



# Northwest Kansas Technical College

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CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

## **ASSURANCE ARGUMENT**



## **Assurance Argument**

# Northwest Kansas Technical College - KS

**Review date: 2/28/2022**

# 1 - Mission

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

## 1.A - Core Component 1.A

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The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

## Argument

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### **1.A The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.**

*"The mission of Northwest Kansas Technical College, as an institution of higher learning, is to prepare individuals for gainful employment in technical and professional careers, productive personal lives, and lifelong learning."*

The mission of Northwest Kansas Technical College (hereafter, NT) serves as a public declaration of its purpose and its vision of excellence. NT's mission communicates the higher aspirations the institution seeks as well as its values that guide day-to-day operations.

The mission of NT is well-defined, publicly articulated, and provides guidance in all aspects of the college's procedures. The mission effectively guides strategic planning and daily processes. Statements of its mission, purpose, vision, values and Strategic Pillars are treated as mission documents. The college is committed to its promise that encourages "gainful employment in technical and professional careers," "productive personal lives," and "lifelong learning" by providing exceptional opportunities for personal growth and intellectual development for all students. The college delivers quality education by offering programs that result in graduates who achieve Certificates of Completion, Technical Certificates, and Associate of Applied Science degrees.

#### **1.A.1 The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.**

NT's mission documents were developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.



NT embraces its motto, [“Be Smart, Work Hard, and Do The Right Thing,”](#) encompassing the idea that education aims to connect mind, hand, and heart. Faculty and staff often use this phrase to describe the implementation of the college's mission. The mission statement captures what the college executes in its course offerings, classroom discussions, encouragement of faculty professional development, and governance.

The mission documents are reviewed annually with an established four-step process that includes approval by employees, stakeholders, Strategic Planning Committee, and the governing board. This approval process extends to NT's purpose, vision, values, and Strategic Pillars, all of which guide the setting of priorities and planning. The process begins with a [review by faculty and staff](#). Next, the fifteen program advisory committees review and make any suggestions for changes. Then, the mission documents are reviewed and [approved by the Strategic Planning Committee](#). Finally, the documents are reviewed and approved by the Area Board of Control (hereafter, the Board).

The statement's latest reaffirmation, [in November 2021](#), is an example of this process. Upon review and approval, the mission documents are published widely. New faculty and staff are provided with the mission documents, and the President reviews the mission with the entire student body at the beginning of each academic year. Instructors include the mission in syllabi and review with students how each program serves the mission of the college.

**1.A.2 The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution’s emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.**

The mission purposes, values, and strategic pillars guide the institution’s instruction, scholarship, basic research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and cultural purpose.

NT has a variety of instruction, assessment, and academic reporting methods based on students’ ability to demonstrate they have mastered the skills relevant to gain meaningful employment, obtain an appreciation for continuous learning, and productively contribute to society. [Competency profiles](#) for each of the fifteen programs at NT are developed under the guidance of their Advisory Committee. All programs provide hands-on, live-work training that is specific to each program’s field. Several programs maintain [industry-specific accreditations](#) that ensure relevance and quality of instruction, facilities, technology, and equipment. This conveys the program is maintaining industry standards. Faculty members and Career Services are actively involved in maintaining relationships with business and industry employers to provide successful student internships and clinical opportunities and job placement success.

[Faculty members are qualified](#) to teach in their areas and are required to submit an approved [professional development plan](#) annually to remain up-to-date with current industry standards and technologies. This plan must be based on identified short and long-range goals, emphasizing degree acquisition for non-degreed faculty and other eligible professional development for degreed faculty. Professional development empowers faculty to create meaningful, industry-based learning experiences for students and ensures consistent quality across the curriculum.

The [mikeroweWORKS Ethic Certification](#) and the [Maverick Code of Conduct](#) are examples of student expectations set forth by NT to instill personal responsibility for the role they play in the success of the college’s mission.

General Education is integrated into each program's curriculum and is considered a crucial component of students' education. NT acknowledges that students will be employees, citizens, family members, consumers, and lifelong learners. The General Education courses serve to ensure that students gain a holistic education that encompasses an understanding of cultural, economic, intellectual, and social aspects of society. NT's [general education courses are accepted for transfer](#) to four-year colleges and universities, and the college has several developed [articulation agreements](#).

The [Advisory Committees](#) play a significant role in guiding program direction. The primary goal of an Advisory Committee is to guide curriculum development and establish competencies for the program to ensure graduates have the skills needed to succeed in the workforce. Many of these Advisory Committee members provide presentations and other demonstrations for students. The Advisory Committees ensure that the curriculum closely emulates current industry standards, including new technology and equipment. Often, Advisory Committee members hire NT graduates.

Through the [Statement of Values](#), NT demonstrates its emphasis on five core values in commitment to: learning, quality, integrity, service, and diversity. NT encourages lifelong learning and higher education with students and faculty alike. NT strives to ensure quality classroom and training experiences for students. The college's commitment to quality is reflected through alignment with numerous [external industry certifications](#). NT's performance record resulted in the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program naming the college as an "[Aspen Prize Top 150 U.S. Community College](#)". NT continues to be one of the top-performing colleges in the nation, according to the recent release of [The Chronicle of Higher Education's Annual Almanac](#). Out of 795 publicly-funded technical and community colleges from around the country, NT ranked #20 for students graduating within 150% of the time, placing the college among the top 3% in the Nation. NT ranks #11 for students graduating within 100% of the time. NT stresses integrity by faculty, staff, and students. The college has a policy on addressing plagiarism and encourages ethical behavior. Classes such as Ethics and Human Relations in Life and Work explicitly discuss themes of personal responsibility and decision-making. Faculty members monitor time management and class attendance. The college encourages service-learning through student [department clubs](#), organizations, and specific coursework that offer opportunities and events for community service. The college has worked to improve staff and student diversity. This effort has successfully seen increases in gender proportions as well as in ethnic diversity. The college recognizes the economic diversity of its student population. Per IPEDS data, during the 2019-20 academic year, 90% of first-time, full-time students at NT received some form of financial assistance. The college also strives to improve the age diversity of its student population with online education, summer session, and evening and weekend classes for nontraditional students. The college also works with outside agencies to encourage non-traditional student enrollments, such as [Kansas WorkforceONE](#).

At NT, strategic planning is ongoing and an integral part of the day-to-day operations. The initiatives in the strategic plan support the eight [Strategic Pillars](#) guiding priorities of NT to carry out its mission.

### **1.A.3 The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.**

The mission documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the college's higher education programs and services, including students, faculty, administration, staff, alumni, community, and industry partners.

NT is an open-admissions institution and models real workplace environments that rely on business

and industry for input into the curriculum and requires faculty to have industry experience in the programs they teach. The college is committed to engagement with its constituents for the overall public good.

**1.A.4 The institution's academic offerings, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.**

NT's mission documents (mission, purposes, vision, values, strategic pillars) are implemented and enacted through its academic programs, support services, and enrollment policies and procedures.

Academic Programs

NT offers [Associate of Applied Science degrees, Technical Certificates, and Certificates of Completion](#) to meet the diverse interests of its students as well as the needs of the skilled regional workforce. The array of programs encompasses five general interest areas that are managed in a divisional structure: Business and General Education, Construction, Transportation, Information Technology, and Health and Human Services.

All programs are assessed annually to ensure consistency with mission documents. NT has a program development process that links programs to the changing needs of employers with curriculum and program development to validate competency profiles that reflect skills necessary for gainful employment. All programs have competencies that require students to demonstrate not only technical proficiency within a field but also character traits and soft skill development to encourage productive personal lives and lifelong learning. Each advisory committee meets bi-annually and follows a structured [agenda](#), and program [validation forms](#) are completed along with [meeting minutes](#).

In order to ensure continuous improvement of courses and academic programs, NT engages in annual program reviews. There are many catalysts for program revisions and new program development, including KBOR's Program Alignment Initiative, faculty feedback from teaching existing courses, and advice from industry and business leaders on curriculum development.

[KBOR's Program Alignment](#) is a statewide initiative that enlists statewide advice from business and industry to map leaders' preferences for preferred outcomes. Business leaders, college administrations, and faculty from across the state work to produce standard programs with multiple exits (e.g., certificates, degrees), industry-recognized credentials, and expected course designs. This program facilitates transferable courses and programs of typical lengths.

Faculty feedback is a catalyst for change. Faculty constantly monitor student progress against learning objectives and search for better ways to deliver quality education. Faculty members continually adjust curricula to ensure that courses meet criteria for accreditation bodies, workforce needs, and transfer to four-year collegiate institutions.

Another important promoter for change is advice from specific partners in business and industry who request specific training in particular disciplines or skills. NT responds to industry with high-quality credit courses and programs. Input is sought, and coursework is tailored to address specific requirements or requests from the constituency. Coursework in areas such as Commercial Driver's License (CDL), Certified Nurse Aide (CNA), Certified Medication Aide (CMA), and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training are examples of how NT responds to the needs of stakeholders in its service area.

## Support Services

NT views its role in student services to support students from initial recruitment through graduation and placement in the workforce or transfer to four-year institutions. NT ensures that its mission is accomplished through persistent contact and help for students throughout their education.

NT is an [open-admission](#) institution. The college welcomes all applicants and recognizes that it is responsible for supporting potential students through the application process. The admissions department follows up with potential applicants, encourages campus visits, sends out monthly reminder cards, and places reminder calls for high school transcripts, financial aid applications, housing requests, and placement testing. Departmental faculty often contact potential students to ensure that programs match each student's goals and needs. Campus "shadow" days are encouraged in departments for applicants to explore career and learning possibilities within a program.

NT uses Next-Generation ACCUPLACER, ACT, and SAT testing, as well as multiple measures to [place applicants](#) into appropriate writing and mathematics classes. Some applicants may not be well prepared for successful collegiate work. After a successful test trial of implementing Beginning Algebra with Review, all remedial courses have been revised into accelerated course formats. Faculty members work with the student in accelerated courses and provide additional support to remove barriers to success.

Admitted students can complete [orientation and registration](#) in-person or online. They are provided with a detailed [checklist](#) of required items to finalize enrollment. Students communicate with academic advisers to ensure that courses correspond with the requirements of their respective academic programs. Students also receive information about required textbooks, course materials, tools, apparel, on-campus housing, and financial aid.

Every student receives the [college catalog](#) and a [program handbook](#). Instructors communicate the policies and procedures during the first week of class. In November 2020, NT announced it would revise its Student Success Seminar to incorporate in the mikeroweWORKS Foundation's pilot curriculum, known as the mikeroweWORKS Ethic Certification. This program examines the importance of work ethic, personal responsibility, delayed gratification, and a positive attitude. Students who complete the program will receive an industry-recognized NC3 certificate.

NT's care and concern for every student extends throughout the student's academic career. Programs have established class attendance and progress requirements. A systematic procedure is in place for issuing [academic and attendance alerts](#) to students who may prove to be deficient. Suppose a student is identified as at-risk in either area; in that case, there is initial counseling by program instructors, then with the academic adviser so that a plan of action is developed, and finally with the Dean of Students. General education instructors communicate regularly with program instructors. Every effort is made to support students to ensure consistent attendance and academic progress. Students may request additional [accommodations](#). Evening peer [tutoring sessions](#) are available to students either by appointment or walk-in.

NT contracts with the local hospital and health department to provide [counseling and health services](#) to students. These professionals assist in providing students with attaining positive mental and physical health.

NT recognizes that students often require assistance with career planning, interviewing, and resume development. Career Services and faculty assist students with short and long-term job opportunities,

job placement, interviewing, and resume preparation. Employers are invited to campus for [interview days and job fairs](#) during which students can showcase their skills to individual companies for long-term job placement.

### Enrollment Profile

A year and a half into COVID-19, NT continues to face challenges of responding quickly to the evolving logistical concerns of the pandemic. NT resumed in-person classes in Fall 2020; however, the pandemic still negatively affected enrollment. Data reveals that total full-time equivalent enrollment in Fall of 2020 was down 19.98% and increased slightly (2.8%) in Fall 2021, which is a good sign, but not enough to repair the gap from 2020.

Diversity of student enrollment, with respect to gender and ethnicity, enhances campus culture. The [Student Profile Report](#) reflects the female percentage of students to be 33%. The report also shows 27% of the student population was of an ethnicity other than Caucasian. There are 688 students at NT, including the Main Campus and Gove County location for Fall 2021. By attending status, there are 402 full-time and 286 part-time students. The Student Profile Report reveals that 84% of the student body falls within the age group of 16-29. Less than 10% of the student population is married, and only 50 students are reported to have dependents. Among the full-time, degree-seeking student population, 39% are student-athletes.

The Governor's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Bill is intended to stimulate growth in technical education at both the secondary and post-secondary levels in Kansas. [Excel in CTE](#) has been instrumental in boosting the college's enrollment efforts. The bill encourages growth in career and technical education through dual registration and tuition-free credits. This initiative helps the state to address the demands for a technically skilled workforce. The college is working diligently with area high schools to provide opportunities for high school students to take college-level technical coursework. The college encourages high school students to take these courses and then complete the AAS degree. In the Fall of 2021, the [student enrollment profile](#) indicated that 295 high school students participated in a concurrent enrollment program with NT.

### **1.A.5 The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.**

NT clearly articulates its mission through many public documents, including:

- [The Mission section of the website](#)
- [The 2018-2021 Strategic Plan](#)
- [College Catalog](#)
- [AIR report](#)

New students and families are introduced to NT's mission through [recruitment materials](#), orientation materials, Department Handbooks, and course syllabi.

NT's mission is articulated for faculty, staff, and administration in [New Hire Committee materials](#) and Faculty/Staff In-service materials.

NT communicates its mission to a broader audience through general public documents like the college's website and the [Alumni Newsletter](#).



## Sources

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- Academic\_Attendance\_Alert
- Accomodations
- Accreditation\_DT\_AT\_RT\_MA\_COS
- Admissions\_Policy
- Advisory\_Minutes
- Advisory\_Minutes (page number 2)
- Advisory\_Minutes (page number 18)
- AIR20
- Alumni\_Newsletter.pdf
- Articulation\_Partnerships.pdf
- Career\_Fairs
- Code\_of\_Conduct
- College\_Catalog.pdf
- Competency\_Profiles
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- DAA\_Aspen\_Award
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- DAA\_Program\_Advisory\_Committees.pdf
- DAA\_Transfer\_Equivalencies
- Degrees\_Certifications
- Department\_Clubs
- Excel\_CTE
- Faculty\_Credentials
- Faculty\_Meeting\_Minutes\_Sept2021
- Graduation\_Rankings
- KBOR\_Program\_Alignment
- Math\_English\_Placement
- MikeRowe\_SweatPledge
- New\_Hire\_Mentor\_Program
- November21\_Board\_Minutes
- November21\_Board\_Minutes (page number 3)
- Professional\_Development\_Template
- Program\_Handbooks
- Registration\_Checklist
- Statement\_of\_Values
- Strategic\_Plan
- Strategic\_Planning\_Nov21
- Student\_Profile
- Tutoring
- Tutoring (page number 2)
- Viewbook
- Viewbook (page number 5)
- Viewbook (page number 33)
- WEB\_MissionPage.pdf
- WorkforceONE\_KsDoC

## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

### Argument

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#### **1.B The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.**

NT commits to providing quality education and engaging in active partnerships with local, regional, and world communities for the public good.

#### **1.B.1 The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.**

Through service and education, NT develops graduates who will contribute to society and acquire knowledge to make a difference in the world.

NT understands that access to higher education for all students is vital to creating an educated workforce. The college has been proactive in meeting the needs of the changing demographics in Western Kansas. Over the past several decades, the general population and the number of high school graduates in the tristate area have declined. To address this declining number of high school graduates, the college has [expanded its recruiting territory](#), added new programs, and opened an additional location in Quinter, Kansas. New programs such as Precision Agriculture Technology, Women's Wrestling, Shooting Sports, [and new program proposals](#) have attracted students nationally and internationally. [Recruiting efforts](#) from faculty, staff, and market strategies allow the Admissions Department to target prospective students. Athletic recruitment has made it possible to attract a more diverse pool of applicants. Athletic programs have made it possible to appeal to applicants regionally, nationally, and even internationally.

By offering [15 programs](#) in specialized areas, short-term certifications, and [early college](#) opportunities, NT is achieving its vision to be the leading provider of technical higher education in the region. NT students receive relevant training with [state-of-the-art technology](#) and equipment. Such activity provides students with a competitive edge as they enter highly skilled careers. Employers report that graduates are well-prepared technicians that require less on-the-job training.

There are many opportunities for campus personnel and students to contribute to the community. NT maintains that students can be nurtured to develop productive personal lives and contribute to their community. NT provides multiple opportunities for students to realize education beyond the classroom through immersive community activities and projects. For instance, the Engineering

Technology's [Haunted House](#) event, the Athletic Department's "[High-Five](#)" Fridays, and NT athletes [reading to elementary students](#). NT also became a part of the mission to repopulate the City of Nicodemus to rebuild their community and bring residents to town. Several NT programs, including Carpentry, Electrical, and Engineering Technology, will be contributing to this project by designing and building affordable [tiny homes](#).

NT believes in the importance of employee participation and immersion into the community. NT seeks to accomplish this goal by encouraging active participation. NT employees contribute to their local community by serving on various area boards and organizations and volunteering, including the Sherman County Community Development Board, [Kansas Jayhawk Community College Conference Board](#), the [Kansas Association of School Boards](#), as well as volunteer firefighters and church pastors.

NT, as an entity, also contributes to its community by providing free facility rentals and accommodations to local organizations such as Rotary Club, Kiwanis International Club, and Lions Clubs International. NT allows the American Red Cross to use campus facilities to hold blood drives and contributes significantly to the success of the blood drive by promoting and managing the event.

NT cares about the economic development of the region and [understands its economic impact](#) on the area. College officials regularly meet with community leaders to discuss ways to promote the development of Goodland and Sherman County. As an example of NT's involvement, the College President serves as the President of the Sherman County Community Development Board to ensure our efforts support the local economy. The educational success of students translates into effective economic development through placement. The college serves as an economic driver by providing the skilled workforce needed to attract, retain, and expand businesses. A strong connection with industry is strengthened through the industry advisory boards the college has in place for every program. NT plays a vital role in providing skilled employees to our region's technical industry.

These actions and decisions promote service to the greater public good, commitment to building community connections, and creating productive citizens that will contribute to society.

**1.B.2 The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.**

As a state-funded post-secondary institution, NT takes its educational responsibility seriously. It does not promote the generation of financial returns for investors, contribute to any parent organization, or support external interests. The college aims to be a good fiscal steward while managing and appropriating its funding resources as efficiently as possible. Whether those resources come from state appropriations, tuition and fees, endowment contributions, local, state, federal grants, or returns on college fund investments, the college strives to use its resources to further the college's mission. Thirty-three percent ([33%](#)) of school revenues come from state aid. Federal and state grants amount to 27%. Northwest Tech cannot make expenditures that would conflict with the educational mission or the public interest because these revenues aim to support academic responsibilities. Over 59% of NT's resources are aimed at instruction. Instructional expenditures are defined as faculty salary and benefits, instructional materials and technology, equipment, new program development, professional development, and program accreditation. Responsible stewardship demands deliberate and reasonable cost controls. The college maintains such controls by competitively bidding contracts, upgrading facilities and equipment in a prudent and accountable way, reviewing all requests for new equipment and instructional space annually, and following its [purchasing policies](#). The college has

an [annual external audit](#), which is reviewed and approved by the Board. NT has a clear policy regarding [conflict of interest](#). This policy is another safeguard on the importance of educational interests where the welfare of NT is involved.

### **1.B.3 The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.**

NT engages with its external stakeholders and responds appropriately concerning the college's mission, resources, and capacity. The advisory committees represent structured relationships between the college and industry employers, which provides invaluable guidance and insight in areas such as learning outcomes, student competencies, curricula, classroom materials, student experiential learning, and capital expenditures. This input allows NT to strengthen graduate preparation to better serve regional businesses and industries.

Some employers allow students to gain practical experience from internships. For instance, Engineering Technology has a well-developed [internship program](#), and work experience counts toward fulfilling the degree requirements. The Respiratory Therapy program also incorporates active medical sites that allow students to gain [clinical experiences](#). The Medical Assistant program has similar arrangements with medical sites to provide field [practicum](#) for students.

The economic development of Sherman County is supported by the college's effort to collaborate with the Sherman County Community Development (SCCD) economic development organization. In November 2020, NT received a significant grant award through an initiative launched by the Kansas Department of Commerce in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to expand opportunities for education in advanced manufacturing and automation throughout the state. NT utilized the grant funds to secure several new cutting-edge pieces of manufacturing equipment for the Engineering Technology program and expand the curriculum to include new coursework and training in advanced manufacturing and automation. With the implementation of the Advanced Manufacturing curriculum in Engineering Technology, we provided a [letter of support](#) to the SCCD to advocate their proposal to The Great Plains Technology & Manufacturing Cluster, which connects manufacturers with vital resources, in hopes of getting a micro-factory start-up in Goodland. This collaboration has the potential to grow and drive innovation throughout the Great Plains region. The college also hosts meetings with city and hospital leadership to enhance communication and collaboration.

The college maintains active contact with alumni through newsletters, networking, and surveys. The college works with the philanthropic community through the NT Endowment. The endowment advances the college's mission by soliciting private donations for scholarships, facilities, and academic programs. The Endowment Association holds fall and spring [endowment fundraisers](#) annually.

NT encourages civic and community participation by faculty and staff. Members of college faculty and staff belong to various organizations such as the Goodland USD 352 School Board, Museum Board, Lions, Rotary, Leadership Sherman County, and Leadership Kansas.

The college opens its facilities to community organizations depending upon availability in relation to the schedules of the college's intramural programs and sports teams. NT's relationship with the community is reciprocal and mutually beneficial in terms of facility use. The college shares use of the USD Track and the Sugar Hills Golf course for cross-country training. NT's basketball teams share use of the USD's Max Jones Fieldhouse for home games. The college's gym is often used by the USD for practice and games. Leadership Kansas holds annual meetings on the college campus. During



their meeting, the college is afforded the opportunity to showcase the campus and programs.

NT actively engages with its external constituencies. The college serves the social and economic well-being of its students, employers, and the community.

## Sources

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- Audit
- Audit (page number 11)
- Early\_College
- EIS.pdf
- Employee\_Handbook
- Employee\_Handbook (page number 15)
- Fundraisers
- Haunted\_House
- High\_Five\_Friday
- High\_Five\_Friday (page number 7)
- Jayhawk\_Conference\_Board
- KASB
- MA\_Practicum
- OWE
- Placement\_Report
- Program\_Proposals
- Purchasing\_Policies
- Recruitment
- Recruitment (page number 3)
- RT\_Clinical
- Support\_Letter
- Technology
- Tiny\_House
- Viewbook

## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

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The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

### Argument

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#### **1.C The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.**

NT provides many opportunities to encourage students to participate in civic engagement measures in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world through coursework, policies and procedures, and the overall educational experience.

#### **1.C.1 The institution encourages curricular or co-curricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.**

NT offers many curricular and co-curricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success. Some examples include the Student Success Seminar, Civic Engagement courses, Department Clubs, Student Government, Student Ambassador Program, SkillsUSA, as well as other efforts to engage students in the process of learning and engaging in society and are critical to preparing graduates for their future. These activities demonstrate how NT fulfills its mission to prepare students to be good citizens capable of positively contributing to society.

The [Student Success Seminar](#) examines the importance of work ethic, personal responsibility, delayed gratification, and a positive attitude. The course emphasizes the importance of hard work, determination, and respect for others. These principles are the basis of the Student Success Seminar curriculum, which aims to help strengthen the workforce populace.

[Civic Engagement](#) courses are offered each semester and provide students with valuable experiential experiences that help develop their civic engagement behaviors and encourage actions to improve their communities. The course empowers students to learn about the importance of community engagement and community service. Students develop skills through active participation in service projects available throughout the semester from various organizations. Students must complete 10 hours of documented community service along with an essay describing their experience. Students learn through reflection the value of community service and their engagement with others along with the community.

All NT programs have a [Departmental Club](#). Clubs plan civic engagement activities, fundraisers,

awareness campaigns, and social events. These clubs also host guest speakers, participate in community service events, and raise funds for community organizations. Clubs sponsor field trips that allow students to observe business and industry operations in real-life work environments.

[Student government](#) offers students an opportunity to get involved in the inner workings of the college. Student government participants represent the student body's best interests and help shape the student experience on campus. Student government procedures emulate the culture and structure of community governance thus preparing them for real-world involvement.

Student ambassadors play an essential role in the recruitment and admissions process. Ambassadors are selected to serve as a strong link between their academic program and prospective students. The goal of the [Student Ambassador Program](#) is to educate prospective students, families, school groups, and the general public on the programs, resources, and student life at NT. The experience helps students develop leadership, communication, and presentation skills.

[SkillsUSA Kansas](#) serves students enrolled in career and technical education training programs at NT. Students who participate and compete in SkillsUSA engage in activities that promote citizenship, leadership, employability, technical and professional skills training.

NT recognizes the need for internships and other experiential learning, the opportunity to take advantage of career services and training for the workforce, and professional networking opportunities for students. Students experience live-work situations as part of their training program. Live-work includes service, repair, or production jobs. For instance, the Automotive Technology program functions as an automotive lab in an authentic shop atmosphere. This live-work approach lets students apply skills by performing work on vehicles needing repair and communicating with customers, closely simulating the workforce they will soon enter.

### **1.C.2 The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.**

NT demonstrates inclusion and diversity through appropriate policies, procedures, and programs. The college welcomes students, employers, and individuals from the immediate [seventeen county area](#) it serves in Kansas and from all parts of the state, nation, and the global community.

In the past, NT attracted a predominantly male caucasian enrollment based on its service area population and rural location. The college has effectively recruited a higher minority and underrepresented population with the addition of athletic programs and improvements made in marketing and recruiting practices.

[Athletic programs](#) have made it possible to attract a more diverse pool of applicants by recruiting student-athletes regionally, nationally, and even internationally. Athletic recruitment involves direct enlistment from coaches, marketing department efforts, and admission team engagement. Within the past four years, NT has added several new athletic programs, including Women's Softball (Fall 2017), [Shooting Sports \(Fall 2019\)](#), and [Women's Wrestling \(Fall 2021\)](#). These additions have helped build enrollment and specifically contribute to the increase of the female population on campus.

The [open-admissions policy](#) states that all students who are willing to learn and who can benefit from programs will be accepted. This policy encourages prospective students to apply and enroll. Admissions representatives are [members](#) of the Kansas Association of Collegiate Registrars and

Admissions Officers (KACRAO), which provides guidance and ongoing professional development regarding [ethical and fair recruitment practices](#). In 2020, the college decided to remove the \$25 application fee to eliminate this financial barrier. The college adheres to its [non-discrimination policy](#) and uses its [website](#), with a recently added chat feature, as a tool to provide students and the public with information about the campus, its programs, and available resources. The college has improved its social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Fall of 2021, TikTok. These efforts have led to more significant interaction with potential students throughout the application process. Facing the continued population decline in Western Kansas, the college has engaged a marketing firm to help build an effective strategy to create additional brand recognition and awareness of the opportunities at the college.

NT personnel support inclusive student services with a specific procedure for providing guidance to applicants about financial aid, transcripts, housing, program requirements, and reminders for important due dates. Financial Aid personnel attends webinars and training to remain up-to-date on all the current federal guidelines and procedures. There are [specific registration days](#) to assist students in signing up for programs. This support is essential for encouraging new applicants to follow through, register, and attend class.

NT addresses its role in a multicultural society with programs and activities directed towards celebrating diversity. Campus-wide events are dedicated to celebrating the achievements of minorities in conjunction with national holidays, such as Martin Luther King Day, Cinco de Mayo, and [Black History Month](#). The college invites organizations and speakers to campus to promote multiculturalism, tolerance, and a better understanding of diversity in society. NT supports the presence of all cultural and ethnic groups within the college community. NT hosts annual events such as the [Kansas Latino Leadership Conference](#) (2020 and 2021 conferences canceled due to COVID restrictions) to promote the equitable representation of cultures. NT also hosts keynote speakers to commemorate Black History Month, such as Kyven Gadson (February 2021). The Dean of Student Advancement is working to schedule Ron Freeman to speak about empowerment strategies in Spring 2022.

NT strives to promote a safe campus environment. The college maintains compliance with the Clery Act. The Dean of Student Advancement collects and reports [crime statistics](#), maintains a public crime log, and provides [campus safety warnings and training](#). The college has [sexual harassment](#) and non-discrimination policies that are widely disseminated to students, faculty, and staff. In-service training and policy review occur throughout the year to ensure all faculty, staff, and students are aware of the stated policies. In Fall 2021, the college required all faculty and staff to complete online [training sessions](#), provided through the Kansas Association of School Boards, about inclusion and diversity.

The non-traditional student population also contributes towards a more diverse campus. Perkins V legislation defines non-traditional fields as "occupations or fields of work for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25% of the individuals employed" and "students over the age of 25". NT has effectively served non-traditional students for many years. NT received grant funding to purchase a mobile billboard advertising semi-box wrap. The goal of the advertisement is to recruit and retain more nontraditional students into technical programs in the most effective way possible. The [semi-box wrap](#) features females in technical fields and includes information to contact NT.

NT recognizes economic divergence in its student population. During FY'21, 168 students qualified for Pell grants, and 224 were granted student loans. The college distributed over \$3.5 million in total financial aid support. The college assists applicants in preparing FAFSA documents and follows up



to ensure that all supporting financial materials are current and accurate. In some programs, students may also rent tools and books if they do not have the economic means for purchase.

NT also supports students who may not be academically prepared for collegiate program success. All incoming students are placed in general education classes based upon Next-Generation ACCUPLACER, ACT, SAT, or multiple measures scores. If a student's scores indicate a weak background in writing or mathematics, that student is placed into a course that includes a review component in order to provide additional assistance to keep them on track for graduation. The college also staffs the Max Alderman Library and an evening lab in the Digital Technology building that provides ["open lab" hours and peer tutoring](#).

Consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), NT ensures that individuals with disabilities are afforded equal opportunity to participate in programs and services with appropriate accommodations provided. Reasonable modifications in policies, practices, and procedures ensure equal access for individuals with disabilities in a supportive environment. The Dean of Academic Advancement coordinates reasonable [accommodations](#), advocates for an accessible learning environment, and encourages self-advocacy and personal responsibility on the part of students with disabilities. The Dean provided a faculty training session during [Fall 2021 in-service](#) to promote ideas to faculty on best practices in identifying and providing accommodations. The process is designed to ensure that all students have equal access and opportunity.

Excel in CTE is another contributor to diversity at NT. This state-sponsored program, which pays tuition for high school students pursuing technical education courses, has brought many students to the college for coursework. The college recently dedicated a full-time position, Director of Outreach, in efforts to expand early college opportunities.

The wide range of programs, degrees, and certificates offered by the college contributes to diversity and serves students who plan to transfer to another institution. The college has developed articulation agreements with several four-year institutions to allow for ease of [transfer](#). The college's strategic plan outlines an initiative to develop additional articulation agreements.

### **1.C.3 The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff, and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives.**

NT believes interacting and socializing with a diverse student body has a positive personal and academic influence. This progression fosters a climate of respect, improves academic development, increases cultural awareness, and promotes cultural acceptance amongst all students, faculty, staff, and administration. NT has a longstanding philosophy of "Mind, Hand, and Heart." As part of this way of thinking, students are encouraged to be smart, work hard and do the right thing. When our students enter the workforce, they are prepared to be good citizens and engage in the development of their community.

#### Maverick Student Code

The Maverick Student Code ensures the safety and protection of students, teachers, staff, and administration. The code itself is a detailed guideline of values and standards of acceptable conduct to help students understand their behavior's impact on the global community. NT aims to assist students with making good decisions that lead to success in their personal and professional endeavors.

### Student Success Seminar

First-year students attend a mandatory Student Success Seminar for guidance on life skills and mindset. In November 2020, NT initiated the mikeroweWORKs Ethic Certification program. The program is accredited by the National Coalition of Certification Centers (NC3). This program examines the importance of work ethic, personal responsibility, delayed gratification, and a positive attitude which results in an overall climate of mutual respect and professionalism.

### Civic Engagement Courses

Civic Engagement courses offer students a valuable opportunity to apply leadership skills and concepts to their everyday lives. Incorporating civic engagement into the design of leadership courses also helps NT fulfill its institutional mission. The Civic Engagement course connects leadership and civic engagement by adding experiential civic components, such as volunteering requirements and working to solve campus or community concerns through service projects.

### Student Life Activities

Another way NT creates an environment of collaboration and mutual respect in partnership with students and college personnel is through Student Life events and activities. The Student Life division falls under the responsibilities of the Dean of Student Advancement. NT is dedicated to providing a safe, inclusive environment to promote student development and a sense of belonging within NT's campus community. Student Life hosts events and activities such as Welcome Week, Trivia Nights, karaoke, intramural sports, etc. Student Life events and activities focus on enhancing the student experience and supporting the personal, social, and academic growth of students.

### Athletics

NT's Athletic programs offer many benefits to the campus community. Athletes are recruited from all different regions and cultural backgrounds. This population of student-athletes contributes significantly to the diversity of the college community. NT athletes develop fitness habits, competitiveness, and discipline. Concepts such as teamwork, individual responsibility, determination, and perseverance are implemented throughout each team. These behaviors shape their future as they enter the workforce. Athletic events unite student-athletes, students, college personnel, and community members in a common bond.

### General Education Learning Outcomes and Competency Profiles

The purpose, content, and learning outcomes of NT's general education courses are clearly articulated. Learning outcomes for general education are spelled out in syllabi. The outcomes represent a framework for developing communications, analytical, quantitative, computer, and scientific skills, as well as an appreciation for human values. Program faculty members integrate curricula with general education outcomes in mind. Several program courses have projects that require students to demonstrate values of diversity, integrity, perseverance, work ethic, as well as communication skills, and mathematical competency.

NT recognizes its role in preparing students for global citizenship. General education courses are crucial in this endeavor. The Human Relations in Life and Work course specifically prepares students for conducting themselves with tolerance and respect in a multicultural society. The Ethics course addresses relevant topics for a diverse society, including bioethics, morality, marriage, sexuality,

lying, cheating, and business and media ethics. The Personal Finance course teaches students how to save for emergencies, pay off debt fast, spend wisely, and invest for their future. The general education effort is supported by program-specific courses open to all students. The Business Communications course dedicates exercises to communicating effectively within a global and diverse workforce, promoting teamwork, and understanding cultural diversity and sensitivity. Cosmetology offers specific classes and exercises promoting customer service to a diverse clientele. Other programs make similar efforts in coursework and training to enhance sensitivity to diversity.

Students are expected to develop skills in adapting to change as well as respect for human and cultural diversity. Course competency profiles provide another level of assessment of student achievement in course work. Instructors develop these profiles for every course taught. The profiles require instructors to define measures for knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Instructors compile data obtained from classroom and laboratory exercises, shop projects, clinical experiences, presentations, quizzes, and tests for students. The profiles are validated as current and relevant in meetings with industry experts who serve on Program Advisory Committees.

Diversity lays the groundwork for cultural experiences and prepares students to enter the workforce in a global society. Faculty and staff are committed to ensuring students gain experience, guidance, and understanding for diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives during their time at NT.

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## 1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

### Summary

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NT is dedicated to its mission "to prepare individuals for gainful employment in technical and professional careers, productive personal lives, and lifelong learning." The mission serves as a public declaration of the college's ultimate purpose and clearly communicates the values that guide day-to-day operations. The vision, goals, values, and strategic plan are developed through a public and inclusive process and provide guidance that keeps the institution aligned with the mission. The college meets the needs of its students through its open admissions policy, relevant academic offerings, student support services, and commitment to quality education.

NT recognizes regional population declines in the rural tristate area, which have historically been the primary recruitment territory for the college for non-athlete technical students. Generation Z students are increasingly questioning the cost and effectiveness of higher education. The college is positioning itself to address concerns over declining populations and to communicate the quality and value of technical education, through the new partnership with a marketing firm. This will allow the college to push beyond traditional recruiting regions, craft messaging that reflects value and career opportunities, and ensure enrollment remains sustainable. The college constantly evolves our approach to appeal to current student populations, adhere to applicable workforce needs, and provide quality education. NT's mission is a living document that is continually evaluated to ensure it serves current student populations and constituents.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

### 2.A - Core Component 2.A

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The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

### Argument

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#### **2.A The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.**

NT establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

##### **2.A.1 The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.**

The mission documents are discussed, developed, and reviewed throughout the organization and then adopted by the governing board. The mission documents are reviewed annually with an established four-step process, as described in detail in Core Component 1.A.1., that includes approval by employees, stakeholders, Strategic Planning Committee, and the governing board. This approval process extends to NT's purpose, vision, values, and Strategic Pillars, all of which guide the setting of priorities and planning. The college mission documents were reviewed and reaffirmed in [November 2021](#) by the Board.

##### **2.A.2 The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.**

NT commits to integrity and fair and ethical behavior on the part of the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff. The college has a [Code of Ethical Practices](#) that outlines the responsibilities of all employees, administrators, and members of the Board. The rights and responsibilities of each internal constituency—students, faculty, staff, and administration are clearly stated in the college catalog or employee handbook. Catalogs and handbooks are reviewed and [approved by the Board](#) annually.

Non-discrimination policies and practices appear in relevant NT publications such as the Employee Handbook, syllabi, and the college website. The college catalog includes a [statement of non-discrimination](#) and rights under Title IV and Title IX.

To operate with integrity in all financial matters, NT follows processes for fair and ethical behavior and policies. NT sets forth standards of conduct through policies for faculty and staff concerning fiscal management in four categories; [Purchasing](#), [Fiscal Controls](#), [Budget](#), and [Grants](#). The policies were created to ensure transparency and accountability throughout all financial and operational transactions.

NT's finances are audited annually and independently by a certified accounting firm, Agler & Gaeddert, Chartered, that guarantees the college's financial practices follow Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for the United States and the Kansas Municipal Audit and Accounting Guide. William's Consulting Accounting Firm works with college personnel to prepare financial reports and statements to prepare for audit. The college is in good financial health, which is reflected in the most recent audit reports for [2019-2020](#) and [2020-2021](#). The annual audit assures NT's financial integrity and helps identify opportunities to improve operations and meet strategic goals.

The Board meets monthly according to a schedule published in advance and abides by the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA). [Board meetings](#) follow a democratic process that allows for the approval of minutes, financial statements, and general items. The meetings follow a process of discussing the regular business of NT and setting policies that direct the management of the college. Board members report to their local school districts about college activities. The Board hires the college [President](#), whose responsibility is to ensure adherence to college policies, oversee the organization's daily operations, and meet all Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) requirements. Each meeting includes various standard agenda items, including the President's report to inform and update the Board regarding college financial, legal, and academic matters.

The [Administrative Cabinet meets weekly](#) to discuss current and future issues, directives and plans to guide the college. The full Administrative Cabinet includes President, Vice President of Operations, Vice President for Information Technology, Dean of Academic Advancement, Dean of Student Advancement, Athletic Director, Director of Admissions, Director of Outreach, Director of Endowment, Director of Grants, Director of Information Technology, and Director of Buildings and Grounds. The Cabinet is responsible for ensuring that the college operates fairly, consistently, and ethically in day-to-day operations. The college administration implements the policies of the Board and makes daily decisions that guide the ethical actions of the college.

NT adheres to rules and regulations for the administration of the federal financial assistance programs. The college maintains membership in the Kansas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (KASF AA) and the Rocky Mountain Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (RMASFAA). [These organizations](#) provide federal regulations and policies training to ensure student financial aid is awarded fairly and equitably to all students. Financial aid administrators also attend training sessions via webinars.

### Academic Integrity

NT follows an [organizational structure](#) that groups programs into five divisions: Business and General Education, Transportation, Information Technology, Health and Human Services, and Construction. The division meetings ensure that fair and ethical behavior standards are maintained among students and faculty. [Division chairs meet](#) with the administration monthly. There are also [monthly faculty meetings](#) and [monthly staff meetings](#) for personnel in which ethical issues that affect the campus are discussed, and training conducted.

NT ensures that faculty protects the grading privacy of its students. Expectations for faculty interaction with students are discussed annually at in-service. The discussion is reinforced with the online distribution of the employee handbook that details expectations for ethical behavior in academic matters.

NT ensures that its academic operations are fair, equitable, and transparent.

Students receive [program handbooks](#), and expectations are transparent and mirror the policies set forth by the college catalog. Competencies for performance are presented in each program handbook by course. Students acknowledge they received and understand the respective information.

NT's college catalog includes an [academic integrity policy](#) that addresses academic integrity in the classroom, laboratory, shop, internship, and clinical areas. Academic integrity includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, falsification, forgery, and alteration of records. Consequences of breaching the guidelines are outlined in the policy.

NT's Curriculum & Assessment Committee Charter outlines the committee's function, purpose, and membership. The committee's primary function is to ensure the quality and curricular integrity of all NWKTC program offerings, curriculum, and implementation and oversight of the outcomes assessment program. Other functions, tasks, and responsibilities of the committee include (but are not limited to):

- Make recommendations regarding curriculum and assessment
- Review of program reviews
- Review of new course/program development and deletion
- Review of annual departmental assessment reports and program assessment plans
- Annual Program Review
- Provide input to the development of the institutional assessment program
- Address other academic and assessment issues as needed

Privacy protection extends to the classroom. The college [provides training](#) to faculty and staff to ensure that they comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in all communication with students and families. Students must sign a FERPA waiver before any faculty or staff speak with family members about student grades or performance. Faculty members are trained not to discuss students' individual grades except in private one-on-one discussions.

NT sets clear, ethical expectations for interactions between faculty, support staff, and students. Program handbooks are created for all 15 programs. Each spells out expectations for ethical behavior, and each is distributed to students electronically on the first day of class. Additionally, the [Maverick Code of Conduct](#) outlines what behavior and dispositions are expected from students.

The student appeals process and [student grievance procedure](#) are outlined within the college catalog. The student appeals process includes timely steps that allow for fair and ethical consideration, resolution of issues, and consistency in policy application. The Dean of Student Advancement manages and records all appeals. These processes can be used for civil rights, harassment, and other formal complaints and grievances. Special procedures are also available for sexual harassment, rights to privacy, and suspension from financial aid.

NT maintains a student complaint log in compliance with federal laws. A [formal complaint](#) process follows applicable laws and is managed by the Dean of Student Advancement Office. Resolutions are

kept in a secure file for when the student is enrolled. These records can be reviewed only through special requests.

NT offers an educational guarantee policy that is published in the college catalog. This [Limited Warranty to Employers](#) policy is provided to employers for up to one year after graduation. It guarantees that graduating students will possess knowledge and skills in the area of study necessary for successful entry-level employment. This policy allows an employer to notify the college and be given the opportunity to send the employed graduate back for additional education and training within the specific area found to be deficient. The college reciprocates with a Limited Warranty to its students. The warranty sets forth conditions under which a student is guaranteed employment.

NT's policies adhere to the Clery Act and Homeland Security/Emergency Management regulations. These policies are in the college catalog that students receive during annual program orientation and are available on the website. Faculty members review these policies annually during in-service, division meetings, and general faculty meetings.

The college has an [athletic handbook](#) that discusses expectations and behaviors expected of student-athletes. There is a special code of conduct for behavior and specific guidelines for citizenship, sportsmanship, and travel. Coaches reinforce these expectations regularly in team meetings. Co-curricular and athletic activities support the college mission of teaching students to be productive and contributing citizens while providing them with opportunities to develop citizenship, sportsmanship, critical thinking, and social and physical skills.

#### Integrity of Human Resources

NT establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior to ensure operational integrity. The Board has approved numerous policies for hiring, employee benefits, compensation, employee expectations, and leave. Examples include; [Hiring Policy](#), [Nepotism Policy](#), [Flexible Benefits Program for Employees](#), [Tuition Waiver Policy](#), [Employee Leave Allowances](#), [Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#), [Retirement Supplement Benefits](#), [Employee Degree Completion Compensation](#), and [Faculty Non-Instructional Work Days](#).

NT follows federal and state hiring practices and is an equal opportunity employer. Position descriptions are written for all positions. NT seeks to hire the most qualified applicant when filling positions. Open positions are posted and advertised through appropriate channels such as the [college website](#), Indeed.com, [HigherEdJobs.com](#), social media, and other local, state, and national media. Applications are reviewed for appropriate education and work experience. A formal interview process may include an initial phone screening, in-person interview with standardized questions to ensure fair treatment to all candidates, and reference checks. Faculty members who observe professional ethics and complete a prescribed probationary service period as full-time teaching members are eligible for tenure. The President recommends all tenure decisions based upon annual teaching evaluations, student evaluations, and service contributions. The Board makes final decisions regarding employment.

#### Integrity of Auxiliary Functions

The auxiliary services provided by NT help transform the campus into a community that helps foster a more student-friendly environment. Services include the campus Bookstore, Student Housing, and Food Services. These amenities are operated with integrity and contribute to the overall satisfaction and success of the student body.



NT's [Bookstore](#) supports student learning by supplying required and optional course and support materials, as well as other conveniences, including snacks, supplies, and memorabilia. The bookstore assists faculty in book adoptions by discussing cost-effective options and benefit students and faculty. The Bookstore negotiates with publishers and vendors when purchasing books and other support materials and tools. The Bookstore also provides students with textbooks, tools, and supplies lists for each program or course if students choose to purchase from other sources.

NT provides fair and equal housing for students who choose to live on-campus. Students are provided with a contract and a [housing handbook](#) that outlines rights and responsibilities for all student residents. The Dean of Student Advancement and the Housing Manager hold meetings with all students who live in campus housing to reinforce the importance of treating other residents respectfully, ethically, and fairly.

Initially, to improve food service operations to accommodate more students with greater satisfaction, NT contracted an external vendor. Student satisfaction levels improved; however, the vendor still did not meet expectations. As a result, the college released an RFP for food services in the Spring of 2019. In the fall of 2019, NT contracted with a [new vendor](#) that specialized in dining services for schools, colleges, and universities. The new service created a personalized dining program based on the college's location, population, and current conditions and continually introduces new techniques and processes to ensure that each customized program is contemporary and always student-oriented.

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## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

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The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

### Argument

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#### **2.B The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.**

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

#### **2.B.1 The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.**

NT maintains high standards for presenting itself accurately and honestly. NT utilizes a diverse combination of communication mediums to present itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

NT uses the website ([nwktc.edu](http://nwktc.edu)) as one of the main ways to disseminate and publish information. The website has become a repository of information about the college for prospective students and the community. The website is an excellent tool for providing accurate, consistent, and up-to-date information. Every effort is made to ensure that communication is clear, complete, and relevant.

To keep up with current trends, NT is active on [social media](#) channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. Today's students want and expect to be reached through social media. Social media provides the college with new opportunities to communicate clearly, accurately, and frequently with current and prospective students. Tiktok was added in the fall of 2021 with input from the student ambassador group after webinars about advertising and posting on social media were attended by college personnel.

The college also markets itself through print media such as a [College viewbook](#) and [program information sheets](#). Another initiative that improves communication with the community includes a weekly radio program called [Tech Talk](#), which provides a popular forum for disseminating information. Recent programs have included athletic news and schedules, upcoming conferences, student achievements, student life, endowment events, program offerings, and new technology initiatives.

NT recognizes its responsibility to provide accurate and timely information to current and prospective students. Every effort is made to ensure students have current electronic and print

materials about the college's mission, vision, values, goals, campus-wide policies, and procedures. Each year, NT publishes updated materials, such as the [College Catalog](#), [Course Catalog](#), and program guides that inform students and the general public of current requirements for degree and certificate programs, admission standards, enrollment policies, and course descriptions. These publications create a transparent structure of information that is easily accessible.

The Admissions Department [guides the recruitment](#) of new students and marketing efforts. Admissions personnel recruit prospective applicants, make presentations at high schools and public events, maintain the college's website, disseminate all electronic social media communications, and sponsor [campus events](#) to enhance awareness. Admission recruiters visit high schools and college fairs over a five-state area, giving informational presentations to prospective students. Prospective students are provided with a College viewbook that summarizes the fifteen academic programs and provides overviews of student and campus life. An informational packet containing program, housing, and cost materials is mailed out if a prospect indicates interest in the college. Program information sheets provide information about a particular program of interest and a step-by-step application process. Prospective students also have the opportunity to schedule a [campus tour](#) or a [shadow day](#) to become more familiar with the campus and program of interest. The college also holds events for prospective students, including Technology Exploration Day (hereafter [Tech Expo](#)) and [6th Grade Day](#). NT has additional opportunities for high school students, such as the [Early College Program](#), which introduces college learning experiences to high school juniors and seniors.

The NT [faculty and staff directory](#) is accessible through the main website and is updated throughout the academic year as needed. Faculty and staff members are responsible for reviewing their contact and credential information annually to ensure accurate representation.

NT provides transparency with complete disclosure regarding tuition, program, and room and Board [costs](#) in print and electronic formats. A [Net Price Calculator](#) is available on the website to assist students in making financial calculations. Once a student has applied and completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®), they can access a Shopping Sheet through the student information system [EMPOWER](#) to review their cost of attendance and funding options. Once students are registered for classes, they can access an estimated cost worksheet and their financial aid award letter. Students have immediate access to grades and receive unofficial transcripts through Empower.

NT supports shared governance. The college's [organizational](#) and [committee structures](#) ensure participation from all institution levels. An array of internal constituents exist designed to ensure the accuracy of its representations, such as the Division Chair meetings, Faculty and Staff meetings, Curriculum Assessment Committee meetings, and Strategic Planning Committee meetings. NT is supported by two state agencies and governed by its local Area Board.

The Kansas Board of Regents ([KBOR](#)) is a nine-member governing board for the state's six universities and the coordinating Board for 26 other public higher education institutions — one public university, 19 community colleges, and six technical colleges. KBOR oversees the state's student financial aid, adult education, GED, and career and technical education programs. KBOR establishes policies and procedures related to all institutions that approve courses and programs.

The Kansas Postsecondary Technical Education Authority ([KTEA](#)) is a second state coordinating body that functions under the auspices of KBOR and makes recommendations to KBOR regarding coordination, statewide planning, and improvements and enhancements to postsecondary technical education. TEA has 12 members appointed by state leadership in business, industry, and education.

TEA ensures that proposed programs align with business and industry needs for current and emerging high-skill, high-wage occupations. Institutions must demonstrate local, regional, and/or statewide needs for proposed technical education and training programs. [Proposed programs](#) must identify occupational shortages, potential wages, student interest, and local industry support for the occupational area for which the new program will prepare graduates. TEA uses information from various labor studies and partners with the Department of Commerce and the Department of Labor to continually refine, identify, and communicate Kansas' workforce needs.

The Board governs NT. The college serves a [17-county area](#) containing 23 school districts and 15,000 square miles. Each district appoints its own representative to the Board. The Board appoints the twenty-fourth member at large. Board members are selected based on knowledge and expertise about education and the represented school districts. Board meetings discuss the college's strategic direction, financial statements, and academic, personnel, and athletic policies and procedures. Administration, faculty, and staff are welcome to participate fully in these meetings and provide relevant perspectives for the Board's consideration.

Many groups of internal constituents are key in the shared governance philosophy, and through committee work, develop, review, and approve policies and procedures to ensure the representation of information is accurate and transparent.

NT facilitates several accreditation relationships between programs and external agencies. Several individual programs at the college are accredited separately from the overall institution. [Program-based accreditation](#) is conducted by the professional associations linked to that field of study. Programs accredited by an outside agency include Automotive Technology, Cosmetology, Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology, Medical Assistant, and Respiratory Therapy. The Auto Body program instructor is currently taking measures to secure external accreditation for the program. Students, faculty, staff, and the general public can view accreditation relationships with the institution on the website.

The Higher Learning Commission has accredited NT since 2007. NT maintains [active links on its website to the HLC site](#). It also provides active links to major HLC reports, such as the 2015 Self Study Report, in which the college received its most recent full accreditation.

### **2.B.2 The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.**

NT collects abundant student data to translate into valuable demographics, social, and educational insights. Data collected is analyzed to improve internal processes that contribute to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, and economic development. All information presented in advertising, print materials, the webpage, and other communications are reviewed and approved by appropriate constituencies.

NT supports the quality of teaching and learning by encouraging faculty and students to explore better ways to improve comprehension within their chosen fields. Faculty and students are constantly researching and learning. Examples of these projects include:

- [Automotive Technology](#) and Diesel Technology students research specifications and service procedures for vehicle repair. The Automotive Technology instructor provides links to industry sites for technical information;



- Business Technology students participate in an [Entrepreneurship](#) course that requires students to develop a new business plan that can be presented for additional external capital investment. Market and product research is a required part of the course;
- Collision Repair students research paint specifications;
- Cosmetology students search hairstyles or seek the latest in styling trends; and in the [capstone project](#), students research all aspects of salon ownership;
- Through the [capstone project in Engineering Technology](#), students on the civil pathway research the legal requirements of a plat document and then create one and students on the advanced manufacturing pathway will complete a design/build project;
- General Education faculty have researched assessment parameters and made curriculum and placement test changes;
- [Respiratory Therapy](#) students use clinical practice guidelines as a tool for research.

Positive relations between NT and its community are essential for the sustainability of our college and the experience our students have while they are here. Examples of student community involvement include; [blood drive events](#), participation in the [NWK District Fair](#) parade and carnival, [Flatlanders Festival](#), local and regional parades, and the [annual day of service](#) event. Continuous efforts are made to grow the college's contributions in community activities and events while at the same time opening our doors to the community to engage in campus life. Our athletic programs act as a front porch for the college with many of our community members and provide an opportunity for engagement and support. All local USD students receive free admission to NT athletic competitions through a reciprocal agreement. Community engagement efforts are documented through social media posts and press releases.

NT provides hands-on learning to enhance learner outcomes that contribute greatly to student experiential learning. Programs also incorporate key components of general education in skill assessment. Faculty members are responsible for choosing texts, determining curricula, and developing instruction to supplement the educational experience further. Every effort ensures that students receive hands-on, practical, rigorous, and workforce readiness training and exercises within a technical field. The blend of technical and general education facilitates the development of well-rounded, educated graduates who can keep pace with the technological and social changes in specialized industries.

On-the-job training supports the college's mission to place skilled workers into technical and professional careers. [Many programs provide internship or clinical practice opportunities](#) that enrich experiential learning. Students who participate in these opportunities gain experience, build confidence and collaborate within an actual work environment.

The college generates benefits in return for the investments made by its key stakeholder groups. In addition to the number of students the college serves, it generates an estimated \$16 million in annual economic impact, making it among the most significant economic drivers of the local and regional economy. Evidence of economic development is reflected within [The Economic Value of NT Executive Summary \(November 2019\)](#).

Furthermore, evidence regarding educational experience claims can be found on the [Student Outcome Data and Disclosure](#) page. Data on those pages include Diversity of Enrollment, Retention Rates, Student Right-To-Know Graduation, Transfer Rates, and job salary and placement information.

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## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Argument

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#### **2.C The governing Board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.**

NT has governance and administrative structures that promote effective leadership and support teamwork. The college fully supports shared governance. The [Area Board of Control](#) provides effective oversight of financial, legal, and academic policies and procedures. Local unified school district appoints board members to serve. Of the 24 Board members, none are among the college's major donors; and none were employed by an external party with interest contrary to the college's mission, vision, values, and strategic planning pillars. The Board governs independently and democratically to ensure institutional integrity.

#### **2.C.1 The governing Board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the Board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.**

Each participating school district appoints its Board representative to the Board. The Board appoints the twenty-fourth member at large. [Board meeting agendas](#) are developed using a standard template to ensure monthly items for discussion include the college's strategic direction, financial statements, academic, personnel, athletics, policies, and procedures. Administration, faculty, and staff participate fully in these meetings and provide relevant perspectives for the Board's consideration. Meetings are conducted according to standard parliamentary procedures, and [minutes](#) are recorded. Open discussion and debate is expected from all Board members.

Board policies are legally vetted. College finances are audited annually. Faculty, staff, and administration regularly discuss the college's strategic and operational direction. Administrative procedures are in place for effective day-to-day operations. The Board, administrators, faculty, and staff have clear roles and responsibilities in ensuring that students are well served. NT promotes leadership with responsible stewardship of resources, and there are appropriate controls of budgets and expenditures.

The Employee Handbook outlines the organization and responsibilities of the Board. The Board is responsible for fiduciary oversight of the college under [college bylaws](#) and articles of incorporation.

The Board conducts an annual organizational meeting in July annually where each of the board committees present a report that summarizes the year's activities in the following six areas: [financial](#), [buildings and grounds](#), [faculty](#), [curriculum](#), [student welfare](#), and [public relations](#).

### **2.C.2 The governing Board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.**

The governing Board follows a well-defined [planning process](#) that assures deliberations align with strategic priorities that preserve and enhance the college. This year, the [Strategic Plan Questionnaire](#) was developed and will be distributed to Board members, endowment trustees, community members, students, alumni, advisory members, the Strategic Planning Committee, and all college personnel in the Spring of 2022. Regular meetings inform the Board about progress towards current goals and challenges, pending issues, and new goals and priorities for the college.

Prior to monthly Board meetings, the [administrative team prepares written board reports](#) and attends meetings about current reports and activities to the Board. Faculty and staff also make presentations to the Board at these meetings. Discussions regularly address NT's strategic direction and the progress of programs and initiatives that enhance the effective operation of the college.

### **2.C.3 The governing Board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.**

NT considers the protection of employees' and students' rights a vital responsibility. Policies and procedures are outlined in college handbooks and catalogs and provide individual protections. The Board's policies delineate the rights and job responsibilities, employment conditions, [hiring practices](#), and [employee grievance policies](#). The Board directs administration to review and update employee policies annually thoroughly. The Board also is committed to successful interaction with the student population. Student policies include student rights and responsibilities stated in the college catalog. The [Maverick Student Code of Conduct](#), in the college catalog, governs students' behavior. The [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#), the Student Right-to-Know Act, the Clery Act, and the Campus Security Act ensure student information is accessed and disseminated through the website and college publications. College personnel are responsible for executing appropriate policies that protect students.

[Employers](#) are represented on Program Advisory Committees and are also surveyed for their input regarding strategic planning. Through survey input, administration, faculty, staff, community members, and students are represented in annual strategic planning. The survey results provide data, facts, opinions, and recommendations that inform the governing Board about the reasonable and relevant interests of key internal and external stakeholders.

Contractual agreements are the responsibility of the Board and are typically recommended by the President, Dean of Academic Advancement, Dean of Student Advancement, and the Chief Financial Officer. Contractual obligations include clinical site agreements, construction contracts, consulting services, grants, and leases. Employment, real estate, consulting, and other contracts are reviewed and approved by the Board. The Dean of Academic Advancement oversees articulation agreements and partnerships with other educational institutions. The oversight and accountability for the contractual agreements for business and industry training are the responsibility of the administration.

These contractual arrangements are monitored by policies to ensure the integrity of processes.

**2.C.4 The governing Board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.**

The governing Board of NT is autonomous and makes its decisions with the best interests of the college in mind. The Board reviews the interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies as part of decision-making deliberations. The Board demonstrates its independence from undue influence by complying with Board policies such as [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) and [Handling of Complaints Policy](#).

The geographic composition of the Board guarantees autonomy. The Board comprises one member appointed by each of the 23 participating USD boards within the college's 17-county service area and one additional at-large member appointed by the Board. The USD's boards appoint a current or past member of a local school district board, so these members are already educated with board etiquette and have fiduciary familiarity. No single community or county can dominate decision-making due to the broad makeup of the governing body.

During the [annual reorganizational Board meeting](#), officers and committee chairpersons are elected. The remaining members of the Board are appointed to one of those five committees. Monthly meetings require a quorum of nine Board members. All members of the Board may vote. This policy ensures autonomous and democratic decision-making in support of the best interests of the college and assures ethics and integrity in board action.

**2.C.5 The governing Board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.**

The Board delegates the college's day-to-day financial, operational, and organizational management to the President and administration. The [Dean of Academic Advancement](#) and Division Chairs provide academic leadership to faculty. The [Dean of Student Advancement](#) works closely with Division Chairs on student matters. The Board expects faculty to deliver instruction, continually improve curricula, and attend to academic matters. While the Dean of Academic Advancement is ultimately responsible for overseeing the development of the curriculum, including courses and programs, the primary basis of guidance on matters of curriculum development is the [Curriculum and Assessment Committee](#).

The [President](#) of NT is the chief executive officer approved by the Board. The President leads and delegates responsibility to appropriate members of the organization. The President or designee attends legislative sessions, KBOR meetings, and Technical Education Authority (KTEA) meetings. The President visits USD boards in the college's service area and discusses the mission and progress of the college. The President participates in the Kansas Technical Colleges (KTC) group, which advances the interests of technical colleges throughout the state. KTC contracts with a professional lobbyist who informs the organization of legislative developments and advocates measures to support the welfare of technical education within the state.

The President receives extensive support and advice in the administration of the college from the Administrative Cabinet. Members of the Cabinet play key roles in communicating progress of the college. Members of the Cabinet report to the Board about their various areas of responsibility within the college. Monthly administrative reports are prepared and sent out with the Board agenda to provide additional perspectives and knowledge to board members before the regular monthly



meetings.

NT organizes to improve internal and external communication and streamline operations. The organizational structure delineates the Board's responsibility to administration, faculty, and support staff. As evidenced by the committee structure, shared governance continues to be an important part of the college's institutional culture.

The Board expects the faculty to deliver instruction effectively. The divisional academic structure strengthens attention to academic matters. The Division Chairs meet monthly with the President and Dean of Academic Advancement. Issues, concerns, and suggestions for improving college operations and student success often are discussed.

Faculty and [program advisory committees](#) assist program faculty with determining curriculum content, program competencies, grading policies, and student participation policies. In collaboration with the Dean of Academic Advancement, all faculty members are responsible for delivering relevant curricula with specific learner outcomes. All NT programs communicate directly with employers and industry partners. Both employers and industry partners actively serve on the Advisory Committee for each program. The primary goal of the Advisory Committee is to guide curriculum development and establish competencies for the program to ensure graduates have the skills needed to succeed in these high-demand careers. The Advisory Committee [meets](#) with the instructors at least twice a year to discuss and develop the current curriculum to meet and exceed industry standards. Changes suggested in the meetings are proposed for implementation in the following academic year after program faculty have followed established review protocols with administration.

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## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

### Argument

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

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

The college catalog includes a "[Freedom of Inquiry and Expression](#)" statement that supports freedom of expression by faculty, students, and staff. NT reinforces its commitment to free inquiry and expression with several established channels for sharing and expressing differing opinions.

In the interest of shared governance, NT's instructional programs are organized into divisions with programs grouped with common career characteristics. This allows faculty to communicate freely on common instructional issues within a divisional structure. Divisions are led by Chairs who are experienced faculty members and who are assigned to the positions to provide academic leadership. Division Chairs are responsible for maintaining and sharing [minutes](#) of all meetings. Division Chairs meet monthly with the President and Dean of Academic Advancement to enhance communication between division chairs and senior administration.

Faculty members have the opportunity to provide feedback and input in monthly faculty meetings freely. Faculty meetings are typically scheduled on the first Monday of the month. The Dean of Academic Advancement leads the meetings. [Agendas](#) include input from the Division Chairs and Cabinet. Faculty meetings are a forum to address and discuss faculty and administrative interest topics and may also serve as opportunities for in-service training. Meetings are required for all faculty and often are attended by professional support staff.

Students have an official vehicle for free expression through [student government](#). Student representatives are elected from each program. Programs are required to provide time for representatives to explain issues of interest. Students are also encouraged to participate in the annual [Noel-Levitz student satisfaction survey](#) to provide feedback to the college. Surveys of students are one of the primary data sources for research at NT, and participation is critical. The [response rate](#) for the Noel-Levitz student satisfaction survey was 75% which gives the institution a solid representation of overall student opinion.

Other effective and transparent communication processes among administration, faculty, staff, and students include:

- Administrator [open door policy](#);
- Campus-wide email messages provide information;
- [Faculty portal](#) on the college website including handbooks and institutional forms;
- Class materials such as syllabi, assignments, and feedback through [Moodle](#);
- Student performances in regional & national competition (both academic and athletic) posted

- on the website and publicized through local radio and newspapers;
- College website home page with recent news announcements and quick links;
- Google calendars that contain event dates, holidays, and dates for all important meetings;
- [Notifications for cancellations and emergencies](#).

NT encourages the pursuit of truth as part of its mission commitment. It is the mutual desire of the Board and faculty to create and maintain a climate in which instructors are free to teach and students are free to learn. The Freedom of Inquiry and Expression policy encourages a climate conducive to open inquiry and responsible discussion. It enables faculty and students to pursue new and better ways of learning and understanding. The college supports the scholarship of teaching and learning by encouraging faculty and students to explore better ways to improve comprehension within their chosen fields. Faculty and students are constantly researching and learning.

New academic programs at NT include pursuing truth through administration, faculty, and staff research regarding program viability. Prior to offering any new program, the college researches employer demand, checks for availability of instructors and classroom space, and investigates current labor market needs. Through this process, the college researched the demand for [Plumbing Technology](#) and [Child Care Specialist](#) programs and submitted proposals to the state for new programs for their consideration. NT received final approval in December 2021.

The college supports the pursuit of truth with lifelong learning through [professional development plans](#). Faculty and staff are asked to pursue advanced education and receive tuition reimbursement for undergraduate college credit courses. The college supports employees attending continuing education classes by modifying work schedules, providing release time, and reimbursing transportation and hotel costs. The college supports administration, faculty, and support staff in attending workshops and webinars pertaining to their fields. Through professional development plans, faculty members are encouraged to remain current in the fields and bring new ideas and methods back to the classroom.

The college provides an environment where students and constituencies alike have the freedom to express ideas and to pursue truth in learning and teaching.

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## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Argument

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

NT has policies and procedures that call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge. These policies and procedures are widely distributed and electronically accessible. Faculty and staff review them at in-service sessions, and then faculty members review them with students as part of orientation.

#### **2.E.1 Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.**

NT's mission aims to prepare graduates for gainful employment in professional and technical careers. Faculty, staff, and students engage in basic and applied research with technical disciplines. Most research is performed in course projects, in pursuit of additional education, and to keep abreast of new reference sources and professional development material within disciplines. Most applied practice by NT students occurs in laboratory, internship, or clinical settings. The college maintains [current equipment](#) and [facilities](#) for all programs.

NT faculty work with students to ensure that knowledge, skills, and dispositions are appropriate and applicable for the chosen program of study. Faculty members regularly assess students with written tests and performance evaluations in laboratory settings. These assessments measure the knowledge and skills students have developed in courses or programs and are linked to [competency profiles](#). Students can evaluate instructors through [course evaluations](#).

Students participating in occupational work experience ([OWE](#)), internships, clinical training, and practicums are expected to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and dispositions for responsible applied research. Clinical supervisors provide feedback to instructors and students through written evaluations. The instructor is available throughout the course of the experience to communicate with clinical supervisors and to support students. NT contracts with each employer, and students sign agreement forms before entering clinical or internship settings.

NT's college catalog includes an [academic integrity policy](#) that addresses academic integrity in the

classroom, laboratory, shop, internship, and clinical areas. Academic integrity includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, falsification, forgery, and alteration of records.

NT defines responsible use of knowledge in its [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy covers ethical Internet and e-mail usage as well as copyright infringement. Faculty, staff, and students agree not to violate copyright laws, download computer software without following license agreements, misuse accounts or passwords, access files without appropriate permissions, or misuse college network and computing resources. In addition to these definitions, the policy addresses responsible use of college technology resources, reinforces security precautions, and places stipulations on courtesy and privacy.

NT supports [professional development](#) in research and scholarly practice for faculty. In-service training, undergraduate and graduate coursework, industry-supported conferences, and webinars exemplify how professional development is accomplished.

NT encourages additional academic development in research and scholarly practice for students. The on-campus Library and Resource Center serves as a place for students to seek information, utilize the computer lab, and receive tutoring support.

Administration and division chairs facilitate [new faculty orientation](#) sessions each fall. These sessions ensure that faculty members are familiar with their obligations to maintain lawful and ethical working and learning environments.

As discussed in Criterion 2.A.2, the [Code of Ethical Practices](#) policy is a resource for faculty to learn about their responsibilities and expectations for ethical behavior supported in the values of respect and integrity. The website offers students information about the policies and procedures within the academic integrity policy, including the definition of Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct. Students can also contact staff within the office for more support related to conduct.

Criterion 2.A.2 also discusses NT processes for fair and ethical behavior and policies to operate with integrity in all financial matters. The policies and processes were created to ensure transparency and accountability throughout all financial and operational transactions.

### **2.E.2 The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.**

NT emphasizes ethical practice in the use of information. Measures are in place to ensure ethical practices are up-to-date and meet campus, community, and global standards.

The college is committed to [modern and reliable technology](#) and recently installed upgraded fiber throughout campus, which provides high speed and campus-wide wireless access. Students are introduced to computer resources available on campus. Students have unrestricted access to these resources during operational hours. Apple TVs allow students to share information using iPads in classroom and shop settings. Students are continuously instructed on the ethical use of all these resources. Students receive direct guidance from faculty in the ethical use of information, particularly in relation to electronic sources of information, as part of their initial orientations. Students are instructed in iPad use, accessing classes in Moodle, protecting accounts with passwords, protecting files, and storing information safely.

NT also adheres to [student protections](#) with respect to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Faculty receives training on sharing information about classroom performance with

students while safeguarding student privacy.

The above policies are discussed and reviewed at in-service meetings for faculty and staff, monthly faculty meetings, and office staff meetings to ensure that faculty and staff are well informed and updated on the information necessary to discover, acquire, and disseminate knowledge appropriately.

### **2.E.3 The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.**

Faculty members provide students with policies and procedures for ethical information, such as the Acceptable Use Policy and the Academic Integrity policy. The [English Composition](#) courses offer bibliographic instruction for individuals and groups for research, guidance in proper citation methods, and discussions regarding academic integrity. In developmental classes, students receive extra instruction for their college-level coursework by practicing study methods that reinforce the appropriate use of information. Numerous programs expect students to conduct research and make reports that cite information accurately and ethically. The [Library and Resource Center](#) is available to students during operational and extended hours to aid students with tutoring services, reliable high-speed internet access, additional research sources, free printing, and an effective study environment. Library staff are available to students for assistance with the learning management system (LMS), locating textbooks, utilizing electronic databases, and other basic research skills.

NT also has an [intellectual property rights](#) policy in place, which is published in the college catalog. The college owns works created by faculty, which includes courses and curriculum projects that use college resources and that are developed during regular work assignments. Original work created by students for class projects is the property of the respective students. NT may use student work for promotional purposes but must recognize the work's creator, and the college may not sell rights for the work. All faculty members respect the intellectual property rights of textbook or information source authors.

### **2.E.4 The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.**

Within daily classes and shop environments, faculty members are the immediate contacts for policies regarding academic honesty and integrity. NT has a defined set of policies and practices on honesty, cheating, and plagiarism in [syllabi](#).

The Academic Integrity policy is designed to ensure that the principle of academic honesty is upheld. There are many ways that academic dishonesty can manifest in a college setting. The Academic Integrity policy lists five examples of academic violations; cheating, plagiarism, falsification, forgery, or alteration of records. Academic dishonesty is [not tolerated](#). Dishonest behavior is defined as any action or activity that is meant to deceive the instructor from determining the true performance of the student. Students who violate this policy initially receive a zero on the assignment/quiz/test. The second time they violate the policy, they receive an "XF" on their transcript. XF is a letter grade used at NT to denote students who are caught performing repeating acts of academic dishonesty. If a student commits a third offense, the college retains the right to withdraw the student from all courses for the remainder of the semester.

Northwest Tech adheres to policies and procedures that ensure ethical conduct in research and instructional activities. The college provides clear documentation in program and faculty handbooks regarding acceptable behavior policies, consequences for violation, and review processes. Counseling services are provided to students who may be at risk for violating academic policies, including

plagiarism and cheating. Faculty [members refer students](#) for counseling when concerns arise.

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## 2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

### Summary

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NT administration, faculty, and staff act with integrity; their conduct is ethical and responsible. The college is a public institution that adheres to governance and structures that create a system of checks and balances. Common practices, established policies, and everyday procedures clearly demonstrates that integrity governs all operations and decisions within the institution. The mission, goals, values, and vision of the college were created collaboratively through an inclusive, transparent process and are subject to review and improvement.

The college made the decision to outsource food service in the campus cafeteria in 2015-16. Over the intervening years, the college has changed companies to the current food service provider. While it has proven to be a fiscally sound decision, and there are fewer complaints over food quality, there are still complaints nonetheless. Administration recognizes the need for improved and direct communication between stakeholders regarding food quality, and the need for stronger expectations that result in improved food quality.

NT is committed to establish new touchstones for financial reporting to ensure data that will provide reliable, transparent, and comparable institutional data to constituents. Providing additional reports helps ensure that financial reports reflect the current health of the college.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

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

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

### **3.A - Core Component 3.A**

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The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

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

### **Argument**

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#### **3.A The rigor or the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.**

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate and certificate programs. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all delivery modes and all locations.

#### **3.A.1 Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.**

NT offers post-secondary education degrees or certificates with credit hour requirements set by [KBOR policy](#) for each credential level:

1. Certificates of completion require less than 16 credit hours or less of coursework and focus on occupational skills. Certificates of completion do not include a general education component.
2. Technical certificates require up to 59 credit hours of coursework and include 6 to 9 credit hours of general education courses.
3. Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees require 60-68 credit hours of coursework and include 15-29 credit hours of general education courses depending upon the program.

As indicated below, credentials are obtainable within all technical and professional program areas NT offers. Several programs have the opportunity for students to achieve multiple credentials, also commonly referred to as "stackable credentials."



<b>Program Description</b>	<b>Certificate of Completion (less than 16 credit hours)</b>	<b>Technical Certificate A (&gt; 16 credit hours &lt; 30 credit hours)</b>	<b>Technical Certificate B (&gt;= 30 credit hours &lt; 45 credit hours)</b>	<b>Technical Certificate C (&gt;= 45 credit hours &lt; 60 credit hours)</b>	<b>Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degree (minimum of 60 credit hours)</b>
Applied Technologies*					X
Auto Body (Automotive Collision & Repair)				X	X
Automotive Technology			X	X	X
Business Technology			X		X
Carpentry			X	X	X
Cloud Computing			X		X
Certified Medication Aide	X				
Certified Nurse Aide	X				
Commercial Driver's License	X				
Computer Graphic Technology (Digital Design)			X		X
Cosmetology**				X	X

Crime Scene Investigation			X		X
Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology				X	X
Electrical Technology			X	X	X
Emergency Medical Technician (Basic)	X				
Emergency Medical Technician (Advanced)	X				
Engineering Technology			X		X
Medical Assistant				X	X
Precision Agriculture		X	X		X
Respiratory Therapy					X
Welding		X	X	X	X

*\*Applied Technologies Degree, formerly Technical Studies Degree, requires at least 45 credit hours of technical training in a minimum of at least two different technical program areas and completion of the 15 credit hours of required general education courses.*

*\*\*Cosmetology also offers Instructor Training coursework for eligible students to prepare them to obtain their instructor license through the Kansas Board of Cosmetology.*

The college recently sought program approval from KBOR for Plumbing Technology and Child Care Specialist as referenced in 2.D. Plumbing Technology credential levels will include Technical Certificate A, Technical Certificate C, and AAS. The Child Care Specialist program is pursuing credential levels in Technical Certificate A, Technical Certificate B, and AAS. [KBOR approval](#) was finalized in December 2021.

All programs are approved by KBOR and deemed appropriate for advanced technical training beyond secondary education. Several programs have completed the [alignment process through KBOR](#). This process involves business, industry leaders, and program administrators developing common core competencies for transfer.

[External agencies](#) accredit many programs. The external agencies establish course and program rigor expectations and monitor compliance with these expectations. External agencies refer to state and nationally mandated regulations and requirements to plan and deliver the appropriate curriculum. Programs meet the standards provided by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) in Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology and Automotive Technology; by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (COARC) in Respiratory Therapy; by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) in Medical Assistant; and by the Kansas Board of Cosmetology (KBOC) for Cosmetology.

NT makes every effort to ensure that its programs and courses are current and require levels of student performance that are appropriate for degrees and certificates. The institution has a [minimum GPA requirement](#) to receive credentials. Program faculty and program advisory committees serve a central role in keeping program curricula current, relevant, and rigorous.

Faculty members are responsible for choosing texts, determining curricula, and developing instruction for students. Every effort is made to ensure that students receive "hands-on," practical, rigorous, and "workforce ready" training and exercises within a technical field. Faculty members develop measurable and demonstrable competencies and learning outcomes for every course. Competencies align with KBOR requirements and expectations from external agencies. Program Advisory Committees review competencies annually.

KBOR facilitates the alignment of general education courses within Kansas through the KBOR Core Outcomes Groups ([KCOG](#)). Faculty from KBOR institutions meet annually to identify common course competencies and outcomes for courses in their disciplines. As of Spring 2021, 107 General Education courses have been identified by KBOR for transfer. NT offers several of these courses. Faculty and the Dean of Academic Advancement ensure that syllabi and coursework match KBOR requirements. For these courses to qualify for system-wide transfer, each institution must use outcomes outlined in KCOG. These courses transfer seamlessly among all KBOR institutions.

In addition to the general articulation set forth by the Kansas Board of Regents between community colleges and the Kansas Regent Universities, NT has established several [articulation agreements](#) to help transfer and continuing students make a smooth transition between colleges and programs. Accreditation of NT programs validates the quality and rigor of its courses and associate degree programs.

### **3.A.2 The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.**

Each program has a [program guide](#) that communicates the requirements for each degree level offered. The curriculum for each credential is developed with the collaboration of the Advisory Committee. As previously stated in 3.A.1., learning goals are further articulated by external accrediting bodies that guide curriculum in some programs. All curricula for AAS degree programs, technical certificates, and certificates of completion are approved by KBOR.

The college has learning goals for its AAS degrees, technical certificate programs, and certificates of

completion. Learner outcomes and competencies for every course are clearly documented in [syllabi](#). Course content is subject to faculty review compared to similar institutions and KBOR standards. All programs and coursework are reviewed and [validated by Program Advisory Committees](#). NT is not authorized to offer credit at the upper-division, graduate, or postgraduate levels.

### **3.A.3 The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).**

NT's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all delivery modes and locations. NT supports all student learning types by offering quality programs using various delivery methods at multiple locations. NT endorses alternative modes of delivery, including traditional on-campus instruction, online courses, courses offered for dual credit, and courses at its additional location in Quinter, KS.

NT maintains consistent program quality across all delivery modes by using a system of checks and balances. A recently developed handbook outlining principles and standards for distance learning at Northwest Tech was approved. This [handbook](#) guides effective course design, instructor and student experiences for distance education courses. All syllabi, course learner outcomes, and assessment processes are guided and approved by the Curriculum & Assessment Committee with oversight from the Dean of Academic Advancement. The [Faculty Expectations](#) statement is available to all college employees and sets a precedent for teaching, professionalism, and service.

NT provides [instructional design assistance and workshops](#) for all faculty members for developing in-person and online courses. Faculty are required to create syllabi, find appropriate texts, and develop plans to ensure quality instruction in each of the programs for all delivery methods. The [Curriculum Handbook](#) provides significant guidance and ensures consistency. The Curriculum Handbook lists policy and procedures for curriculum development and revisions, curriculum workflow, and resources to state guidelines. Oversight of distance delivery offerings is supported by the same organizational structure that supports face-to-face offerings. In addition, online faculty members are required to respond to students in a timely manner so that students receive the same attention as in a face-to-face setting. The Dean of Academic Advancement, with direct involvement by program faculty, supervises course implementation. Future curriculum decisions are derived through the assessment processes, which gather information from various sources. [Course feedback](#) informs course and program improvements. Assessment of online programs occurs concurrently with the evaluation of face-to-face programs.

NT monitors and controls the course curriculum regardless of the course, instructional method, or location. This process ensures that students are held to the same academic standards and quality is consistent throughout all technical and general education credit NT grants in all delivery methods.

## **Sources**

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## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

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The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

## Argument

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**3.B. The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.**

The institution demonstrates that its program offerings engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information, as well as master inquiry and creative work and develop skills adaptable to a changing environment.

**3.B.1 The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.**

The faculty and staff at NT are committed to offering quality technical and general education courses that prepare individuals to achieve their educational goals for employment and advancement in technical and professional careers. [Degree requirements](#), certificate requirements, general education objectives, and [program guides](#) are articulated in the College Catalog or on the website. Intended learning outcomes are communicated through [course syllabi](#) and [competency profiles](#).

NT makes every effort to ensure that its programs and courses are current and require levels of student performance that are appropriate for degrees and certificates. Program faculty and program advisory committees serve a central role in keeping program curricula current, relevant, and rigorous. The Advisory Committee helps guide faculty to select the appropriate general education requirements for each career field. The Advisory Committee and respective faculty members select the most beneficial general education courses to provide students with relevant experiences to cultivate a well-rounded program. In Fall 2020, [Personal Finance was added as a required general education course](#) for all programs to ensure students obtain a better financial understanding and set



reasonable financial goals.

The general education classes for Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees and Technical Certificates are appropriate and relevant for the level of the credentials. All AAS degree programs require a minimum of [15 hours of general education per KBOR policy](#). Students must complete various courses in communications, mathematics, applied or natural science, personal finance, optional electives, and social and behavioral science.

Technical certificate programs typically include six to nine hours of general education in communications, mathematics, personal finance, applied or natural science courses, and social and behavioral science. The skills learned in general education courses are a vital part of our technical certificates and AAS degrees.

Many students seek courses beyond the minimum general education requirement to transfer credit to another institution. Transferable general education courses meet the requirements set out by the KBOR's Core Outcomes Group ([KCOG](#)). While transferring is not NT's primary mission, the college provides some transferable programs, which is important to our students. NT also has several [articulation agreements](#) to help students continue their education if desired.

**3.B.2 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.**

Through its mission, NT recognizes the importance of the general education curriculum for developing students who function in the workforce and appreciate lifelong learning. The college's general education philosophy states, "Northwest Tech believes general education is a crucial component to a student's education. We acknowledge that students will be employees, citizens, family members, consumers, and lifelong learners. Therefore, we seek to instill in our students an understanding of their world's cultural, economic, intellectual, and social dimensions. Students will learn technical theory and application, which will make them successful in their careers, and they will also learn to analyze problems, ideas, and values, which will enable them to be full participants in their communities."

NT General Education learning outcomes are embedded in each degree and certificate program. The seven learning objectives are;

1. Demonstrate the values of diversity, integrity, responsibility, perseverance, and strong work ethics.
2. Read, write, speak, and listen on a level that facilitates working in a chosen field and being an active citizen.
3. Perform mathematical operations necessary to be competent in personal and professional settings.
4. Use computer technology applications in personal and professional settings.
5. Demonstrate sound judgment in planning and making personal financial decisions.
6. Use systematic methods of inquiry critical and creative processes to identify problems and make informed decisions.
7. Recognize strengths and weaknesses as a learner and develop strategies for time management, documentation, evaluation processes, and personal improvement.

NT's 'general education courses' purpose, content, and learning outcomes are clearly articulated. Learning outcomes for general education are spelled out in syllabi. The outcomes represent a framework for personal financial management, developing communications, analytical, quantitative, computer, and scientific skills, and an appreciation for human values. The importance and need to develop skills for students is reflected in the fact that the college has general education coursework incorporated into its technical certificates and associate degrees.

Program faculty members integrate curricula with general education outcomes in mind. Several program courses have projects that require students to demonstrate values of diversity, integrity, perseverance, work ethic, communication skills, and mathematical competency. Expectations for computer literacy remain high because of the [iPad initiative](#). [Capstone projects](#) synthesize these skills and require students to demonstrate critical thinking and creativity. Students have ample opportunity to recognize strengths and weaknesses as learners and to develop strategies for personal improvement.

General education faculty members tailor curricula to meet the expectations of technical programs. For example, students must complete a cover letter and resume in [English Composition I](#). In [Technical Math](#), students must complete measurements and calculations found in technical environments. The [Computer Fundamentals](#) class covers common software applications generally found in business settings. The [Personal Finance](#) class prepares students for making sound financial decisions now and after graduation.

Learning outcomes for each transferable general education course have been aligned with KBOR Core Outcome standards. This process assures adherence to established standards in general education and provides for seamless course transfer.

### **3.B.3 The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.**

The college's stated values demonstrate a united commitment to enhancing the campus environment, embracing a diverse student body, offering meaningful courses, providing experiential learning, creating internship opportunities, and simulating industry situations in a noble effort to prepare students to live and work in a multicultural world. As articulated in Criterion 1.C., NT prioritizes diversity.

NT offers a variety of activities that support the college's diversity awareness efforts. Recruiting efforts are most impactful for increasing diversity on-campus. The Admissions office makes conscious efforts to diversify visit locations, advertising modes, and communication methods to eliminate barriers to access. For example, [athletics](#) emphasize good citizenship, sportsmanship, honesty, and integrity on the campus, in the classroom, and in the community. Additionally, all NT programs have a [Departmental Club](#). Clubs plan civic engagement activities, fundraisers, awareness campaigns, and social events. These clubs also host guest speakers, participate in community service events, and raise money for community organizations. Clubs sponsor field trips that allow students to observe business and industry operations in real-life work environments. Furthermore, NT hosts special events or activities to recognize diversity, such as; [Latino Day](#) and [Black History](#) Month.

The food service vendor at the college also demonstrates the importance of cultural diversity through culinary selections. The directors and staff of the cafeteria make an effort to bring diverse dining options based on the student population's requests. Students are encouraged to submit their favorite

home recipes for the staff to recreate and serve.

The diversity of the student body provides exposure to working and living with people of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. NT believes diversity is a fundamental resource that enhances and strengthens the learning and working environment and contributes to institutional merit and quality.

NT is actively pursuing Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Status to increase diversity on campus and embrace the responsibility of aiding these students in the most effective way possible. NT's 3-year Hispanic student population average is 17%. The 2018-2021 Strategic Plan details [Strategy 2-3](#) to increase diversity and cultural appreciation.

As previously mentioned in 1.C.1., the [Civic Engagement](#) courses are offered each semester and provide students with valuable experiential practices that help develop their civic engagement behaviors and encourage actions to improve their communities and embrace diversity. Students develop skills through active participation in service projects available throughout the semester from various organizations.

The college is committed to engagement within a diverse world. NT models real workplace environments and relies on business and industry input into the curriculum and require faculty to have industry experience in the programs they teach. Technical professions serve people of all cultures. The college's tradition of customer-based education provides students with the opportunity to interact with a broad cross-section of society. Technical education is the foundation of the college mission, and it serves as a basis for the college's values of commitment to learning, quality, integrity, service, and diversity.

Several programs provide internship or clinical opportunities to partake in experiential learning and prepare students for work and life in a diverse world. Students encounter work and customer relationships that mirror the diversity of the public at large. Engineering and Precision Ag offer occupational work experience programs that evaluate students' workplace relationships. Respiratory Therapy has clinical experiences within the program, and the Medical Assistant program requires an unpaid practicum that reflects diverse work environments. The COVID-19 Pandemic disrupted some of these opportunities; however, students still managed to gain the experiences necessary to earn a degree in their respective programs. For example, Medical Assistant students completed an accredited online simulation course and case study documents to substitute clinical practicums. The Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB) allowed the program to use approved source material to fulfill the 160 practicum hours.

Program faculty members expose students to industry situations to enhance the communication skills necessary for working effectively with customers, co-workers, and employers. For example, the Cosmetology program includes [instruction relating to the ethnic diversity of hair and skin types](#). The Automotive Technology program takes an active approach to diversity by creating live-work opportunities for students to work in teams. [Human Relations in Life and Work](#) and [Ethics](#) classes encourage students to communicate, analyze changing environments, and share thoughts regarding diversity.

### **3.B.4 The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.**

NT faculty and students contribute to scholarship and creative work. They discover knowledge

appropriate to the respective program and carry out NT's Mission.

Faculty responsibilities for scholarship, creative work, and discovery of knowledge related to their content area are outlined in the Employee Handbook. The scholarship and educational contributions outlined are integrative and progressive as they move throughout the faculty ranks. These skills are evaluated and must be demonstrated as part of the [administrative](#) and [student evaluation](#) process. Experienced faculty can apply for the Maverick Mentoring Program to mentor new faculty members. The [Northwest Tech Maverick Mentoring Program](#) connects experienced employees with new hires. It allows for knowledge and skill sharing to help the less experienced person advance their career and success at NT. Mentors also benefit, as mentoring allows leadership and management skill development.

NT provides faculty members with [professional development funds](#) to pursue approved scholarship in their disciplines. NT often hires professionals from industry and therefore provides [funding for collegiate coursework](#) for faculty members to complete their bachelor's degrees. Additionally, the college supports other professional development opportunities such as conferences, webinars, and college-led training.

NT recognizes that research is essential to higher learning and therefore provides appropriate resources for faculty and students. The [campus resource center houses](#) professional journals, books, magazines, and databases appropriate for applied research. The college partners with the NorthWest Kansas Library System (NWKLS) for additional resources such as bi-monthly book rotations, resource sharing, librarian development, Kansas Library eCard, and online resources. The campus resources center helps students utilize web and mobile library media streaming platforms like Hoopla, Sunflower, and Libby. These library media streaming platforms allow the NT library users to access eBooks, eAudiobooks, music, movies, and TV shows for free. Faculty and students have access to computer equipment and internet access. The college has an established partnership agreement with the Goodland Public Library, which allows college faculty, staff, and students to gain dual access to both the Max Alderman Library and Goodland Public Library using their college ID cards.

Technical programs require students to complete "live-work" projects, case studies, written and oral presentations, and applied research reports. NT's focus on "live-work" provides a unique opportunity for students to apply knowledge gained from practical research immediately. For the Automotive Technology program, applied training includes working on vehicles belonging to community members. Students do this "live-work" under the direct supervision of instructors to apply or enhance learned skills. This notion makes it possible for students to gain knowledge of specific scenarios.

The Occupational Work Experience (OWE) course is designed for students enrolled in a program at NT while working as paid or non-paid employees in related workforce occupations. As a participant of the course, students may earn college credit. The goal of this course is to help students develop soft skills and work habits appropriate to successful employment in their chosen career field.

Advisory Committees were established to provide industry knowledge, applicable advice, and current industry innovations to programs at NT. The committees are composed of professionals in the respective field. The primary purpose of a [program advisory committee](#) is to help the college ensure that the program is relevant to the region, addresses current industry standards, meets workforce needs, and has appropriate resources to support high-quality student outcomes. Advisory committees focus on program development, curriculum review, program evaluation, instructor guidance, student recruitment, retention, and graduate placement.

In technical programs, students are constantly researching the requirements and trends of their field. For example, students in Automotive Technology and Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology research specifications and service procedures required to repair vehicles. The Automotive instructor provides a link to industry sites for technical information. Collision Repair students research paint specifications. Electrical Technology students study the National Electrical Code ([NEC](#)) to understand the requirements for wiring and provide service to community members who need to update wiring. Through the [capstone project in Engineering Technology](#), students on the civil pathway are required to research the legal requirements for a plat document and then create one, and students on the advanced manufacturing pathway complete a build/design project.

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## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. 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, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. 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.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

### Argument

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

NT has a qualified, professional faculty and staff that deliver effective and engaging education for the college's students.

#### **3.C.1 The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.**

As detailed in Criterion 1.C, NT adheres to its commitment to diversity and inclusion by ensuring that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate for the constituencies it serves.

A review of the most recent student profile report for NT provided information related to the diversity of the student body population. The student body population consisted of [67% male and 33% female](#). Student [underserved ethnic diversity is 27.5%](#) of the student body population.

Diversity among NT employees for Fall 2020 consisted of 52% male and 48% female. Thirteen percent of full and part-time employees represent underserved ethnic diversity. The [IPEDS Human Resources Report](#) includes demographic data of full-time faculty, part-time faculty, full-time staff, part-time staff, and new hires. The Administrative Cabinet, otherwise known as the Leadership Team, comprises 50% female employees and 50% male employees.

NT believes the diversity of thought and scholarship is also essential for the classroom environment. Diversity of thought and scholarship includes building a group of faculty with different opinions who work within competing paradigms and whose differences foster intellectual growth and well-rounded students. The diversity of NT instructors increases the scope of scholarship and the pursuit of knowledge in general. The [Instructor Credential report](#) demonstrates NT employees' diverse wealth of knowledge.

**3.C.2 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, assessment of student learning; and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.**

NT strives to preserve a low student-faculty ratio to create a better learning environment by increasing individualized attention and allocating more resources. NT has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and non-classroom roles of faculty. As of Fall 2020, the college employed 31 full-time faculty and 40 part-time faculty with a student-to-faculty ratio of 11 to 1.

NT strives to maintain a high faculty retention rate to ensure effective and qualified instructors are allocated to the student body and contribute to the institution's overall success. Currently, [67% of full-time faculty have acquired tenure status](#), and 33% are on track to receive tenure status. NT recognizes that consistent, quality instructors impact our students significantly and eliminate barriers to success.

Faculty members are responsible for the development and oversight of curriculum, student performance standards, preparing lesson plans, and learning outcomes as stated in the Employee Handbook. Faculty are guided by the Dean of Academic Advancement, who is ultimately governed by the Board. Methods for instruction are determined by faculty and are tailored to teaching and learning styles. Faculty members use various teaching methods that best serve students in classroom, shop, or field situations. Faculty members use video, podcasts, and iPad technology in course delivery. Guest speakers, study guides, journals, worksheets, chapter outlines, field trips, laboratory assignments, student presentations, and group work are also utilized to strengthen class instruction. Student progression and competency are evaluated appropriately and determined by faculty. Faculty use [Student Academic/Attendance Alerts](#) to identify students at risk. These students may be struggling academically, incurring absences, or experiencing other barriers affecting academic performance. The faculty and Dean of Student Advancement closely coordinate and respond to at-risk students and recommend action plans for success.

In addition to classroom responsibilities, faculty are required to serve on a college committee to contribute to the overall development of the institution. NT currently has a total of 12 appointed, [standing committees](#). Each committee includes a combination of faculty and staff relevant to the committee's work. The shared governance structure of the committee work greatly increases the quality of teaching and adheres to the college's mission.

NT continuously assesses staffing and hiring needs to ensure efficient and professional operations. The faculty employee policy supports the college's belief that faculty with appropriate credentialing, technical knowledge, and industry experience contribute significantly to effective teaching. Faculty members are viewed as experts in their fields and work cohesively with Program Advisory Committee members who validate the program curriculum. In support of NT's mission, curriculum and instructional strategies include industry standards. Certifications gained by students through

third-party testing ([technical skill assessments](#)) also validate that industry standards are being taught and achieved.

### **3.C.3 All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.**

NT expects all instructors to be appropriately qualified. The college ensures that instructors in dual credit off-campus locations are held to the same standards as on-campus faculty. Technical education faculty members are expected to hold a bachelor's degree and appropriate industry certifications.

Technical education faculty members are hired based on experience in industry, which allows them to educate our students while observing the mission of the college. In addition to their experience, the college works with each new faculty member to develop an appropriate degree plan. Per HLC's guidelines, NT strives to "ensure that students have access to faculty members who are experts in the subject matter they teach and who can communicate knowledge in that subject to their students." To safeguard this policy, NT creates an individual [professional development plan](#) for each new faculty member to ensure they meet all degree requirements and are in compliance.

NT requires all program faculty to attain their bachelor's degree with the exception of the Business Technology and Crime Scene Investigation program, whose faculty is required to attain a master's degree. The college requires faculty members of the Business Technology and Crime Scene Investigation programs to attain a higher level degree because these programs have a higher transfer rate among graduates. Many students use these two programs as a stepping-stone to a four-year college and a bachelor's degree.

General education faculty members are required to have master's degrees with a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline taught. Faculty members who do not meet degree standards must meet the technical area credential requirements and have an approved professional development plan to ensure progress towards attaining an appropriate degree. Concurrent and adjunct faculty members are hired based on the same hiring policies as full-time faculty; any faculty member not meeting the above criteria must sign an agreement of understanding that they must meet or exceed this requirement by September 1, 2023.

The college does not have contractual or consortial educational programs.

### **3.C.4 Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.**

Various methods are used in the evaluation of instructor performance. New faculty members are evaluated once every semester during the first two consecutive years of employment by students and the Dean of Academic Advancement. Beginning with the third year of service, faculty members are evaluated annually, as prescribed by [KSA 72-2409](#) and college policy. The Dean of Academic Advancement reviews all evaluations and meets with instructors to discuss strengths and weaknesses in performance. If an instructor's performance is deficient, a [Plan for Improvement](#) is developed, and changes are implemented.

At the end of each semester, [course evaluations](#) are completed and submitted by the respective students. The Dean of Academic Advancement reviews the evaluations and follows up with faculty members. The survey collects student feedback data and serves as a basis for discussing instructor successes and improvements. The goal of student-based evaluations is to improve the educational

experience for future students.

Per the [Concurrent Enrollment Partnership agreement](#), NT will evaluate Concurrent Enrollment faculty and courses. The Director of Outreach ensures student learning outcomes are equal to NT student learning outcomes. Evaluation will include classroom observation, student evaluations, and student performance assessments. NT faculty periodically meet with Concurrent Enrollment faculty for mentorship and review of course outcomes.

### **3.C.5 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.**

The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; NT implements professional development plans annually for all faculty members. These plans are aimed at strengthening content knowledge and assuring skill and delivery. In-service week gives both new and continuing faculty opportunities to engage in training activities, departmental meetings, and skill development—the college budgets adequate resources, including Perkins [funding to support professional development](#) expectations. Faculty members attend industry-sponsored training, which provides exposure to new technology and teaching methods. For example, the Respiratory Therapy instructor participated at the AARC conference, CSI faculty attended TriTech Training Forensics, and the Computer Graphics instructor attended the Siggraph virtual conference.

The administration supports workshop attendance and in-house professional development for faculty in multimedia technology, instructional media development, iPad technology, email, Microsoft PowerPoint, and other instructional technology software and tools. A New Faculty Workshop is held annually. The purpose of the workshop is to maintain contact with new faculty and provide them with valuable resources as they assimilate to their new position at NT.

NT supports faculty in pursuit of additional education through several initiatives. Flexibility in scheduling is used to allow faculty the opportunity to attend courses off-campus. [Salary increments](#) are used as an incentive for faculty to pursue additional degrees. The college [reimburses tuition](#) for technical faculty to pursue baccalaureate education. In addition, some faculty members return to industry in the summertime to enhance their technical skills and knowledge.

Faculty and administration attend KBOR program alignment and Core Outcomes Group meetings to develop expected course outcomes so that courses at KBOR institutions can transfer seamlessly. This opportunity ensures that NT faculty members are engaged in developing and implementing course outcomes and program alignments.

### **3.C.6 Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.**

Instructors are accessible for student inquiry and are required to "[devote the time exclusively to college duties during college hours](#)," as outlined in the Employee Handbook. An instructor at NT will typically have six to eight contact hours per day with students. Instructor availability is necessary and appropriate to support the learning outcomes for all programs. Faculty members are expected to be available for conferences with students before and after class times and during regularly scheduled office hours. Faculty members also have individual telephone and voicemail and emails for student use. Faculty members must publish email addresses and telephone numbers in syllabi, using the syllabi template for students to access easily. Regular and online faculty also use our learning management system, Moodle, to facilitate courses and allow open communication with students.

Online faculty members must be active on course platforms daily. As identified by the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey results, students highly rated the importance of faculty availability and acknowledged this was a strength for the institution.

**3.C.7 Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and cocurricular activities are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.**

Job descriptions provide evidence of the required knowledge and skills for each position of employment. Staff also have monthly meetings with the President to remain updated on college happenings, improve processes, and ensure overall professional development of staff.

Financial Aid staff participates in ongoing training through webinars and conferences. Financial Aid staff members participate in the Kansas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (KASF AA). KASF AA is an association for Kansas federal financial aid coordinators that provides training regarding federal regulations and policies that ensure student financial aid is awarded fairly and equitably. NT maintains membership in both KASF AA and the Rocky Mountain Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (RMASF AA). [Staff attends meetings and webinars](#) regularly.

NT Student Affairs staff members belong to KACRAO. KACRAO provides training on student records and fair recruiting practices. The Student Affairs staff and the Registrar attend this conference annually and receive regular updates. Faculty members who are qualified by degree preparation, program knowledge, and experience conduct tutoring and advising. Faculty members advise students within assigned programs so that advisers are familiar with program requirements. Advising for programs and supporting general education coursework also ensures that students are enrolled in the appropriate courses required for graduation. The Registrar conducts and disseminates [degree audits](#) to students and faculty to ensure graduation requirements are met.

College personnel attend the annual [KBOR Data Planning conference](#). This conference, coordinated by KBOR, focuses on updates and issues related to higher education data submission, usage, planning, and training related to Career and Technical Education, such as the Carl D. Perkins grant program.

Co-curricular advisers are appropriately qualified by sanctioning organizations such as SkillsUSA. If standards are not available, advisers are deemed qualified at the time of appointment. The Athletic Director and coaching staff remain abreast of NJCAA (National Junior College Athletic Association) and KJCCC (Kansas Jayhawk Community College Conference) eligibility requirements to ensure compliance with both regulatory bodies. The athletic director holds regular meetings with the coaching staff and works with qualified internal staff to conduct [annual CPR training for coaches](#).

NT staff are well trained and supported in their professional development efforts and provide quality student services.

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- Employee\_Improvement\_Plan
- Faculty\_Credentials
- Inservice\_Funding
- IPEDs\_HR
- KASFAA\_RMASFAA
- KASFAA\_RMASFAA (page number 3)
- KBOR\_Data\_Quality\_Conference
- Personnel\_Evaluation\_Policy
- Professional\_Development\_Template
- Standing\_Committees21
- Student\_Profile
- Student\_Profile (page number 8)
- Student\_Profile (page number 11)
- Tuition\_Reimbursement



## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

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The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

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

### Argument

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#### **3.D The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.**

NT ensures that students and faculty are supported for effective teaching and learning. The college directs substantial resources for academic support and preparation to address student needs. The college promotes effective teaching and learning with infrastructure, laboratories, equipment, library resources, and technology support.

#### **3.D.1 The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.**

NT has a diverse student population. Approximately 27.5% of students are underrepresented minority populations, and 33% are female. NT has developed an infrastructure of academic and student support that encourages success for students. Resources that provide academic support, direction, and infrastructure include Admissions, Registration, Financial Aid, Student Support Services, Information Technology, and the Resource Center and Library. Program instructors and academic departments provide additional direction, academic counseling, and mentoring. Through placement assessments, ongoing advising, course offerings, and inter-departmental cooperation, NT ensures that students are properly placed, prepared, and supported in their programs and courses. The college recruits diverse faculty and staff to meet the needs of the diverse student population and provide students with a campus support system.

The college prepares students for success by participating in the [Student Success Seminar](#). This program is an extension of the mikeroweWORKS Foundation's SWEAT Pledge and examines the importance of work ethic, personal responsibility, delayed gratification, and a positive attitude. Students who complete the program will receive an industry-recognized NC3 certificate.

The college offers other support services outside of the classroom, such as on-campus housing staffed with a housing manager, food service program, food pantry, school nurse, mental health/addiction counseling, and an on-campus fitness center.

Additional support services such as the [Code RED](#) system and the [Student Emergency Fund](#) are

available for student use. Code RED is NT's contracted provider of emergency communications. This system will notify participants of campus closures and campus emergencies via text message, phone call, or e-mail. Students, faculty, staff, and community members are encouraged to enroll in the Code RED program. The Student Emergency Fund was created to help Northwest Tech students with financial assistance in emergency situations such as accidents, illness, death of a family member, fire damage, or need for temporary housing. Students may apply for funding consideration when they have exhausted all other resources.

NT has a student population interested in gaining skills and knowledge that are immediately useful in the workforce or suitable for transfer. The [2019-2020 Graduate Follow-up Report](#) indicates that most students seek employment upon graduation. Employment placement rates generally exceed 80%. The college maintains Career Services support through faculty and required coursework, including resume writing, interviewing advice, interviewing days with industry, and follow-up with placement.

Annually, the college conducts a student satisfaction survey to determine the effectiveness of its services—the [spring 2021 survey identified areas of both strength and challenges](#). The results have been shared with faculty and staff during the fall 2021 in-service, and informal plans of action to address student satisfaction are underway, with formal plans being developed.

**3.D.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.**

NT provides learning support and preparatory level instruction for all students through accelerated developmental courses. NT offers [accelerated developmental courses](#) in Mathematics and English. The overall purpose of the accelerated developmental course model is to provide students with more support and individualized instruction. This course model allows students to complete remediation and college-level courses simultaneously. Accelerated developmental coursework is designed to help students build their skills in these areas and prepare for college-level coursework required for the Associate of Applied Science degree or Technical Certificate.

All entering students are required to submit high school transcripts, college transcripts (if applicable), and ACT, SAT, or Next-Generation ACCUPLACER test scores prior to registration. A multiple measures approach is used for [placement](#) if a student does not have test scores or if a student's test scores do not meet the college's placement thresholds. NT believes standardized testing is not the primary means of assessing if a student is prepared for college-level work and that a multiple measures approach more justly evaluates a student's capabilities. Students are strategically placed in appropriate courses that address their learning needs. The Northwest Tech Testing Center is also a newly established resource available to prospective and current students and the community at large.

Students formally register for courses, order and obtain textbooks, tools, clothing, and supplies for their respective programs during orientation. Students also review financial aid, register for student housing, and receive information concerning associate degree or technical certification requirements. Incoming first-year students attend [Maverick Enrollment Days](#) to receive academic and support information for a successful transition into their chosen technical program.

Academic support services are available on campus to encourage student success. The college staffs the Max Alderman Library and an evening lab in the Digital Technology building to provide ["open](#)

[lab" hours and peer tutoring.](#)

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- Student\_Emergency
- Student\_Success

## **3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary**

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

### **Summary**

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NT provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered. Students are provided with high-quality education through the college's academic programs, support services, and student life experiences.

One of the most significant academic challenges the college faces is the credentialing of qualified concurrent faculty teaching courses to high school students. In the rural region of the state in which the college is located, there are few high school faculty teaching in the service area who have met the faculty credentialing requirements set by HLC. In order to ensure area high school students continue to have the opportunity for concurrent enrollment, the college will need to develop incentives for high school faculty to reach the credentialing requirements or will need to increase the number of concurrent online courses taught to area high schools.

### **Sources**

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*There are no sources.*

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

### 4.A - Core Component 4.A

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The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials 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.

## Argument

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### 4.A The institution ensures the quality of the educational offerings.

The college has several methods in place to review the relevancy and accuracy of courses and programs:

#### Advisory Board Input

Faculty members evaluate the currency and relevance of programs with [Program Advisory Committees](#) semi-annually. The reviews are extensive and cover program mission statements, learner objectives, competency profiles, textbooks, classroom materials, equipment, facility requirements, student satisfaction surveys, student placement rates, and employment information.

#### Program Competencies and Course Competencies

Faculty design assignments that assess student mastery of program and course competencies. At the

end of each semester, faculty create a [competency profile](#) for each student and submit those profiles to the Academics office. Program Advisory Board members are given the opportunity to review the competency profiles and make adjustments that reflect the skills needed in the current workforce.

### **Classroom Assessment/Checking for Student Understanding**

Instructors implement a variety of techniques to check for student understanding during classes (asking open-ended questions, using the Kahoot app, assigning formative assessments, quizzes, and shop experiences). At the end of each semester, students respond to the [Instructor Course Evaluation](#) to provide feedback regarding their experiences with instructors and the courses. Pass rates for assignments and courses provide feedback to faculty about student performance.

### **Internships/Clinicals/Practical/Work Experiences**

If a program has occupational work experiences (OWE), internships, clinical training, or practicum, instructors review the relevance of that training annually by conducting off-campus site visits and/or receiving employer feedback. Typically, students must provide [weekly timesheets](#) to show progress and periodic reflection papers to demonstrate the skills/knowledge gained through the experience.

#### **4.A.1 The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.**

The NT Curriculum and Assessment Committee is charged with facilitating program reviews. For the past ten years, the committee requested that faculty complete an annual comprehensive self-review, [home-grown survey-type instrument](#), which provided comments and supporting evidence and offered improvement strategies.

The questions on the survey included topics such as program goals to meet industry standards; annual review of course syllabi; annual review of program competencies; evaluation instruments that reflect higher-order thinking skills; setting learner benchmarks; results of certification tests; work experience/clinicals/internships that offer cognitive, psychomotor and affective domain learning; capstone project results; and review of program equipment/facilities.

However, the Curriculum and Assessment Committee is currently adopting a new program review model that uses the [Association for Career and Technical Educator's Quality Framework](#). The Curriculum and Assessment Committee is also developing a program review calendar that will establish a five-year rotation for program reviews. Programs will undergo program review so that only four or five programs are going through the process during any given academic year for the next five years ([see Assessment Manual](#)). We plan to align each program's review for its respective accrediting body (i.e., NATEF for Automotive, Diesel, and Collision Repair; MAERB for Medical Assisting; CoARC for Respiratory Therapy, etc.) with the college's rotation for program review. Programs that are not accredited by an external agency will utilize the ACTE Quality Framework program review.

### **Acting on Findings**

The program review results are shared with each program's advisory board. The advisory board is invited to make recommendations which are forwarded to the college administration. The college administration also reviews the results to make informed decisions about budget, facilities, equipment, recruitment, and staffing.



**4.A.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.**

**Evaluation of Transcripts for Incoming Transfer Credit**

NT maintains an established process for reviewing [transfer credits](#). The college requires students to provide official transcripts documenting college credit earned for transfer credit. The Registrar considers, reviews, and evaluates transfer coursework from regionally accredited institutions. NT accepts credits for transfer based on specific criteria, including credit hour equivalencies, consistency of course descriptions or syllabi, learning objectives, and topics covered in a course.

**State of Kansas Program Alignment and Transfer Credit**

The Technical Education Authority (under auspices of KBOR) initiates a [Program Alignment](#) process whereby designated Career and Technical programs are evaluated every ten years or so for relevance and consistency. The TEA brings together employers from industry and faculty from across the state to review the core courses and supporting classes, review and revise course competencies, and ensure that all technical colleges update their curricula. The goal is to assure the transferability of technical credits among institutions.

KBOR also sponsors the statewide transfer program. It hosts an annual [KCOG conference](#) during which faculty representatives from four-year, two-year, and technical colleges all meet to review course competencies for designated general education courses.

**Credit for Prior Learning**

[Credit for prior learning](#) may be granted to students who gained skills through work and life experiences, such as employer and military training programs, industry certifications, non-credit postsecondary-level courses, and civic or volunteer experiences. The Dean of Academic Advancement, Registrar, and program faculty evaluate requests for prior learning. In the case of military experience, NT considers documented training and nontraditional credit earned through active military duty that may satisfy program course requirements (as determined by the ACE Military Guide and Joint Services Transcript). NT has earned a [Military Friendly®](#) school designation for several years for supporting educational opportunities for veterans.

**4.A.3 The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.**

NT has a policy in the college catalog that assures the quality of the credit it accepts for transfer in general education courses.

[Transfer of Credits Policy](#)

General education course credits meeting AAS degree requirements may be transferred from a regionally accredited college or university. All courses must be passed with a C grade or better to be accepted for transfer. The Registrar certifies that an official transcript has been received from the credit-granting institution for the course in question. NT participates in the Kansas System-Wide Transfer agreement led by KBOR to facilitate seamless transfer among higher education institutions in Kansas. In the case of general education courses taken outside of Kansas for which credit is granted, there is a review of KBOR standards for topic coverage in relation to the syllabus.

Coursework accepted for transfer must meet KBOR standards for the course.

NT adheres to a similar review process for technical program courses. If a course from another institution is to be applied towards a degree requirement, there must be demonstrated equivalence of content and rigor that align with NT's standards. In the case of a technical program course, the Registrar will request a syllabus to compare with the college's course and ask faculty to evaluate rigor and curriculum. NT participates in the KBOR program alignment process. This process aligns technical coursework throughout the state.

The college proactively pursues transfer equivalency agreements and articulation agreements to promote transfer opportunities.

**4.A.4 The institution maintains and exercises authority over the pre-requisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures 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.**

### **Pre-requisites for Courses**

NT [Program Guides](#) illustrate the sequence of courses students must complete for their respective cohorts each semester for their programs of study. Courses that follow a hierarchical sequence designate the pre-requisites that must be completed prior to enrollment in the more advanced class. If a student attempts to register for a course for which they have not met pre-requisite requirements, they will receive communication that pre-requisites have not been met.

The college continuously evaluates curricula with program reviews and learner outcome assessments and by participating in KBOR program alignments and KCOG transfer credit analysis. These external bodies provide suggestions for course sequencing and pre-requisites.

In certain programs, such as Automotive Technology, Cosmetology, Respiratory Therapy, Medical Assistant, and Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology, NT meets the standards of accreditation by external organizations. If the accrediting agencies specify pre-requisites for coursework, NT will comply with their guidelines.

### **Course Rigor**

Course rigor is evaluated using the revised Bloom's Taxonomy to ensure that students are exposed to learning activities that move from lower-order thinking skills in pre-requisite and lower-numbered courses to higher-order thinking skills in later courses. The [Capstone project](#) in each program is designed with the HOTS (higher-order thinking skills: analysis, evaluation, creation) in mind.

### **Expectations for Student Learning**

Each course syllabus and program handbook contain statements regarding [expectations for student learning](#). Common themes include class participation and consistent attendance. Each syllabus also contains a statement pertaining to the [grading system](#) used to evaluate student learning. Faculty members regularly create [rubrics](#) to provide guidelines for assignments and facilitate the grading process. Each course is graded upon a unique combination of formative and summative assessments such as classroom participation (discussion and/or completion of an in-class instructional activity),

quizzes, papers, lab, and shop experiences.

### **Access to Learning Resources**

The Max Alderman Library and Resource Center provide a central location for [student access to learning resources](#) on campus. Students have access to physical resources, including books, reference materials, journals, magazines, and newspapers. The library offers numerous electronic resources, including over thirty computer terminals for Internet research and program and general education assignments. The library also maintains links to academic databases, such as EBSCO, and other library media streaming platforms, such as Hoopla. Library personnel is available to assist faculty and students with research, citation, and other general library support.

Career and Technical education programs require a great investment of financial assistance to maintain the necessary equipment and facilities that are learning resources for technical programs.

### **[Perkins V Grant Funding](#)**

The college provides financial resources necessary to support the academic quality of programs. NT uses Perkins Grants to fund the [equipment necessary](#) for optimal student learning. Faculty members work with industry experts serving on Program Advisory Committees to develop recommendations for capital expenditures. The Dean of Academic Advancement and the Perkins Coordinator review all capital requests to ensure equipment expenditures align with NT's mission to prepare students for gainful employment. In addition, some programs have relationships with business and industry partners that result in monetary and physical equipment donations.

### **Grants and Sponsored Programs**

Grant writing is an avenue through which NT obtains funding for continued operations and updating equipment. In 2017, NT added a Grant Writer position to ensure grant writing efforts were proficient and effective. The Grant Writer is tasked with researching institution needs, identifying grant opportunities, and writing and submitting grant proposals. The Grant Writer maintains responsibility for the grant application process and manages grant proposals from submission to final reporting. In 2019, NT retained government relations professionals, Merchant McIntyre Associates. Merchant McIntyre Associates assist NT with federal grant writing processes. Within the past five years, the college [generated over \\$5 million](#) in local, state, and federal grant awards. These funds have been utilized to enhance program facilities and equipment, which ultimately advances the quality of education and improves student outcomes.

### **State and Federal Funding**

NT received Maintenance of Effort ([MOE](#)) funds through state allocation. Faculty and staff worked to identify retooling needs and securing additional equipment and technology that advanced programs.

NT was awarded \$2,959,391 from the federal [Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund](#) to help relieve the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of this total, \$1,234,792 million was used to assist students undergoing financial hardships caused by the pandemic. Students who were enrolled on/after March 13, 2020, were experiencing financial hardship and could not pay their student account balances were granted a discharge of student debt. Grants were awarded up to the amount of the student's prior account balance. The discharge does not apply to any additional charges incurred for the Fall 2021 semester and after. The amount discharged by NT totaled \$142,023.93.

## **Faculty Qualifications On-campus Instructors**

Professional experience and training enhance the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning. [Technical instructors](#) are hired based on their expertise in their fields of study. Many hold industry-recognized certificates and participate in job-related training. Technical instructors who have not yet earned a bachelor's degree are expected to submit a plan outlining the courses to be completed in pursuit of the degree (most technical programs offer the associate degree). For the [general education courses](#) or technical programs that prepare students for transfer to 4-year institutions, faculty must have a Master's degree in their content field. To maintain a high level of instruction and professional skills, all full-time instructors are required to submit a Professional Development Plan. Each faculty member meets annually with the Dean of Academic Advancement to review progress in achieving professional development goals.

## **Faculty Qualifications Dual Credit Instructors (usually adjunct instructors)**

[Excel in CTE](#) allows Kansas high school students to acquire technical coursework tuition-free. This initiative has allowed the college to contract with several Unified School Districts (USD) to teach concurrent high school and NT credit technical courses. NT signs agreements with USD's to meet the college-level outcomes. The Director of Outreach develops relationships with area USD's to support Excel in CTE efforts. This administrator ensures that qualified faculty offer an approved curriculum that aligns with college requirements. High school instructors must have the appropriate credentials to teach courses for NT credit. High school instructors who do not currently possess this credential have been placed on a professional development plan to assure compliance by September 2023.

NT reviews all faculty qualifications to ensure that high school instructors meet or exceed necessary qualifications. The high school instructors attend NT adjunct faculty in-service sessions, are provided a [handbook](#) and work with NT faculty to meet course expectations. NT evaluates and aligns concurrent credit courses using learning outcomes established by NT faculty and KBOR. Program and general education courses taught off-campus meet the same standards required for college credit.

### **4.A.5 The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.**

Achieving [external accreditation](#) ensures that NT's programs align with the college's mission of providing quality higher education and leadership in workforce training and meet business and industry standards. Comprehensive reviews of educational strategies, activities, processes, and technologies occur as programs go through the self-evaluation process for external program accreditation. Student [competency profiles](#) reflect these state and national standards on a course-by-course basis. Learner outcome assessments annually measure student performance versus these standards.

As previously referenced in 3.A., several programs rely on state and nationally mandated regulations and requirements to plan and deliver the appropriate curriculum. Programs meet the standards provided by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) in the Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology and Automotive Technology; by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (COARC) in Respiratory Therapy; by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) in Medical Assistant; and by the Kansas Board of Cosmetology (KBOC) for Cosmetology.

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- Program\_Guides
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## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

### Argument

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#### **4.B The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.**

NT supports the assessment of student learning as a continuous improvement process requiring constant conversation about data collection, interpretation, and data-driven decision-making. The Curriculum and Assessment (C&A) Committee, consisting of Division Chairs, Assessment Coordinator, and other appropriate faculty and staff, forms an assessment team and holds periodic [meetings](#). [Assessment days](#) have been instituted for faculty members to prepare the review process and share the results of assessment plans. The Assessment Coordinator participates in the New Teacher Workshop annually to assist new faculty in understanding the assessment process. The Dean of Academic Advancement collaborates with the Assessment Coordinator to assess student learning. The [Assessment Coordinator](#) works directly with faculty to review and update assessment plans, discuss program reviews, and guide comprehensive reviews.

Ongoing assessment of student learning is an integral part of the college's commitment to educational achievement and improvement. The college has an assessment system in place with clearly stated learning goals and measures of student competencies that allows for accurate evaluations of student achievement. Faculty complete assessments and make recommendations for educational improvement. (see the [NWTKC Assessment Manual](#)).

#### **4.B.1 The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.**

NT assesses student achievements at several levels. A variety of direct and indirect measures of student learning are used to evaluate NT courses and programs.

#### **Assessment of Student Learning – Academic Offerings**

Assessment of student learning occurs at three levels – informal classroom assessment (which informs faculty decisions regarding instructional methods to improve student performance); cohort level assessment (formalized assessment plans developed annually for each career and technical



program, including the general education program); and periodic program reviews (formalized, comprehensive self-studies that analyze the full scope of factors that influence student learning).

### *Classroom Assessment*

Informal assessment of student learning occurs daily in the classroom when instructors interact with students. Course-level assessment involves classroom participation, lab and shop projects, testing, clinical experiences, and demonstrations to gauge a student's learner outcomes. Through these formative assessments, faculty provide corrective and constructive feedback to students to guide and enhance student learning.

Program and general education faculty construct and embed exercises within course curricula and measure learner outcomes as stated in course [syllabi](#). A formal assessment of student learning in the classroom is also assessed through summative assessments. Additionally, course [competency profiles](#) provide another level of assessment of student achievement in coursework. Instructors develop these profiles for every course taught. The competency profiles require instructors to define knowledge, skills, and dispositions and are reviewed by Program Advisory Committees. Each semester, faculty members provide competency profiles and submit them to the Academics Office for review and reporting to respective stakeholders.

### *Cohort Level Assessment ([Annual Program Assessment Plans](#))*

NT's fifteen technical programs have Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). [Program handbooks](#) clearly state these program learning goals. Instructors plan and shape coursework to achieve these program learning goals. Program Advisory Committee members review these goals to represent a consensus of industry experts and faculty on what knowledge, skills, and dispositions define competent graduates. The program learning goals also reflect the college's commitment to integrating general education courses within program offerings. Students must demonstrate competence in organization, personal management, teamwork, communications, personal finance, and analytical skills. Program faculty members are encouraged to reinforce the general education outcomes with additional assignments and work projects that seek such results. Each technical program's "[capstone](#)" project assesses students' knowledge acquired through technical and general education courses.

Traditionally (for the past ten years), each program conducted an annual review. The review examines the program by faculty, using direct and indirect measures, which are documented through a three-part process evaluated by faculty, the assessment coordinator, and the C&A Committee. The Assessment Coordinator shares results with the Dean of Academic Advancement and discusses action plans or any needed improvement. The C&A Committee reviews summaries of reviews and action plans.

With the adoption of the new Assessment Manual, annual assessment plans will include a curriculum map through which the Program Learning Outcomes are mapped to each course in the program to ensure that program competencies are being met. For each PLO, direct and indirect measures will be evaluated based on pre-determined thresholds (i.e., XX% of students will earn scores of YY% or higher on ZZ assessment).

With each annual assessment report, faculty will analyze the outcomes of the direct/indirect measures; demonstrate how they/the program has addressed the three tenets of the mission statement (preparing students for gainful employment, leading productive personal lives, and becoming lifelong learners); "close the loop" or determine how to improve student learning in the coming year; and

share these plans with their respective stakeholders.

### *Assessment of Student Learning – Cocurricular Offerings*

The C&A Committee is devoted to an integrated approach to student learning and consistently strengthening co-curricular programs. To ensure cohesive assessment of all aspects of the college, the C&A Committee collaborated with the NT Athletic Department to begin the creation of a Department of Intercollegiate Athletics Assessment Plan. The plan's objective is to demonstrate that graduating student-athletes mastered the college's learner outcomes. A [survey](#) was deployed in November 2021 to gather student-athlete learner outcome information.

The [Co-Curricular Assessment Annual Report](#) defines co-curricular activities outcomes and lists clubs that are designated to evaluate. The Dean of Student Advancement is responsible for stating goals and outcomes, developing assessment tools, collecting data, then using the information to improve future activities and processes.

### **Institutional Level Assessments**

NT's institutional assessment process is a cohesive and ongoing process that evaluates the college's attainment of its mission and goals through a system of feedback and activities. NT disseminates several institutional surveys annually; the [Graduate Placement Survey](#), [Graduate Employer Survey](#), the Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL)- Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) Survey, and the Institutional Effectiveness Survey. This year, the [Strategic Plan Questionnaire](#) was developed and will be distributed in the Spring of 2022.

The [Graduate Placement Report](#) is a six-month follow-up of graduates and employers to document job satisfaction, pay rate, employment tenure, and employer satisfaction. The graduate survey is administered by Career Services, presented to faculty, and the data results become part of the Annual Program Review.

The information collected by the Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL)- [Student Satisfaction Inventory \(SSI\) Survey](#) captures various data points such as; instructional effectiveness, academic advising, registration effectiveness, campus climate, safety and security, recruitment, financial aid, and campus life. The survey results will direct improvement efforts to support programs and develop processes to enhance its student-focused environment to increase student learning and retention. The Assessment Coordinator will include the survey results in the college's annual institution report, allowing NT to make benchmark comparisons to other institutions on a national level.

NT measures the effectiveness of its institutional operations with an [institutional effectiveness survey](#). The survey measures the performance of several college staff departments, including student services, admissions, career services, financial aid, library, and front office.

This year, the [Strategic Plan Questionnaire](#) was developed. It will be distributed to Board members, endowment trustees, community members, students, alumni, advisory members, the Strategic Planning Committee, and all college personnel in the Spring of 2022. The Strategic Planning Committee designed this survey to solicit responses from the mentioned vital constituencies for the college to make a sound strategic plan for the next five years.

### **4.B.2 The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student**

### **Closing the Loop**

Ongoing assessment of student learning is an integral part of the college's commitment to educational achievement and improvement. The college has an assessment system in place with clearly stated learning goals and measures of student competencies that allows for accurate evaluations of student achievement. During faculty in-service/planning days, faculty reflect on the impact of their teaching based on student performance to plan ways to enhance their classroom experience and improve outcomes for their students. During Program Advisory Board meetings, faculty invite board members to offer input regarding assessment results and provide suggestions for improving student learning. Further, the Dean of Academic Advancement reviews assessment results and survey results with each faculty member and determines what action steps may be taken to improve the teaching/learning dynamic. Assessment results are consulted to determine what can be done differently to improve outcomes.

NT has early assessment methods that provide a significant opportunity for "at-risk" students to have the available resources, curriculum, and guidance to succeed, such as the Academic/Attendance Alert process, Midterm Grade Reports, and assessment testing.

Faculty members collaborate with the Dean of Student Advancement to implement an effective Academic/Attendance Alert procedure. The alert process is a proactive, student-centered system of communication between faculty and staff that identifies students who may be experiencing academic barriers. The [Academic/Attendance Alert](#) process aims to provide support, resources, and guidance to students to improve academic performance.

Each term, [Midterm Grade Reports](#) are made accessible to students. Midterm grades are essentially a snapshot indicating how a student is performing academically. If a student is not in good standing with the institution, this information is used by faculty and administration to aid students with strategies to improve their academic performance. The college catalog clearly defines grade point average expectations. Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 1.75 by the midpoint of the first year, 2.0 by the end of the first year, and 2.0 during the entire second year to remain in good academic standing.

NT uses placement testing in subjects like math and English to check the academic skill levels of entering students. Placement testing is defined as any assessment method such as Next-Generation ACCUPLACER, ACT, SAT, and multiple measures. Students are strategically placed in appropriate courses that address their learning needs.

Additionally, many programs utilize third-party evaluation tools to evaluate student knowledge. Third-party assessments provide students with additional opportunities to demonstrate competencies. [Technical Skill Assessments](#) are used by programs to meet the standards provided by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) in Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology and Automotive Technology; by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (COARC) in Respiratory Therapy; by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) in Medical Assistant; and by the Kansas Board of Cosmetology (KBOC) for Cosmetology.

SkillsUSA is a Career and Technical Education partnership of students, teachers, and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. SkillsUSA competitions are another third-party evaluation that tests students in realistic and challenging work projects. NT students have entered these competitions, and many have received state, regional, and national recognition. In 2020, SkillsUSA canceled all in-person events at its 2020 National Leadership and Skills Conference (NLSC) due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**4.B.3 The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.**

**Processes and Methodologies**

The Curriculum & Assessment committee charter identifies the various faculty and staff members who constitute the membership of the committee. Staff members include the Registrar, the Athletic Director, the Dean of Student Advancement, and others who have a stake in student success.

The Assessment Manual iterates how NWKTC addresses the AAHE's "Principles of Good Practice in Assessing Student Learning" (see below).

1	<i>The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.</i>
	NT's values include a commitment to Learning, Quality, Integrity, Service, and Diversity. It is our goal to incorporate these values into all our student learning experiences.
2	<i>Assessment of student learning is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.</i>
	NT instructors will provide multiple opportunities and modalities for students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills that are required for success in their careers in each course. Courses are sequenced so that students master lower-level competencies before advancing to higher-level competencies.
3	<i>Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated goals.</i>
	NT programs incorporate competencies that reflect the technical standards for performance in the career/technical field.
4	<i>Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to experiences that lead to those outcomes.</i>
	NT values and emphasizes the instructional methods and practices in the classrooms, labs, and shops as well as through co-curricular activities where student learning takes place.
5	<i>Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.</i>
	NT embraces a culture of assessment as demonstrated by the practice of three ongoing levels of assessment – at the classroom level, the cohort level, and at the program level.

6	<i>Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.</i>
	NT involves representatives from across the campus, along with input from program advisory boards.
7	<i>Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.</i>
	NT recognizes that various stakeholders seek accountability, particularly for ROI (return on investment). These questions may range from the employability of graduates to the relevance of specific curricular activities. These questions are openly and objectively discussed during assessment committee and advisory board meetings and staff development days.
8	<i>Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.</i>
	NT instructors and administrators use assessment and program review results to inform decisions regarding budget, personnel, facilities, and equipment purchases.
9	<i>Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to the student and the public.</i>
	NT reports assessment results freely and openly on the designated webpage in an effort to communicate with various stakeholders.

Athletic coaches are very involved in student learning, often providing study tables and visiting students' classrooms to ensure that students are studying and meeting expectations.

Instructors assess student performance regularly and provide immediate access to grades using Moodle. Instructors meet with each student at mid-term regarding academic progress. When a student is identified as at risk, the instructor uses the Academic/Attendance Alert form to seek intervention from the Dean of Academic Advancement and the Dean of Student Advancement.

Faculty members utilize designated workdays to create [plans of action based](#) on results of direct and indirect measures on the program assessment plan. The faculty submit these action plans to the Assessment Coordinator, who then meets with the Dean of Academic Advancement to review plans of action.

Faculty meet on an annual basis with advisory committees to validate proposed changes to program curricula. This process ensures that appropriate constituents are informed and have the opportunity to discuss the rationale for change.

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## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

## Argument

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### **4.C The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.**

#### Graduation and Retention Rate Goals

NT has developed goals and strategies to improve retention and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs through its Strategic Plan, consisting of eight pillars; two of these pillars specifically contain ambitious goals to achieve [retention and graduation rates of 85%](#).

#### Persistence Goals

NT recognizes its role in meeting workforce demands and the importance of improving enrollment, retention, and completion to meet these demands. While most of NT's career and technical programs are designed to facilitate employment upon student graduation, a small percentage of students aspire to continue their education at four-year institutions. To facilitate this persistence, NT works to ensure students have completed the requisite general education courses that will transfer to such institutions.

#### Pursuing Educational Improvement

The college has designed and implemented processes and interventions based on an analysis of student success rates. Continuous improvement of our first-year seminar course has been implemented to address issues identified through student surveys, course grades, and attendance patterns. Ongoing improvements include upgrading technology at the college, designing admissions processes suited to the needs of NT's prospective students, and emphasizing retention, engagement, and student success in shop, laboratory, and classroom environments.

**4.C.1 The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.**

The NT mission statement contains three tenets that differentiate our student populations and educational offerings from other two-year and four-year schools. Our mission is to (1) prepare students for gainful employment, (2) lead productive personal lives, and (3) become lifelong learners. While most of our educational offerings lead to the Associate of Applied Sciences, we also offer options for completion of workforce-ready certifications of completion and technical certificate. Successful completion of our educational programs typically results in immediate employment upon graduation, more so than the continuation of studies at four-year school; thus, we focus on our retention, graduation, and placement rates as indicators of student success. While a small percentage of students will transfer, NT does not have access to the National Student Clearinghouse data that would validate our persistence rates; however, the college does do an annual follow-up with graduates who self-report transfer and also accesses National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) when completing [IPEDS Outcomes](#) reports which also provides transfer information if a student took out a student loan at a new institution.

**Ambitious Yet Attainable Goals**

NT has well-defined goals for retention and completion. NT's goals for student retention, persistence, and completion are guided by [KBOR's Foresight 2020](#) plan, a ten-year strategic agenda for the state's public higher-education system. This plan sets long-range achievement goals that can be measured and reported. The plan ensures that the state's higher-education system meets Kansans' expectations. The goals are established in a performance agreement between NT and KBOR.

The Kansas legislature set performance agreements for Kansas's public higher education institutions. New state funds are tied to these agreements. KBOR reviews and approves all performance agreements. Each institution's performance agreement reflects the goals of Foresight 2020.

Six goals are defined in the performance agreement between KBOR and NT:

1. Increase the first to second-year retention rates of the college-ready cohort;
2. Increase the number of students who achieve a third party credential;
3. Increase the total number of degrees and certificates awarded;
4. Of the students who test into developmental math, increase the percent who earn a certificate or AAS degree;
5. Increase the number of students employed in their field of study within one year of graduation;
6. Increase the three-year graduation rate for all students.

The performance agreement establishes baseline benchmarks using the college's historical averages. The college has [collected performance data](#) and reported its most recent results to KBOR in April 2021.

NT aligned its 2018-2021 Strategic Plan with KBOR expectations in Foresight 2020. Within the college's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan were initiatives to improve student success and retention, increase third-party credentials, spur enrollment growth, boost graduation rates, and strengthen industry relationships for higher placement of graduates. The college's future strategic plan will align with KBOR's expectations and their new [Building a Future](#) plan focusing on Family, Business, and Economic Prosperity.

NT has set internal goals for student retention, persistence, and completion. These goals are 85% or better for student retention for first-year to second-year enrollment and 85% for degree completion within 150% of normal time.

### Profile of the Student Population

Each fall, the Academics department releases a [Student Profile](#) report based on 20-day census data. This report includes descriptive statistics regarding our full-time and part-time enrollment, student demographic data, and enrollments by technical programs. The most recent Profile indicates that:

- Enrollment has declined since an all-time high (896 headcount) in 2017-18; yet we saw a small increase for 2021-22 (688 headcount)
- 58% of NT students are full-time
- 73% of NT students are Caucasian
- 14% of NT students are Hispanic
- 9% of NT students are African-American
- 70% of NT students are under age 20
- 67% of NT students are male
- 75% of NT students are Kansas residents
- 23% of NT students are out-of-state
- 2% of NT students are international
- 18% of NT students are student-athletes

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

#### Data Collection

NT has several established internal reports that collect data on student demographics, enrollment information, persistence, and graduate follow-up information such as; weekly enrollment reports, quarterly retention reports, annual student profile reports, and annual graduate follow-up report. The collected data is used to create priorities within the Strategic Plan and improve the overall student educational experience.

NT systematically collects information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs with multiple modes of tracking and reporting. NT generates a [weekly Enrollment Comparison Report](#), which allows the college to track program recruitment and retention rates. The report provides continuing information to faculty, staff, administration, and the Board about the demand for services by program. It provides Admissions with an additional check on recruiting and enrollment efforts.

NT also collects information about program completion with an annual [Graduate Follow Up Report](#). The report summarizes placement into related employment, continuing education, unrelated employment by program, and reports wage and salary information.

The Assessment Coordinator, faculty, and staff collect, analyze, and disseminate information, which contributes to effective planning, decision-making, and continuous improvement. The Chief Financial Officer is the liaison for responding to requests for internal and external information and is responsible for ensuring that the college complies with data reporting requirements of state and federal agencies.

NT collects data and reports to external agencies such as; KBOR, IPEDS, program accrediting bodies, The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA), and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Several of these reports are used to compare NT student retention, persistence, and completion of programs data to similar institutions. Other reports provide an annual summary for the institution to gauge effectiveness.

### Data Analysis

NT recognizes the links between student satisfaction, institutional effectiveness, and student persistence. The college conducts surveys to investigate student satisfaction and institutional performance. The Assessment Coordinator publishes an [Annual Institutional Report](#) where data are summarized for faculty and administrative review and subsequent decisions to improve teaching and learning.

The college also prepares [Quarterly Retention Reports](#), which provide more detailed analyses of retention by program and reasons for attrition. These reports are published and reviewed by faculty, staff, administration, and the Board. During faculty in-service weeks (at the beginning of each semester), data from recent reports and surveys are provided to faculty. They are analyzed to help set goals for the coming semester/year.

The college identifies and supports students who may be at risk of failing to persist and complete programs. During initial registration, students are required to provide ACT, COMPASS, or SAT scores in writing and mathematics. A multiple measures approach is used for placement if a student does not have test scores or if a student's test scores do not meet the college's established threshold. NT believes standardized testing is not the primary means of assessing if a student is prepared for college-level work and that a multiple measures approach more justly evaluates a student's capabilities. Students are strategically placed in appropriate courses that address their learning needs. When measures indicate a need for additional preparation, students are placed into developmental courses. These measures provide early indication of student preparation for college-level work and encourage student retention and persistence.

Attendance is another early indicator of student persistence. Faculty monitor attendance closely. All programs have strict attendance requirements for successful completion. In Fall 2019, NT moved to a standardized attendance policy for all programs. Program Handbooks reflect this policy. All students are permitted [no more than 35 hours of absences](#). The college views absences and tardiness as lost production in the educational process, and exceeding 35 hours of absences may affect the evaluation for the grading period in which such absences/tardiness occurs. The Attendance/Academic Alert Form is used to create a cohesive student support system amongst administration and faculty. The [Attendance/Academic Alert Form](#) is a communication tool used to support NT students' academic success and retention. Faculty utilizes this form to report student absences and academic performance at 30%, 60%, and 90% of allowable absences.

Faculty members are a primary source of data and information about retention, persistence, and completion of programs. Courses are delivered through the Moodle learning management system. Evaluations of student achievement in shop and classroom settings are tied to exercises that reflect learning goals and competency profiles. Instructors monitor student performance closely through Moodle and other assessments to provide additional support for students who are not progressing at satisfactory levels.

Students are required to meet or exceed specified grade-point averages to [remain eligible for financial](#)

[aid](#) and remain in good standing with the institution. A system of academic alerts has been established and utilized. When a student is identified as falling below acceptable academic standards, instructors complete an academic alert form, and an initial conference is held with the student. Areas of improvement are discussed with the student. If the student continues to perform at unacceptable levels, the student is referred to the Dean of Academic Advancement for additional academic counseling. Every effort is made at each intervention to provide students with additional tutoring and personal support. NT is revising its Student Information System (SIS) to record and provide quarterly access to online grades officially. This will increase accessibility, awareness, and student accountability.

Should a student decide to withdraw from a course or program, the student meets with faculty, the Registrar, and the Dean of Academic Advancement to create options for program completion. Because students are enrolled in a cohort, and courses are only offered during designated semesters, withdrawing from a course (or failing a course) impacts the student's progress toward degree completion. NT has built-in safeguards to ensure that students can repeat required classes or find alternatives for electives that keep the student on track to graduation.

At the beginning of semesters, students are required to attend [registration sessions](#) in which advisers, the Registrar and Dean of Academic Advancement, review academic progress. During this review of degree plans with students, the adviser discusses future goals and past performance along with progress towards completion of a certificate or degree program. Regular reviews of degree plans are important for students to progress towards graduation.

Annual program reviews provide regular and systematic analysis of retention, persistence, and completion data by faculty and administration.

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

NT is committed to a process of continuous improvement in student success and educational offerings by collecting and analyzing data pertaining to retention, persistence, and completion. NT considers direct indicators of retention, persistence, and completion rates and indirect indicators such as licensure, certification, job placement, and student satisfaction to gauge the effectiveness of programs and inform improvements for those programs. Each fall, program faculty share these data with their respective Advisory Boards for consideration of program improvements.

Through analysis of the annual Student Profile and informal, anecdotal evidence of student performance and behavior, NT faculty and staff make modifications or suggest systematic changes designed to enhance student success.

Most of our technical programs are funded through Perkins V; as such, we make an effort to attract and educate students who are considered to be members of [special populations](#) (as defined by the Perkins V grant). Many NT students fall into one or more of these categories: economically disadvantaged, first-time college student, minority, and non-traditional (defined in two ways: students aged 25 and over, or students pursuing careers predominately filled by other genders).

NT has a clear record of successfully guiding students to degree completion. The college is proud of its [graduation rates](#), but it has [seen a decline](#) in those rates since implementing athletic programs. When athletic programs were first proposed to the Board, there was discussion that implementing these programs might result in a decline in graduation rates. The Board concluded that the added



value of these programs for enrollment growth and community engagement was essential to the future of the college.

The student-athlete population at NT is unique and accounts for over 38% of the full-time, non-high school, degree-seeking student body. Student-athletes face the same challenges of traditional college students while also juggling team commitments such as athletic performance and frequent traveling. Over a four-year period, over 60% of students who withdrew were tied to an athletic program. This rate is significantly higher than the traditional-student dropout rate. Ensuring academic success of the student-athlete population is a vital responsibility. NT continues to provide strategies and resources to increase their academic success, such as; weekly supervised study-hall sessions, extended tutoring hours, and additional early academic and attendance alert models implemented by coaching staff.

As a result of these changes that have been implemented with student-athletes, NT will strive to meet the goal of 85% retention from first to second year as stated in Strategy 2-1 of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. This goal aligns with KBOR's performance agreement, it is well above the college's IPEDS cohort group, and it reflects strong performance in line with historical evidence.

#### Data-Driven Decisions to Improve Student Academic Performance

Analysis of placement test scores reveals that many students come to NT under-prepared and require developmental coursework to improve math and writing skills. All entering students are required to submit high school transcripts, college transcripts (if applicable), and ACT, SAT, or NEXT-GENERATION ACCUPLACER test scores prior to registration. A multiple measures approach is used for placement if a student does not have test scores or if a student's test scores do not meet the college's established threshold. NT believes standardized testing is not the primary means of assessing if a student is prepared for college-level work and that a multiple measures approach more justly evaluates a student's capabilities.

Students are strategically placed in appropriate courses that address their learning needs. NT provides learning support and preparatory level instruction for all students through [accelerated courses](#) in mathematics and English. The overall purpose of the accelerated developmental course model is to provide students with more support and individualized instruction. The accelerated courses contain the same course competencies and content as "regular" math and English classes but also require students to attend review sessions for individualized support by the instructor.

Faculty members seek the advice of industry experts in program advisory committee meetings to interpret data and to construct assignments that are realistic, practical, and appropriate for programs. Committee members contribute invaluable advice about program organization in relation to data. A recent example can be found in Engineering Technology, whereas a result of a program advisory committee recommendation, the program was split into [two tracks](#), civil engineering, and advanced manufacturing, with different assignments and coursework for each track. The track was developed to meet business sector needs in high-demand and high-wage occupations. The additional track provides an overarching framework to enhance collaborative activities between the college, school districts, [KANSASWORKS](#), and industry partners to provide students with direct pathways into the workforce. This change has led to more precise training of students that better meets the needs of employers.

Faculty members have primary responsibility for supporting retention efforts. The Assessment Coordinator supports this effort by leading annual data retreats where retention information is



discussed. During these retreats, faculty review and recommend actions to improve student retention, persistence, and graduation rates.

NT utilizes a data-driven planning process that is focused on outcomes. The student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness surveys generate data used to make changes to improve operations and outcomes.

The student satisfaction survey examines student perceptions of the college's environment and facilities. Students assess educational, social, and other aspects of the college. The data is collected and analyzed for use in future planning and operations. In 2021, students noted the following challenges as high-priority; updated lab equipment and social climate concerns. Students felt it is very important to have updated equipment in program lab facilities. This concern was aided by grant monies, state COVID funding, and MOE funds. Two survey item challenges were identified concerning campus racial climate. Students ranked positive racial climate, and students from different backgrounds feeling comfortable as high-priority but ranked low on satisfaction level. This prompted the college to confront the challenges of racial climate by requiring [faculty and staff to complete cultural diversity and sensitivity in the education workplace training](#). The college also implemented mandatory student assemblies that addressed diversity and inclusion. This training aims to foster a respectful, inclusive, and equitable learning environment.

The 2018 institutional effectiveness survey reflected a need to improve the registration and add/drop process. The registration process was too time-consuming. The registration schedule allocated time for each program to be registered individually to streamline the process. Instructors accompanied students to the administrative building, and the students were able to quickly complete the registration process. The add/drop process was converted to an online form for easy accessibility. Additionally, the mikeroweWORKS Foundation's SWEAT Pledge course, as detailed in 3.D.1., was implemented into first-year student curriculum because the 2020 institutional effectiveness survey reflected the need to improve student soft skills. The course learner outcomes include soft skills such as work ethic, personal responsibility, delayed gratification, and a positive attitude.

**4.C.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.)**

#### Good Practice in Data Collection and Reporting

While NT has not traditionally used the scholarly approach to research design, it is important to note that efforts have been made to ensure the ethical use of data and protection of personally-identifying information when reporting data. One example is the method in which we deploy our home-grown surveys via Survey Monkey – we choose the web collection method, which only records the IP address of the respondent rather than an email collection that would reveal the identity of the respondent. Data reports that are shared internally or with our service (17 counties in Northwest Kansas) are written with the goals of transparency and clarity while protecting student identification.

#### Data Collection Processes and Methodologies

NT uses the Empower Student Information System and the Moodle Learning Management System. Appropriate levels of access are assigned in an effort to safeguard the data contained within these

systems. Faculty and staff are trained to enter data as appropriate for their roles and to extract data as needed for data collection and analysis. One goal for future improvement is to develop a data dictionary to clearly understand the meaning of values in each field in the Empower database. Another goal is to streamline the use of the grade book in Moodle so that students better understand how to interpret their current grade (i.e., clarify the denominator in the algorithm to calculate current grades as opposed to final grades). While most data is contained within these two systems, NT also uses third-party instruments (such as Noel Levitz Ruffalo student satisfaction surveys and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement) to benchmark and inform decisions.

### Validity of Suitable Measures

While we do not calculate statistical validity/reliability measures of our home-grown survey instruments, we do attempt to address face validity, construct validity, content validity, and internal validity. For example, each semester, we discuss the questions that we include on the student evaluation of instruction survey. When analyzing the results, we consider what factors may have impacted the student responses. The small class sizes and cohort model allow us greater insight into student performance/response than might be found on a larger, traditional college campus.

When reporting to external agencies, we comply with the requirements specified. For example, when reporting to IPEDS, we use the definitions of full-time, first-time student status, whereas, in our home-grown reporting, we are more likely to break down the degree-seeking student from the non-degree seeking and the high-school (dual credit or part-time student) from the full-time post-secondary student.

Over the past three years, NT's graduation and retention rates using IPEDS summary reports and definitions are as follows:

<b>Year of IPEDS Report</b>	<b>150% Graduation Rate of First-Time, Full-Time Degree/Certificate Seeking Students</b>	<b>Retention Rate of First-Time, Full-Time Degree/Certificate Seeking Students</b>
<a href="#">2019</a>	50%	64%
<a href="#">2020</a>	56%	57%
<a href="#">2021</a>	57%	59%

Using IPEDS definitions NT has retention and graduation rates that are comparable to similar two-year colleges.

However, it must be acknowledged that the graduation and retention rates based on IPEDS definitions (first-time, full-time students) are lower than rates calculated from the entire NT student population. The NT algorithms show that [retention rates](#) range from 80-90%, which is the basis for our performance goal of 85%. Graduation rates are currently calculated using IPEDS definitions, however, this assessment does not encompass the entirety of NT's graduates (students who do not fall under the first-time, full-time classification). NT is currently examining alternative methods to calculate and analyze graduation rates to ensure the full representation of successful students is captured. The overall graduation rate goal will also be re-assessed to correlate with the new

algorithm.

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## **4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary**

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

### **Summary**

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NT is committed to the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates its effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement. The institution's mission is fully integrated into the institution's strategic efforts and procedures related to student success. To ensure consistency and success, the institution has a systematic assessment process for student learning outcomes, academic programs, faculty performance, and institutional effectiveness.

Challenges regarding assessment procedures at NT include refining measurement, key position turnover, and cultivating continuous improvement. The Dean of Academic Advancement position is entrusted with supporting the development and assessment of general education, institutional, program, and content-specific student learning outcomes in curricular and co-curricular contexts. This particular position previously has had a high turnover rate which caused inconsistencies throughout the assessment process. The current Dean of Academic Advancement was hired in the Summer of 2021 and is implementing positive changes such as working with the C&A Committee to revise the Assessment Manual, Curriculum Handbook, Distance Learning Handbook, and the overall improvement of procedures.

### **Sources**

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*There are no sources.*

## 5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

### 5.A - Core Component 5.A

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Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

### Argument

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#### **5.A Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.**

NT's organizational structure promotes collaboration within the college. The college's processes and structures support voice and inclusion.

#### **5.A.1 Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing Board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.**

NT is structured to promote shared governance to ensure the engagement of its internal constituencies. Various college populations provide unique perspectives on the development and compliance of college planning, policies, and procedures.

The Board provides effective oversight of financial, legal, and academic policies and procedures. The Board engages through [monthly meetings](#) to review, approve, and give input on the college's financial standing, policies, procedures, and overall direction. The Board accepts feedback for deliberation from faculty, staff, and students.

The college's strategic planning process clearly affirms its mission, determines goals for the college, sets strategic priorities to guide the college towards achieving the vision. In order to build a multi-year strategic framework, NT developed a [3-year strategic plan](#). This strategic framework is linked to specific objectives that can guide day-to-day operations.

In 2021, a new [Strategic Plan Questionnaire](#) was developed. The questionnaire will be distributed to Board members and other college internal and external stakeholders to collect information that will guide the new strategic plan development. The Board meets monthly according to a [schedule published in advance](#), and the Board abides by the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA). Board meetings follow a democratic process that allows for the approval of minutes, financial statements, and general items. The meetings follow a process of discussing the regular business of NT and setting policies that direct the management of the college. Board members report to their local school districts about college activities. The Board hires the college President, whose responsibility is to ensure adherence to college policies, oversee the organization's daily operations, and meet all KBOR requirements. The Board [reorganizes annually](#). During reorganization, the Board appoints a legal council. NT works to ensure that it complies with state and federal legal requirements. [Audit](#) information and [Board minutes](#) are available to the public by request.

The President's Administrative Cabinet (also known as the Leadership Team) is composed of college directors, deans, and vice presidents who report directly to the President. The Leadership Team meets weekly and is responsible for ensuring that the college operates in a fair, consistent, and ethical manner in day-to-day operations. The team works together to develop and implement college-wide initiatives and policies, oversee college operations, and discuss challenges and issues. The team is guided by the college's mission and vision and the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. Members of the Leadership Team serve on [standing committees](#). The Leadership Team also serves as a resource for the college's shared governance committees and the Board.

NT follows an [organizational structure that groups programs into five divisions](#): Transportation, Information Technology, Health and Human Services, Construction, and Business/General Education. The division meetings ensure that fair and ethical behavior standards are maintained among students and faculty. Division chairs meet with the administration monthly. Ethical issues, policies, procedures, concerns, and improvements that affect the campus are regularly discussed in monthly, campus-wide meetings.

Faculty and staff contribute significantly to the formation of policies and procedures. Often, faculty and staff members identify needs within the college community and bring them to the attention of the Leadership Team to further discuss the potential implications of the policy or procedure. Faculty members can freely express opinions in monthly faculty and staff meetings. Faculty meetings are typically scheduled on the first Monday of the month and staff meetings on the first Friday of the month. The Dean of Academic Advancement leads the faculty sessions, and the President leads the staff discussions. Agendas include input from the Division Chairs and the Leadership Team. The meetings are a forum to address and discuss faculty and administrative interest topics and may also serve as opportunities for in-service training. Meetings are required for all NT employees.

Students have an official avenue for free expression through [Student Government](#). Student representatives are elected from each program to serve on the council. Programs are required to provide time for representatives to relay council information to their peers.

Other effective communication processes among administration, faculty, staff, and students include:

- Administrator "open door policy";
- Campus-wide email messages provide information;
- Faculty portal on the college web site including handbooks and institutional forms;
- Class materials such as syllabi, assignments, and feedback through Moodle;



- Student performances in regional & national competition (both academic and athletic) posted on the website and publicized through local radio and newspapers;
- College website home page with recent news announcements and quick links;
- Google calendars that contain event dates, holidays, and dates for all important meetings;
- Notifications for cancellations and emergencies through the "CodeRED" system.

### **5.A.2 The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.**

The college utilizes data to make informed decisions and to gain deeper insights into the needs of students, faculty, and staff. Information gathered from various surveys and assessments is used to evaluate the institution's constituents' opinions, thoughts, and suggestions. The administration then leverages the data derived from results to guide future planning and create or modify policies and procedures.

NT supports the assessment of student learning as a continuous improvement process that requires a constant conversation about data collection, interpretation, and data-driven decision-making. The Assessment Coordinator works directly with the Dean of Academic Advancement and faculty to review and update assessment plans, discuss results of program reviews, and guide the completion of annual reviews. The C&A Committee helps to improve data utilization and communication across the campus by gathering the information needed to create the Annual Institutional Assessment Report ([AIR](#)). The AIR report reflects information about the campus community for both internal and external constituents. The report combines multiple data points and information on the college's mission, strategic goals, academic programs, student life activities, student profiles, institutional operations, and assessment.

Regular Strategic Planning Committee meetings provide an opportunity for input about the college's strategic direction. The committee reviews the initiatives in the current strategic plan and updates the progress of each for an ongoing annual report of successes and areas. Rather than the standard SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis with internal and external constituents, the committee decided to develop a survey to reach a greater and more diverse population of constituents to collect more useful and relevant feedback. This survey will be conducted in Spring 2022. The results derived from the survey will foster the development of the proceeding strategic plan.

[IPEDS data feedback reports](#) provide performance comparisons against peer institutions, which aid the college in setting goals for retention, graduation, and other measures based on comparative data.

The [annual Graduate follow-up report](#) provides feedback about the employment status of our graduates. The college also reports this data to the KBOR, which creates an annual Kansas Training Information Program ([K-TIP](#)) report that provides state data regarding employment and wage data for Kansas postsecondary career and technical education programs.

[Weekly enrollment](#) and [quarterly retention reports](#) provide consistent data regarding student body fluctuations to faculty, staff, and the Board. Enrollment and retention data improves student outreach, captures shifting program trends, and enables the college to make better staffing decisions earlier in the year.

### **5.A.3 The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective**

### **collaborative structures.**

NT encourages contribution and collaboration in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes from administration, faculty, staff, students, and external constituencies in business and industry.

The college's academic decisions and actions are influenced by program [Advisory Committees comprised of local business and industry leaders](#). An Advisory Committee supports each program and meets semi-annually to review competencies and learner outcomes, program equipment, facilities, current enrollment trends, and any policy or procedural changes that might affect business and industry. Advisory Committees provide input to the college's faculty and administrators on the employment needs of the local, state, regional, and national marketplaces, help understand the overall economy and promote the latest business and industry trends regarding new technologies practices workforce needs.

Faculty members drive academic procedures and policies. [NT hires qualified technical and general education faculty](#) who make recommendations about curricula, tools, texts, learning materials, and grading policies and procedures with administration, staff, and student input. Faculty recommendations for changes to academic requirements, policy, and processes are discussed with program Advisory Committees and then received through the C&A Committee for review and approval. The final approval process involves review by Division Chair members and final approval by the Administrative Cabinet.

Staff members within the Academic and Student Affairs department are heavily involved in developing and implementing academic requirements, policies, and procedures. The department is comprised of staff members dedicated to supporting the academic and personal development of students attending NT. The department works directly with faculty and students through advising and committee efforts to ensure the quality of education and academic success.

NT believes students should be included in education policy-making to ensure that all students' needs are being served and that every student has access to quality education. Students can communicate institutional or program feedback through faculty evaluations, student surveys, student government, and the institution's "open-door policy."

A recent example of college contribution and collaboration in academic matters can be found in recent revisions to policies and procedures concerning academic integrity. The annual student satisfaction survey indicated that students saw plagiarism and cheating as an issue. Faculty supported the student impressions with evidence of improper iPad use when completing assignments such as copying and pasting while writing and taking screenshots of completed work. In addition, faculty members discovered software to monitor cheating on examinations and shared findings at division meetings. During the technology training and classroom management sessions during faculty in-service, faculty and divisional meetings, and New Teacher Workshop, presentations show faculty how to monitor and prevent improper use of technology.

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## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

### Argument

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#### **5.B The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.**

NT constantly works to build its resources to strengthen the quality of its educational programs and support growth. NT's resources support its current educational programs. NT's fiscal resources, human resources, physical plant, and technological infrastructure are sufficient.

#### **5.B.1 The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.**

The college has an established planning model for actions related to human, fiscal, academic, technological, and physical resources, as outlined below. The following plans and activities are closely tied to the college's strategic pillars.

#### **Human Resources**

NT is committed to quality and service and expects employees to support the college's mission, vision, values, and goals. The Leadership Team and appropriate department personnel assist in recruiting and retaining qualified faculty or staff and provide professional development opportunities. NT's human resource processes are supportive throughout employees' entire careers.

The New Hire Committee provides a smooth transition phase for new hires. New employees attend the Maverick Mentoring Program and in-service training. The NT, "[Maverick Mentoring Program](#)," connects experienced employees with new hires. It allows for knowledge and skill sharing to help the less experienced person advance their career and success at NT. Mentors also benefit, as mentoring allows leadership and management skill development.

Faculty and staff are encouraged to attend professional development activities to build their skill sets to serve the mission more effectively. NT also invests in faculty and staff to attract and retain qualified employees. The college provides [tuition reimbursement for faculty](#) to obtain a bachelor

degree. [Salary incentives](#) are awarded to faculty for associate degree, bachelor degree and master's degree completion. The college supports [strong credentialing](#) for program instructors. The college requires full-time general education instructors to have a minimum of a Master's degree. Adjunct faculty teaching general education courses not holding a Master's degree have been notified and must complete a degree by Fall 2023. In addition, all full-time employees and their eligible dependents can benefit from the [tuition waiver program](#).

Full-time faculty members are expected to submit an [annual professional development plan](#). Plans require faculty to identify opportunities for personal and professional development and growth through degree attainment, continuing education, attendance at seminars and conferences, and outside work experiences that the college supports. [Perkins grant funds](#) are used to support these opportunities. Staff and adjunct performance are regularly reviewed by senior administration personnel to ensure quality and service.

Academic and administrative departments also provide professional development funds for seminars, webinars, conferences, certifications, and more. For example, each year, the Registrar and select staff from the admissions department attend the KACRAO conference.

The college supports enrollment growth and new program opportunities and knows it must invest in human resources to keep pace. Recent examples include:

- Grant Writer position- the position was created in 2017 to support its effort to expand revenue streams.
- The Admissions and Outreach Director position was split into two separate positions to ensure more focus and effort is concentrated in each area.
- Athletic Department Internship- A paid internship opportunity was created this year as a support position under the Athletic Director. The intern assists with athletic website updates, athletic social media management, game-day preparations, and other support duties as assigned by the Athletic Director.
- Immersive Storytelling Media- NT collaborated with Lead for Kansas to hire a "young leader." The new hire creates short video clips for the college and podcast episodes. "[The Mav On Campus](#)" podcast showcases alumni, students, staff, and community members - telling their unique stories. The podcast is available to listen to on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and other podcast streaming services. This work plays a vital role in connecting with alumni, promoting staff research, and inspiring prospective students.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Project Coordinator-NT is currently seeking to fill a [grant-funded Project Coordinator](#). This position will be funded with monies awarded by the US Department of Agriculture.
- With the addition of [Shooting Sports](#), NT hired a full-time head coaching position.

For the 2021-22 academic year, NT employs 133 full-time and part-time personnel as follows:

- 29 full-time instructors
- 43 adjunct instructors (includes concurrent and Excel in CTE USD faculty)
- 12 full-time administrative staff
- 20 full-time operations, student, and academic support staff
- 11 full-time coaching staff
- 18 part-time college work-study students

The college provides individual attention and care to students in instruction and support. Courses are

taught and administered by faculty members who have appropriate academic qualifications, certifications, and technical competence. The student-faculty ratio per IPEDS Human Resources report for 2019-2020 was 11:1.

As a technical college, NT hires faculty based upon academic preparation, work experience, technical competence, and knowledge within a specialized field. The college remains committed to supporting the advancement of credentials, education, and industry knowledge for faculty and staff. As of Fall 2021, 71% of full-time faculty possess a bachelor's degree, 26% possess a master's degree, less than 1% are pursuing a master's, 1.3% are pursuing a bachelor's, and 1.6% have a technical certificate or associate degree. All general education faculty members, including concurrent general education faculty members, possess or are pursuing a master's degree.

## **Fiscal Resources**

NT's fiscal position is fundamentally sound, and the college directs the allocation of budgetary resources through its strategic plan. NT has received clean audits for the past several years. The college's audited net position as of June 30, 2021, was [\\$14,124,629](#). Instruction, academic support, and student activities are the school's fiscal priorities. As reflected in the FY 2021 audit report, [59% of expenses were related to caring for and educating students](#). Administrative expenditures accounted for 16% of total costs. The remaining costs were for the operation of plant, cost of sales, and depreciation.

Over fifty percent of NT's operations are funded by two primary sources of revenue: state post-secondary aid and student tuition. State post-secondary aid comprised 33% of FY 2021 revenue, and student tuition and fees comprised 18% of total revenues. With the addition of the grant writing position, 27% of the college's revenue was accounted for from federal, state, and local grants. The remaining revenue sources include but are not limited to, sales and services of educational departments, residential life, and student center.

The college annually receives grant revenue from [State Capital Outlay](#) and [Carl Perkins funds](#) to assist the college in acquiring up-to-date equipment, updating facilities, supporting new programs, and supporting professional development for faculty. Program faculty and Advisory Committees review needs annually and make recommendations for expenditures from these funds. Programs submit a [three-year capital outlay request](#) annually based on these recommendations. In FY'2021, the college received an additional state allocation for Maintenance of Effort funds ([Technical Colleges Equipment Fund Distribution](#)) in the amount of \$619,285.71. These funds were legislatively allocated for equipment and technology for programs, and the college utilized the programs' three-year budget requests to fulfill equipment and technology needs. The HEERF funds received due to the COVID-19 pandemic were used to upgrade technology and equipment and provide funds for campus safety. The grant writer position and consulting with a federal grant writing agency has been a positive experience for the college and generated [over \\$5 million in grant funding](#) for program equipment, technology, and facilities.

The following are recent Board approved actions for operating academically and fiscally responsible:

- The Cloud Computing and App Development program was scheduled to go through a reduction in force process due to low enrollment history and projections, but one of its full-time instructors resigned, so the college did not fill this position. However, the college was successful in obtaining [grant funding](#) to support strategies to build pathways for secondary students with the end goal of increasing enrollment in this program.



- Due to low enrollment caused by the pandemic, the college assigned the Dean of Academic Advancement duties to a long-standing full-time instructor. While the instructor did an excellent job, it was determined that the need was too great to not have a full-time position and filled the position in summer 2021.
- After the retirement of the Assistant registrar, the college split those duties between several current positions.
- Within the past five years, NT has added new positions; Grant Writer, Director of Outreach, Athletic Department Intern, Shooting Sports Head Coach, NRCS Project Coordinator, and the Lead for Kansas Intern.
- All assistant coach positions were promoted to full-time positions. Originally, assistant coach positions were stipend contracts.

As the college constantly forecasts budget projections based on enrollment trends, it continues to keep its number one priority focused on increasing full-time enrollment. This is essential to future sustainability. The college has allocated funds and is seeking additional grant funding to support its two new proposed programs in Fall 2022. In addition, the college has engaged with a [marketing firm](#) to develop a marketing plan and message in order to focus on getting a consistent message out about the opportunities at the college, which hopefully will result in additional enrollment.

### **Academic Resources**

NT prides itself in its strong academic history with over 11,000 graduates and historically high success rates among students who complete a program. The college has well-articulated strategic initiatives and adequate fiscal resources dedicated to continuous improvement in the area of academics, as shown in [Pillar 2](#), Quality and Accessible Academics, of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan.

The college is working on expanding its program offerings and providing academic options that meet the needs and goals of its diverse constituency. In an effort to meet industry needs and student interest, the college:

- Implemented the Precision Agriculture program in 2016
- Leased farmland and facility to enhance program in 2017
- Received [KBOR approval in December 2021](#) for Plumbing Technology and Child Care Specialist

The college continues to research and seek input on the creation and enhancement of new program/course offerings through interest surveys, strategic planning meetings, and input from program advisory committees.

The college recognizes its responsibility in providing adequate resources to support academic expansion. Many facility renovation projects have been completed to provide efficient and practical learning environments and benefit our student body. Recent examples include:

- Relocation and expansion of the Electrical Technology program
- Remodel and expansion of the Carpentry Program
- Updated Welding Technology facility and equipment
- Engineering Technology program expanded, remodeled, new equipment, and updates
- Future Diesel Technology facility expansion (EDA CARES Act Recovery Assistance grant) and updated equipment
- Additional location in Gove County Kansas for Welding Technology program

## **Technological Infrastructure**

NT's vision is to remain a leader in career and technical education through progressive technology and facilities. This commitment has led to NT's designation as an Apple Distinguished School for almost a decade. The college currently has one faculty member recognized by Apple as Apple Distinguished Educator and many faculty members have completed the Apple Teacher Certification.

NT received funding through HEERF to update remote learning technology for aid during the COVID pandemic. NT is located in a rural community and the use of telecommunications helped the college connect to students remotely. The funds were used to purchase virtual learning equipment and software to outfit classrooms with telecommunication abilities.

- Portable welding simulators (Welding Technology)
- Portable desktop CNC Routers (Engineering Technology)

NT's Information Technology (IT) Department provides extensive assistance to students, faculty, and staff through campus-wide wireless connection upkeep, secure wireless network for account platforms, and support for computer hardware. NT's Information Technology (IT) department is a critical provider of support services to students and college employees. NT emphasizes "anytime-anywhere learning," which requires IT to provide access and tools to students, faculty, and staff. The college's infrastructure includes:

- High-speed wireless network
- Newly upgraded single-mode fiber
- Three point-to-point towers

The campus open-use computer labs provide convenient access to computers for all college constituents. Faculty, staff, and students have access to computers, copiers, and printers throughout campus. IT provides student support with iPad distribution and set up of email, Moodle, and Empower.

Students, faculty, and administration use Empower student information system for transactions in admissions, student services, mid-term and final grading, and financial aid. Moodle serves as the college's primary learning management system (LMS). Some program and general education courses use individual course management software systems, such as WebAssign for mathematics and Cengage for Business Technology, allowing reduced textbook cost and more consistent evaluation of student progress. Public web access allows for interface with all systems. Campus email is the preferred mode of communication with students, faculty, and administration.

With NT's commitment to being a leader in technology, and enforced by its [technology resources](#), the college recognizes the rapidly changing demands placed on technological infrastructure and focuses planning on providing the highest possible experience for students and faculty. Compliance, regulatory, and security issues require continued investment to maintain the college's position as a leader in technology.

## **Physical Infrastructure**

The campus [Master Facilities Plan](#) is aligned to meet the college's strategic plan. The Master Facilities Plan includes a catalog of existing facilities and histories as well as future campus development plans. The plan includes immediate improvement projects as well as deferred

maintenance projects and the college annually addresses buildings and ground improvements with the Board.

The college has ample land for expansion as future enrollment and program growth warrant. Future expansion and maintenance of facilities will provide a challenge without incremental supporting funds, in which the college will rely heavily on its grant writing efforts on the local, state, and federal level. NT expects that its physical plant will continue to expand to meet the needs of the anticipated growing student population. The future plan includes space for additional housing units to be constructed and it also designates areas for additional academic and athletic facilities as warranted by future enrollment growth.

NT is located on a 270-acre campus with 32 facilities. Since 2014, 69% of its facilities have been either built or renovated. The facilities are maintained and renovated to continually improve the student experience and the college's ability to function as a focal point of technical learning.

Some recent improvements to the physical facilities of NT include;

- "The Stable" is NT's latest eatery project where students can study, grab a quick snack, or just relax between classes.
- The Bookstore was relocated to the main administration building for easier access to college merchandise and memorabilia.
- The Softball Complex was established in 2018 and includes two NJCAA regulation softball fields, batting cages, and pitching bullpens.
- NT leases a 240-acre working farm. The facility includes farmland for Precision Agriculture students to implement learning objectives and a 9000 sq. ft. building for classroom and lab space.
- The Engineering facility underwent a major renovation in 2021 to expand opportunities for education in advanced manufacturing and automation.
- In August 2019, NT launched an additional location in Quinter, Kansas. The new campus is located south of the I-70 exit on Castle Rock Road and has enough space for approximately 30 students to pursue technical courses.
- The City of Goodland donated an abandoned building on Main Street to NT. The college plans to seek funding to rebuild, renovate, and inhabit this building within the next five years.
- In 2019, the Electrical Technology program moved to a larger, unused facility on campus. It had grown out of its previous space because of the significant number of new students.
- The Carpentry program is in the process of remodeling its facility. New storage rooms, lab space, and a future Plumbing program classroom and lab have been created.
- The Welding Technology program received significant state and local grant funding to add new welding booths and electrical source building system upgrades.
- The Max Alderman Library and Resource Center was renovated in the summer of 2019 to accommodate the influx of students enrolled into General Education mathematics courses.
- In Fall 2020, the NT Testing Center became fully operational for the use of the college and surrounding communities. The center is equipped with closed-circuit surveillance cameras and a monitor in the proctor's station for observation.
- Recently, NT inquired about a building located adjacent to college property. The building is currently owned by the local Elk's Lodge and serves as a primary community event space. NT proposed to purchase the building to hold fundraising events, conferences, workshops, and remain a resource to the community.

NT's physical plant is well maintained, developed, and adequately meets the student population's

needs.

**5.B.2 The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.**

The college's strategic pillars (goals) are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities to provide services to students and the service area. NT carries out its mission through these purposes:

1. Offering AAS and technical certificates upon completion of technical programs designed to meet student and employer needs;
2. Providing educational opportunities that enhance technical experience, problem-solving, communication, and human relations skills;
3. Providing relevant learning experiences that are supported by qualified and experienced faculty and staff, modern technology, and physical facilities;
4. Ensuring that technical programs and curricula are updated and relevant through interaction with business and industry experts;
5. Providing diverse opportunities for students to experience personal and professional development;
6. Maintaining appropriate guidance to allow students to make better personal and career choices.

NT has the financial and human resources and the physical and technological infrastructure to support these mission purposes. The college provides its students with multiple opportunities to experience personal and professional development. NT continues to expand and improve its degree and certificate offerings. The college exposes students to realistic laboratory and shop environments. Faculty members are well qualified, and many have years of industry experience. The college's Program Advisory Committees has over 100 business and industry experts in chosen fields. The college's commitment to diversity and quality ensures that students receive appropriate educational and personal experiences.

NT organizes activities and ties resource allocations to strategic planning goals that articulate the stated mission purposes. The 2018-2021 Strategic Plan focuses on [8 pillars](#) with specific strategies to address human, technological, financial, and facility resources. These pillars approved by the Board are Enrollment Growth and Sustainability, Quality and Accessible Academics, Student Success, Community, Maintain Fiscal Health, Improve Facilities & Network, Developing Employees, and Strengthen External Partnerships. These strategic planning goals are realistic and relevant to the college's continued success.

**5.B.3 The institution has a well-developed process for budgeting and monitoring its finances.**

NT prepares an [annual operating budget](#) with the active participation of administration, staff, and faculty. These groups advocate for students and ensure that technical and academic programs remain true to the college's mission, vision, values, and goals. Budgets are aligned to the college's strategic plan. Each program prepares a [three-year request for capital and operating expenditures](#). Maintenance, housing, athletics, and support departments estimate annual expenditures. From these requests, a yearly budget is developed and approved by the college's administrative Cabinet and the Board.

All employees are expected to adhere to the college's purchasing policies. Budget information directly impacting faculty is shared via monthly reports. These reports depend on the department and may

include a [lab fee report](#), a [department repair order report](#), and a [department club report](#). In addition, based on the program's three-year budget request, funding made available for new equipment and professional development through Capital Outlay or Carl Perkins is shared with faculty annually. The board reviews and approves monthly bank reconciliations and expenditures in order to constantly monitor the finances. The Vice President of Operations is responsible for oversight of the Business and Financial Aid Offices as well as the College Bookstore. The Vice President reviews and approves [purchase orders](#) as needed. The President signs off on all expenditures. Quarterly, the Vice President and President monitor the budget expenditures compared to the projected budget and revise as needed. The college works with a certified public accounting firm to prepare its annual financial statements for audit, and the audit process provides assurance to the college and its constituents that the college is maintaining proper controls and following guidelines for the use and receipt of its funds.

#### **5.B.4 The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.**

All revenues generated by NT are used within the college to accomplish its mission of providing quality higher education and leadership in workforce training. The college does not disburse revenues to any entities outside the college. The college executes its responsibilities, as a faithful and responsible steward, with regard to its priorities, strategic pillars and without regard to political pressures or interpersonal pressures that arise as a result of organizational and political interactions.

The past two year audits reflect that the college spends approximately 60% of its revenues directly on the education and care of students. All other expenditures are in direct support of delivering quality education. As a part of the annual audit, the administration prepares a Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A) report. The MD&A provides a [three-year comparison of net position](#), [three-year change in net assets](#), [three-year comparison of capital assets and provides a narrative description of potential economic factors](#) the college foresees may impact next year's budget and rates. The MD&A data reflects the college has increased its net position, change in net assets, and capital assets over the past three years.

The Composite Financial Indicator ([CFI](#)) score over the past three years (7.05, 6.81, 7.29) shows financial health consistency. In the fiscal year ending July 2020, NT's CFI score was 7.29, which indicates that NT has strong financial health and can support new programs and activities as well as overcome financial difficulties that may arise.

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- President\_Master Facilities Plan\_FY' 2022
- Purchase Order Form
- Repair Order Budgets
- Shooting\_Sports
- Strategic\_Plan
- Strategic\_Plan (page number 3)
- Strategic\_Plan (page number 7)
- Tuition\_Reimbursement



## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

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The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

### Argument

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

NT engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement. Planning and budgeting priorities are reflected in the college's strategic plan. NT ensures that its planning strategies align with its Kansas Board of Regents Performance Agreement. The college aligns resource allocations to support the college's mission, vision, values, and goals. Planning is inclusive and open, so there is active discussion of the college's strategic direction. Student learning assessments and operations evaluations are synchronous with planning and budgeting. The college's planning process has multiple checks and balances to ensure that perspectives of internal and external stakeholders are considered. NT is alert to demographic, economic, social, political, and technological trends. The college's planning anticipates how trends affect its revenues, expenditures, and operations.

#### **5.C.1 The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.**

NT's allocation of resources demonstrates the capacity to fulfill its mission, vision, values, and goals. The 2018-2021 Strategic Plan directs human, technological, facilities, and financial resources to support the eight strategic planning pillars of the college.

#### **Enrollment Growth and Sustainability - Pillar 1**

NT remains focused on enrollment growth and sustainability as its leading strategic goal. The college supports five strategies within Pillar 1 to support this focus.

#### [Strategy 1-1: New Program Development](#)

- Addition of Precision Agriculture program
- Additional location for Welding Technology program
- Plumbing Technology program proposal
- Childcare Specialist program proposal
- Addition of Women's Softball
- Addition of Women's Wrestling
- Addition of Shooting Sports

#### [Strategy 1-2: Recruitment](#)

- Admissions staff are members of KACRAO
- Extended primary recruiting territory
- Additional allocated funding for travel, advertising, promotions, and supplies
- Implemented new prospect communication software- BirdEye

#### [Strategy 1-3: Branding/Marketing](#)

- New partnership with full-service creative marketing firm, "Middle Marketing"

#### [Strategy 1-4: Attractive & Accessible Housing](#)

- Annual extensive deep cleaning
- Student form to request maintenance or submit issues, requests, or concerns using "Dorm Maintenance Request Form"
- Dorm Manager position has extended duties to better accommodate students Continuous renovations
- Village I bathrooms remodeled with new high-gloss acrylic shower stalls, tile, and vanities

#### [Strategy 1-5: Secondary Enrollment](#)

- Increased number of high schools participating in Excel in CTE/dual credit
- Created "Director of Outreach" position that oversees high school relations

### **Quality and Accessible Academics - Pillar 2**

NT understands that quality and accessible academics facilitate student learning. The college supports three critical strategies on assessment, quality faculty and instruction, and curriculum. These key focus areas are the basis of ensuring student outcome successes.

#### [Strategy 2-1: Assessment](#)

- Assessment Coordinator position to ensure data is collected, analyzed, and utilized
- Faculty and administration conduct annual program reviews
- Assessment data is reviewed to improve college operations

#### [Strategy 2-2: Quality Faculty & Instruction](#)

- Competitive salaries and benefits to attract quality applicants
- Recruit faculty directly from industry to meet level of mastery required
- Funding available for instructors to obtain additional academic credentials
- College provides funding for updated equipment and tools

- Professional development funding and opportunities
  - Recent examples include: AI Summit, OSHA 502, Redken, Haas Training, Kansas Governor's Water Conference, Workforce Innovation Conference, KACRAO, and NC3 Train the Trainer Cutting & Wire Pathways.
- Safe and inclusive learning environments
- Instructional support is success-oriented and uses specific assessment and intervention techniques to sustain and improve all programs.

### [Strategy 2-3: Curriculum](#)

- Program Advisory Committees propose suggestions for capital investments, admissions requirements, learning resources, and curricula updates to enhance classroom and shop learning
- Electrical program was relocated into its own building to create a better student-learning environment
- Engineering building was remodeled to include an advanced manufacturing lab to provide new curriculum and enhance student job opportunities
- Funds are allocated to maintain national and state accreditation of programs such as;
  - Auto Technology, Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology, Cosmetology, Medical Assistant, and Respiratory Therapy
- College administration and faculty attend national meetings for accreditation

### **Student Success - Pillar 3**

Student success is central to NT's mission. The college supports this planning goal with strategic initiatives to improve student satisfaction, civility, tolerance, and retention.

### [Strategy 3-1: Student Satisfaction](#)

- Addition of the Dean of Student Advancement position has improved student welcome week and overall student life activities
  - Activities include: intramural opportunities, karaoke night, and grocery bingo
- During basketball season, the evening meal is provided by the food service provider at the Max Jones Fieldhouse
- A student movie theatre was constructed in the Union facility
  - Attendance has dropped significantly, so the college plans to redesign the space to accommodate a more extensive food service area
- Student recognition programs such as Student of the Month and Student of the Year are implemented to honor students performing at exceptional levels
- Evening lab access and peer tutoring available

### [Strategy 3-2: Civility & Tolerance](#)

- Student Success Seminar, assemblies, and guest speakers are incorporated into every student's experience
- Topics such as assault prevention, leadership, and diversity are discussed to promote civility and tolerance
- Students are provided with multiple opportunities for civic engagement
- Student Government and SkillsUSA are active student organizations
- Department clubs help students demonstrate leadership and civic engagement

### [Strategy 3-3: Retention](#)

- Improving retention is a vital objective in the college's KBOR Performance Agreement on retention of first to second-year students
- An Academic/Attendance Alert procedure is used to identify students who are at risk, design academic interventions, and increase student persistence
- Academic Services provides academic counseling and advising for students in terms of courses and programs
- Additional instruction opportunities such as peer tutoring, and scheduled open-lab periods are available
  - The Max Alderman Library and the Digital Technology computer lab provide students access to technology, peer tutoring, and additional resources

## **Community - Pillar 4**

Positive community relations are essential for the sustainability of the college and the student experience. Efforts are continually made to increase overall involvement in community activities and events. These efforts encourage and welcome the community to engage directly with the college.

### [Strategy 4-1: Civic Engagement](#)

- Athletics emphasize good citizenship, sportsmanship, honesty, and integrity on the campus, in the classroom, and in the community
- Student-athletes participate actively in community service projects. For example, on certain Fridays, the Men's and Women's Basketball student-athletes greet the local elementary school children on arrival and welcome them with a high five ("high-five Fridays")
- NT employees participate in an annual "Day of Service" to partake in social, charitable, and environmental activities voluntarily
- In 2018, the employees of NT volunteered their time to help restore an old Main Street building which became the Sherman County Historical Society

### [Strategy 4-2: Student Organizations](#)

- The Student Ambassador program was re-instituted in 2018
  - The purpose of the Student Ambassador Program is to educate prospective students, families, school groups, and the general public on the programs, resources, and student life at NT

## **Maintain Fiscal Health - Pillar 5**

Kansas technical colleges have significant challenges in the way funding is distributed through the state funding model. The college manages fiscal resources and invests limited dollars into areas where it can anticipate sustainable growth. Budgeting processes, good stewardship, and fundraising are critical strategies for the college's future.

### [Strategy 5-1: Budgeting](#)

- Newly established purchasing policy helps the administration implement its procurement strategy that aligns with the college's strategic purchasing requirement

### [Strategy 5-2: Stewardship](#)

- New sponsorships have provided financial and in-kind support to programs and events that align with the college's mission and goals
  - [American Implement](#) is sponsoring students' educational expenses through an application process. Selected students will receive up to \$20,000 to cover tuition, tools, or other college-related costs.

#### [Strategy 5-3: Fundraising](#)

- Expand grant writing opportunities
- In 2017, NT added a Grant Writer position to ensure grant writing efforts were proficient and effective
- In 2019, NT retained government relations professionals, Merchant McIntyre Associates. Merchant McIntyre Associates assist NT with federal grant writing processes
- Within five years, the college generated over \$5 million in local, state, and federal grant awards. These funds have been utilized to enhance program facilities and equipment

### **Improve Facilities & Network - Pillar 6**

One of the largest expenses of any institution lies within the upgrades and upkeep of the campus facilities and network infrastructure. Students thrive in spaces that are safe, clean, and not dated. As facilities age, so does the mechanical infrastructure needed to operate them.

#### [Strategy 6-1: Facility Improvements](#)

- Ongoing efforts are maintained to optimize and evaluate technical facilities to meet the needs of each program such as HVAC, electrical, roofing, and plumbing systems
  - For example, by Summer 2020, 99% of campus roofs were replaced due to significant damage after a hailstorm

#### [Strategy 6-1: Network Improvements](#)

- The college's fiber backbone was replaced with single-mode and has increased the college's throughput immensely
- Network is backed up with generator to remain operational in emergency situations

#### [Strategy 6-2: New Facilities Short-Term](#)

- Evaluate program expansion in service area communities

#### [Strategy 6-3: New Facilities Long-Term](#)

- Evaluate need for multi-level dormitory and new welding facility to accommodate the increasing number of students

#### [Strategy 6-4: Grounds](#)

- Maintain current campus and make continuous improvements when possible

### **Developing Employees - Pillar 7**

Recruiting technical faculty with solid content knowledge is a significant factor in selecting new

teachers. Finding strong candidates for any position continues to be a challenge in a rural area of the state, and the college continues to cast a wider net to attract employees.

#### [Strategy 7-1: Employee Recruitment](#)

- Online recruiting tools such as Indeed.com, LinkedIn, HigherEdJobs.com, the college website, and social media
- Reach out to alumni for applications or referrals

#### [Strategy 7-2: Employee Retention](#)

- Flexible Benefits Plan for full-time eligible employees in conformity with the rules and regulations set forth by the Internal Revenue Code with regard to a Cafeteria Section 125 Salary Reduction Plan
- Various insurance benefits are provided through a salary reduction authorization for eligible employees
- Perkins grant funding allocated for personal and professional development and growth through degree attainment, continuing education, attendance at seminars and conferences, and outside work experience opportunities
- Wellness Committee established in 2018 to promote and implement wellness initiatives for NT employees
  - The committee recently implemented an “Apple Watch program” to entice and motivate employees to focus on personal health and fitness

### **Strengthen External Partnerships - Pillar 8**

NT understands the need to continue to strengthen relationships with individuals, companies, alumni, legislators, and more who are willing to work alongside of us to ensure the sustainability and vitality of the college. Business and industry connections along with increased efforts to engage with alumni creates an incredible potential benefit to future of NT. External partnerships are essential for supporting teaching and learning, enhancing opportunities for student success, and building enrollment growth. NT supports strategic initiatives to build and strengthen partnerships with business and industry, secondary and post-secondary institutions, Goodland community, and alumni.

#### [Strategy 8-1: Business & Industry](#)

- Industry partners serve on Program Advisory Committees
- Industry partners regularly donate equipment, tools, or funding to programs

#### [Strategy 8-2: Alumni](#)

- Alumni members serve on Program Advisory Committees
- Alumni regularly donate to the college

#### [Strategy 8-3: Community](#)

- The college has articulation agreements with post-secondary institutions
- Excel in CTE legislation provides opportunities for NT to partner with secondary institutions
- The college has a strong partnership with the local School District, USD 352
  - The college and USD have facility sharing MOUS that benefit all students and a gentleman's agreement where our students may attend their athletic competitions for



- free, and their students may attend our athletic events for free
- NT has increased the opportunities for high-school students by offering the Early College Program
  - USD 352 and NT created this partnership to build upon the strengths of each institution and focus on student success and the economic development of the Goodland community

The Strategic Plan helps NT focus on its future success. The plan guides long-term and day-to-day operations to ensure the institution follows the mission, vision, and values.

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

NT links its assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting through policies and required procedures.

NT assesses student learning at course, program, and institutional levels and uses data collected at these levels to evaluate operations, planning, and budgeting. Quality and Accessible Academics and Student Success are planning goals that are a major consideration when the Board adopts the strategic plan.

Assessments of student learning inform Board discussions about the strategic plan, academic operations, and budgets. NT uses multiple assessments to ensure that student learning is occurring. Assessment procedures provide valuable feedback for instructors and the college about student skill attainment and competitiveness for employment. Budgeting for assessment has included an Assessment Coordinator position, end-of-program testing, state, and national licensure exams, and funding for program and institutional accreditations.

Planning and budgeting priorities are consistent with the college's Performance Agreement with KBOR as these priorities align with the college's strategic plan.

The [Executive Summary](#) of the Annual Institutional Assessment Report contains enrollment, placement, retention, and graduation information.

lists concerns identified by the assessment process and plans of action. In addition to annual budget requests, these items are used to form future annual budgets.

A recent example of a cohesive process is the implementation of a grant-writing position. The position aids with the institution's planning and budgeting procedures by working to secure additional funding. The additional funding is used to support program needs identified through student learning assessment and operations evaluation. The [Grant Questionnaire](#) is used to organize, evaluate, and prioritize program instructor requests. The questionnaire requires instructors to link requests with Strategic Plan initiatives to ensure institutional funds are being used to significantly support strategic goals.

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

NT's Board, administration, faculty, staff, students, and community leaders participate in strategic planning. The college's strategic planning process allows for internal and external stakeholders to have a voice in NT's strategic direction and provides a venue to consider multiple perspectives about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the institution.

Plan development begins with the Strategic Planning Committee composed of representatives from faculty and staff. Previously, NT created its Strategic Plan with results derived from a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat (SWOT) analysis. Faculty, staff, students and community members attended in-person SWOT meetings to determine strategic goals and initiatives. The Strategic Planning Committee decided to shift to an online survey to reach a more prominent and broader audience. This year, the committee worked to develop a [new survey](#) that will be deployed in Spring 2022 to internal and external stakeholders. The committee felt this survey would provide more feedback from a more diverse population, allowing more significant data to develop the college's next three-year plan.

The strategic plan is publicly available through the college's website. The strategic plan is discussed at Administrative Cabinet, Division Chair meetings, faculty and staff meetings, and Board meetings to ensure action and implementation. Program Advisory Committees serve as external constituent groups to inform institutional planning during biannual meetings. The latest Board reaffirmation of the planning goals occurred in [November 2021](#).

#### **5.C.4 The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.**

NT plans based on a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the college's sources of revenue and enrollment. The institution uses the following processes to guide the understanding of its current capacity and to establish attainable future goals:

- NT uses continuous enrollment projections to determine potential tuition revenues. Enrollment is constantly reviewed by the Admissions department and conveyed internally across the institution through [weekly enrollment reports](#).
- College personnel remain up-to-date on current legislative happenings and stay connected in KTEA, and KBOR monthly meetings ensures the college is at the forefront of any issue that may impact state budget allocations.
- The technical college business officers meet annually to discuss state financing concerns and routinely communicate on financial questions or issues via group email.
- The college analyzes monthly grant writing efforts and successes as this source of revenue is now a significant factor in the college's ability to improve programs and facilities.
- The college monitors the athletic scholarship allowance each year to determine the impact on tuition revenues.
- [Annual three-year program budget requests](#) are reviewed, and funding resources are prioritized.
- NT's primary planning document, the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, was created with all-encompassing input from internal and external constituencies and considered revenue sources and enrollment elements.
- The college has implemented small percentage increases (less than 2%) over the past couple of years for tuition and room and board costs. These cost increases are small to keep the cost affordable for students yet significant enough to help the college remain viable.

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the institution put a priority only approval on lab fee expenditures and the following fall reduced normal allocations by 25% to help offset the reduction in enrollment.
- COVID-19 funds were able to help the college recapture some of its lost revenue due to low enrollment. These funds proved essential for the college to remain on track and continue classes face-to-face and maintain fiscal stability.

### **5.C.5 Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.**

NT continually reviews emerging factors that may impact college operations. The college holds ongoing conversations with business and industry regarding emerging technologies, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy, and state support.

NT is a technology-led campus that promotes the integration of innovative technology within the curriculum with the intention of improving the learning environment for students. NT believes providing on-going professional development is most effective for encouraging instructors to integrate technology into their curriculum and classrooms. As noted in Strategy 2-2 of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, enhancing technology support for faculty through professional development is a priority. For example, in 2021 NC3 partnered with Apple to create a “Train the Trainer” professional development course for college instructors. [NT’s own Cloud Computing instructor was selected as an NC3 teacher](#) for the course, demonstrating the college’s strong commitment to remain a leader in emerging classroom technologies. Another recent example of ongoing professional development is the recognition of NT’s Precision Agriculture instructor being featured in Apple’s Higher Education “[Innovation in Action](#)” blog. The NT instructor was highlighted for using Apple technology to control sensors on machinery and fly drones to collect water and temperature data.

NT devotes a significant amount of funding toward the advancement of technology in academic programs and throughout campus. Strategy 6-1 exhibits recent facility updates including the complete campus network overhaul, which included the upgrade from multi-mode fiber to single-mode fiber. This enhancement enabled network connections to be faster and more accessible. Other recent updates include increasing bandwidth capacity, wireless technology upgrades, and securing two providers for redundancy.

The college has been proactive in meeting changing demographics in western Kansas. Over the past several decades, both population and high school graduates in the service area have declined. Pillar 1 of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan defines the college’s plan for enrollment growth and sustainability. Strategy 1-1 defines NT’s new program development initiatives, including the implementation of a women’s softball program, [women’s wrestling program](#), and a [shooting sports](#) program to shift the college’s target prospective student demographic. The college’s marketing initiatives, as detailed in Strategy 1-3, also contribute to the response to shifting demographics by defining the college’s target audience and effective marketing approaches. Secondary enrollment also contributes to the college’s demographic diversity, and Strategy 1-5 supports the expansion of recruitment to area high schools. These initiatives have attracted students locally, nationally, and internationally.

NT recognizes access to the global community is exponentially increased and valued through advances in technology. NT strives to globalize many of its initiatives to ensure the interaction and integration of college constituents is maximized. Strategy 2-1 details the college’s efforts to obtain a globalized assessment of various aspects such as; student satisfaction, program improvement,

graduate job placement, and third-party credentials to ensure a full-spectrum of institution evaluation. NT also supports faculty professional development, detailed in Strategy 2-2, to encourage industry connections and partnerships that will ultimately benefit students. Employee recruitment strategies are also expanded through the use of online employment sites to advertise position openings, as stated in Strategy 7-1, to optimize the number of qualified applicants. Advisory Committee members and industry partners (Strategy 8-1) are also sought after on a global scale in an effort to expose students to diverse career directions and options.

As detailed in 5.C.4, college personnel remain up-to-date on evolving legislative and economic projections and stay connected in KTEA and KBOR monthly meetings. This ensures the college is at the forefront of issues that may arise that would impact state budget allocations. Strategy 5-1 describes comprehensive initiatives the college has developed to remain attentive to evolving state funding trends. The college is also responds to developing workforce opportunities.

### **5.C.6 The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.**

The college has several structural components dedicated to ensure that NT engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement. The college implements a strategic plan and tracks institutional progress to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes. The college's organizational structure, processes and policies, standing committees, and systematic assessment methods are most significant in the progression of the institution.

The main purpose of NT's organizational structure is to aid the college in achieving its overall goals. The [organizational structure](#) outlines functions between college constituents to ensure effective performance throughout the institution. As described in 2.C., NT has governance and administrative structures that promote effective leadership and support teamwork. The college fully supports shared governance to ensure the institution engages in continuous improvement of operations and student outcomes.

Policies and procedures are an essential part of NT. The policies and procedures adopted by NT guide day-to-day operations, ensure compliance with laws and regulations, provide direction for decision-making, and build efficient internal processes. Policies and procedures are published within college guidebooks such as the [employee handbook](#), [college catalog](#), [housing handbook](#), [course catalog](#), [athletic handbook](#), and individual [program handbooks](#). These guidebooks establish a framework for the college that will ensure consistency in applying values and principles throughout the institution.

NT engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement through the development and implementation of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. [Standing Committees](#) carry out strategies and initiatives defined by the Strategic Plan. Standing committees are organized annually and ensure their respective agendas adhere to the current Strategic Plan. NT currently has a total of 12 appointed, standing committees. Each committee includes a combination of faculty and staff relevant to the committee's work. The shared governance structure of the committee work greatly increases the quality of teaching and adheres to the college's mission.

NT implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes using data derived from surveys, evaluations, and reports. Throughout each year, NT distributes various surveys such as the [student satisfaction survey](#), [graduate follow-up](#), [institutional effectiveness survey](#), and [strategic plan survey](#). Evaluations are also conducted on course, program, and institutional levels including; student course evaluations, program reviews, and institutional accreditation reviews. The

college regularly publishes internal and external reports such as; [enrollment](#), [retention](#), graduate follow-up, [EADA](#), and [AIR](#).

These systematic assessment methods provide data for improving operations and student outcomes.

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## 5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

### Summary

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NT exhibits a strong and effective planning system that supports the college's current and future operations. The college is committed to seeking improvements that serve and fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The strategic planning process provides focus, engages the community and stakeholders, and helps create efficiency throughout the institution. NT has a developed three-year plan that identifies the college's strategies, timeline, and challenges. The plan ensures the institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient and fulfill the mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

NT has reconfigured its strategic plan process within the past several years to achieve long-term initiatives and goals. Previously, the college operated from a one year strategic plan which was formulated by a SWOT analysis system. The college decided to shift to a 3-year strategic plan system in 2018. This demonstrated a focus shift from operational planning to effective institutional strategic planning. The college recently initiated a Strategic Plan Survey in preparation for the development of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. The survey will provide insights on current issues and trends, constituent needs, program evaluations, funding priorities, and general institutional feedback. The institution will evaluate the results if the Strategic Plan Survey proves to be more effective than a SWOT analysis process to develop the next strategic plan.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*