



Northwest Kansas Technical College

CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

ASSURANCE ARGUMENT





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Introduction

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Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

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Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

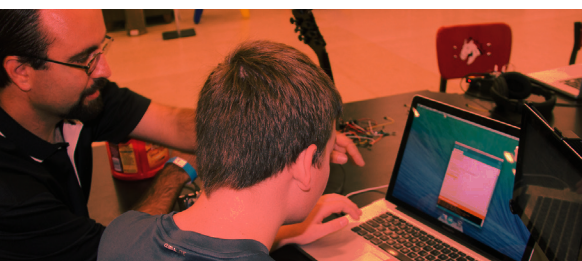
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Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

Published October 14, 2015

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Letter from the President

It is my pleasure to present Northwest Tech's self-study report that has been prepared for the Higher Learning Commission Accreditation team to review as the team visits our campus on November 16-17th, 2015.

For the past two years, Northwest Tech has worked diligently on this Self-Study report. This report demonstrates that Northwest Tech has an accurate sense of the college's accomplishments, its future challenges, and its opportunities for improvement. With this report, Northwest Tech demonstrates the "quality of higher learning" that HLC endeavors to ensure through accreditation.

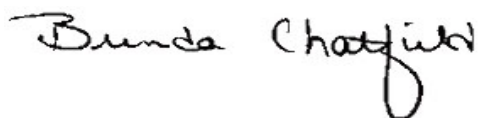
Northwest Tech is a college that enacts its mission of preparing individuals for gainful employment and for productive personal and professional lives. As you review our self-study report, you will learn that Northwest Tech is a unique institution focused on technical education. We provide the education that encourages individuals to better themselves and their families.

Northwest Tech is committed to meeting workforce needs on state, regional, and national levels. The college has developed curricula in sixteen programs that prepare our students for exciting careers. Our faculty seek the input of industry and business leaders with active Advisory Committees to ensure that our programs meet current workforce needs.

Through the self-study process, Northwest Tech reaffirms HLC's criteria for accreditation. The college fulfills its mission, encourages diversity, practices inclusion, shares governance, promotes leadership, and embraces technological innovation. The college rigorously assesses student achievement with measureable benchmarks that focus on demonstrable performance. Northwest Tech is developing a model for 21st Century technical education.

We welcome the HLC team to Northwest Tech and we look forward to our moving the college ahead with the team's review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda Chatfield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'B'.

Brenda Chatfield
Interim President
Northwest Kansas Technical College

Preface

This self-study report represents more than two years of self-reflection, evaluation, and research by Northwest Kansas Technical College's (Northwest Tech's) faculty, administration, staff, students, and community members. Northwest Tech has conducted a thorough and comprehensive review of its institutional documentation and practices. As part of the formal application process for renewed accreditation, Northwest Tech offers this report to maintain compliance with the Higher Learning Commission. This report documents the findings obtained by Northwest Tech as part of the self-study process and provides the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) with the information needed to evaluate the college during the team visit. This report also provides an overview of the college for its constituents, including current and potential students, faculty, staff, administrators, business and industry partners, the governing board, program advisory members, and the public at large.

Northwest Tech trusts that this self-study report will influence the college beyond the Commission's visit. This document supports Northwest Tech's dedication to continuous improvement and provides evidence to the Commission that the college fulfills HLC's Criteria for Accreditation. HLC accreditation guidelines provide the opportunity for Northwest Tech's personnel, students, and community stakeholders to better understand the college's policies, procedures, and operations and to assess the college's performance against nationally recognized expectations for institutions of higher learning.

History and Context

Northwest Tech is a two-year technical college located in Goodland, Kansas. It is one of six technical colleges in Kansas. Northwest Tech is located in the northwest corner of Kansas, approximately one mile from Interstate 70 and approximately seventeen miles from the western border of Kansas. It is the only technical college located in the western third of the state. The college officially serves 25 counties in western Kansas, but enjoys a reach well beyond its geographical designation.

Northwest Tech is a workforce development institution designed to prepare students to enter the job market or to continue education. The institution's mission, "preparing individuals for gainful employment in technical and professional careers, productive personal lives, and lifelong learning", directs operations of the college to prepare individuals for careers that require a technical certificate or an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree.

These are important features of Northwest Tech:

1. **Campus** – Northwest Tech occupies 24 buildings housed on a 50-acre tract in Goodland, Kansas. The college includes 11 program buildings, a library/resource center, a student union, a fitness center, an academic & athletic facility, and a distance learning /general education facility. The campus maintains four dormitory facilities, one of which is off-campus.
2. **Students** – The student body of Northwest Tech is primarily comprised of students from the neighboring tristate area (Kansas, Colorado, and Nebraska). The college has grown dramatically in the past eight years. Overall headcount enrollment has more than tripled in the past eight years from 251 in 2007-2008 to 779 in 2015-2016. With the addition of new programs and inter-collegiate athletics, the college has seen an increase in students who are coming from throughout the nation and the world. Gender diversity has improved to where approximately one-third of the student population is female. Ethnic diversity has improved to where Caucasian students comprise less than 60% of the student population.
3. **Faculty, Staff, and Administration** – For the 2015-2016 academic year, Northwest Tech employs 85 full-time and part-time academic staff and non-teaching and coaching staff:
 - 32 full-time instructors
 - 55 adjunct instructors (includes concurrent and SB 155 USD faculty)
 - 5 full-time and 4 part-time administrative staff
 - 13 full-time office staff
 - 3 full-time and 7 part-time coaching staff
 - 5 part-time fitness center workers
 - 1 full-time on-campus housing staff
 - 4 full-time and one part-time maintenance workers
 - 4 part-time night security workers

These individuals oversee Northwest Tech operations, provide instruction, and offer student support.

4. **Organization** – Sixteen educational programs currently are offered by Northwest Tech:
 - Automotive Technology (AT)
 - Business Technology (BT)
 - Cosmetology (COS)
 - Carpentry (CA)
 - Collision Repair (CR)
 - Communications Technology (CT)
 - Computer Graphics Technology (CGT)
 - Crime Scene Investigation (CSI)

- Diesel Technology (DT)
- Electrical Technology (EL)
- Engineering Technology (EN)
- Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration (HVACR)
- Medical Assistant (MA)
- Mobile Application and Entertainment Development (AD)
- Respiratory Therapy (RT)
- Welding (WD)

Northwest Tech operates year-round, but most programs function within fall and spring semesters. Full-time student hourly course load depends on program requirements but the average is approximately 15-18 credit hours per semester.

All programs offer an AAS degree, which can be obtained by students who acquire a minimum of 15 credit hours in general education and meet the technical program requirements. Students who satisfactorily complete technical program requirements are awarded a technical certificate. Satisfactory completion of a program requires a “C” grade or above.

Northwest Tech also addresses workforce education and training needs through customized training courses; certification courses; and business-industry partnerships.

Self-Study Process

Northwest Tech conducted this self-study to prepare for its reaccreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (HLC-NCA). The college continuously monitors its programs, processes, and outcomes to ensure quality, but the self-study process allowed Northwest Tech to thoroughly examine itself in relation to the Criteria for Accreditation. The college used the five accreditation criteria and core components to evaluate its operations, policies, and procedures and to identify improvements for future consideration and implementation.

Preparation for the November 2015 visit began in 2013, when President Dr. Guy Edward Mills appointed the following individuals to Northwest Tech’s Accreditation Steering Committee:

- Brenda Chatfield, Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Dr. Scott Searcy, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Reina Branum, Assistant Vice President for Student Services
- Sherri Knitig, Chief Financial Officer
- Brad Bergsma, Chief Information Officer
- Christa Bergsma, Division Chair - Health and Human Services
- Adam Elliott, Assessment Coordinator/Division Chair - Information Technology
- Jason Cook, Division Chair - Transportation Division
- Daniel Ordonez, Division Chair - Construction Division.

Brenda Chatfield, in her role as Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, (and subsequently, as President of the College) provided leadership for the self-study process and served as the self-study coordinator. Accreditation Steering Committee members were charged with ensuring that each criterion and its core components were addressed. Each criterion and its respective core components were assigned two co-chairs to guide an initial draft of the college’s response by criterion and to begin identification of documents for inclusion into the evidence file.

Once co-chairs were identified, then faculty, staff, and administrators were assigned to one of five committees organized by the five HLC criteria. As of the beginning of the fall 2014 semester, these were the self-study process participants:

Accreditation Sub-Committee Assignments	
Criterion 1	Christa Bergsma (co-chair), Brenda Chatfield (co-chair), Jim Kennedy, Randy Selbe, Mike Sebaaly, Phyllis Prawl, Jade Inlow, Abby Keith, Brenna Balduff, Sylvia Shores, Ben Foust, Patrick Lorens
Criterion 2	Dan Ordonez (co-chair), Dr. Ed Mills (co-chair), Ron Kaus, Chris Miller, Andrew Davidson, Trista Zimmerman, Kerri Ketter, Adam Jantzi, Kelly James, Caitlyn Ziegler, Jason Showalter
Criterion 3	Jason Cook (co-chair), Dr. Scott Searcy (co-chair), Dennis Misurell, Wade Taylor, Rob Loftin, Ben Lacy, Jeremy Skrdlant, Lois Seibert, Shelbi Hall, Landon Steele, Ward Cassidy, Damon Francis, Blaise Wilson
Criterion 4	Adam Elliott (co-chair), Reina Branum (co-chair), Dwight Williams, Oura Garrett, Michael Zimmerman, Carrie Whitcomb, Andrew Strange, William Morris, Calli McDaniel, Danny Main, Chuck Lutters, Doug Hurtt
Criterion 5	Brad Bergsma (co-chair), Sherri Knitig (co-chair), Scott Waugh, Ian Tompkins, Tia Brannick, Leah Innocci, Logan Dobbs, Tracy Ostmeyer, Jeremy Johnston, Kindi Bauman, Penny Nemechek, Pam Whitson

Northwest Tech’s self-study process was highly collaborative and participatory, benefiting from the expertise and talents of the participants. All administrators, faculty and key staff personnel participated on a committee and were actively engaged in the development of the self-study report. Accreditation Steering Committee members served as co-chairs by sub-committee, guided the self-study process by criterion, and served as liaisons, leaders, and resources for the sub-committees. Each criterion subcommittee approached its area of responsibility as a research project to determine the college’s strengths, challenges, and opportunities for the future, and to provide supporting evidence for statements. Each criterion subcommittee reviewed respective drafts three times for accuracy and completeness. Then the Accreditation Steering Committee made a complete final review of argument, evidence, prose, and links to support before the college submitted its report to the HLC. Dr. Scott Searcy served as

the primary contact for managing documents in the evidence file and generating evidence links within the college's argument. Dennis Misurell provided writing support to ensure consistency and flow with the college's argument.

Governance

Northwest Tech 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 the state's 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 approves courses and programs.

The Kansas Postsecondary Technical Education Authority (TEA) is a second state governing body which functions under the auspices of KBOR and makes recommendations to KBOR regarding coordination; statewide planning; and improvements and enhancements to postsecondary technical-education. TEA is comprised of 12 members appointed from 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.

Northwest Tech is governed by its Area Board of Control. The college serves a 17-county area containing 24 school districts and 15,000 square miles. Each district appoints its own Board representative to the Northwest Tech Board. The Northwest Tech Board appoints the twenty-fifth member at large. Area Board of Control members are selected on the basis of knowledge and expertise about education and the school districts that are represented. Board meetings discuss the college's strategic direction and financial statements, as well as academic, personnel, and athletic policies and procedures. Administration, faculty, and staff participate fully in these meetings and provide relevant perspectives for the Board's consideration.

The Board hires a President who is the chief executive officer of the college. The president directs the day-to-day operations with the support of an Administrative Cabinet that includes key executives responsible for academic affairs, student affairs, finance, technology, admissions, marketing, alumni, and endowment.

Northwest Tech has standing committees that sustain operations and support shared governance with administration, faculty and staff including:

- Accreditation Steering Committee
- Strategic Planning Committee
- Curriculum and Assessment Committee
- Marketing Committee
- Enrollment Committee
- President/Faculty Council.

These committees guide the college to ensure that the college's mission, vision, values, and goals are enacted in policies and procedures and supported with adequate resources.

Response to Higher Learning Commission Request

Upon completion of the last HLC comprehensive review, conducted in June 2012, the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) voted to request a progress report that demonstrates a planning model and plans to guide the institution's actions related to facilities, human resources, academics and technology. The IAC also recommended that these plans be aligned with the institution's strategic goals. Subsequent communication with the HLC indicated that this self-study report would be an acceptable answer to the IAC's request.

As HLC's self-study visit is planned for November 16th-17th, 2015, the visit coincides with the college's strategic planning cycle. As of the date of submission of this report, a final and complete strategic plan with subordinate plans related to facilities, human resources, academics, and technology has not been approved by Northwest Tech's governing Area Board. The college; however, can provide evidence to the HLC that significant progress has been made in demonstrating a planning model and in developing plans for facilities, human resources, academics, and technology.

Northwest Tech has adjusted its strategic direction and has revised its strategic goals in the current draft of its 2016-2017 Strategic Plan. The revised goals address four key strategic areas for the college to deliver on its mission, vision, values, and goals:

- Enrollment Growth
- Teaching and Learning
- Student Success
- Alliances and Partnerships

The college is in the process of developing plans for ensuring that each goal is achieved through strategies and initiatives that align with each goal, and that the initiatives are backed with investments in academics, facilities, technology, and human resources.

Northwest Tech's overall strategic approach will be to deliver sustained and managed enrollment growth in the future. In 2015-2016, the college, with its new programs, academic and athletic, as well as with its improved marketing and recruiting policies, has increased its full-time and concurrent student base to levels that fully support and sustain operations. The 2016-2017 Strategic Plan is being developed with full recognition of the challenges of sustaining new growth. Investments are being planned for new faculty, housing, student services, and student life. These investments are going to be in-line with anticipated revenue receipts and will be smartly managed with a coherent planning process. Northwest Tech is not afraid to say to the HLC that it is "in the middle" of planning what is expected to be an exciting set of opportunities in its future.

Assurance Argument
Northwest Kansas Technical College - KS

10/14/2015

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Argument

Core Component 1A

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

The [mission](#) of Northwest Kansas Technical College, (hereafter, Northwest Tech), is broadly understood within the institution. The mission guides college operations. The college has an annual process to promote the mission's understanding and implementation. Every member of the institution supports the mission documents. Statements of [mission, vision, values, and goals](#) are treated as mission documents. All who participate in the college's planning process strive to enact these principles. The mission documents guide the college.

The college provides quality education by offering programs that result in graduates who achieve Certificates of Completion, Technical Certificates, and Associate of Applied Science degrees. The college delivers general education courses that transfer to other post-secondary education institutions. The college is committed to its promises that encourage "*productive personal lives*" and "*lifelong learning*" by providing exceptional opportunities for personal growth and intellectual development for all students.

Core Component 1.A.1

The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.

Northwest Tech's mission statement has been developed through a process that is suited to the nature and culture of the institution. The statement's latest [reaffirmation](#), in August 2015, is an example of the process. The mission is discussed and reviewed throughout the organization and approved by the governing board annually. Upon review and approval, the mission is publicized widely to all members of the college. New faculty and staff are provided with the mission statement 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.

Mission documents are reviewed annually with an established four-step process that includes approval by faculty, staff, students, stakeholders, and the governing board. This approval process extends to Northwest Tech's purpose, vision, values, and [goals](#) all of which guide the setting of priorities and planning. The process begins with a review by faculty and staff. Next, the sixteen [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 by the Area [Board](#) of Control (hereafter, the Board) and [approved](#).

Northwest Tech recognizes that students may have professional objectives that do not necessarily involve technical careers as the college continues to become more diverse in its population and subsequent programs. Inclusion of the word "*professional*" in the mission statement in 2010 directed Northwest Tech to expand its general education offerings, develop numerous transfer and articulation agreements, and extend its range of program offerings.

The mission documents capture the culture of the college. Northwest Tech embraces education that is aimed at connecting "[mind, hand, and heart](#)". Faculty and staff often use this phrase to describe 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.

Core Component 1.A.2

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

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

Academic Programs

Northwest Tech offers [Associate of Applied Science degrees](#), [Technical Certificates](#), and [Certificates of Completion](#) in order to meet the diverse interests of its students as well as the needs of the regional skilled workforce. The array of programs encompasses four general interest areas that are managed in a divisional structure: Construction, Transportation, Information Technology, and Health and Human Services. General Education faculty who deliver coursework in language arts, mathematics, behavioral and social sciences, physical sciences, and computer literacy support these interest areas. These courses reinforce the college's commitment to students in every program to achieve [general education outcomes](#).

All programs are assessed annually to ensure consistency with mission statements. Faculty and industry collaborate in annual advisory committee meetings 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.

Northwest Tech has a program development process that links programs to the changing needs of employers with curriculum and program development. This process surveys what employers require

and investigates current and future needs for the workforce. Northwest Tech solicits advice and guidance about its program offerings in advisory committee meetings and in conversations with business and industry leaders. Each advisory committee meeting follows a structured [agenda](#) and [program validation forms](#) are completed along with [meeting minutes](#). This advice is integrated with national workforce and student interest data to identify areas for existing and new program development. Once local and regional industry needs are identified, then specific skills and knowledge are translated into programs, competencies, and curricula that ensure quality. New or modified program learning outcomes, skills, and competencies are reviewed and approved by the Curriculum and Assessment (C&A) Committee, which meets quarterly. In the case of a new program, curriculum is proposed and approved by the C&A [Committee](#), the [Board](#), and the [Kansas Board of Regents](#) (hereafter, KBOR).

Northwest Tech continues to develop new programs in response to the needs of industry for a skilled workforce. The [Mobile Applications and Entertainment Development](#) and [Crime Scene Investigation](#) programs are examples of how new program development takes shape within the college.

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 the preferences of leaders for preferred outcomes. Business leaders, college administrations, and faculty from across the state work to produce common programs with multiple exits (e.g. certificates, degrees), industry recognized credentials, and common course designs. This program facilitates transferable courses and programs of common lengths. Northwest Tech has completed this initiative for several of its programs: Automotive Technology, Carpentry, Collision Repair, Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology, Electrical, Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning, Medical Assistant, Respiratory Therapy and Welding.

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 and for transfer to four-year collegiate institutions.

Another important catalyst for change is advice from specific customers in business and industry who request specific training in particular disciplines or skills. Northwest Tech responds to industry with high-quality credit and non-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 Drivers License ([CDL](#)), Certified Nurse Aide ([CNA](#)), Certified Medication Aide ([CMA](#)), [Concealed Carry](#), and Emergency Medical Technician ([EMT](#)) training are examples of how Northwest Tech responds to the needs of stakeholders in its service area.

Support Services

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

Northwest Tech is an [open-admission](#) institution. The college welcomes all applicants and recognizes

that it has a responsibility to support 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.

Northwest Tech uses COMPASS, ACT, and SAT testing to [place applicants](#) into appropriate writing and mathematics classes. Some applicants may not be well prepared for successful collegiate work; in these cases a program of [remedial instruction](#) is developed and provided. Faculty members work with the student in remedial classes and provide tutoring to remove barriers to success.

Admitted students come to campus for registration and orientation, and are welcomed into the campus community. Students meet with academic advisers to ensure that courses taken match requirements of respective academic [programs](#), and [book](#) and [tool](#) lists are reviewed.

Every student receives the [college catalog](#) and a [program handbook](#). Instructors review policies and procedures during the first week of class. First year students receive additional guidance on study and life skills in a mandatory [Student Success Seminar](#).

Northwest Tech'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. If a student is identified to be at risk in either area there is initial counseling by program instructors, then with the Counselor or 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 [counseling services](#) or additional [accommodations](#).

Northwest Tech recognizes that students often require assistance with career planning, interviewing, and resume development. Career Services assists students with short and long term job opportunities, job placement, interviewing, and resume preparation. Employers are invited to campus for [interview days](#) during which students can showcase their skills to individual companies for long-term job placement.

Enrollment Profile

Northwest Tech's enrollment profile directly reflects how its mission of preparing individuals for "*gainful employment, productive personal lives, and lifelong learning*" guides the actions of the institution.

In 2014, 96% of graduates [reported](#) permanent employment, military entry, enrollment in another Northwest Tech program, or transferred to another educational institution.

Total enrollment continues to demonstrate a pattern of consistent growth. Over the past five years, [total enrollment](#) has more than doubled from 291 (fall 2009) to 647 (fall 2014). Of that latest number, 389 were registered as full-time students.

Diversity of full-time enrollment continues to grow with respect to gender and ethnicity, which

enhances campus culture. By 2014-2015, the [female percentage of students](#) had risen to 38%. By 2014-2015, 30% of the student population was of an [ethnicity other than Caucasian \(IPEDS 2014\)](#). The one-year decline in ethnic origin other than Caucasian in 2014-2015 can be traced largely to a one-year hiatus with women's soccer. This sport was reinstated in 2015-2016, and the college is making additional recruiting efforts to reach Hispanic markets.

Senate Bill 155, the Governor's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Bill, 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 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 2014-2015 fiscal year, the [student enrollment profile](#) indicated that 218 high school students participated in a program of concurrent enrollment with Northwest Tech.

Core Component 1.A.3

The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

The [FY'16-17 Strategic Plan](#) establishes four strategic goals:

- Enrollment Growth
- Teaching and Learning
- Student Success
- Alliances and Partnerships

All strategic goals support the mission and are backed with investments in facilities, technology, and human resources in order to achieve strategies and initiatives that align with each goal. Over [60% of the operational budget](#) is devoted to instructional services which is consistent with the college's mission.

Enrollment Growth

Over the past five years, the college has begun programs in Mobile Applications and Entertainment Development and Crime Scene Investigation. The college expanded the number and the transfer potential of courses in Business Technology, extended the number of specialized courses offered (e.g. CDL, CNA, CMA, Concealed Carry, EMT), increased its on-line course offerings, and improved the quality and range of general education courses offered. These changes have contributed to enrollment growth and allowed the college to expand well beyond its traditional student base. New program development will continue to be an important strategy for the college in the years ahead. The board has approved development of a program for precision agriculture to begin as early as fall 2016.

Athletic programs have made a substantial contribution to the campus community, not only because they have brought new students into the college, but also because they have stimulated a more diverse and student-centered campus. In FY 2014-2015, [153 students competed](#) in some form of athletic competition. Northwest Tech also expanded its athletic facilities with construction and subsequent opening of the Dr. Guy E. Mills Athletic and Academic Center.

Teaching and Learning

Northwest Tech continually invests in technology for quality student learning and classroom instruction. Resources are budgeted annually to provide programs with adequate resources, [equipment](#), and instructional materials. As a *recognized leader* in technical education, the college continually invests in technology. Significant investments are made in supporting classrooms with Apple TV equipment, wiring infrastructure, and associated hardware so that students receive audio-visual instruction in their programs. The college also executed several software and hardware upgrades to allow students better opportunities to complete academic assignments in the computer lab, the digital technology lab, and in the Max Alderman Library. Northwest Tech provides funding to maintain national accreditation of programs.

Northwest Tech also invests in faculty and staff to attract and retain [qualified](#) faculty. Over the past five years, the proportion of faculty holding advanced degrees has risen to 30%. The college provides [tuition reimbursement](#) for faculty to obtain bachelor level degrees. In 2013, the Board [approved](#) a salary enhancement for successful completion of the Masters degree. The college supports strong credentialing for program instructors. The college requires full-time general education instructors to have a minimum of a Masters degree. Adjunct faculty not holding a Masters degree have been notified and are required to file a professional development plan to complete a degree by Fall 2017.

HLC accreditation policies have provided an important impetus in providing students with higher education and services for future advancements in chosen careers. In relation to program accreditation, Northwest Tech budgets funds for faculty and staff to attend assessment and accreditation conferences, industry and specialized training conferences, as well as technology forums.

Northwest Tech has invested in assessment to provide feedback for instructors and the college about student skill attainment and employment. The [assessment](#) budget includes resources for an assessment coordinator, college attendance at conferences, end of program testing, COMPASS placement testing, WorkKeys testing, and state and national licensing examinations.

Student Success

The college invests in technology, human resources, and facilities to ensure student satisfaction and success. Northwest Tech replaced all desktop computers this summer and budgeted funds for evening computer laboratory hours so that student have improved computer access. Expanded bandwidth as well as iPad availability makes it possible for students to have 24/7 access to assignments and study materials. The college makes remedial courses and tutoring available for students.

Investment and attention to campus life begins with welcome week and continues throughout the year. Students may participate in campus-wide events throughout the year. First-year students participate in a [Student Success Seminar](#) that provides training and support in study and life skills.

Civility and tolerance are topics of discussion throughout campus. One of the strategies within Goal 3 of the FY'16-17 Strategic Plan focuses on [Civility and Tolerance](#).

Every effort is made to retain students so that they graduate with an AAS degree. Academic and attendance alerts are issued for students who are falling behind. The Dean of Students and the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs actively monitor these alerts and help to design interventions that promote retention and satisfaction.

Alliances and Partnerships

Northwest Tech invests considerable human resource time and talent to promote partnerships with

secondary and post-secondary institutions. Under SB 155 legislation, [concurrent and dual credit classes](#) serve almost 300 students with technical education in secondary (high school) institutions across northwest Kansas. The college also invests considerable human resource time and talent in developing [articulation agreements](#) that promote partnerships with post-secondary institutions.

The college collaborates with business and industry partners. The program advisory committees are an invaluable source of expert input into teaching, learning, and program development. Northwest Tech also receives considerable investment support from partnerships with industry in terms of scholarships, equipment, facilities, and recruiting.

Northwest Tech also participates in the greater Goodland community with human and facility investments for the Flatlander Festival, city and county leadership meetings, and civic organizations. The college community participates in Campus Candy, Salvation Army bell ringing, downtown Christmas lighting, and many other events.

Sources

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

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

Argument

Core Component 1B

The mission is articulated publicly.

Many of the college's forms and documents refer to the [mission documents](#) which are comprised of mission, vision, values, and goals that guide the college's planning and daily operations. Northwest Tech uses promotional materials to familiarize faculty, staff, students, and the general public with the mission documents.

Core Component 1.B.1.

The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.

Mission information can be found in readily accessible locations such as the college's website, the college catalog, and every campus building. Printed versions of mission documents are available upon request. The mission documents are distributed and discussed with current employees each year.

When employees represent Northwest Tech in a public capacity, it provides an opportunity to incorporate key elements of the mission into public remarks. For example, the college sponsors a "Tech Talk" program on local radio. These appearances have become an important means for disseminating the mission, vision, values, and goals of the college to the larger community. The admissions staff includes the mission, vision, and values into the college's verbal and [electronic presentations](#) to potential applicants and students. Annual [advisory committee meetings](#) with industry representation allow for explicit discussions of the mission documents.

Northwest Tech makes every effort to be available to the local community through open houses, [speakers](#), and other public events. Many college facilities and conference rooms are also available for rental or no-fee use by the general public, local companies, and other organizations. At every opportunity, the college mentions its mission, vision, values, and goals to groups and individuals who visit the college.

The mission of Northwest Tech is clear, widely disseminated, and well known by its constituents.

The mission is available publicly through a variety of channels and influences day-to-day campus activities.

Core Component 1.B.2

The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.

In addition to the mission statement, two other mission documents, the [vision statement](#) and the [statement of values](#), demonstrate how the college emphasizes aspects of its mission.

Vision Statement

Northwest Tech's vision as a forward thinking, premier leader in career and technical education is to maximize learning through progressive technology and facilities, collaborations, and professional experiences that foster lifelong learning in a diverse global society.

By offering 16 programs in specialized areas, Northwest Tech is achieving its vision to be the leading provider of technical higher education in the region. Northwest Tech students receive relevant training with state-of-the-art technology. Such training 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.

Northwest Tech's vision is to be a forward thinking leader in career and technical education. The college maximizes student learning through its continuous investments in instructional technology for teaching and learning. Every faculty member receives an iPad and a MacBook with training sessions to integrate technology into instruction. Every student purchases an iPad to support and enhance learning. Classrooms have been outfitted with high definition televisions, and every department has at least one classroom where the television is linked to an Apple TV. This allows for faculty and students to wirelessly share content from their devices. Strategically placed wireless connections make it possible to access the Internet anywhere on campus. This leverages the substantial hardware investment for use in 24/7 learning and makes it possible for the college to have a "technologically connected" campus. Even on days when classes are cancelled, faculty and students are able to engage in teaching and learning via Electronic Days or "e-days" which are delivered entirely using the iPad.

The college also has invested by equipping [several labs](#) including the Resource Center, Library, Administration Computer Lab, and two labs in Digital Technology with Apple desktops that have dual Apple and Windows interfaces making it possible for faculty to teach using a wide range of applications from technology for the seventeen diverse programs of study. During each of the past five years, Apple has recognized Northwest Tech for its advances in educational technology. Apple has showcased Northwest Tech on its [Apple Education website](#) as a model for other colleges to emulate. In 2012, Apple presented Northwest Tech with the [Apple Distinguished Program Award](#), and the college was the first two-year, post-secondary institution to receive this honor. Apple also awarded Northwest Tech with the coveted designation of an [Apple Distinguished School](#). In 2015, Northwest Tech received its first [Apple Distinguished Educator](#) award for innovation in teaching and learning with technology.

Northwest Tech emphasizes integration of technology and collaboration into instruction. Faculty members have access to use an on-line classroom management system ([Moodle](#)). This makes it possible for students to have 24-hour access to classroom materials and instruction. It encourages

teacher-student transparency in instructional interactions and evaluations. It also makes it possible for program instructors to work collaboratively with general education faculty, coaches, and administration to support and encourage student performance.

Northwest Tech emphasizes application of technology into new fields of study. The college has developed two new programs that heavily incorporate technology, Mobile Application and Entertainment Development and Crime Scene Investigation. Mobile Application Development is a two-year program preparing students to develop, program, and code games and applications for iOS devices. This program addresses the growing market for mobile IT solutions and offers graduates the opportunity to develop and sell products and services to that market. Crime Scene Investigation is a two-year program that educates students in the collection and preparation of forensic evidence. CSI training is excellent preparation for careers in law enforcement and criminal justice. Students practice integration of technology into investigative police work with the use of the iPad, computers, and digital photography.

Statement of Values

Through the Statement of Values, Northwest Tech demonstrates its emphasis on five core values in commitment to: learning, quality, integrity, service, and diversity.

Northwest Tech encourages lifelong learning and higher education with students and faculty alike. Articulation [agreements](#) continue to be developed to allow students more opportunities to transfer. Faculty members continue to pursue additional education. Faculty must submit [plans for professional development](#) for which funds are budgeted annually.

Northwest Tech 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, credentials, and program certifications](#). Expectations set by these organizations ensure that programs meet or exceed industry standards. The college has a consistent record of performance as recognized by the Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program which evaluates community and technical colleges in three areas: (1) student success in persistence, completion, and transfer; (2) consistent improvement in outcomes over time; and (3) equity in outcomes for students of all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Northwest Tech's record of performance resulted in the Aspen Institute naming the college as one of the [top 120 two-year institutions](#) in the nation for four consecutive years. The college encourages performance by its students through participation in the National Technical Honor Society. Students are nominated for admission into the society by faculty, and student achievements are recognized at graduation.

Northwest Tech 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 organizations. Students have the opportunity to join organizations such as Circle K that sponsor reading programs with local elementary school students. The college also sponsors departmental clubs 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. During the 2014-2015 academic year, over 90% of students

received some form of [financial assistance](#). The college also strives to improve the age diversity of its student population with [on-line education](#), [summer session](#), and [evening](#) and [weekend](#) classes for non-traditional students. The college also works with [outside agencies](#) to encourage non-traditional student enrollments.

Core Component 1.B.3

The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

The primary constituency for the educational programs and services offered by Northwest Tech include students and employers from surrounding communities in Northwest Kansas, Southeast Colorado, and Southwest Nebraska. The college recently has increased the number of students coming from other states and other nations.

Students

Student success is the college's focus. The college provides students with high quality technical and professional education in diverse fields. The technical education is enhanced by broad preparation in general education. Northwest Tech's programs prepare individuals for gainful employment, lifelong learning, and productive personal lives.

Northwest Tech commits substantial resources to ensure that students are technically competent and workforce ready. The college annually [reviews instructional materials](#) with program advisory committees to ensure they are current. The college also reviews the equipment used in classes (e.g. machines, tools, laboratory materials, simulators) with the program advisory committees annually to ensure that they meet or exceed business and industry standards. These reviews are taken seriously by faculty who are committed to meeting student competencies that are informed and enhanced by recommendations from advisory committees.

Program advisory committees [validate course content](#). Often there is explicit discussion of how best to create a classroom experience that is realistic and meets industry standards. Students receive realistic projects as part of technical training enhancing knowledge and skills. Students have the opportunity to hear [guest speakers](#) regarding topics relevant to a particular program.

All college programs offer students an Associates of Applied Science (AAS) degree option. During the initial registration process, students are encouraged to pursue the AAS degree. A matriculated student obtains skills that can lead to a technical career. In addition to technical preparation, the college is committed to providing general education courses that develop verbal, quantitative, and critical thinking skills as well as computer literacy. Civil engagement is encouraged for all students. Coursework provides students with broad learning opportunities that strengthen personal and professional preparation.

Employers

An important constituency of Northwest Tech is employers. The college ensures that it meets the needs of business and industry through regular program advisory committee meetings and through guidance and assistance for students in securing employment. All students receive training in resume preparation and cover letter development through [English Composition I](#) and [Technical Writing](#). As a component of the Student Success Seminar, Career Services offers a class on interview skills and reviews resumes and cover letters. The college holds regular [interview days](#) with industry to help

students consider and secure job opportunities. Many programs offer networking and interviewing days that supplement the efforts of the college. Several programs, notably Computer Graphics, extend the interviewing assistance to students by helping them create portfolios of their work that can be used to demonstrate knowledge skills and dispositions to employers. Internship opportunities are available in some programs.

Northwest Tech's record of graduates securing [gainful employment](#) shows that 86% of the 2014 students either secured employment or chose to pursue continuing education. The average starting salary for those securing employment was \$27,480 and several program graduates had average starting salaries above \$30,000.

Community

Another primary constituency of Northwest Tech is the community at large. The college's service area covers 17 counties containing 24 school districts. The college President travels to several school board meetings during each academic year to discuss the college's mission, vision, values, and goals. The Assistant Vice President of Outreach visits each district to promote enrollment of high school students in college technical and general education classes. College admission office representatives also continually travel to each area school district to inform students of the educational opportunities at Northwest Tech. Representatives from the service area connect students with the schools and districts that they serve.

In addition, the college provides outreach to the community by offering special programs, [courses](#), and events. Northwest Tech has delivered programs such as the American Traditions Speaker Series where community leaders are invited to discuss topics of civic interest. As an example, the [Governor of Kansas](#) served as a speaker for the series. The college also provides community education courses.

Northwest Tech cares about the economic development of the region. College officials regularly meet with community leaders to discuss ways to promote the development of Goodland and Sherman County. As an example, the [Young Farmers Luncheon](#) was aimed at bringing future rural leaders together to discuss their contributions to the future of the area.

Northwest Tech students, staff, and faculty are encouraged to participate in college activities and community organizations. The college hosts several events to promote community service including; [Red Cross Blood Drive](#), Salvation Army Bell Ringing, [Adopt a Highway](#), [Breast Cancer Awareness](#), and [Multiple Sclerosis Awareness](#).

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1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Argument

Core Component 1C

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

Northwest Tech appreciates the connection between its mission and society's diversity. The college enjoys the rich cultural impact a diverse student body brings to campus. The college values diversity and takes explicit action to demonstrate this commitment. Northwest Tech fulfills its commitment to diversity with open-admissions policies for applicants, recruitment policies and practices for potential students, hiring practices for faculty and staff, campus activities, course offerings, and interaction with the community.

Core Component 1.C.1

The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

Northwest Tech addresses its role in a multicultural society with its policies, programs, activities, and course offerings. The best example of these is the college's open-admissions policy. The college accepts all students who are willing to learn and who can benefit from programs, and welcomes and encourages prospective students to apply and enroll. The college adheres to its [non-discrimination policy](#). Examples of the attention to diversity are evident in the [admissions policy](#), [procedures for international students](#), [request for information cards for prospective students](#), and the [application form](#) for entry for admissions to the college.

Northwest Tech's Student Services personnel support the open-admissions policy with a specific [procedure](#) for providing guidance to applicants about financial aid, transcripts, housing, program requirements, and reminders for important due dates. 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.

Northwest Tech addresses its role in a multicultural society with programs and activities directed towards celebrating diversity. The college is a member of the [Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities](#) (HACU). 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 come to campus to promote multiculturalism, tolerance, and a better understanding of diversity in society. As an example, the college has hosted the [Kansas Latino Youth Conference](#) the past two years.

Northwest Tech strives to promote a safe campus environment. The college maintains compliance

with the Clery Act and employs a campus security team. The Dean of Students collects and reports crime statistics, maintains a public crime log, and provides warnings and [trainings](#) for campus safety. The college has [sexual harassment](#), [bullying](#), and [non-discrimination](#) policies that are widely disseminated to students, faculty, and staff. In-service training and review of policies occurs throughout the year to ensure all faculty, staff, and students are aware of these policies.

Northwest Tech recognizes its role to prepare 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 [American Traditions](#) project is a multifaceted effort to ensure that Northwest Tech students graduate with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be active, engaged, and civic-minded members of the communities in which they live. 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 diverse clientele. Other programs make similar efforts in coursework and training to enhance sensitivity to diversity.

Core Component 1.C.2

The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

In the past, Northwest Tech attracted a predominantly male Caucasian enrollment. Since 2009, the college has effectively recruited a higher minority and underrepresented population. There are two primary explanations for change in the composition of the student body: 1) the addition of athletic programs and 2) improvements made in marketing and recruitment practices.

Athletic recruitment has made it possible to attract a more diverse pool of applicants. The addition of [athletic programs](#) in soccer, basketball, wrestling, track and field, and dance, has made it possible to appeal to applicants regionally, nationally, and even internationally.

Changes in recruiting and marketing also have enhanced the diverse composition of the student body. Admissions has expanded the overall number of recruiting locations visited annually, and in the process, has reached underrepresented populations in much greater numbers. In 2015, the admission staff made several trips outside the college's normal service area of western Kansas, western Nebraska, and eastern Colorado to include the metropolitan areas of Colorado, Northwestern Oklahoma and the panhandle of Texas. The college is improving its effort to reach more applicants in southwestern Kansas, in towns such as Garden City, Dodge City, and Liberal, where proportions of Hispanic residents approach or [exceed 50%](#). Northwest Tech advertises using Hispanic media and language in Garden City and Dodge City to build interest.

Admissions revised its system of following up on prospective requests for information, instituted telephone calling plans, and sent out reminder cards to encourage a large number of applications. The college consistently draws applicants from families for whom higher education is a new option. Constant contact from admissions has encouraged many more potential students from underrepresented populations to apply. Marketing changes also have helped. The college's [website](#) has been revised to become more user-friendly and navigable for applicants. The college has improved its social media presence on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). This effort has led to greater

interaction with potential students throughout the application process.

Non-traditional students are another contributing factor towards a more diverse campus. Perkins IV 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." Northwest Tech has served non-traditional students for many years.

Northwest Tech recognizes economic diversity in its student population. During FY 2013-2014, which is the most recently audited financial aid report, 275 students qualified for Pell grants, and 529 were granted student loans. The college distributed over \$3.4 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.

Northwest Tech also supports students who may not be academically prepared for program success. All incoming students are placed in general education classes based upon COMPASS, ACT, or SAT scores. If a student's scores indicate a weak background in writing or mathematics, that student is placed into a developmental course to remedy the deficiency before attempting the required course in that area. The college also staffs the Resource Center and Library and provides "[open lab](#)" hours and tutoring in the Digital Technology building so students can receive assistance with assignments.

Consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Northwest Tech 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 Assistant Vice-President of Academic Affairs coordinates reasonable accommodations, advocates for an accessible learning environment, and encourages self-advocacy and personal responsibility on the part of students with disabilities. The process is designed to ensure that all students have equal access and opportunity.

[Senate Bill 155](#) is another contributor to diversity at Northwest Tech. This state sponsored program, which pays tuition for high school students if they pursue technical education courses, has brought many students to the college for coursework.

The wide range of programs, degrees, and certificates offered by the college contributes to diversity, and serves students who may 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 further develop articulation agreements.

Northwest Tech attends to human diversity with appropriate policies, procedures, and programs. The college welcomes students, employers, and individuals not only from the immediate seventeen county area that it serves in Kansas, but also from all parts of the state, nation, and the global community.

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1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

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

Argument

Core Component 1D

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

Northwest Tech's mission documents demonstrate how the college meets its commitment to the public. One of the school's five values makes a [commitment to service](#) that directly addresses the public good. Northwest Tech supports its mission commitment by hosting community events such as those that promote the health and wellness of the community, community recreation, continuing education, and opportunities for civic engagement.

Core Component 1.D.1

Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

Northwest Tech offers outreach to the community with programs and services that reflect understanding of its obligation to serve the public. The college contributes to the community by offering continuing education courses, supporting community health, wellness and recreation efforts, and opening physical facilities for meetings and services by other community groups.

The college recognizes the public good in its educational role by offering continuing education courses and classes including [CMA](#) (Certified Medical Assistant), [CNA](#) (Certified Nursing Assistant), [CDL](#) (Commercial Drivers License), [EMT](#) (Emergency Medical Technician), and [Concealed Carry](#). Coursework varies according to area of interest, but all are open to the community.

An important extension of the college's community education effort is the enrollment of high school students in Northwest Tech coursework under Senate Bill 155 that was passed into law in 2012. The bill provides state funds to stimulate growth in career and technical education at both secondary and post-secondary levels in Kansas. In response to the bill, Northwest Tech has worked with area high schools to provide an opportunity for students to take college level technical coursework.

Participating programs include: Welding, Carpentry, Computer Graphics, Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology, and Engineering Technology. During 2014-2015, 218 high school students enrolled in technical coursework under the [Senate Bill 155 program](#). The college also has worked to advertise the availability of college general education concurrent coursework for high school students. During

2014-2015, 117 students enrolled in these classes.

Northwest Tech's collaboration with community health and wellness agencies includes sponsorship and use of facilities for the Goodland Regional Medical Center Health Fair. This fair encourages preventative medical care and includes heart and blood pressure screening. A second health and wellness effort is the annual [Blood Drive](#) held in cooperation with the American Red Cross. The college provides a central facility for the Blood Drive and donates time and services of students across campus. The college's third health and wellness effort is sponsorship of a ["The Biggest Loser"](#) competition. The competition forms teams to compete in weight loss. The competition serves as a fundraiser for the men's wrestling team, but the community is able to participate and assemble teams for the competition. Publicity surrounding the event promotes the benefits of losing weight supporting community health and wellness.

Northwest Tech provides opportunity for community recreation. 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. Northwest Tech'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. Northwest Tech'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. The college's dance team practices at the Right Combination Dance Studio, which is a local Goodland business, and the studio's dance team performs at home games for the college's athletic teams. The community has been very supportive of the college's sport programs. The local radio station broadcasts many of the college basketball and soccer games. Home basketball games, soccer games and wrestling matches draw strong community attendance.

Community use of the college's physical facilities extends beyond athletics. Northwest Tech regularly makes the Memorial Union available for Lions, Rotary, and Kiwanis Club meetings, and the college's cafeteria prepares meals for those meetings. During a recent remodeling project for Goodland USD, the school district used the college's facilities for concerts and conferences. Leadership Kansas holds annual meetings on the college campus. During their meeting, the college is afforded the opportunity to showcase the college.

Northwest Tech promotes civic engagement. The college makes a major commitment to the area's [Flatlander Festival](#). This annual Goodland event celebrates the area's hospitality, hometown pride and community spirit. The festival joins different community groups, each holding separate events, over a three-day period in September. Several college programs offer activities and food for attendees and games for children. The college is one of the largest contributors to the festival. Departments often use Flatlander activities for fundraising opportunities and promotion of the college.

In addition to the Flatlanders commitment, college programs sponsor events throughout the year such as the annual [Campus Candy](#) event held on campus in conjunction with Halloween. Community children and adults are invited to campus, which provides a safe environment to celebrate the occasion. Programs construct a "haunted house" for children to enjoy. Other departments have donated candy, time, and talent so that area children can show off their costumes and have fun. Students in Circle K sponsor a jack-o-lantern carving contest for this event.

Other program efforts have included the Cosmetology and Computer Graphics jointly sponsoring a "pink out" event to raise awareness of [breast cancer](#). Respiratory Therapy department [adopts](#) a section of a local highway for cleanup and beautification. In the fall of 2015, [Carpentry](#) is completing a new duplex at the Wheat Ridge complex for senior citizens and beginning a new four-home construction project in collaboration with the city of Goodland. [Electrical Technology](#) regularly donates assistance

in stringing downtown lights for Goodland's holiday decorations.

There are other civic events that call upon the whole campus community to contribute. Every holiday season, students, faculty, and staff donate time to ring bells at Wal-Mart for the Salvation Army. [Students regularly assist](#) local grade school students with reading. There are many opportunities for the campus and the students to contribute to the community.

Core Component 1.D.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, Northwest Tech takes its fiduciary responsibility to the people of Kansas 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, or returns on college fund investments, the college strives to use its resources to further the mission, vision, values and goals of the college.

Approximately [40% of school revenues](#) come from state aid, and from state and federal grants. Because these revenues are provided in support to educational responsibilities, Northwest Tech cannot make expenditures that would conflict with educational mission or the public interest.

Over 60% of Northwest Tech's resources are [aimed at academics](#). Academic expenditures are defined as faculty salary and benefits, instructional materials and technology, equipment, new program development, professional development, and program accreditation.

Northwest Tech sees its fiscal role as being that of a responsible and efficient steward for the community. Responsible stewardship demands thoughtful and reasonable cost controls. The college employs such controls by competitively bidding contracts, maintaining facilities and equipment in a prudent and responsible way, and reviewing all requests for new equipment and instructional space annually and competitively. Responsible stewardship demands effective cash management. The President and the Chief Financial Officer regularly review the college's [budget](#). Expenditures are monitored closely with a system of purchase orders, invoices, and cash controls. The Board reviews and approves expenditures at each regular monthly meeting. The college has an annual external audit, which is reviewed with the Board.

Responsible stewardship demands efficiency. Recent initiatives towards efficiency have included replacement of inefficient light fixtures with low-consumption fixtures, reductions in paper use in favor of wireless document sharing, better scheduling of on-line and on-ground faculty, development of curricula to attract and retain more students, and reductions in staff and faculty when warranted.

Northwest Tech has an explicit policy regarding [conflict of interest](#). A conflict is defined when a person is responsible for promoting the interest of the college at the same time that person is involved in a competing interest, whether it be financial, business, or personal. This is another safeguard on the primacy of educational interests where the welfare of Northwest Tech is involved.

Core Component 1.D.3

The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Northwest engages with its external stakeholders and responds appropriately in relation to the college's mission, resources, and capacity.

Program advisory committees support the college's engagement and involvement with employers. The advisory committees represent structured relationships between the college and employers. The committees demonstrate mutual engagement, shared decision-making, and vision in action. Advisory committees provide invaluable [guidance](#) and insight for programs. Guidance includes direct input for learning outcomes, student competencies, curricula, classroom materials, student exercises, and capital expenditures. Input from the advisory committees makes it possible for employers to provide advice directly to the college. This input allows Northwest Tech to strengthen graduate preparation to better serve regional businesses and industries. Some employers allow students to gain practical experience from internships. Computer Graphics and Communications Technology have well-developed [internship programs](#), and work experience counts toward fulfilling the degree requirements.

Individual programs at Northwest Tech are engaged with constituencies in the surrounding communities. For example, Respiratory Therapy offers its program with the active support and encouragement of medical sites that allow students to gain clinical experience. The Medical Assistant program has similar arrangements with [medical sites](#) to provide field practicum for students. The college actively collaborates with area USD school superintendents through the [Small School Alliance](#) that meets several times on campus throughout the academic year. Economic development of Sherman County is promoted with the college's effort to collaborate with the City of Goodland and the Sherman County Commission. The college also host monthly meetings with city and hospital leadership to enhance communication and collaboration.

The college maintains active contact with alumni through networking and surveys. The college works with the philanthropic community through the Northwest Tech Endowment. The endowment advances the college's mission by soliciting private donations for scholarships, facilities, and academic programs. The college holds an endowment [fundraiser](#) annually. The college recently celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. The large number of donors to that event speaks to the breadth of the college's support from individuals, businesses, and organizations in the service area and beyond.

Northwest Tech encourages civic and community [participation](#) by faculty and staff. Members of college faculty and staff belong to various organization such as, the Goodland USD 352 School Board, the Goodland Regional Hospital Board, Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, Leadership Sherman County, and Leadership Kansas.

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

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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Northwest Tech has clear and current mission documents that state its mission, vision, values, and goals. These documents guide the operations of the college.

Northwest Tech's mission is broadly understood within the institution. There is a well-articulated annual review process through which all relevant constituencies discuss and subscribe to the goals of encouraging "*professional and technical careers*", "*productive personal lives*" and "*lifelong learning*." The review process is systematic and thorough so that mission, vision, values, and goals ground the college.

Northwest Tech supports its mission, vision, values, and goals through academic offerings, student support services, enrollment policies and procedures. The college offers seventeen distinct degree programs that are responsive to the needs of students, business, and industry. The college provides unique academic offerings to address the needs of the community. It is an open-admission educational institution that demonstrates care and concern for students. Student support services are particularly attentive and responsive to the needs of diverse populations. Planning and budgeting priorities and processes are aligned with mission statements. Resources are allocated in relation to priorities and values.

Northwest Tech articulates mission, vision, values, and goals to all constituencies. The college makes every effort to communicate its vision of becoming a "forward thinking, premier leader in career and technical education." The college backs up vision with investment in educational technology, training, and integration of technology into instruction. The college attends to values of learning, quality, integrity, service, and diversity.

Northwest Tech has improved its diversity in recent years. The college now has a diverse student population with national and international enrollments. The college continues to make concerted efforts to attract, recruit, and retain historically underrepresented populations. The college provides a welcoming and supporting environment for the diverse student population.

Northwest Tech also demonstrates commitment to the public good. The college understands that it is a member of larger academic community, and consequently offers a wide range of opportunities for education and service to its students, faculty, and the community at large. The college sponsors interaction with the community in educational offerings, and it supports many community health, wellness, recreation, and civic programs that allow for service.

Northwest Tech has a strong record with respect to this criterion, but the future will not be without challenges:

- Almost 40% of the college's total revenues are supplied by funds from the State of Kansas. Given the state's current fiscal position, future state funding may be impacted. Northwest Tech has been vigilant with respect to expenditures and has deliberately worked to preserve strong fund balances. The college has endeavored to grow enrollment to offset decline in post secondary aid. The college seeks to find efficiency in operations whenever possible. As an example, in 2015-2016, the college retained an independent contractor for cafeteria services to provide stronger cost control while providing quality food service to students, faculty, and staff.
- Population growth and median income in Northwest Tech's service area lag state and national averages. Median population age continues to increase. In response the college is working to import population by recruiting and graduating out-of-service area students. Northwest Tech's Career Services strives to place graduates in local and area positions.
- As the college improves marketing and recruiting efforts, enrollment is forecast to rise. The college will need to provide strong supportive services for an increasing student population. This is essential for matriculation, retention, graduation, and eventual job placement.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

Argument

Core Component 2.A

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

Northwest Tech operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and support functions. The college has a simple slogan to capture operational ethic, *"Be Smart, Work Hard. Do the Right Thing."* Doing the right thing means students, faculty, and staff will act ethically and do what is right, fair, and honest. The ethic encourages mutual respect, active discussion and open transparency within the college's operation.

Northwest Tech 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. Catalogs and handbooks are reviewed by the Board and by program advisory committees annually. One recent example is the revision to the [sexual harassment policy](#) that was strengthened in June 2015 with [Board approval](#).

Financial Operations

Northwest Tech has policies and procedures for setting budgets, [requesting expenditures](#), [collecting payment and disbursing funds](#). Northwest Tech's finances are [audited annually and independently](#) by a certified accounting firm 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. Northwest Tech received clean audits for its [2012-2013](#), and [2013-2014](#) fiscal years.

Northwest Tech 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](#)) and the Rocky Mountain Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (RMASFAA). KASF provides training on federal regulations and policies to ensure student financial aid is awarded in a fair and equitable manner to all students. Financial aid administrators also attend these training sessions via webinars.

Academic Operations

Northwest Tech ensures that its students receive a superior education and are treated fairly, equitably, and transparently.

Members of faculty drive the ethical training within program orientations designed for students. Students receive [program handbooks](#) and expectations are transparent. [Competencies](#) for performance are presented in each program handbook by course. Students sign off to ensure that they have received the respective information.

Expectations for faculty interaction with students are discussed annually at in-service. The discussion is reinforced with the on-line distribution of the employee handbook that details expectations for ethical behavior in academic matters.

Northwest Tech offers an educational guarantee that is published in the college catalog. This policy, the [Limited Warranty to Employers](#), 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.

Northwest Tech ensures that faculty protects the grading privacy of its students. 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 waive [FERPA](#) rights before any faculty or staff may speak with family members about student grades or performance. Privacy protection extends to the classroom. Faculty members are instructed not to discuss individual grades of students except in private one-on-one discussions.

Personnel Operations

Northwest Tech follows federal and state hiring practices and is an [equal opportunity employer](#). Position descriptions are written for all positions. Northwest Tech seeks to hire the most qualified applicant when filling positions. Open positions are [posted and advertised](#) through appropriate channels such as the college website, HigherEdJobs.com, other local state, and national media. Applications are reviewed for appropriate education and work experience. A formal interview process follows which may include an initial phone screening, in-person interview with standardized [questions](#) to ensure fair treatment to all candidates and reference checks.

Northwest Tech rewards performance in the classroom. Faculty members may be eligible for tenure. Northwest Tech follows state tenure laws. The President recommends all tenure decisions based upon annual [teaching evaluations](#), [student evaluations](#), and service contributions. The Board makes final decisions regarding employment.

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

Northwest Tech's policies adhere to the [Clery Act](#), and to Homeland Security/Emergency Management regulations. These [policies](#) are contained in the college catalog that students receive during annual program orientation and through the website. Faculty members review these policies

annually during in-service, division meetings, and general faculty meetings.

Support Operations

Support functions are considered as those enhancing the well being of students. This includes student life, housing, security, counseling and advising and health services.

Northwest Tech sets clear expectations for ethical behavior with students in relation to faculty and support personnel. [Program handbooks](#) are created for all 16 programs. Each spells out expectations for [ethical behavior](#) and each is distributed to students electronically on the first day of class.

The [Maverick "Code of Conduct"](#) also outlines what behavior and dispositions are expected from students. The code is contained within the College Catalog.

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 and resolution of issues. The Dean of Students handles appeals, and records are maintained for all appeals. These processes can be used for civil rights, harassment, and other formal complaints and grievances. Special procedures also are available for [sexual harassment](#), [rights to privacy](#), and [suspension from financial aid](#).

A [formal complaint](#) process follows applicable laws and is managed by the President's office that documents complaints, recording timelines, and final resolution results. Resolutions are kept in a complaint file for the time in which the student is enrolled. These records can be reviewed only through special request. Northwest Tech maintains a student complaint log in compliance with federal laws.

Northwest Tech provides students with a fair housing [contract](#) and a housing [handbook](#) that outlines rights and responsibilities for all student residents. The Dean of Students 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.

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.

Area Board of Control Operations

The Board meets monthly according to a [schedule](#) that is published in advance, and the Board abides by Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA). [Board meetings](#) follow a democratic process that allows for approval of minutes, financial statements, and general items. The meetings follow a process of discussing the regular business of Northwest Tech 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, to oversee the daily operations of the organization, and to meet all Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) requirements. Each meeting includes the [President's report](#) (typically labeled as KTEA / KBOR / KATC report) to inform and update the board regarding college financial, legal and academic matters.

The Board reorganizes annually. During reorganization, the Board appoints legal council. Northwest Tech works to assure that it complies with state and federal legal requirements. [Audit](#) information and [Board minutes](#) are available to the public by request.

Cabinet Operations

The Cabinet meets weekly to discuss current and future issues, directives, and plans to guide the college. The full Cabinet includes: President, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Information Officer, Athletic Director, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Assistant Vice President for Outreach, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, Director of Admissions, Registrar, and Director of Endowment. The Cabinet is responsible for ensuring that the college operates in a fair, consistent, and ethical manner in day-to-day operations. The college implements the decisions of the Board, and it makes day-to-day policy decisions that guide the ethical action of the college.

Faculty Operations

Northwest Tech follows an [organizational structure](#) that groups programs into four divisions: Transportation, Information Technology, Health and Human Services, and Construction. General Education faculty members are assigned to each of the divisions to ensure their participation in governance. The division [meetings](#) ensure that standards for fair and ethical behavior are maintained among students and faculty. Division chairs meet with the administration monthly at the [Faculty/President meeting](#). There also is a [campus-wide monthly meeting](#) for all faculty and staff personnel in which ethical issues that affect the campus may be discussed.

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

Argument

Core Component 2.B

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

Northwest Tech maintains high standards for presenting itself accurately and honestly to prospective students, current students, and to the public at large. Over the past year, [new procedures](#) have been established for recruiting and marketing. These procedures guarantee even higher levels of interaction and transparency with prospective students and the public at large.

The Director of Admissions guides recruitment for new students and coordinates [marketing](#) efforts. Admissions recruits prospective applicants, makes presentations at high schools and public events, maintains the college's website, disseminates all electronic communications, and sponsors campus events to enhance student life.

Northwest Tech uses the [website](#) to disseminate and publicize information. The website has become a repository of information about the college for prospective students and the community at large. 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, and that navigation within the site is intuitive and transparent.

Northwest Tech is publicized widely through social media channels such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). Today's students want and expect to be reached through social media. Social media provide the college with new opportunities to communicate clearly, accurately, and frequently with prospective students. The college has begun using a communication tool, Constant Contact, to provide management tools for e-mail and social media efforts beginning in Fall 2015.

The college also markets itself through print media. Admission recruiters visit high schools and college fairs over a five state area, and [presentations](#) are given to prospective students. Prospective students are provided with a "[view book](#)" that summarizes the seventeen academic programs and provides overviews of student and campus life. If a prospect indicates interest in the college, it is followed up with a mailing that contains a more detailed discussion of the college's features and costs. [Program information sheets](#) provide information about a particular program of interest, and a step-by-step [application process](#). If a prospect wishes to make a campus visit, then the prospective student may participate in a "Shadow Day" to visit programs of interest, attend classes, and speak with students and instructors about the college and its programs. The college also holds campus-wide events to interest prospective students in technical education, including [Technology Exploration Day](#), where local high schools students visit individual programs, and [6th Grade Day](#), where area middle school students are introduced to the Northwest Tech's programs.

Major publications such as the [college catalog](#), recruiting [presentations](#) and [Program Handbooks](#) are presented on an annual basis to faculty, staff, administration, and the Board for approval before dissemination to prospective students at large.

Northwest Tech recognizes that it has a responsibility to provide accurate and timely information to students currently enrolled in programs. Every effort is made to ensure students have active electronic links to all relevant materials about the college's mission, vision, values, goals, and campus-wide policies and procedures through the college catalog.

Completeness and transparency is reinforced at the program level. Every instructional program has a defined program mission, goal statements, and learner outcomes that are consistent with the organization's mission. All are detailed in [Program Handbooks](#). The handbooks set forth program expectations and policies as well as program learner outcomes and competency profiles by course. If programs are accredited by an outside agency, including [Cosmetology](#), [Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology](#), [Medical Assistant](#), and [Respiratory Therapy](#), then rules and regulations for receiving credentials are disclosed within the program handbooks and reinforced by faculty in classroom instruction.

Faculty provide classroom and course information in a [syllabus](#) for each course in the electronic learning management system at the beginning of each course. Students have immediate electronic access to information about course requirements, assignments, and grading policies. Faculty members are accessible to students through e-mail, phone, and specified office hours.

Staff and support personnel provide transparency with complete disclosure in terms of program costs, housing and dining options, and campus-wide events in print and electronic formats. There is a net price and cost calculator to assist students in making financial calculations on the website. Students have immediate access to grades and receive unofficial transcripts through [Empower](#), which is the college's student information system. Potential [employment opportunities](#) for students are posted on the college website.

The college continually evaluates internal and external communications and the policies and procedures that support Northwest Tech's recognition as a leader in career and technical education. In Fall 2009, the Cabinet began a concerted effort to extend and improve communication with the surrounding region, specifically focusing on the community of Goodland, so that the immediate area would become more aware of what the college offers. The college installed an electronic [sign](#) at a major highway intersection visible to the community and visitors to Goodland. The president makes regular visits to USD board meetings within the college's service area to promote mission, vision, values, and goals as well as to inform USD boards about programs, policies, and procedures. Other initiatives that improve communication with the community include 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.

The Higher Learning Commission has accredited Northwest Tech since 2007. Northwest Tech maintains [active links on its website](#) to the HLC site. It also provides active links to major HLC reports, such as the 2012 Self Study Report, in which the college received its most recent full accreditation.

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Argument

Core Component 2.C

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

The governing Board of Northwest Tech is autonomous and makes its decisions in the best interests of the college.

Autonomy is guaranteed by the geographic composition of the Board. The Board is comprised of one member appointed by each of the 24 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. 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 the nine Board members. All members of the Board may vote. This ensures autonomous and democratic decision-making in support of the best interests of the college and assures ethics and integrity in board action.

Core Component 2.C.1

The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

The Board is focused on the mission and the welfare of the college. State funding is one recent issue that demonstrates the Board's autonomy in preserving and enhancing the institution. The Kansas Board of Regents has approved a tiered-funding formula that was intended to provide additional resources to post-secondary technical education. Thus far, Northwest Tech has not been a recipient of any new post-secondary funding. Since the implementation of the tiered-funding formula, strategies have been approved and implemented by the Board to mitigate the impact of budgetary challenges. Tuition has been raised, better efficiency in operations has been achieved, and [new programs](#) have been launched.

The governing Board follows a well-defined planning process that assures deliberations are in line with strategic priorities that preserve and enhance the college. Each year, a planning session is conducted with the Board, endowment trustees, community members, students, and the Strategic Planning Committee. Regular meetings inform the Board about [progress](#) towards current goals and challenges, pending issues, and new goals and priorities for the college.

At monthly Board meetings, the administrative team [interacts](#) with the Board to provide information and reports about current activities. Faculty and staff also make presentations to the Board at these meetings. Discussions regularly address Northwest Tech's strategic direction, as well the progress of programs and initiatives that enhance the effective operation of the college.

Core Component 2.C.2

The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

Employers are represented on Program Advisory Committees and the Strategic Planning Committee. Administration, faculty, staff, community members, and students are represented in an annual strategic planning session. These meetings provide data, facts, opinions, and recommendations that inform the governing Board about the reasonable and relevant interests of key internal and external stakeholders.

Internal Constituencies

Northwest Tech considers the protection of employees' and students' rights an important responsibility. Policies and procedures that provide individual protections are outlined in the Employee and Student Handbooks. The Board's policies delineate the rights and job responsibilities, employment conditions, hiring practices, and grievance policies for employees. Northwest Tech respects all employees and students. The Board directs administration to fully review and update [employee policies](#) annually. The Board also is committed to successful interaction with the student population. Student policies include student rights and responsibilities that are stated in college catalog. The [Maverick Student Code of Conduct](#), in the college catalog, governs the behavior of students. 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 the website and college publications. College personnel are responsible for executing appropriate policies that protect students.

External Constituents

Contractual agreements are the responsibility of the Board and are typically recommended by the President, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs 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 Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs 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 Administration. These contractual arrangements are monitored by policies to ensure the integrity of processes.

Core Component 2.C.3

The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be

in the best interest of the institution.

The [Board](#) is comprised of representatives who are appointed by USD boards on the basis of experience, public interest, educational expertise, and support for welfare of the college. Of the 25 Board members, none are among the college's major donors; none are elected officials; and none were employed by an external party with an interest contrary to the mission, vision, values and goals of the college. The Board governs independently and democratically. Meetings are conducted according to standard parliamentary procedures, and minutes are recorded. Open discussion and debate is expected from all Board members.

Core Component 2.C.4

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

The Board delegates financial, operational, and organizational management of the college to the President and administration. The Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Division Chairs provide academic leadership to faculty. The Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs works closely with Division Chairs on academic matters. The Board expects faculty to deliver instruction, continually improve curricula and attend to academic matters.

The President of Northwest Tech 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 (TEA) 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 Association of Technical Colleges (KATC), which advances the interests of technical colleges throughout the state. KATC 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 [finances](#), [program information](#), infrastructure, [athletics](#), [student conduct](#), [recruitment](#), [retention](#), financial aid, and [student support services](#).

Northwest Tech organizes to improve internal and external communication and streamline operations. The [organizational structure](#) provides a clear delineation of responsibility from the Board to administration, faculty, and support staff. Shared governance continues to be an important part of the college's institutional culture.

The Board expects the faculty to deliver instruction effectively. Attention to academic matters is strengthened by the divisional academic structure. The [President's Faculty Committee](#) meets monthly and consists of the President, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Division Chairs. Issues, concerns, and suggestions for improving college operations and student success often are discussed.

Faculty and program advisory committees determine curriculum content, program competencies, grading policies, and student participation policies. All faculty members, in collaboration with the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs, are responsible for delivering coherent curricula with [specific learner outcomes](#). Every program has a Program Advisory Committee with

representatives from business and industry who act as resources for curricula, course content, relevance of equipment, and adaptability of facilities to realistic industry practice and experience. Program Advisory Committees meet two times per year with a complete curriculum review in the fall. [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

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

Argument

Core Component 2.D

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

Northwest Tech 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. Northwest Tech reinforces its commitment to free inquiry and expression with several established channels for sharing and expressing differing opinions.

In the interest of shared governance, Northwest Tech's instructional programs are organized into divisions with programs that are grouped together 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 in order to provide academic leadership. Division Chairs are responsible for maintaining and sharing [minutes](#) of all meetings. Division Chairs report regularly to the President and other administrators on discussions and decisions from divisional meetings. The [President's Faculty Committee](#) also meets monthly to enhance communication between division chairs and senior administration.

Faculty members have the opportunity to freely express opinions in monthly faculty/staff [meetings](#). Faculty meetings are typically scheduled on the first Monday of the month. The Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs leads the meetings. Agendas include input from the Division Chairs and Cabinet. Faculty meetings are a forum to address and discuss topics of faculty and administrative interest and may also serve as opportunities for in-service training. Meetings are required for all faculty and coaching staff 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.

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.

Northwest Tech 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. This policy encourages a climate conducive to open inquiry and responsible discussion. It encourages 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. Recent examples of these projects include:

- Automotive Technology and Diesel Technology students research specifications and service procedures for repair on vehicles. The Automotive Technology instructor provides links to industry sites for technical information;
- Collision Repair students research paint specifications;
- Respiratory Therapy students use clinical practice guidelines as a tool for research;
- Cosmetology students search hairstyles or seek the latest in styling trends; and in the capstone project, students research all aspects of salon ownership;
- Business Technology students participate in an Entrepreneurship course that requires students 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;
- Through the capstone project in Engineering Technology, students research the legal requirements of a plat document and then create one;
- General Education faculty have researched assessment parameters and made curriculum and placement test changes.

New academic programs at Northwest Tech include the pursuit of truth through research by administration, faculty, and staff 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 the [Mobile Application and Entertainment Development](#) program that was approved by KBOR in April 2011 and the [CSI](#) program that was approved by KBOR in 2013.

The college supports 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 provides an incentive [salary increase for associate and bachelor degree completion](#). In 2014, the Board approved a salary incentive for faculty members who receive a [Masters degree](#). 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. For example, in order for students to qualify for Microsoft Office Specialist certifications, the general education instructor for the Computer Fundamentals course took training to assist students in earning certification.

The college provides an environment where students and faculty 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

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

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

Argument

Core Component 2.E

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

Northwest Tech 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.

Core Component 2.E.1

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

Northwest Tech's [mission](#) aims to prepare graduates for gainful employment in professional and technical careers. Faculty, staff, and students at the college engage in research and scholarly practice with technical disciplines. Most research is performed in course projects, in pursuit of additional education, or in keeping current on new developments within disciplines. Most scholarly practice by Northwest Tech students occurs in laboratory, internship, or clinical settings. The college maintains current equipment and [facilities](#) for all programs.

Northwest Tech 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 scholarship. 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. Northwest Tech contracts with each facility and students sign [agreement forms](#) prior to entering clinical settings.

Northwest Tech'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.

Northwest Tech 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.

As the center of information resources and a support unit for the instructional programs of Northwest Tech, the library support staff teaches research skills for self-directed study. The [Student Success Seminar](#) received by first-year students covers topics of intellectual and academic integrity and proper use of research.

Northwest Tech supports and encourages professional development in research and scholarly practice for faculty. In-service training, undergraduate and graduate coursework, industry-supported conferences, and webinars are examples of how professional development is accomplished.

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.

Core Component 2.E.2

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

Northwest Tech emphasizes ethical practice in use of information. Measures are in place to ensure ethical practices are up-to-date and meet campus, community, and global standards. Faculty members provide students with policies and procedures for ethical information.

The college is committed to technology and provides campus-wide wireless access. Students are introduced to computer resources available on campus. Students have unrestricted access to these resources during operational hours. Apple TV's 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.

Library staff offers bibliographic instruction for individuals and groups for research. Students receive guidance in proper citation methods during the Student Success Seminar. English Composition 1 reinforces training in APA and MLA citation methods. In developmental classes, students prepare for college level coursework by practicing study methods that reinforce appropriate [use of information](#). Numerous programs expect students to conduct research and make reports that cite information accurately and ethically.

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.

Northwest Tech also adheres to student protections with respect to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Faculty receives [training](#) on how to share 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 up to date on information necessary to appropriately discover, acquire, and disseminate knowledge.

Core Component 2.E.3

The institution has and 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. Northwest Tech has a defined set of policies and practices on honesty, cheating, and plagiarism that appear in [syllabi](#).

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. Included among behaviors that are defined as dishonest are plagiarism, cheating, participation in academically dishonest activity, and unauthorized communications.

Northwest Tech 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 are the property of the respective students. Northwest Tech may use student work for promotional purposes, but must recognize the creator of the work, and the college may not sell rights for the work. All members of faculty respect the intellectual property rights of textbook or information source authors.

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Northwest Tech acts ethically, responsibly, and with integrity. The college commits to integrity in its values statement and reinforces its commitment with policies and procedures to ensure ethical behavior on the part of the governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

The rights and responsibilities of all internal constituencies with respect to ethical conduct are outlined clearly and disseminated broadly throughout the institution. The college catalog, faculty handbook, and program handbooks contain several statements about the importance of acting ethically and responsibly. There are policies and procedures to ensure ethical action including sanctions against instances of unethical behavior. The college holds high expectations for integrity in action across financial, academic, personnel, and student support functions.

Northwest Tech embraces transparency, clarity, and completeness in its communications with students and with the public. Admissions and recruiting practices ensure prospective students receive accurate and complete information. Students have access to program information, handbooks, courses, learner outcomes, and grades through the campus website and through learning management systems. The college continually works to improve communications with the public. HLC accreditation reports are fully disclosed.

Northwest Tech's governing board is autonomous and makes decisions that are in the best interests of the college. The governing board provides effective guidance in relation to the college's strategic priorities. There are well-defined planning processes to consider reasonable and relevant interests from internal and external constituencies. No member of the Board is a major donor to the college, and the institution serves the public interest as is appropriate for a public education institution. The Board provides appropriate oversight with respect to operational management and delegates academic responsibility to faculty.

Northwest Tech is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. There are several channels through which faculty, students, and staff can freely express opinions. The college supports lifelong learning and professional growth for faculty, staff, and students.

Northwest Tech has policies that call for and support responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge. There is oversight and support for students to learn how to conduct intellectual and professional research with integrity, and there are appropriate controls on the access to information. The college enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity and has appropriate sanctions if those policies are not followed.

Northwest Tech has an excellent record with respect to ethical behavior and foresees these challenges

and opportunities going forward:

- The college has an ethical responsibility to be transparent in its communications, and it will become increasingly important to be transparent in a time of expanding social media channels. It will be a major challenge to manage the accuracy and flow of communications in those channels.
- Plagiarism and cheating are a continuing and troubling problem in class settings. The broad and ever expanding capabilities of iPad's and smart phones make it easy for students to use the devices inappropriately. Encouraging honest and appropriate behavior while using these devices will be a pedagogical challenge.

Sources

There are no sources.

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

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Argument

Core Component 3.A

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

Northwest Tech offers three post-secondary education degrees or certificates:

1. [Certificates of completion](#) require 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 program.

AAS degrees and technical certificates are offered within 17 programs that provide technical training and education. These programs are:

1. Auto Technology
2. Business Technology
3. Carpentry
4. Collision Repair
5. Communications Technology
6. Computer Graphics Technology
7. Cosmetology *
8. Crime Scene Investigation
9. Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology
10. Electrical Technology
11. Engineering Technology
12. Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning Technology

13. Medical Assistant
14. Mobile Application and Entertainment Development
15. Respiratory Therapy **
16. Technical Studies***
17. Welding *

(* Certificates of completion also are available.)

(**AAS is the only available degree.)

(***Technical Studies requires at least 15 credit hours of technical training in two different technical programs and completion of all required general education courses in each program. AAS is the only available degree.)

All [programs](#) have been approved by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) as appropriate for advanced technical training beyond secondary education. Some programs have been through the KBOR process for alignment across the state. This process involves business, industry leaders and program administrators to develop common core competencies for transfer. Many programs are accredited by external agencies that establish expectations for course and program rigor and that monitor compliance with these expectations.

Core Component 3.A.1

Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

Northwest Tech 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 the process of keeping program curricula current, relevant, and rigorous.

Faculty members are responsible for choosing texts, determining curricula, and developing instruction to 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. The college also develops [articulation agreements](#) with four-year institutions to guarantee transfer of coursework. These agreements provide additional evidence that the college offers quality courses.

Northwest Tech's [general education courses](#) are accepted for transfer to four-year colleges and universities. KBOR facilitates the alignment of general education courses within Kansas through the KBOR Core Outcomes Project. Faculty from KBOR institutions meet annually to identify common course competencies and outcomes for courses in their disciplines. Fifty-two general education courses have been identified by KBOR for transfer. Northwest Tech offers several of these courses. Faculty and the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs ensure that [syllabi](#) and coursework match KBOR requirements. For these courses to qualify for system-wide transfer, each institution must use outcomes developed in the KBOR Core Outcome Project. These courses transfer seamlessly among all KBOR institutions with shared learner outcomes.

Northwest Tech has developed assessment processes to ensure that student performance remains high.

Assessment methods identify useful data to develop plans of action for improvement.

At the course level, assessment generally includes [student evaluations](#), measured [learner outcomes](#), completions of [competency profiles](#), and appropriate third party testing. Course level outcomes assure that graduates meet student performance goals at satisfactory levels.

At the program level, there is an [assessment plan](#), an [annual program review](#), annual [validations](#) by program advisory committees, a [comprehensive program review](#) every five years, [student evaluations](#), [student satisfaction surveys](#), and certification or licensing [exams](#). Program level assessments ensure program goals are aligned with industry needs and assure transfer of coursework. Ongoing feedback from Program Advisory Committees as well as [articulation agreements](#) indicates that Northwest Tech requires student performance appropriate for higher education. Further evidence of college performance includes the [ACT Career Readiness award](#), [Apple Distinguished School award](#) and [recognition from the Aspen Institute](#).

Core Component 3.A.2

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

Northwest Tech is not authorized to offer credit at the upper-division, graduate or post-graduate levels. The college has learning goals for its AAS degrees and technical certificate programs. Learner outcomes and competencies for every course are clearly documented. Course content is subject to faculty review in comparison with similar institutions and KBOR standards. All programs and coursework are reviewed and validated by Program Advisory Committees.

Northwest Tech's learner outcomes are articulated through program curricula. The curriculum for each credential is developed with collaboration of subject-matter experts. Learning goals are further articulated by external accrediting bodies that guide curriculum in some programs: [Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology](#), [Medical Assistant](#), [Respiratory Therapy](#), [Cosmetology](#). All curricula for AAS degree programs, technical certificates, and certificates of completion are approved by KBOR.

Core Component 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).

Northwest Tech ensures that program quality and learning goals are consistent across all delivery modes and all locations.

Northwest Tech encourages that courses be delivered through the [Moodle learning management system](#) (LMS). Courses demonstrate consistency between online and face-to-face modalities through Moodle. The Moodle interface guarantees that students have assignments, grades, and course updates available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Faculty members are expected to maintain standards of consistency in levels of student contact, assignments, topic coverage, and learner outcomes, and to maintain an active Moodle shell. 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.

Oversight of distance delivery offerings is supported by the same organizational structure that supports face-to-face offerings. Faculty members with the professional knowledge and expertise to

determine both appropriate learning outcomes and appropriate delivery methods evaluate online course offerings. The Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, with direct involvement by program faculty, supervises course implementation. Long-term course management is informed by the assessment process, which gathers information from faculty, Information Technology, Registrar, and Admissions. Embedded course feedback informs course and program improvements. Assessment of online programs occurs alongside assessment of face-to-face programs.

Beginning in academic year 2013-14, Northwest Tech bolstered concurrent offerings. With the passing of [Senate Bill 155](#) that allows high school students to acquire technical coursework tuition-free, the college further expanded offerings. This initiative has allowed the college to contract with several USD's to teach technical courses at high schools for Northwest Tech credit. Currently, several [courses](#) are offered at Northwest Tech and at area high schools. Northwest Tech faculty members teach courses both on campus as well as at area high schools. In the fall of 2014, the college created a position for an Assistant Vice President for Outreach to develop and coordinate agreements with area USD's, to provide SB 155 coursework, and to select qualified faculty for course delivery. This ensures that appropriate faculty deliver approved curriculum aligned with college level coursework.

Northwest Tech evaluates and aligns concurrent credit courses by using the same learning outcomes established by Northwest Tech faculty and KBOR. This evaluation and alignment assures that both program and general education courses taught off-campus meet the standards required for college credit. The Assistant Vice President for Outreach, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, and college faculty meet with SB 155 and concurrent USD faculty to review mission, discuss curriculum, receive training in [Northwest Tech procedures](#), and align assessment.

Concurrent credit courses are offered at high schools and are typically taught by high school instructors. USD's contractually agree to follow Northwest Tech syllabi, and use college textbooks that align with college courses. In addition, Northwest Tech faculty and administration visit high schools to tour facilities and conduct evaluations. High school instructors must have appropriate credentials to teach courses for Northwest Tech. Faculty teaching concurrent general education classes must hold a Masters degree with 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline taught. Faculty members not meeting this standard have been placed on professional development plans with the understanding that they must meet this standard by Fall 2017.

Regardless of type of course, instructional method, or location, Northwest Tech monitors and controls the course curriculum. This ensures that students are held to the same academic standards regardless of modality.

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Argument

Core Component 3.B

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

Northwest Tech understands that education is an exercise of intellectual inquiry. The college's mission demands that individuals develop a broad set of learning and critical thinking skills across a range of technical and professional expectations. Every program aims at producing individuals with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be successful in a technical field and to lead productive lives.

Core Component 3.B.1

The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

Northwest Tech recognizes the importance of the general education curriculum for developing students who function in the workforce and appreciate lifelong learning.

The [general education classes](#) for Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees and for 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. Students must complete a distribution of courses in communications, mathematics, applied or natural science, and social and behavioral science, as well as optional electives. Many students seek courses

beyond the minimum general education requirement in order to transfer courses to another institution.

- Technical certificate programs typically include six to nine hours of general education, most commonly communications, mathematics, and applied or natural science courses.

The quality and rigor of Northwest Tech's [general education courses](#) is recognized by other educational institutions as well as through numerous [articulation agreements](#).

Core Component 3.B.2

The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

The purpose, content, and learning outcomes of Northwest Tech'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.

The six general education learning outcomes are:

1. Demonstrates the values of diversity, integrity, responsibility, perseverance, and strong work ethic.
2. Reads, writes, speaks, and listens on a level that facilitates the ability to work in a chosen field and be an active citizen.
3. Performs mathematical operations necessary to be competent in personal and professional settings.
4. Utilizes computer technology applications in personal and professional settings.
5. Uses systematic methods of inquiry, critical, and creative processes to identify problems and make informed decisions.
6. Recognizes their strengths and weaknesses as a learner, and develops strategies for time management, documentation, evaluation processes, and personal improvement.

The courses that comprise the general education program result in coverage of these outcomes.

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. Because of the iPad initiative, expectations for computer literacy remain high. [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, in Composition I, students must complete a cover letter and resume. In Technical Mathematics, students must complete measurements and calculations found in technical environments. The Computer Fundamental class covers [common software applications](#) generally found in business settings.

Learning outcomes for each general education course have been [aligned](#) with KBOR Core Outcome standards. This assures adherence to established standards in general education and provides for seamless course transfer. The general education framework is adapted from the community college system in Kansas so that it articulates with coursework across state institutions.

Core Component 3.B.3

Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

Programs at Northwest Tech have "hands on," technical learner outcomes that incorporate key components of general education in skills assessment. The blend of technical and general education facilitates development of well-rounded, educated graduates who are able to keep pace with the technological and social changes in a global society.

Program faculty members expose students to industry situations requiring them to use communication skills necessary for working effectively with customers, co-workers, and employers. For example, the Medical Assistant program includes [outcomes](#) relating to cultural and ethnic diversity pertaining to the treatment of patients in a medical setting. The Cosmetology program includes [outcomes](#) relating to the ethnic diversity of hair and skin types. The Automotive Technology program takes an active approach to diversity in the workplace by creating live work opportunities for students to work in teams. Human Relations in Life and Work and Ethics classes encourage students to communicate with each other, analyze changing environments, and share thoughts regarding [diversity](#).

Northwest Tech prepares students for work in a global society. The college embraces technology as a global tool. For example, the Mobile Applications and Entertainment Development program interacts with clients around the world using Google Hangouts. The CSI program requires students to gather information about global crime issues. Business Technology students prepare global marketing and communications projects as an ongoing engagement component in their courses.

Core Component 3.B.4

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

Northwest Tech models real workplace environments, relies 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 within a diverse world. 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 commitment to learning, quality, integrity, service, and [diversity](#).

The college emphasizes diversity awareness through inclusion of the topic in the [Student Success Seminar](#). The concepts are reinforced in all programs. The [diversity](#) of the student body provides exposure to working and living with people of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Several programs provide internship or clinical opportunities for students to apply what they have learned in actual job settings. Students encounter work and customer relationships that mirror the diversity of the public at large. [Computer Graphics](#) has an occupational work experience program in which students are evaluated on their workplace relationships. Respiratory Therapy has [clinical](#)

[experiences](#) within the program, and the Medical Assistant program requires an [unpaid practicum](#) that reflects diverse work environments.

Core Component 3.B.5

The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Northwest Tech recognizes that research is essential to higher learning and therefore provides appropriate resources for faculty and students. The [campus library](#) houses professional journals, books, magazines, and databases appropriate for applied research. Faculty and students have access to computer equipment and Internet access.

Technical programs require students to complete “live work” projects, case studies, written and oral presentations, and reports using applied research. Northwest Tech’s focus on “live work” provides a unique opportunity for faculty and students to immediately apply knowledge gained from practical research. Using research, Respiratory Therapy students perform a [case study](#) on a patient. Cosmetology students research demographics and location in order to determine appropriate pricing and equipment for a “dream salon” [presentation](#). Program Advisory Committee members grade these presentations.

In technical programs, students are constantly researching the requirements of their field. For example, students in Automotive Technology and in Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology research specifications and service procedures that are required to repair vehicles and the Automotive instructor provides a link to industry sites for technical information. Collision Repair students research paint specifications. Electrical Technology students research 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 are required to research the legal requirements for a plat document and then create one.

Northwest Tech publicly acknowledges the achievements of students and faculty in acquiring, discovering, and applying knowledge.

- National Technical Honor Society students are honored with an [induction ceremony](#) and recognized at [commencement](#);
- Each program at Northwest Tech selects a student of the year candidate who has excelled in the program. The candidates are recognized at [commencement](#). Northwest Tech also creates [individual press releases](#) that students can have sent to a hometown newspaper;
- At [commencement](#), Northwest Tech publicly acknowledges students receiving technical certificates and AAS degrees in the various programs;
- Student work is [published](#) in the local newspaper.
- Students who participate in SkillsUSA representing the college at regional, state, and national competition are recognized in a [ceremony](#).
- Faculty members completing bachelor or master degrees are recognized.
- Faculty members with other significant accomplishments are recognized at college events and with [press releases](#).

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Argument

Core Component 3.C

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

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

Core Component 3.C.1

The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

Northwest Tech has a highly qualified faculty that is sufficient to carry out classroom and non-classroom roles. All Northwest Tech faculty members, whether teaching general education, technical, or customized training courses, have appropriate credentials and are evaluated regularly. Technical education faculty members have experience in industry. General education faculty members are required to have masters degrees with a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline taught. Concurrent faculty members are required to meet or exceed this [requirement](#) by August 2017.

In 2014-2015, Northwest Tech employed 29 full-time instructors and 57 adjunct instructors. The college maintains a low average [student/faculty ratio](#) of 9 to 1 to assure personalized instruction in programs. Evidence of faculty effectiveness includes favorable retention and [graduation rates](#) in comparison to cohort institutions.

Northwest Tech 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 program curriculum. To support of Northwest Tech's mission, curriculum and instructional strategies include industry standards.

[Methods for instruction](#) are determined by faculty and are tailored to teaching and learning styles. Faculty members use a variety of teaching methods that best serve students in classroom, shop, or field situations. Faculty members use podcasts and iPad technology in course delivery. Guest speakers, study guides, journals, worksheets, chapter outlines, field trips, laboratory assignments, student presentations, and group work strengthen class instruction.

Faculty use [Student Academic/Attendance Alerts](#) to identify students who may be at risk. These students may be struggling academically, incurring absences, or experiencing other problems, which may affect academic performance. The Counselor and Dean of Students closely coordinate and respond to at risk students and recommend action plans for success.

Core Component 3.C.2

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

Northwest Tech 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 technical certifications. General education faculty members are expected to hold an appropriate master's degree or higher with 18 graduate hours of instruction 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 in place to ensure progress towards attainment of an appropriate degree. The college does not have contractual or consortial educational programs.

Core Component 3.C.3

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 by the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. Beginning with the third year of service, faculty members are evaluated annually, as [prescribed by policy](#). The Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs reviews all evaluations and meets with instructors to discuss strengths and weaknesses in performance. If an instructor's performance is deficient, then a [Plan for Improvement](#) is developed, and changes are implemented.

Core Component 3.C.4

The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

Northwest Tech implements [professional development plans](#) annually for all faculty members. These

plans are aimed at strengthening content knowledge and assuring skill and delivery. The college [budgets adequate resources](#) including Perkins funding to support professional development expectations. Faculty members attend industry-sponsored training, which provide exposure to new technology and teaching methods. For example, the Engineering Technology faculty attended an Autodesk University conference. The Computer Fundamental instructor attended Microsoft Certification training workshop. The Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology faculty attended Foley's instructor update workshop.

The administration supports [workshop attendance](#) and in-house [professional development for faculty](#) in the areas of multi-media technology, instructional media development, iPad technology, e-mail, Microsoft PowerPoint, and other instructional technology software and tools. A New Teacher Workshop is held annually.

Northwest Tech 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 Project meetings. These meetings bring college representatives together to develop common course outcomes, so that courses at one KBOR institution can transfer seamlessly to another KBOR institution. This opportunity ensures that Northwest Tech faculty members are engaged in the development and implementation of course outcomes and alignments that ease transfer.

Core Component 3.C.5

Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Instructors adhere to policies outlined in the [Employee Handbook](#). Instructors are required to “devote the time exclusively to college duties during college hours”. An instructor at Northwest Tech 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 classes and during regularly scheduled office hours. Faculty members also have individual telephone and voicemail. Faculty members are required to publish email addresses and telephone numbers in syllabi. Online faculty members must attend to courses daily. Policy requires online faculty members respond to all student requests within a 48-hour period.

Core Component 3.C.6

Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

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 program and supporting general education coursework also occurs to ensure that students are enrolled in the [appropriate courses](#) required for graduation.

Financial Aid staff participates in [ongoing training](#) through webinars and conferences. Staff members participate in the Kansas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (KASFAA). KASFAA is an association for Kansas federal financial aid coordinators that provides training regarding federal regulations and policies that ensure student financial aid is awarded in a fair and equitable manner. Northwest Tech maintains membership in both [KASFAA](#) and the Rocky Mountain Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (RMASFAA). Staff attend meetings regularly.

Northwest Tech Student Affairs staff members belong to the Kansas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (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.

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, and planning, as well as training related to Career and Technical Education such as the Carl D. Perkins grant program.

Co-curricular advisers are appropriately qualified by standards set by sanctioning organizations such as SkillsUSA and Circle K. If standards are not available, advisers are deemed qualified at time of appointment. The Athletic Director and coaching staff attend [annual NJCAA meetings](#), and conduct training for coaches in order to [assure compliance with NJCAA regulations](#).

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

Argument

Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

Northwest Tech ensures that students and faculty are supported for effective learning and teaching. The college directs substantial resources for academic support and preparation in order to address student needs. Students are tested and placed into courses reflecting their levels of preparation. There is a well-defined process to guide students through registration. The college supports effective teaching and learning with infrastructure, laboratories, equipment, library resources, and technology support. Students receive guidance to use information and conduct practical research projects.

Core Component 3.D.1

The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

Northwest Tech has a [diverse student population](#). Approximately 30% of students are from underrepresented minority populations, and 38% of students are female. Northwest Tech 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, counseling, and mentoring. Through placement assessments, ongoing advising, course offerings, and inter-departmental cooperation, Northwest Tech 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.

Northwest Tech has a student population interested in gaining skills and knowledge that are immediately useful in the workforce or suitable for transfer. The [2014 Graduate Follow-up Report](#) indicates that most students seek employment upon graduation. Employment placement rates generally exceed 80%. The college maintains Career Services support with resume and interviewing

advice, interviewing days with industry, and follow-up with placement.

Core Component 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.

Incoming freshman students attend Freshman Orientation. During this orientation, students formally register for programs. This required activity for all freshmen assists in ordering and obtaining books, tools, clothing, and supplies. Students also review financial aid, register for student housing, and receive information with regard to associate degree or technical certificate requirements.

Northwest Tech recognizes that some entering students may not be prepared for college-level academic courses. All students must provide ACT, SAT, or COMPASS test scores before registration. Results of these tests are used for placement into classes. The college offers [developmental coursework](#) in mathematics and writing. While these courses do not fulfill degree requirements, successful progression through the developmental course sequence allows students to ultimately complete the college-level courses required for a degree.

Orientation includes a [Student Success Seminar](#) that prepares students for early college experiences. The Seminar provides students with a complete transition guide to college life. It covers effective study skills, health and wellness, personal finance, budgeting, financial planning, and civic engagement. Policies are reviewed regarding sexual harassment, drug and alcohol awareness, bullying, and appropriate use of technology.

Academic support services are available on campus to improve student success. Academic support services include advising and counseling, and individual and group tutoring in language arts and mathematics. Additional assistance to students is offered through computerized tutorials and face-to-face study skill seminars. In addition, the college offers an English Language Learner course. Computer labs are available throughout the campus. In the evenings, a computer lab remains open and tutors are available for assistance with coursework.

Accommodations for students with special learning needs are also available. Northwest Tech provides equal opportunities for all students, including students with disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. The [college catalog](#) outlines procedures for requesting these accommodations. The Dean of Students, college counselor, and the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs serve as additional resources to assist students with special life situations.

Core Component 3.D.3

The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

Recruiting encourages [communication with applicants](#) so that preliminary advising begins from initial contact through orientation sessions. Students visit with an academic adviser at Freshman Orientation to review the [coursework](#) required for a program of study and set schedules.

During the first week of classes, program faculty review the [college catalog](#) and [program handbook](#) with the students. The college catalog provides information about [program descriptions](#), [state and national certifications](#), and [general program learner outcomes](#). The program handbooks cover [specific](#)

[rules and guidelines for behavior](#), [course summaries](#), which outline the coursework requirements, and [competency profiles](#).

Students may access course schedules online through the student data system, [Empower](#), and review progress towards degree attainment with the degree audit function. During academic advising, staff ensures degree progress with general education and program classes.

Program instructors serve as primary advisers and mentors for students. Instructors monitor progress and support students at regular intervals for successful completion with evaluations and grades that are linked to competencies. Program instructors maintain close contact with general education instructors and occasionally visit general education classes to observe student performance.

Full-time faculty members have regular office hours to assist students one-on-one before and after class, and are available through e-mail and telephone. Program instructors assist with guiding students in appropriate course enrollment. Program instructors encourage students to attend math and writing remediation classes and use library and computer lab resources to ensure student success.

Student Services support the role of instructors. Processes are in place to support academics and attendance. When an instructor identifies a student as deficient in academic performance, or in demonstrating poor attendance, the instructor counsels the student and files an [Attendance/Academic Alert form](#). If the behavior continues, then the student is referred to the academic or student affairs staff that identifies a plan for improvement. The Registrar also sends e-mail notifications at mid-term to students with identified poor performance and meets with students as needed for guidance and advice. Students meet with advising staff every semester to assess progress and to plan for the next semester.

Career Services provides students with assistance in career goals and planning. Career Services and general education faculty assist students in developing a professional resume and interview skills. Interview days are held to invite potential employers to campus to interview students. Career Services also conducts a [Graduate Follow-up Report](#) to track student progress in securing employment and obtain satisfaction data from employers.

Core Component 3.D.4

The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Over 60% of Northwest Tech's operational budget is devoted to instructional services. Instruction is supported with a [capital asset base](#) with an initial book value of over \$13.8 million in 2014.

Resources are allocated to provide instructional programs with facilities, equipment, and other items that are conducive to teaching and learning. Each program's [capital request](#) is reviewed on multiple levels to assure that educational opportunities provided to students are current. Faculty request additional equipment based upon identified educational needs. Up-to-date equipment allows students to build, create, repair, design, analyze, and solve problems with industry appropriate technology. Grants are sought to help provide [equipment](#) for departments. Current facilities provide the faculty with support necessary to fulfill learning outcomes expected by program advisory committees.

Northwest Tech's shops and lab areas are equipped with necessary tools and equipment to assist

student learning. Students can gain skills to move seamlessly into the workforce as a productive contributor. For example, the Respiratory Therapy and Medical Assistant program laboratories allow students to practice bedside care in a simulated environment. Labs are equipped with tools and supplies necessary for students to transition to clinical practice sites. Students gain hands-on experience at clinical/practicum sites. Area medical facilities work in conjunction with Northwest Tech's programs to provide on-the-job training. Students in these programs spend significant hours in [clinical practices](#) prior to program completion.

Northwest Tech'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 options that are cost effective and benefit students and faculty. The bookstore negotiates with publishers and vendors when purchasing books and other support material and tools.

Northwest Tech's Information Technology (IT) department is a critical provider of support services to students and college employees. Northwest Tech emphasizes "anytime-anywhere learning," which requires IT to provide access and tools to students, faculty, and staff. The college's infrastructure includes a high-speed, wireless network throughout the campus. Open-use computer labs provide convenient access to computers. Faculty and staff 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 must purchase an iPad allowing instant communication and access to the Internet. Students are able to access class assignments via learning management systems on a 24-hour basis. In summer 2015, computer technology was upgraded through a new board approved three-year lease with Apple. To encourage and support computer literacy and use of technology, Northwest Tech has array of computers including iPads, iMacs, MacBook Pros, Mac Minis, Power Macs, Mac Pros, and Apple Servers. Computers support instruction in classrooms, labs, and the library. All classrooms are equipped with high definition televisions and Apple TVs. Air Play technology makes it possible for students and faculty to share information and make classroom presentations.

Northwest Tech provides workshops and in-service activities for faculty, staff and the board in areas of multimedia technology, distance learning, instructional media development, e-mail, and other instructional technology software and tools. Northwest Tech supports faculty in use of instructional media and other teaching aids used to address multiple student learning styles.

Faculty and students have access to multi-purpose presentation classrooms and an interactive distance-learning (IDL) studio. These facilities are also available for use by civic groups and local community groups such as Kansas Bar Association, the National Weather Service and Leadership Kansas.

Core Component 3.D.5

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

Northwest Tech uses multiple methods to guide students in the use of research and information resources. As a part of the Student Success Seminar, students receive initial instruction in the use of [information resources](#). The materials presented in this course supports instruction in [English Composition I](#) and [Technical Writing](#) courses for effective use of research and information. Students learn research and citation skills that support completion of programs.

The Max Alderman Library and Resource Center provides a [variety of resources](#) including current magazines, databases for research, Kansas Library Association inter-library loan, professional development, NATEF end of program test center, and SP2 safety training. The library provides students with access to the Internet. Students work on projects, homework, and interact with peers and faculty. Kurzweil Reader software is available to students who have difficulties with vision and reading comprehension. Through an agreement with the Northwest Kansas Inter-Library Loan system, materials and resources from all Kansas libraries are accessible to Northwest Tech faculty and students. Online resources provided by the State Library of Kansas include databases such as World Book Online, First Search, Infotrac Web, SIRS Discoverer, Heritage Quest, Literature Resource Center, Custom Newspaper and ProQuest. The online resources combine to include over 55 million online records available to students, faculty, and the public. These resources support faculty in keeping abreast of teaching, learning, and technological advances in their respective fields.

Through services and infrastructure, Northwest Tech provides quality support for student learning and effective teaching. Services, personnel, and programs continue to be enhanced as part of the college's emphasis on student success.

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3.E - Core Component 3.E

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

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

Argument

Core Component 3.E

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

Northwest Tech's [mission](#) aims to prepare individuals for gainful employment in technical and professional careers, lifelong learning, and productive personal lives. Northwest Tech understands that students should experience education inside and outside the classroom. The college provides an enriched educational environment by supporting a wide range of activities that contribute to learning and campus life.

Core Component 3.E.1

Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

Northwest Tech recognizes that the college must provide engaging and enriching [co-curricular programs](#) and activities that support and contribute to the growth and development of students.

Co-curricular programs on campus include SkillsUSA. SkillsUSA is a national organization that serves students enrolled in technical, skilled, and occupation programs. SkillsUSA intends to improve the quality of the nation's skilled workforce through a structured program of citizenship, leadership, and technical and professional skills training. SkillsUSA enhances the careers of students, instructors, and industry representatives. Focused training and competitions develop technical ability and personal character. Through SkillsUSA, students connect with students from other colleges with similar career interests. Student involvement in the organization contributes to the development of technical, personal, and social skills that help students compete for high-skill, high-wage jobs in a global economy. Students are encouraged to become members of SkillsUSA and to compete in state and national competitions. Northwest Tech students compete successfully in these [competitions](#) and several have held offices on the regional level.

Circle K International (CKI) is another co-curricular program. CKI is an international collegiate service organization and leadership program sponsored by Kiwanis International. It promotes service, leadership, and fellowship opportunities for student members. CKI blends community service and leadership training with an opportunity to meet other college students around the world through its community-oriented projects. The Northwest Tech chapter has sponsored several community projects in the local Goodland community such as the [Easter Egg Hunt](#), the Flag Project, and reading

to elementary students.

All Northwest Tech 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 operation in real-life work environments.

Many programs provide [internships](#) or [clinical practice](#) opportunities for students to become exposed to the actual work that careers entail and enrich the learning environment by introducing students to supervisors, colleagues, and customers. On-the-job training supports the college's mission to place skilled workers into technical and professional careers.

Maverick Student Council is another avenue that allows students to develop and demonstrate skills in leadership and teamwork. Each department elects a representative to the council. [Student Council](#) sponsors campus-wide activities and events to enrich campus life such as Gradfest and [Red Cross Blood Drive](#).

Northwest Tech promotes diversity in its [mission documents](#). The college sponsors an annual [Northwest Kansas Latino Leadership Conference](#) in partnership with the Southwest Plains Regional Service Center. The event typically hosts over 250 student participants. Guest speakers provide inspirational messages for students, and local Hispanic business leaders, faculty, and other successful role models lead breakout sessions with students. Technical programs set up booths in the Student Union Assembly Room to showcase educational opportunities. High school students are able to participate in hands-on educational activities and ask questions of instructors and program students. The college is a [member](#) of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and participates in efforts to improve the access to quality post-secondary education for Hispanic students.

Northwest Tech promotes the lifelong learning and citizenship of students and faculty through the American Traditions series of [lectures](#) and courses. The series promotes the understanding of responsible citizenship and brings guest speakers to discuss current events in the public interest.

Northwest Tech has an active intercollegiate [athletic program](#). In 2014-2015, [153 students participated](#) in athletic programs. Athletics emphasize good citizenship, sportsmanship, honesty, and integrity on the campus, in the classroom, and in the community. Student athletes must maintain a 2.0 GPA and carry a full course load of at least 12 credit hours per semester. Student-athletes participate actively in community service projects. For example, the wrestling team sponsored a ["Biggest Loser"](#), which was a weight loss event, to promote health and wellness in the Goodland community. The addition of athletic programs has enhanced the cultural [diversity](#) of the student body.

Northwest Tech offers a variety of co-curricular activities that support the college's mission, contribute to campus life, and lead to an enriched educational environment for students.

Core Component 3.E.2

The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Northwest Tech develops programs with a combination of technical training and general education that combined lead to graduate success in the workforce. The programs enhance the ability of

students to be successful in gainful employment, strengthen the possibility of productive personal lives, and encourage lifelong learning. Northwest Tech provides multiple opportunities for students to realize education beyond the classroom.

Students expect to gain employment as a result of education at Northwest Tech. Instructors play a key role in preparing students for the workforce by including industry-specific, entry-level skills in the curriculum. Collaborations and partnerships with industry further the preparation of students with the appropriate skills, knowledge, and dispositions to become excellent employees.

Northwest Tech maintains that students can be nurtured to develop productive personal lives by providing diverse opportunities for leadership and personal growth through [student organizations](#). Organizations such as Circle K, SkillsUSA, departmental clubs, and student government provide opportunities for personal development and community engagement.

Departments are instrumental for providing service learning opportunities. For example, Electrical Technology students provide assistance to the town of Goodland by wiring and assembling holiday [decorations](#), and Carpentry students are building a [duplex](#) for local senior citizens. The college supports departments with resources and professional guidance in providing service learning.

The college maintains that students develop positive habits by adhering to policies and procedures that encourage ethical conduct. The college catalog, the [athletic handbook](#) and [program handbooks](#) include expectations of acceptable behavior. The [Maverick Student Code](#) and [academic integrity](#) policies outline expected behaviors consistent with Northwest Tech's mission documents. Faculty and students are directed to conduct all college business honestly and with the highest integrity, and to maintain a welcoming approach and attitude towards all individuals.

The college has articulation agreements with area high schools that provide opportunities for career and technical education to high school students that enroll in a technical program. The college has [articulation agreements](#) with four-year institutions, which demonstrate the college's commitment to lifelong learning.

Northwest Tech received over \$190,000 in grants in 2014-2015. These grants enhance lifelong learning with professional development support and with upgrades to technology and equipment.

Northwest Tech faculty members are continually and actively engaged in the scholarship of teaching whether they are in a shop or classroom environment. The excellent [placement rate](#) of Northwest Tech's graduates that the college has enjoyed for years is evidence of the quality of teaching.

College faculty members develop passion for lifelong learning through continuing education. Northwest Tech supports a life of learning for its faculty members through [professional development plans](#). Faculty members receive tuition reimbursement for undergraduate college credit courses and the plan also provides an [incentive salary increase](#) for associate's and [bachelor's](#) and master's degree completion. Northwest Tech supports employees in attending continuing education classes by modifying schedules, providing release time, and providing financial support in some cases. Northwest Tech supports administration, faculty, and support staff in attending workshops that pertain to relevant fields.

Northwest Tech demonstrates its mission for gainful employment, lifelong learning, and productive personal lives. It supports students in achieving those aims through an enriched educational environment. The college incorporates program reviews, employer, and graduate feedback for continuous improvement. The development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions at Northwest Tech

serves the changing needs of the workforce while maintaining a strong academic foundation that is student focused.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Northwest Tech provides high quality technical education through its certificate and degree programs. The college enjoys close working relationships with business and industry, which assures strong academic programs. Faculty and program advisory committees meet semi-annually to review curriculum, mission documents, facilities, equipment, wages, and outcomes which provides a high quality, current, and relevant education to students. Faculty and administration participate in KBOR statewide program alignment initiatives to ensure rigor and relevance of coursework.

Course offerings and outcomes are the same for online, dual-credit, and face-to-face delivery. Oversight of all modalities is assured with monitoring by the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and strengthened with regular meetings discussing mission, curriculum and outcomes. Appropriate faculty, the Curriculum and Assessment Committee, and the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs review all courses. Program prerequisites, course resources, texts and supplements, and student competency profiles are the same regardless of modality.

The college has general education courses appropriate for its mission. General education courses have well-defined learner outcomes that emphasize skills in communications, quantitative methods, computers and technology, scientific methods, critical thinking, and capacity for personal development. Courses are aligned with KBOR requirements, are taught by faculty with appropriate degrees, and transfer to four-year institutions.

Northwest Tech engages students with projects that require demonstration of knowledge, skills and dispositions. Students complete capstone projects that require critical thinking skills to collect, analyze, and present information that demonstrate what they know and what they can do. Students are expected to demonstrate the work and personal ethics that programs expect. Students are expected to develop skills in adapting to change as well as respect for human and cultural diversity.

Northwest Tech instructors provide high quality programs and services to students. Faculty members are appropriately qualified for coursework taught. Technical faculty members have real-world experience before becoming instructors at Northwest Tech. Instructors are evaluated regularly. Program Advisory Committees and professional development plans ensure that instructors remain current in their disciplines.

The college provides support services suited to its student population. Academic counseling begins with testing and placement into programs and counseling continues to be available to students through matriculation. If additional assistance is warranted, the college provides developmental coursework in mathematics and writing. Tutoring assistance is available.

Northwest Tech makes substantial investments in technological infrastructure. The college emphasizes "anytime-anywhere learning" with a high-speed wireless network throughout the campus. Computer investments support teaching and learning in the classroom, and students can access assignments and class materials on a 24-hour basis.

The college recognizes the importance of an enriched educational environment that takes place inside and outside the classroom. Several co-curricular organizations provide students with leadership and service opportunities.

Northwest Tech has a strong record to present in terms of this criterion, and it recognizes potential challenges going forward:

- Recruiting and retaining qualified faculty and staff to Northwest Tech is an on-going concern. Finding and keeping exceptional teachers is difficult in several fields due to competing salaries in business and industry.
- State funding remains problematic.
- Infrastructure investments must continue if the college is to maintain its high quality levels of instruction.

The college will address these challenges by aggressively recruiting qualified instructors, growing enrollment, identifying efficiency in operations, and seeking external funding sources.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

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

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

Argument

Core Component 4.A

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

Northwest Tech maintains high student learning standards with continuous quality improvement of educational programs. Continuous improvement is accomplished by drawing upon faculty, students, administration, research, and industry experts to develop data-driven plans that focus on student learning, measure effectiveness, and use results to make further improvements. The college regularly reviews programs, monitors the quality of course credit it accepts from other institutions, maintains authority over the rigor of its courses, and evaluates the success of graduates.

Core Component 4.A.1

The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

Northwest Tech conducts regular program reviews to improve programs through analysis of evidence about quality of instruction, measurable student progress of learning objectives, and feedback from students, faculty, and administration.

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

1. Continuous assessment by faculty is an integral part of every program on campus. Faculty tie assignments to [competency profiles](#) and measure student learning by assessing student progress in relation to competencies.
2. Pass rates for assignments and courses inform feedback to faculty about student performance. Instructors also [review student feedback](#) about teaching and learning and make improvements whenever necessary.
3. 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 and classroom materials, capital equipment and facility requirements, student satisfaction surveys, student placement rates and employment information.
4. If a program has an [occupational work experience](#) (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](#).
5. Annual [program reviews](#) are conducted that contain direct program measures including learner competencies, industry standards, coverage of syllabus topics, student achievement rates, pass rates for certifications (where applicable), capstone projects, facilities and equipment. The program reviews contain indirect measures of performance including student satisfaction survey data, retention rates, employment placement and salary rates, employer recommendations of graduates, service learning options, and faculty Professional Development Plans. Program instructors reflect on these measures and make revisions to courses and curricula as needed.
6. The college conducts [learner outcome assessments](#) annually for program and general education courses. From the data revealed in these assessments, faculty set goals for learners, identify the assessment tool to be used to measure learner progress, and establish benchmarks for student progress. Learner goals are defined in terms of outcomes assessed at regular intervals regarding benchmarks and student performance.
7. Programs undergo [comprehensive reviews](#) every five years. In the comprehensive review, instructors evaluate programs along seven dimensions: 1) program revenue in relation to program costs, 2) retention rates, 3) graduate placement rates, 4) benchmarks for program reviews and learner assessment outcomes, 5) industry needs for the program, 6) graduation rates, and 7) maintenance of industry certifications. Program faculty collect data to assess programs, [present to the Curriculum and Assessment](#) (C&A) Committee and make suggestions for program improvements. [Recommendations](#) are then forwarded to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and then sent for final approval by the President. The college holds semi-annual [data retreats](#) to provide current data to faculty for decision making aimed at improving curriculum and instruction.

Core Component 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.

Northwest Tech 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. Northwest Tech 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. Technical and community colleges in Kansas follow core competency standards established by KBOR for general education courses. Northwest Tech transfers credit based upon [KBOR course equivalencies](#). The Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Registrar, and faculty make the final decisions with respect to the courses accepted for transfer.

Advanced standing may be granted to students who have [prior work experience](#), coursework, or military experience. The Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and program faculty evaluate requests for advanced standing and determine appropriate placement. In the case of military experience, Northwest Tech considers documented training and nontraditional credit earned through active military duty that may satisfy program course requirements. Northwest Tech has been cited as a "Military Friendly" institution for many years, placing it in the 20% of institutions in the United States recognized for supporting educational opportunities for veterans.

Core Component 4.A.3

The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

Northwest Tech has a policy in the college catalog that assures the quality of the credit it accepts for transfer in general education courses. 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. The Registrar requests a syllabus to review course descriptions and topic coverage unless the credit granting institution participates in the Kansas System-Wide Transfer Agreement. Northwest Tech 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.

Northwest Tech adheres to a similar review process for 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 Northwest Tech's standards. In the case of a program course, the Registrar will request a syllabus to compare with the college's course and ask faculty to evaluate rigor and curriculum. Northwest Tech 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.

Core Component 4.A.4

The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

Northwest Tech maintains and exercises authority over prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, and expectations for student learning. The college continuously evaluates curricula with annual program reviews and learner outcome assessments. Northwest Tech seeks the advice of industry experts with semi-annual Program Advisory Committee meetings. The college adheres to KBOR guidelines established by program alignment. In certain programs, such as Automotive Technology, Collision Repair, [Cosmetology](#), [Respiratory Therapy](#), [Medical Assistant](#), and [Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology](#), Northwest Tech respects the standards for accreditation by external organizations.

Faculty members lead curricular changes through an academic approval process beginning with the proposing faculty making an initial recommendation. The Program Advisory Committee, the [Curriculum and Assessment Committee](#) (C&A), and the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs review any proposed changes. Evaluation includes the impact of the proposed change on curriculum, learning, fiscal feasibility, and KBOR standards. This process ensures that input is collected and considered before the President approves any proposed change.

Northwest Tech has the human, financial, and physical resources to provide educational quality and to guarantee fair access to learning resources. The student-to-instructor ratio for the past five years has averaged 9:1. This ratio indicates the college provides students with appropriate faculty attention for academic success. The college is fiscally sound and is able to recruit and retain qualified faculty. The campus has many buildings that provide students with appropriate physical resources that are equipped with current technology.

The Max Alderman Library and Resource Center provides 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 on-line reference resources. Library personnel work closely with faculty to provide assistance to students with research, citation, and other general library support.

Faculty and administration work together to identify financial resource needs. The college provides instructional programs with financial resources necessary to support academic quality of programs. Northwest Tech uses Perkins Grants to fund the purchase of [equipment](#) necessary for optimal student learning. Faculty members work with industry experts serving on Program Advisory Committees to develop recommendations for capital expenditures. The Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs reviews all capital requests to ensure equipment expenditures align with mission to prepare students for gainful employment. In addition, some programs have relationships with business and industry that result in monetary and physical equipment donations. [Contributions](#) from partnering industries allow Northwest Tech to remain up-to-date with equipment.

Instructors have [expertise in their fields](#) of study. Most hold industry-recognized certificates and participate in job related training. This enhances the quality and effectiveness of teaching and student learning. The percentage of faculty holding bachelor and masters degrees continues to increase. In order to maintain a high level of teaching and professional skills, all full-time instructors are required to submit a [Faculty Development Plan](#). Each faculty member meets annually with the Assistant Vice

President for Academic Affairs to review plans.

[Senate Bill 155](#) allows Kansas high school students to acquire technical coursework tuition-free. This initiative has allowed the college to contract with several USD's to teach technical [courses](#) for concurrent high school and Northwest Tech credit. Northwest Tech signs [agreements](#) with USD's to follow college syllabi and textbooks. In the fall of 2014, the college employed an Assistant Vice President for Outreach to develop relationships with area USD's to support the SB 155 effort. This administrator ensures that qualified faculty offer approved curriculum that aligns with college requirements.

High school instructors must have the appropriate credentials to teach courses for Northwest Tech credit. High school instructors who do not currently possess this credential have been placed on a professional development plan to assure compliance by August 2017. Northwest Tech reviews all faculty qualifications to ensure that high school instructors meet or exceed necessary qualifications. The high school instructors attend Northwest Tech [adjunct faculty in-service sessions](#) and work with Northwest Tech faculty to meet course expectations. In addition, Northwest Tech faculty and administration visit the high schools to meet with faculty, principals, and administrators and to tour facilities.

Northwest Tech evaluates and aligns concurrent credit courses by using learning [outcomes](#) established by Northwest Tech faculty and KBOR. Program and general education courses taught off-campus meet the same standards required for college credit. The alignment process includes review of student assessments.

Core Component 4.A.5

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

Several programs including Cosmetology, Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology, Respiratory Therapy, and Medical Assistant rely on state and nationally mandated regulations and requirements to plan and deliver appropriate curriculum. Programs meet the standards provided by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) in Kansas Institute of Diesel 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.

Achieving external accreditation ensures that Northwest Tech'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.

Core Component 4.A.6

The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and

participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Northwest Tech prepares an annual [Graduate Follow-up Report](#) that is distributed to Advisory Committees, faculty, administration, and the Board. The annual report includes information regarding employment status and salary data by program. The [survey](#) specifically asks students about employment related to their education and has specific qualitative measures about faculty effectiveness in the classroom, satisfaction with equipment and facilities, and overall rating of the quality of the education received. The [employer survey](#) gathers information about the knowledge, skills and dispositions of Northwest Tech graduates. This information fulfills state reporting requirements and contributes to [annual program reviews](#).

Northwest Tech has a strong placement rate of its graduates. In 2014, over 80% of graduates were placed in employment related to their field of study or continued education. Graduates reported salaries that ranged from \$20,509 to more than \$46,000.

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Argument

Core Component 4.B

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

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 assessment day, faculty complete assessments and make recommendations for educational improvement.

Core Component 4.B.1

The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

Northwest Tech offers Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, technical certificates, and certificates of completion. [Requirements](#) for the AAS degree include successful completion of program courses and 15 to 24 hours of general education courses. Technical certificates range up to 59 credit hours and encompass intermediate or advanced occupational skills. Technical certificates typically include six to nine credit hours of general education courses. Certificates of completion are 16 credit hours or less and focus on occupational skills. Certificates of completion do not include a general education component. Requirements for AAS degrees, technical certificates, and certificates of completion are outlined and explained in the college catalog and in program handbooks. Academic advisers use program [guides](#) to assist students in registration of courses and understanding matriculation progress.

Northwest Tech's seventeen technical programs have general learning goals. Program handbooks clearly state these program [learning goals](#). Instructors plan and shape course work so that students achieve these program learning goals. Program Advisory Committee members review these goals so that they represent a consensus of industry experts and faculty as to what knowledge, skills, and dispositions define competent graduates. The program learning goals also reflect the college's commitment to the integration of general education courses within program offerings. Students must

demonstrate competence in organization, personal management, teamwork, communications, and analytical skills. Program faculty members are encouraged to reinforce these [general education outcomes](#) with additional assignments and work projects that seek such outcomes. A “capstone” project within each technical program assesses student's knowledge acquired through general education courses.

Program faculty members define specific competencies that reflect knowledge, skills and dispositions, which are tied back to the mission statement. Faculty construct work exercises, assignments, and tests to measure student progress. Faculty members must complete [competency profiles](#) that document student achievements. The profiles tie to specific learning objectives that are spelled out in the [syllabus](#) for each course.

The college catalog clearly defines [grade point average expectations](#). Students must maintain cumulative grade point 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 in order to remain in good academic standing.

Many programs utilize third party assessment tools to evaluate student knowledge. For example, in programs such as Automotive Technology, Collision Repair, and Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology, there are certification examinations that require students to demonstrate achievement against specific learner outcomes. Northwest Tech aligns its competency profiles to match [NATEF competencies](#), standards, and student assessments. [Third party evaluations](#) provide students with additional opportunities to demonstrate competencies.

[SkillsUSA](#) competitions are another third-party evaluation that test students in realistic and challenging work projects. Northwest Tech students have entered these competitions and many have received state, regional, and [national recognition](#).

Northwest Tech [partners](#) with other institutions to promote seamless educational opportunities for students who wish to further their learning.

Core Component 4.B.2

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

Northwest Tech assesses student achievements at several levels. Assessment includes measurement of [learner outcomes](#), course [competency profiles](#), and measurement through third party testing. At the program level, assessment includes the [program outcomes assessment plan](#), the [program review](#), [comprehensive review](#) every five years, and certification and licensing examinations. At the institutional level, assessment includes graduate follow-up report and [placement](#) data.

Course Level Assessments

Learner Outcomes

Course level assessment takes place with classroom participation, lab and shop projects, testing, clinical experiences, and demonstrations to gauge a student's attainment of learner outcomes. Program and general education faculty construct and embed exercises within course curricula and measure learner outcomes as stated in course syllabi.

Competency Profiles

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.

Program Level Assessments

Program level assessment is achieved through measuring: student performance on certification or licensing exams; internships, Occupational Work Experience (OWE) evaluations; job placement rates; and successful demonstration of knowledge, skills and dispositions for workplace success.

Program Outcome Assessment Plan

Every program at Northwest Tech has an established Assessment Plan with program goals and learner outcomes paired with an assessment tool and benchmarks for measuring student achievement. An annual data collection and review process is in place to measure student progress toward program goals, learner outcomes, and program benchmarks. Faculty members assess and improve curriculum and identify areas of success. Northwest Tech instructors implement the assessment process within programs and are responsible for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data. The [results](#) of assessments are used to improve instruction.

Program Reviews

Every program conducts an annual review. The review is an examination of the program by faculty, using direct and indirect measures, which are documented on a [standardized program review form](#) and are evaluated by faculty, the assessment coordinator, and the [Curriculum and Assessment \(C&A\) Committee](#). The Assessment Coordinator shares results with the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and discusses plans of action or any needed improvement. [Summaries](#) of Program Reviews and action plans are [reviewed by the C&A Committee](#). The annual program review requires documentation for student retention, professional licensing and certification, and graduate placement rates and salary.

Comprehensive Reviews

All programs of study undergo comprehensive review every five years or sooner if deemed necessary by administration. Program faculty members are responsible for the review using the [comprehensive program review form](#). The assessment coordinator meets with faculty from each program when the review is complete. Faculty members then meet with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and develop a plan of action. Plans of action are [reviewed by the C&A Committee](#), and the President of the college. Upon approval, the plans are implemented.

Institutional Level Assessments

Graduate Placement Report and Graduate Follow-up Report

The graduate placement report is conducted as 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 becomes part of the annual [program review](#).

Community College Survey of Student Engagement

The college recognizes the need for better data to inform operations. The college will begin using CCSSE (Community College Survey of Student Engagement) in the fall of 2015 to gain additional information to enhance its student-focused environment. This will provide information on student

engagement that correlates with student learning and retention. The Assessment Coordinator will include the survey results in the college's annual institution report. This will allow Northwest Tech to make benchmark comparisons to other institutions on a national level.

Work Keys

Northwest Tech also administers Work Keys, "a job skills assessment system measuring real-world skill," as part of the performance agreement with KBOR. After students pass the tests, Work Keys provides a work ready certificate recognized by employers. Northwest Tech also considers job placement an additional means of validating student learning.

Institutional Effectiveness Survey

Northwest Tech 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.

Northwest Tech supports the assessment of student learning as a continuous improvement process that requires constant conversation about data collection, interpretation, and data driven decision-making. The C&A Committee, consisting of Division Chairs and the Assessment Coordinator, forms an assessment team to further the conversations. The college has completed annual [data retreats](#) as part of faculty in-service. Assessment days have been instituted for faculty members to prepare annual program reviews and share results of assessment plans. The Assessment Coordinator participates in the [New Teacher Workshop](#) annually to assist new faculty in understanding the assessment process. The Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs collaborates with the Assessment Coordinator to assess student learning. The Assessment Coordinator works directly with faculty to review and update assessment plans, to discuss results of program reviews, and to guide completion of comprehensive reviews.

A variety of direct and indirect measures of student learning are used to assess Northwest Tech courses and programs. Direct and indirect measures are outlined in [course syllabi](#) and program assessment plans. Examples of direct measures used within a program include: testing, student performance on shop and lab projects, demonstrations, and performance on certification exams. Examples of indirect measures used in a program include: job placement rates, employer feedback on student performance in occupational work experience partnerships and internships. The college reviews indirect measures of student learning from [quarterly retention reports](#), which include beginning enrollment, withdrawals, and graduations. The enrollment management committee meets quarterly to discuss retention, and an [annual retention report](#) is prepared for Northwest Tech's administration and Board. Faculty and Program Advisory Committee members also review this report early in fall advisory committee meetings.

Core Component 4.B.3

The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Program instructors track learning outcomes continually to improve instruction. 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 at risk, the instructor uses the [Academic/Attendance Alert form](#) to seek intervention from the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs, the college counselor, and the Dean of Students.

Programs of study compile an [Annual Program Review](#) to report how students meet expected outcomes and benchmarks. Faculty members participate in an annual data retreat and share progress

on outcomes and benchmarks. The Assessment Coordinator then meets with the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs 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.

[Pass rates](#) of industry certifications and licensing are tracked, reviewed in advisory committees meetings, and used to inform improvements to teaching and curriculum.

Core Component 4.B.4

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

Northwest Tech faculty use program outcome assessment plans, program reviews, comprehensive reviews, and student satisfaction surveys to assess learning at the course, program, and institution level. Faculty members participate in annual data retreats to review and develop plans of action based on assessment data. The assessment process is completed annually to ensure regular and consistent review of student learning.

The C&A Committee, which is comprised of faculty and administration, oversees the comprehensive review process and uses program review results to initiate needed changes. The Assessment Coordinator presents assessment recommendations to the committee using the executive summary of the [Annual Institution Report](#).

In keeping with good practice, the college validates student learning through third party assessments whenever possible. Northwest Tech has over 100 business and industry [representatives](#) serving on program advisory committees. These advisers validate programs and student outcomes and work directly with faculty to review program outcome assessment plans and learner outcomes. Program advisory committees meet twice a year to validate program and learner outcomes for relevance. The Committees also make [recommendations](#) to enhance curriculum, media, equipment, and learning materials to ensure current business and industry standards are maintained.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Argument

Core Component 4.C

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

Northwest Tech recognizes its role in meeting workforce demands and the importance of improving enrollment, retention, and completion to meet these demands. As is common with two-year colleges, many students come to Northwest Tech from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Under-prepared students may find it difficult to navigate admissions, registration, and financial aid processes. These students may also find it difficult to develop study habits and dispositions that lead to student success. With these factors in mind, the college has designed and implemented processes and interventions that support student success rates. Improvements include upgrading technology at the college, designing an admissions process suited to the needs of Northwest Tech's prospective students; and emphasizing retention, engagement, and student success in shop, laboratory, and classroom environments.

Core Component 4.C.1

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

Northwest Tech has [well defined goals for retention and completion](#).

Northwest Tech's goals for student retention, persistence, and completion are guided by KBOR's [Foresight 2020](#) plan, which is 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 Northwest Tech and KBOR. Northwest Tech has

received additional funding for performance under the [Outcome Metrics Pilot Program](#) conducted by KBOR.

Requirements for performance agreements for Kansas's public higher education institutions were set by the Kansas legislature. 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 Northwest Tech:

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 is collecting data to measure performance and will report results to KBOR in December 2015. Northwest Tech aligned its 2014-2015 Strategic Plan with KBOR expectations in Foresight 2020. Within the college's 2014-2015 Strategic Plan were initiatives to improve [student success and retention](#), increase [third party credentials](#), spur [enrollment growth](#), boost [graduation rates and transfer opportunities](#), and [strengthen industry relationships](#) for higher placement of graduates. The college's 2016-2017 strategic plan will continue alignment with KBOR's expectations.

Northwest Tech has set internal goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that use IPEDS data and definitions. These goals are 85% or better for student retention for first-year to second-year enrollment, and 85% for two-year degree completion within 150% of normal time. Over the past three years, Northwest Tech's graduation and retention rates using IPEDS summary reports and definitions as are follows:

Year of IPEDS Report	Graduation Rate	Retention Rate - Full Time
2012	76%	71%
2013	75%	70%
2014	62%	66%

Northwest Tech has a clear record of successfully guiding students to degree completion. Over the past three years, using IPEDS definitions, Northwest Tech has graduation rates that significantly exceed comparable two-year colleges. The college is proud of its graduation rates, but it has seen a decline in those rates since the implementation of athletic programs. When athletic programs were first proposed to the Board, there was discussion that the implementation of 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.

Since instituting athletics, the college has found that some athletes leave campus at the end of an athletic season. Some are recruited by other institutions and transfer at the end of the first year. This

experience has led the college to become more proactive in retaining student athletes. The college now uses early interventions with individualized counseling and advising and academic alerts. Faculty and coaching staff now communicate regularly regarding the academic progress of student athletes. Coaches and admission officers seek student athletes with interests in core academic programs. The college advises athletes to finish their respective program of study in order to gain technical skills and enhance transfer opportunities.

As a result of these changes that have been implemented with student-athletes, Northwest Tech will strive to meet the goal of 85% retention from first to second year in 2015-2016. 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.

Core Component 4.C.2

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

Northwest Tech systematically collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs with multiple modes of tracking and reporting.

Northwest Tech generates a weekly [Enrollment Comparison Report](#), which allows the college to track rates of program recruitment and retention. The report provides continuing information to faculty, staff, administration, and the Board about demand for services by program. It provides Admissions with an additional check on recruiting and enrollment efforts. 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.

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. These scores provide early indication of student preparation for college level work. When scores indicate a need for additional preparation, students are placed into developmental courses. This support encourages 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. [Program handbooks](#) outline the specific attendance requirements for each program.

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 in order to remain eligible for financial aid, and remain a student in [good standing](#). A system of academic alerts has been established. 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 improvements are discussed with the student. If the student continues to perform at unacceptable levels, the student is referred to the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs for additional academic counseling. Every effort is made at each intervention to provide students with additional

tutoring and personal support.

Should a student decide to withdraw from a course or program, the student meets with faculty, the Registrar, and the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs to create options for program completion. The Registrar maintains all data on course drop/adds. At the beginning of semesters, students are required to attend registration sessions in which advisers review academic progress. Academic advisers review degree plans with students and discuss progress towards completion of a certificate or degree program. Regular reviews of degree plans are important for students to progress towards graduation.

Northwest Tech 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.

Northwest Tech also collects and analyzes 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.

Annual program reviews and five-year comprehensive reviews provide regular and systematic analysis of retention, persistence, and completion data by faculty and administration. Faculty are required to maintain grading and attendance and use these data to evaluate program effectiveness in Program Assessment Plans.

Core Component 4.C.3

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

Northwest Tech is committed to a process of continuous improvement in retention, persistence, and completion. The college has researched, planned, and initiated programs based upon data that have been collected and analyzed. Northwest Tech considers not only direct indicators of retention, persistence, and completion rates, but also indirect indicators such as licensure, certification, job placement, and student satisfaction in order to gauge the effectiveness of programs and to inform improvements for those programs. Many Northwest Tech students fall into one or more of these categories: [economically disadvantaged](#), first-time college student, [minority](#), and non-traditional. Many students come to Northwest Tech under prepared and require developmental coursework to improve math and writing skills.

Program assignments in shop, laboratory, and classroom settings are a primary means for encouraging students to demonstrate competence and persistence. Assignments provide an invaluable source of assessment information about student achievement. Instructors closely tie assignments to learning goals and competency profiles in syllabi, and monitor grades in Moodle and Empower.

A recent example of how Northwest Tech uses information from assignments to drive course improvement can be found in general education with Beginning Algebra. Using WebAssign generated assignments and Class Insights tool, mathematics faculty identified a problem with students persisting and mastering one variable word problems. Only 38% of students were completing these assignments at passing levels, and these assignments directly tied to KBOR course standards. Because these assignments were scheduled early in the course, it led to student frustration and impacted

persistence. Faculty changed teaching methods and designed student interventions to encourage better [results](#). While data are preliminary, results have improved in summer classes. All Northwest Tech general education faculty members ensure that general education courses contain exercises and assignments that meet or exceed KBOR Alignment standards.

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 the Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology, where as a result of a program advisory committee recommendation, the program was [split into two tracks](#), agricultural and over the road, with different assignments and coursework for each track. This change has led to more precise training of students that better meets the needs of employers.

Faculty members have a 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 in [student retention, persistence, and graduation rates](#).

One recent example of how data retreats support retention, persistence, and completion can be found in the Business Technology program. [Data](#) revealed that students were having difficulties in mastering accounting coursework and subsequently dropping. Faculty recommended [three changes](#) in the Business Technology program:

- Altering the sequence of courses to emphasize "soft skill" development during the first year which enhanced communications and life skills early in the college experience;
- Instituting a Business Mathematics course in the first semester of the first year covering mark-ups and discounts, tax and payroll calculations, depreciation, and the time value of money all before beginning accounting coursework;
- Changing the textbooks used in the accounting sequence to provide streamlined presentations of important concepts with interactive exercises embedded within a course management system.

Northwest Tech collects student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness data and makes changes in operations as a result of these data. One recent example can be found with student financial aid. In 2011-2012, [student satisfaction survey ratings](#) indicated lower than average performance on questionnaire items relating to wait times, accessibility of personnel, timely response to requests, and overall service. With the increased enrollment, the Office of Financial Aid struggled to keep up with demand. Northwest Tech employed an additional financial aid officer who specialized in handling student issues and assisted students with the preparation of financial aid forms. By 2014-2015, the rating for financial aid had improved. Another recent example relates to the use of [institutional effectiveness survey data](#) which indicated that food service at the college was performing at lower than desired levels. In 2015-2016, Northwest Tech has contracted with an external vendor to manage its food service operations, and the college will monitor performance by using data from this survey.

Core Component 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.)

Northwest Tech has developed a systematic approach for collecting, analyzing, and reporting information on student retention, persistence, and completion that satisfies both the college's internal assessment needs and the expectations of external constituents. The Assessment Coordinator and faculty, 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.

Northwest Tech responds to data requests from external stakeholders. The college submits annual reports to KBOR based on the definitions and measures by that body. The college submits data to the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) through the Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) using IPEDS guidelines. The Financial Aid department responds to Department Of Education mandates, including Gainful Employment and Higher Education Opportunity Act information. The college provides valid and reliable data to business and industry partners, city and county government, media, and external accreditation boards.

The Assessment Coordinator compiles the [Annual Institutional Report](#), which provides a common source for data that is used by programs and administration to identify areas of success or concern. The Assessment Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that survey instruments and measures follow sound ethical practices for conducting research, and that information is disseminated accurately and responsibly.

The Registrar provides [reports](#) that include information on enrollment, student demographics, completions, placement, testing, and academic success. These reports are used by faculty and staff to inform the assessment process.

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Northwest Tech supports and embraces continuous quality improvement of educational programs in several ways. Program faculty members conduct classes, exercises, and shop work that link to industry standards by discipline. General education faculty members conduct classes that meet or exceed KBOR standards for rigor, curriculum content, and transfer.

The college conducts a system of annual program reviews and five-year comprehensive reviews that examine direct and indirect measures of educational performance and quality. Faculty are expected to maintain courses in Moodle providing transparency to students and facilitating the evaluation of performance. Program advisory committees hold semi-annual meetings to ensure business and industry experts are consulted. Learner outcomes and competencies are developed and reviewed to ensure relevance and currency of curricula.

Northwest Tech accepts credits for transfer based on specific criteria including credit hour equivalencies, consistency of course descriptions, learning objectives, and curriculum covered in a course. Northwest Tech evaluates all credit that it transcripts. The college has established policies and procedures for evaluating the quality of transfer credit and maintains complete responsibility and authority for all transfer credit that is ultimately accepted. The college sets expectations for learner outcomes and competencies. The college monitors course prerequisites and the rigor of coursework.

Northwest Tech assures faculty have appropriate training and academic preparation for courses taught. Program instructors have work and educational experience within respective fields. General education faculty members hold appropriate degree credentials.

The college conducts appropriate oversight of coursework offered in dual credit and online environments and ensures that learner outcomes and levels of achievement are identical to coursework offered on-campus. Use of the Moodle LMS ensures consistency across environments.

Northwest Tech aligns curricula with the standards of third parties such as NATEF, COARC, KBOC, and CAAHEP so that students receive licensure and certifications for learning achievements. The college monitors student performance on examinations and makes improvements in courses and standards when warranted.

Northwest Tech evaluates the success of its graduates with annual follow-up reports and surveys of employers. The college analyzes student placement rates into related fields and continuing education,

and collects employer satisfaction data. The college offers a Limited Liability Warranty to employers, which offers to retrain students if employer expectations for preparation are not met.

Northwest Tech has clearly stated learning goals and effective processes for assessment of student achievement. Courses have defined and specific learner competencies regarding knowledge, skills and dispositions. There are well-defined learner outcomes for the general education program, and there are specific learner outcomes for every general education course that meet or exceed KBOR learner standards.

Northwest Tech uses assessment data to improve teaching and learning. Faculty members are encouraged to improve instruction from evaluation of student performance on examinations and assignments, program assessment plans, program advisory committee meetings, annual program reviews, five-year comprehensive reviews, annual student satisfaction, and institutional effectiveness surveys. These data lead to assessment of teaching and learning at the course, program, and institution level. The assessment process is completed annually to ensure regular and consistent reviews of student learning effectiveness. The college ensures faculty members participate fully in reviewing data used to drive student-focused decision-making.

Northwest Tech attends to retention, persistence, and completion data, and commits to educational improvement of degree and certificate programs through regular analyses of these data. The college has well defined goals for retention, persistence, and completion that align with KBOR's Foresight 2020 strategic plan. Benchmarks have been established in line with the college's historical performance for retention, persistence, and completion. Graduation rates are significantly higher than those of comparable institutions within the college's institutional cohort. First to second year retention rates also exceed those within the same cohort.

Northwest Tech is proud of its record in using data for decision making. Maintaining this record will not be without challenges:

- The college is moving to strengthen its ability to develop data that are more comparable with other institutions. In 2015-2016, Northwest Tech will move to the CCSSE survey to assess student satisfaction. This will enable the college to compare its performance with many more institutions.
- As the college continues to grow, Northwest Tech will need to improve its ability to collect and manage databases of increasing size, interpret data with more powerful statistical tools, and assemble results into reports for decision-making. This will become increasingly important as reporting requirements to outside parties continues to grow.
- Northwest Tech has begun enhancing the assessment of its general education and developmental classes. The college seeks to develop a more comprehensive assessment plan of the general education program as a whole so that performance against all of the general education outcomes can be examined.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Argument

Core Component 5.A

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

Northwest Tech's resources support its current educational programs. Over 60% of annual revenue is expended for instruction, education, academic, and student care as reflected in the college's last audit report. The college is focused on increased tuition revenue through enrollment growth as it seeks efficiency in operations. Northwest Tech's human resources, physical plant, and technological infrastructure are sufficient to absorb projected increases in full-time enrollment. Northwest Tech has sufficient resources to strengthen the quality of its educational programs in the future.

Core Component 5.A.1

The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

In reference to the monitoring report from our 2011 comprehensive visit, the college has an established planning model for actions related to facilities, human resources, academics, and technology as outlined below. The following plans and actions are closely tied to the college's strategic goals as described in the [FY'14-15](#) and [FY'16-17](#) strategic plans.

Fiscal Resources

Northwest Tech's overall fiscal position is fundamentally sound and the college directs the allocation of fiscal resources through its strategic plan. Northwest Tech has received clean audits for the past three years. The college's [audited net position](#) as of June 30, 2014 was \$12,497,158. Instruction, academic support, and student activities are the school's fiscal priorities. As reflected in the FY 2014 audit report, 60.1% of [expenses](#) were related to caring for and educating students. Administrative expenses accounted for 11.5% of total costs. The remaining expenses were for operation of plant, cost of sales, and depreciation.

Northwest Tech's operations are funded by two primary sources of revenue: state post-secondary aid and student tuition. [State post-secondary aid](#) comprised 39.4% of FY 2014 revenue and student tuition comprised 30.3% of total revenues. Remaining revenue sources include, but are not limited to, sales and services of educational departments, residential life, student center, and grants and contributions.

Over the 2012-2014 period, state aid contributions to school revenue remained constant, but in early 2015, the state announced a 2% mid-year cut in appropriations due to state budget shortfalls. While it is hard to predict if the state legislature will be able to master its fiscal difficulties, Northwest Tech anticipates a second round of cuts coming in 2015-2016 in the range of two to five percent. In spite of this forecast, the governor and the legislature have maintained constant support for [Senate Bill 155](#). SB 155 has provided tuition reimbursement to the college for technical education classes delivered to area high school students. Over 250 high school students earned technical course credit from Northwest Tech during the 2014-15 academic year. Northwest Tech projects SB155 reimbursement will continue without any cuts in 2015-2016.

Given the current state budget situation, Northwest Tech projects that student tuition will comprise a greater percentage of the college's revenue in 2015-2016. As a result of changes beginning in 2009, the college has grown its student population in response to the [top strategic planning initiative](#). Enrollment growth has resulted from four major initiatives:

- The implementation of intercollegiate athletics which now includes basketball, wrestling, soccer, dance, cross-country, and track and field ([Objective 1-7](#));
- The initiation of programs for Mobile Applications and Entertainment Development and Crime Scene Investigation and expansion of length of several programs to increase persistence for associate degrees ([Objective 1-5, 1-6](#));
- Improved branding, marketing, and recruiting procedures, which have led to stronger national and international enrollments. The iPad initiative which "put an iPad in the hands of every student," and confirmed Northwest Tech's place as a technological leader in technical and professional education ([Objective 1-1, 1-2](#));
- Expansion of high school outreach programs, including SB155 and concurrent enrollments ([Objective 1-4](#)).

The success of these initiatives is clear. In fall 2009, the college's official headcount enrollment was 291 students. As of the fall 2014, the official enrollment headcount had grown to 647 students. The college anticipates continued enrollment growth. Academic and athletic programs remain strong and are experiencing growth. Revenue from tuition will increase as a result of increased enrollment.

The college 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. Over \$1.3 million has been [allocated](#) to program support over the past five years.

For the 2015-16 academic year, the following non-academic actions for operating fiscal efficiency have been approved by the Board:

- With the retirement of the President of the college, the Vice President has assumed the position as Interim President for the year. The [Vice President's position](#) will remain vacant.
- The [Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs](#) was reduced to part-time and a Director of Admissions has been appointed.
- The [Assistant Director of Building and Grounds](#) position remains vacant.
- The [Director of Endowment and Career Planning/Placement positions](#) have been combined.
- Food service operations have been contracted with an outside provider.

Academic Resources

Northwest Tech prides itself in its strong academic history with over 9000 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 continued improvement in the area of academics as shown in [goal two](#), Teaching and Learning, of the college's FY'16-17 Strategic Plan.

The college is working to expand its program offerings and provide academic options that meet the needs and goals of its diverse constituency. In an effort to meet industry needs and student interest, the college developed the Crime Scene Investigation program in 2013. In 2015, the college added staff to develop curriculum, seek industry sponsorship, and recruit students for a new program focusing on Precision Agriculture. Several existing programs have expanded their curriculum and course offerings to better meet the needs of concurrent student enrollment. 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. Classroom and lab space required to support the development of the CSI program were provided through the construction of the Guy E. Mills Academic and Athletic Center. Expansion of the classroom/lab facilities within the Medical building is underway to provide support for increased enrollment.

Human Resources

For the 2015-2016 academic year, Northwest Tech employs 85 full-time and part-time academic staff and non-teaching and coaching staff as follows:

- 32 full-time instructors
- 55 adjunct instructors (includes concurrent and SB 155 USD faculty)
- 5 full-time and 4 part-time administrative staff
- 13 full-time office staff
- 3 full-time and 7 part-time coaching staff
- 5 part-time fitness center workers
- 1 full-time on-campus housing staff
- 4 full-time and 1 part-time maintenance workers
- 4 part-time night security workers

The college provides individual attention and care to students in instruction and support. The student-faculty ratio in 2015-2016 is approximately 10:1. All classes are under 35 students. Teaching assistants are used as support in two programs, but do not conduct classes or laboratory sessions. Courses are taught and administered by faculty members who have technical competence and appropriate academic qualifications and certifications.

Northwest Tech, as a technical college, [hires](#) faculty based upon [academic preparation](#), work experience, technical competence, and knowledge within a technical field. The college remains committed to supporting the advancement of credentials, education, and industry knowledge for faculty and staff. As of 2015-2016, 78% of full-time faculty possessed a bachelor's degree or higher, 10% are in pursuit of a masters degree and 30% possessed a masters degree or higher. All general education faculty members, including concurrent general education faculty members, possess or are pursuing a master's degree.

Northwest Tech is committed to quality and service and expects employees to support the college's mission, vision, values, and goals. 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 are [supported by the college](#). [Perkins grant funds](#) are used to support these opportunities. Staff and adjunct performance is reviewed by senior administration personnel on a regular basis to ensure quality and service.

The college recognizes that as enrollment continues to grow, investment in human resources must keep pace. Recently, the college added the Assistant Vice President of Outreach position to support its effort to expand enrollment of eligible high school students in concurrent general education and technical (SB 155) programs. The college also has created additional faculty positions in the Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology, Cosmetology, Welding, and Business Technology to support enrollment growth.

Technological Infrastructure

Northwest Tech's [vision](#) is to remain a leader in career and technical education through progressive technology and facilities. This commitment has led to Northwest Tech's designation as an [Apple Distinguished School](#). The college has a faculty member recognized by Apple as an [Apple Distinguished Educator](#). This individual is the first two-year higher education faculty member in Kansas to receive this recognition.

The one-to-one iPad initiative, and investments made in [infrastructure](#) and educational technology support this vision. [Capital investments](#) in 2015-2016 provided new computers to faculty, staff, and classrooms. All classrooms are equipped with high definition televisions and AppleTV's to allow wireless interaction between faculty and students. Shops and labs are also equipped with infrastructure to promote the use of technology in all learning environments.

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 primary learning management system (LMS) for the college. Some program and general education courses use individual course management software systems, such as WebAssign for mathematics and CengageBrain and MConnect for Business Technology, which allows for reduced textbook cost and more consistent evaluation of student progress. Public web access allows for interface with all systems. Campus e-mail is the preferred mode of communication with students, faculty, and administration.

The college has staff for instructional technology support that provides services to faculty, staff, and students. This includes computer and network support, learning and management system support, web and website services, multimedia support, telephony, and streaming support.

With Northwest Tech's commitment to being a leader in technology, the college recognizes the rapidly changing demands placed on technological infrastructure, and focuses [planning](#) on providing the highest possible experience for students and faculty. Northwest Tech continues to place an emphasis on providing professional development and support of technology to ensure a first-class technological 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

Northwest Tech's physical plant is well maintained, developed, and adequately meets the needs of the student population. Additional classrooms have added more academic space and new athletic facilities have provided room for growing athletic programs. The college has ample space for expansion as future enrollment and program growth warrant.

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](#) building and ground improvements with the Board. The new Dr. Guy E. Mills Academic and Athletic Center, completed in January 2014, was initiated by this process and [approved by the Board](#). It houses the college's newest academic program, Crime Scene Investigation, and contains classrooms, a wrestling room, and locker and training rooms.

Future expansion and maintenance of facilities will provide a challenge without incremental supporting funds. Northwest Tech expects that its physical plant will continue to expand to meet the needs of a growing student population. Because of anticipated continuing growth, the college has recognized that additional residential housing may become an ongoing challenge. The college's Master Facility Plan includes additional dorm space and the [strategic plan 1-4](#) provides for the remodeling of existing dorms to increase to occupancy. It also designates areas for additional academic and athletic facilities as warranted by future enrollment growth.

Core Component 5.A.2

The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

All revenues generated by Northwest Tech 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, and without regard to political pressures or interpersonal pressures that arise as a result of organizational and political interactions.

Northwest Tech prepares annual budgets 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, and departments estimate annual expenditures. From these requests, an [annual](#)

[budget](#) is developed and approved by the college's administrative Cabinet and the Board.

Core Component 5.A.3

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

The college's goals are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities to provide services to students and the service area. Northwest Tech 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](#).

Northwest Tech has the financial and human resources, as well as the physical and technological infrastructure, to support these mission purposes. The college provides its students with multiple opportunities to experience personal and professional development. Northwest Tech continues to expand and improve its degree and certificate offerings. The college, because of investments in physical and technological infrastructure, 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](#) have 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.

Northwest Tech organizes activities and ties resource allocations to strategic planning goals that articulate the stated mission purposes. The [FY'16-17 Strategic Plan](#) focuses on a small number of broad goals with specific initiatives aimed at addressing human, technological, financial, and facility resources. The goals approved by the Board are: Enrollment Growth, Teaching and Learning, Student Success, and Alliances & Partnerships. These strategic planning goals are realistic and relevant to the college's continued success.

Core Component 5.A.4

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

Faculty and staff are well qualified to fulfill their roles and are expected to participate in professional development activities to ensure they provide quality service to students. Faculty and staff members attend workshops or conferences, gain undergraduate and graduate credit, or complete other approved activities. [Funding](#) is made available for these activities.

Technical faculty are required to have industry experience in the relevant field and expected to complete a bachelor's degree with financial support from the college. [General education faculty](#)

members are expected to have a master's degree with 18 graduate hours in the field of instruction. Exceptions to this requirement for current faculty require degree completion no later than August 2017. Faculty members are expected to participate in at least 20 hours of professional development activities annually to stay current with new developments and trends.

Faculty members are encouraged to seek graduate education. The Board awards completion of the master's degree with a salary enhancement. Job qualifications for staff are based on the appropriate requirements for the position. Staff training is ongoing through in-service and workshop attendance. Some staff members have been asked to earn degrees and the college provides financial support.

New faculty and staff attend a week long employee orientation beginning with a discussion of mission, vision, values and goals. Teaching methods, technology, and policies and procedures are addressed in the [orientation](#).

Core Component 5.A.5

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

Budgets are planned for all programs including salaries, benefits, construction, and remodeling needs. The Strategic Plan is central to annual budget planning. The Strategic Plan includes recommendations for support of new and existing programs that are tied to the annual budgets. The Board approves annual budgets. Administration prepares monthly reports of receipts and expenditures for [Board review and approval](#).

Expenditures are monitored by the use of purchase orders, monthly department [budget reports](#), and an annual administrative review. At the program level, expenditures are tied to the strategic plan and to program goals. An additional venue for planning program-level budgets is the three-year Capital Outlay request, which describes needs for new technology, replacement equipment, professional development, and facility needs. Expenditures of the college are monitored as a part of the [annual audit](#) and reported to the Board.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Argument

Core Component 5.B

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

The college recognizes that to fulfill its mission, leaders must be developed and teamwork must be established, with processes and structures that support voice and inclusion. Northwest Tech has the largest public College [Board](#) in the state with 25 members. The college serves a 17-county area containing 24 school districts and over 15,000 square miles. Each district appoints its own Board representative to the Northwest Tech Board. The Northwest Tech Board appoints the twenty-fifth member at large. The Board meets monthly according to a [published schedule](#) and abides by Kansas Open Meetings Act. [Board meetings](#) allow for discussion of strategic direction, financial statements, academic and student matters, athletics, personnel, and miscellaneous items. These areas of discussion may also include revision or implementation of new policy and procedure. Administration, faculty, and staff participate fully in these meetings and provide relevant perspectives for the Board's consideration.

Northwest Tech's [organizational structure](#) outlines the support structure and promotes collaboration within the college. The Board employs a [President](#) as the chief executive officer of the college. The President oversees the daily operations of the college, is responsible for the execution of college policies, and ensures that expectations from the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) and the Kansas Technical Education Authority (KTEA) are met. The President is supported by a full Administrative Cabinet including representatives from finance, technology, marketing, academic affairs, athletics, student affairs and division chairs. The President meets with each constituency in regular monthly meetings to ensure input and engagement across campus.

Core Component 5.B.1

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

Board members receive [training](#), which promotes responsible oversight of the college's legal, financial, and academic policies and practices. The college's [by-laws](#) require new Board members to be appointed from each represented Unified School District, and either to have served or to currently serve as a local board member. This unique situation provides the Board with an extensive background in educational policy and finance.

The Board meets monthly for discussions and approvals, which ensures knowledge and oversight of the college. During the [monthly meetings](#) the board reviews: state affairs, academic affairs, student affairs, financials, personnel, and miscellaneous items. The board also conducts an annual reorganizational meeting. During this [meeting](#) they elect officers and committee chairpersons for the year and reports are given to provide a recap of the previous year's successes.

The Board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities by contracting and meeting with outside experts regularly. The college attorney and the Kansas Association of School Boards legal staff provide the Board with legal advice. The college contracts with an independent public accounting firm to conduct an annual [audit](#). [Results of the audit](#) are reported to the Board after each audit cycle.

Core Component 5.B.2

The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.

Northwest Tech supports shared governance. The college uses several structures, policies, and procedures to engage internal constituencies and ensure participation from all levels of the institution. Many groups of internal constituents are involved in developing, reviewing, and approving policies and procedures. Other procedures have been developed by internal constituent groups to provide consistency and continuity in day-to-day operations.

Monthly Board meetings follow an open and democratic process that secures active and regular contributions from the Administrative Cabinet, faculty, staff, and students about the college's strategic, financial, and operational direction. The Administrative Cabinet meets regularly to discuss operational issues with perspectives contributed by representatives from academic affairs, student affairs, outreach, marketing, finance, athletics, and technology. The [President/Faculty committee](#) composed of the President, the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Divisional Chairs allows for interaction and contribution from senior faculty into academic policies and operations. [Monthly Divisional Meetings](#) allow faculty from related disciplines to meet with each other and share teaching and learning strategies, policies, and procedures that share common career and skill bases. Monthly campus-wide [Faculty/Staff meetings](#) allow faculty and staff, to interact with the Administrative Cabinet on a wide range of operational topics including marketing, student affairs, academic affairs, and technology, to review discussions held at the divisional levels, and to share training on topics of campus-wide interest such as [campus safety](#), bullying, and [confidentiality](#).

The [Curriculum and Assessment Committee](#) meets quarterly to guide academic policy, set procedures, and review programs and assessment. Student input is obtained across the campus from faculty through interaction with Student Council representatives and Departmental Club meetings. Data about [institutional effectiveness](#) and [student satisfaction](#) is obtained with regular surveys, and faculty members discuss the implications of information obtained in the surveys during [data retreats](#).

One recent example of how the college engages internal constituencies can be found with the topic of campus security and the [installation of security cameras](#) in key locations on the campus. Student satisfaction surveys and student government representatives began to indicate a desire for increased

campus security. The issue was discussed in Cabinet, President/Faculty Council, Divisional and Faculty/Staff meetings, and a result of several meetings, the Cabinet approved expenditures for cameras in key locations as well as expenditures for an increased security presence on campus.

The college also maintains several [standing committees](#) that further engage internal constituencies and draw on particular expertise from participants. For example, in Fall 2014, the Marketing Committee completed a review of [recruiting policies and procedures](#) that improved the breadth and depth of contact with prospective students. The changes led to improved penetration of the college's market with better call plans, higher conversion rates from interest to paid applications, enhanced positioning of the college within in its geographic setting, and increased [social media](#) contact. Regular Strategic Planning Committee meetings provide internal and external constituencies with opportunity for input about the college's strategic direction. SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analyses have been used to gather assessments about the college from students, faculty, staff, and the community have led to the college revising its strategic goals for its [FY'16-17 Strategic Plan](#).

Core Component 5.B.3

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

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

The college's academic decisions and actions are influenced by [program advisory committees](#), which are comprised of recognized local business and industry leaders. Advisory committees provide input to the college's faculty and administrators on the employment needs of the local, state, regional, and national marketplaces, help to provide an understanding of the overall economy, and promote the latest business and industry trends regarding technologies, practices, and needs. An advisory committee supports each program within the college, and [meet on a semi-annual basis](#) to review competencies and learner outcomes, program equipment, facilities, current enrollment trends, and any policy or procedural changes that might affect business and industry.

Faculty members drive academic procedures and policies. Northwest Tech hires qualified technical and general education [faculty](#) who make recommendations about curricula, tools, texts, learning materials, and grading policies and procedures with input from administration, staff, and students. For example, driven by student input concerning book costs, Business Technology and General Education faculty found lower cost text options and interactive course learning materials that reduced book costs by over one-third.

Another recent example of how the college supports contribution and collaboration in academic matters can be found in recent revisions to policies and procedures with respect to plagiarism and cheating. The annual [student satisfaction survey](#) indicated that students were concerned about the problem. Faculty supported the student impressions with evidence of improper iPad use when completing assignments such as copying and pasting while writing and taking screen shots 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 are given to show faculty how to monitor and prevent improper use of technology.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

Argument

Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

Northwest Tech engages in systematic and integrated planning. Planning and budgeting priorities are reflected in the college's strategic plan. Northwest Tech ensures that its planning priorities align with the college's [Performance Agreement](#) with the Kansas Board of Regents. The college also 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. Assessments of student learning and evaluations of operations 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. Northwest Tech is alert to demographic, economic, social, political, and technological trends. The college's planning anticipates how trends affect its revenues, expenditures, and operations.

In reference to the monitoring report from our 2011 comprehensive visit, the college has an established planning model for actions related to facilities, human resources, academics, and technology. The following initiatives and actions are tied closely to the college's strategic goals in the [FY'14-15](#) and [FY'16-17](#) strategic plans.

Core Component 5.C.1

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

Northwest Tech's allocation of resources demonstrates capacity to fulfill its mission, vision, values, and goals. The 2016-2017 Strategic Plan directs human, technological, facilities, and financial resources to support the four strategic goals of the college: Enrollment Growth, Teaching and Learning, Student Success, and Alliances and Partnerships.

Enrollment Growth

Northwest Tech remains focused on enrollment growth ([Goal 1](#)) as its leading strategic goal. The college supports initiatives to develop new programs in academics and athletics, extend its reach within its service area for secondary enrollment, and continue to improve its marketing, branding, and recruiting. The goal of enrollment growth aligns with the college's [Performance Agreement](#) with KBOR. The college recognizes the importance of planning to continue [current growth trend](#).

Northwest Tech has a track record of [developing new enrollment](#). The addition of the Mobile Application and Entertainment Development program, Crime Scene Investigation program, and expanded concurrent and SB155 offerings have contributed to this growth. In 2016-2017, the college will investigate its [potential to expand offerings](#) to include precision agriculture, health care administration, and sports management. The college is meeting with industry experts to determine feasibility and employment demand in these areas. Northwest Tech looks to strengthen its current athletic programs, and may explore additional offerings for female athletes, such as softball, in the future. [Land and facilities](#) are available for rational expansion of athletics.

With [SB 155 legislation](#), the Kansas state legislature has committed to support technical training and dual credit offerings in secondary education. Northwest Tech has partnered effectively with high schools in its service area, and in 2014, 218 students enrolled in dual credit courses. The college forecasts it can expand and strengthen its partnerships with school districts in its service area. The Assistant Vice President for Outreach will continue to develop and support dual credit offerings.

Northwest Tech supports an effective Admissions department by hiring qualified staff and allocating financial resources for travel, advertising, promotions, and supplies. The admissions representatives and Registrar are members of the Kansas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (KACRAO) and attend state-sponsored workshops to ensure they are knowledgeable about [best practices](#) for recruiting. Admissions officers have expanded their recruiting territory to increase awareness of the college to assist with efforts of continued enrollment growth. The college approved new software, Constant Contact, to be used in 2015-2016 to provide better branding content and more frequent contact with prospective students. One of the recruiting initiatives within the strategic plan, to attract a more diverse student population, is to broadcast radio commercials in Spanish in largely Hispanic populated areas. The college believes its continued enrollment growth success has resulted partly due to improved recruiting, marketing, and branding.

Campus facilities are continually updated and added to serve the needs of the current student population and any anticipated growth. The college has begun planning for [additional dormitory space](#) to accommodate future needs. The college also supports enrollment growth with investments in technology, for example, desktop computers were upgraded in five computer labs in summer 2015 with dual boot capabilities, and the number of student workstations was expanded. The college's major resource challenge for enrollment growth will be to recruit additional well-qualified faculty. Northwest Tech remains committed to finding the best instructors and offering competitive salary and benefit packages.

Teaching and Learning

Northwest Tech understands that excellent teaching facilitates student learning ([Goal 2](#)). In 2016-2017, the college supports strategic initiatives that will attract [quality faculty](#), develop and improve curricula, maintain institutional and program accreditation, and improve teaching and learning assessment.

High quality faculty and staff are cornerstones for achieving superior student learning outcomes. Northwest Tech offers competitive salaries and excellent benefits to attract and retain faculty and

staff. As a focus on retaining quality faculty, Northwest Tech has continued to offer annual raises, regardless of state funding volatility.

The college recruits faculty directly from industry to meet the level of technical mastery needed. Some may not have completed undergraduate or graduate degrees; however, the college has consistently budgeted to support the costs for faculty to obtain additional academic credentials. Northwest Tech also assists adjunct faculty, including concurrent and SB 155 course faculty, in obtaining professional development. Northwest Tech supports faculty and staff training. Recent examples include expenditures to attend the [Apple Distinguished Educator](#) conference and the [AARC Summer Forum](#). The college supports faculty training in using iBooks to publish instructional materials, teaching with new software applications, and managing classrooms and assessment with the Moodle learning management system.

Northwest Tech invests time, talent, and facilities with respect to curriculum development. Through the advice of [Program Advisory Committees](#), the college receives suggestions for capital investments, admissions requirements, learning resources, and curricula updates to enhance classroom and shop learning. For example, the college remodeled the Cosmetology building in order to create a better student-learning environment.

Northwest Tech ensures funds are available to maintain national and state [accreditation of programs](#) such as Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology, Medical Assistant, and Respiratory Therapy. The college supports HLC accreditation with attendance at national meetings and responsiveness to its suggestions for improvement. The college's Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs has been selected to serve as a member of the HLC's peer review corps and funds have been allocated for active participation.

The college invests in [assessment](#) of student learning at the course, program, and institutional levels. Faculty members dedicate time in collecting and analyzing data from class and shop exercises, assignments, and examinations. The college employs an Assessment Coordinator to ensure that the college collects, analyzes, and reports data accurately and in a timely manner. Faculty and administration hold data retreats and conduct annual program reviews to ensure that assessment data influence college operations.

Student Success

Student success is central to Northwest Tech's mission ([Goal 3](#)). The college supports this planning goal with strategic initiatives aimed at improving retention, enhancing campus life, boosting student satisfaction, and building civility and tolerance.

Improving retention is an explicit objective in the college's KBOR Performance Agreement even as the college outperforms its IPEDS cohort on [retention of first to second year students](#). The college has an [Academic/Attendance Alert](#) procedure to identify students who are at risk, design interventions, and increase persistence. In addition, Academic Services provides academic counseling and advising for students in terms of courses and programs. The college invests in developmental classes to support students who may need additional preparation coursework. The Max Alderman Library and the Digital Technology computer lab provide students access to technology, tutoring, and additional resources.

The construction of the Dr. Guy E. Mills Academic and Athletic Center is one example of how the college invests in facilities that support both academic and co-curricular endeavors. The college actively maintains and invests in its physical plant with [capital assets](#) of over seven million dollars.

The college has contracted with a private vendor to improve cafeteria services as requested by student surveys. Investments in programs, athletics, and facilities have increased student opportunities for engagement.

The college has strategic plan initiatives such as the American Tradition speaker series, the student success seminar, and other assemblies to promote civility and tolerance. The college works to provide students with success beyond the campus by providing multiple opportunities for civic engagement.

The college provides resources to student organizations such as Circle K International and SkillsUSA allowing students to experience service learning and to compete in skill-based competitions at state and national levels. Support for departmental clubs provide students with additional opportunities to demonstrate leadership and civic engagement.

Alliances and Partnerships

Alliances and partnerships are essential for supporting teaching and learning, enhancing opportunities for student success, and building enrollment growth ([Goal 4](#)). Northwest Tech supports strategic initiatives to build and strengthen partnerships with business and industry, with secondary and post-secondary institutions, with the Goodland community, and with alumni.

Northwest Tech has relied on industry partners to serve on Program Advisory Committees that inform the college on curricular content, equipment necessary to maintain state-of-the-art programs, and graduate performance within respective fields. In addition to the service contributions of industry experts, the college has welcomed investments and [donations](#) from industry.

The college has [articulation agreements](#) with post-secondary institutions. SB 155 legislation provides opportunities for Northwest Tech to partner with secondary institutions throughout the college's service area. The Assistant Vice President for Outreach has a major objective to strengthen partnerships with USD's in order to provide educational opportunities for high school students.

The college has a strong partnership with Goodland's School District USD 352, sharing coursework and athletic facilities that have increased enrollment, strengthened student learning, and enhanced campus life.

Core Component 5.C.2

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

Northwest Tech assesses student learning at course, program, and institutional levels and uses data collected at these levels to evaluate operations, planning, and budgeting.

Teaching and learning is a strategic planning goal that is 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](#). Northwest Tech uses multiple assessments to assure that student learning is occurring. Assessment provides 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, COMPASS testing, WorkKeys testing, and state and national licensure exams. Beginning in the 2015-16 academic year, the college will begin using the [CCSSE Survey](#) to improve focus on good educational practice and to assist in identifying areas for program improvement and ways to better assist students and improve student outcomes. Planning and budgeting priorities are consistent with the college's [Performance](#)

[Agreement](#) with the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR).

The [Executive Summary](#) of the Annual Institutional Assessment Report list concerns identified by the assessment process along with plans of actions. These items are used to form future annual budgets.

Core Component 5.C.3

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

Northwest Tech's governing Board, administration, faculty, staff, students, and community leaders participate in strategic planning annually. The college's [strategic planning process](#) allows for internal and external stakeholders to have voice in Northwest Tech'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 that is comprised of representatives from faculty, staff, students, community, and senior administration. Throughout the year, at Cabinet, President/Faculty Committee, faculty/staff, and Board meetings, the strategic plan is discussed to ensure participation and implementation. Program Advisory Committees serve as external constituent groups to further inform institutional planning. Improvements to the strategic plan are [adopted](#) by the Board at its August organizational meeting.

Core Component 5.C.4

The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

Northwest Tech continually reviews its institutional capacity with respect to facilities, technology, human resources, and fiscal expenditures in relation to revenue sources. The college anticipates fluctuations in revenue receipts from major sources such as state support, enrollment, and the economy when setting budgets and planning expenditures.

The college has been alert to possible fluctuations in state support. Given the current fiscal difficulties of the Kansas state government, the college has been proactive in anticipating declines in state support. The college's planning assumption for 2015-2016 is a decline in state aid in the area of 2-5%. The college has acted to identify a one-time efficiency in non-academic operations and has contingencies in place should these planning assumptions for state support hold true. The college also projects that SB 155 funding for dual and concurrent enrollment will continue without cuts.

Northwest Tech projects enrollment growth leading to increased tuition receipts from full-time, on-campus students in the years ahead. The college also projects that the percentage of revenue received from tuition as a percentage of total revenue will increase, but only as a result of increased enrollment, and not as a result of any tuition price increases. In 2014, the college adopted flat rate tuition for full-time program students, which has led to improved forecasting of tuition receipts and transparency for students in determining the cost of attendance.

Northwest Tech is fortunate to be located in a rural area with relatively low unemployment. [Demand for technical graduates](#) continues to be strong. The college expects that its proven leadership in providing qualified and well-trained graduates will keep demand for technical education strong.

Facilities are continually upgraded and added to meet the needs of a growing and diverse student population. With the advent of athletics, the college has seen an increase in the number of students living on campus. The college has nearly doubled available dorm space with additional facilities and has acted to improve its food service operations to accommodate more students with greater satisfaction. With continued enrollment growth, Northwest Tech forecasts that additional faculty will be required to accommodate the demand for general education and developmental instruction.

Core Component 5.C.5

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

Northwest Tech continually reviews emerging factors that may impact college operations. The college holds ongoing conversations with business and industry regarding emerging technologies that are necessary for future graduates to be successful. The college is alert to changing demographics across the country and the growing necessity of preparing graduates to function effectively in a globalized economy.

The college has taken these initiatives to be a leader in technology:

- First two-year college in the United States to launch a one-to-one student [iPad initiative](#);
- First two-year college to be recognized by Apple for innovative programs, such as [Mobile Application and Entertainment Development](#);
- Investments in wireless technology across campus to support effective teaching and learning;
- Dual platform desktop computers in all labs;
- Increased bandwidth capacity, more than tripled since 2011;
- [Trained faculty](#) to use technology in teaching.

The college has been proactive in meeting changing demographics in western Kansas. Over the past several decades both population and the number of high school graduates in the service area has declined. To address this declining number of high school graduates, the college has expanded its recruiting territory and added new programs that have attracted students nationally and internationally. Business and industry in the college's service area is comprised primarily of agricultural-related enterprise. The college anticipates that advancing technology will support agriculture and is planning curricula to meet that need. In August 2015, the Board approved planning for a [precision agricultural program](#) to be implemented in 2016.

Access to the global community is exponentially increased through advances in technology. Northwest Tech's programs now attract students from many foreign countries. The college has increased the number of minority students on campus. To meet the needs of a growing and diverse student population, the college has [enhanced efforts](#) to attract diverse faculty and staff members.

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5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

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

Argument

Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

Northwest Tech learns from operations to systematically improve performance. The college embraces an operational philosophy of continuous improvement. The college documents evidence of its performance, uses data to learn from its operational experience, and applies that learning to improve effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability.

Core Component 5.D.1

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

The college develops and documents evidence of operational performance with evaluations of admissions and marketing, academic programs, student learning, human resources, finance, and student services.

Admissions and Marketing

- Admissions prepares [weekly enrollment reports](#) that document student recruitment and retention by program.
- Admissions prepares a monthly report that tracks and projects inquiries, paid applications, and conversions into programs.
- The Registrar prepares an annual report of enrollment by program.
- The Registrar prepares a [quarterly retention report](#) that documents student withdrawals and reasons for withdrawal.
- Marketing tracks [social media contacts](#) (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and supports other media efforts with budgetary tracking.

Academics Programs and Student Learning

- The sixteen separate programs conduct [annual program reviews](#) that report student performance against learning goals, evaluate program competencies, and document student achievements against program benchmarks, learner outcomes, and certification tests where applicable. The learning goals, competencies, and student achievements of students in the Tech Studies program is naturally embedded by their inclusion in the assessment of the two programs that constitute the student's tech studies degree program.
- General education programs conduct annual assessments of student performance against [learner](#)

[outcomes](#) that meet or exceed KBOR standards for general education coursework.

- Program Advisory Committees [meet with faculty semi-annually](#) and discuss learner outcomes, program competencies, student placement and graduation rates.
- Students evaluate program and [instructor](#) performance with annual surveys of teaching and learning.

Human Resources

- Senior administration officials have performance evaluations that are reviewed by the Area Board of Control annually.
- Instructors are [evaluated](#) by the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs with respect to teaching performance at regular intervals based upon teaching experience.
- Instructors prepare [annual development plans](#) and participate in coursework and conferences.
- College staff members receive [annual performance reviews](#) that are discussed with administration.
- The college conducts an annual [institutional effectiveness survey](#) that documents performance in several student service areas including financial aid, counseling, advising, library services, registration, career services, placement, food services, and maintenance.

Finance

- The college prepares an [annual operational budget](#).
- Expenditures by program and by support service area are monitored by the President and Chief Financial Officer, and then approved by the Area Board of Control monthly.
- The college evaluates expenditures at regular intervals against strategic goals.
- Programs [prepare three-year plans](#) for capital spending with Program Advisory Committees that are reviewed and approved by the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs and the President of the college.

Student Services

- The college documents specific [financial aid performance](#) in accordance with state and federal requirements and tracks student scholarships and loans.
- The Registrar records and documents student performance with transcripts in the [Empower records system](#). Performance against student competencies also is recorded by semester.
- Career Planning and Placement conducts annual surveys of graduates and employers. [Graduates](#) evaluate the quality of education received and employers evaluate the [preparation of graduates](#) hired.
- Career Planning and Placement also documents [placement and salary information](#) by program annually.

Core Component 5.D.2

The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

The institution demonstrates a clear record of making decisions to improve institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability based on operational experience.

Northwest Tech has learned that it must develop new programs and improve student life in order to ensure enrollment sustainability. From 2000 to 2009, full-time enrollment plummeted from

approximately 550 to approximately 250 students. In 2009, the Area Board of Control and senior administration began implementing strategic initiatives to grow. The college embraced its technological roots and chose to become a state wide and national leader at the two-year level in the use of iPad technology for teaching and learning. In addition to the iPad initiative, the college implemented new programs in Mobile Application & Entertainment Development, Crime Scene Investigation, enhanced curriculum in Business Technology, Carpentry, and Welding, and began offering college credit to high school students in its service area.

Northwest Tech has learned that there are large numbers of high school graduates who, not only are interested in technical education, but also are athletes. The college implemented an array of athletic programs, which has brought additional students to Northwest Tech. The college expanded its athletic and academic resources with the construction of Dr. Guy E. Mills Academic and Athletic Center and hired coaching staff to support soccer, basketball, cross country, track and field, wrestling, and dance teams.

Admissions and marketing has learned that applicants require a much higher level of [contact and connection](#) than in the past. Today's students are "wired" and must be reached through social media as well as through traditional recruiting channels. The college completely revamped its marketing and recruiting initiatives in 2014-2015. Admissions staff extended its call patterns to include a broader geographic area, developed new procedures to increase frequency of contact with applicants, and improved its communication presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The college in 2015-2016 now has its largest freshman class in many years. New programs and athletics have diversified the student body, which has enriched the campus in many ways.

Northwest Tech learns from its operational experience in the classroom and improves its teaching and learning based upon systematic examination of operations. Several programs have revised learner outcomes based upon advice from [Program Advisory Committees](#). Faculty members have improved curricula and teaching effectiveness based upon classroom experience and [annual reviews](#) of performance. In addition, the influx of new students has brought increased demand for developmental assistance in coursework. The college has hired a developmental instructor to provide help in writing, has increased the number of computers in the Resource Center, and has expanded student access to coursework and tutoring support in evening hours.

Northwest Tech uses an [institutional effectiveness survey](#) that allows faculty and staff to review the services provided by the institution, as well as a [student satisfaction survey](#) to allow students to do the same. Results from these surveys, have improved campus processes and procedures. For example, in the most recent survey food services received low ratings. As a result, in 2015-2016, the Board has employed an outside service provider to improve the cafeteria operations.

The Board and the college remain committed to learn from experience in order to improve capacity, sustainability, and effectiveness.

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Northwest Tech has the resources, structures, and governing processes to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to its future challenges and opportunities.

The college has the fiscal resources to support current and future operations. Over 60% of annual revenue is expended for instruction, education, and student care. The college expects expenses to remain at these levels for the foreseeable future. State post-secondary aid accounts for approximately 40% of the college's operating revenue. This percentage has decreased over the years due to flat, and even reduced at times, state funding; yet, the college has healthy reserves and has continued to generate enrollment growth which have been used to offset increased expenses. Northwest Tech forecasts that as a result of its initiatives for enrollment growth, the college can replace declining state aid with increased tuition revenue from growth and maintain a balanced budget. All public higher education institutions in Kansas have faced similar declines in state support, but Northwest Tech will withstand cutbacks because the college is moving proactively to grow.

Northwest Tech has the technological and physical infrastructure to meet expected enrollment growth. The college has invested in technology with the iPad initiative, wireless connectivity, and dedicated computer classrooms and laboratories. Recently, the college upgraded desktop computers and expanded student access. The college invests in pedagogy with faculty training in classroom management systems and iBooks publishing. The college maintains and updates its physical facilities and has a master facility plan. The college has added dormitory space and a new academic and athletic building to accommodate enrollment growth. The college's master facility plan includes investments for additional dormitories. Space is available for classroom expansion as programs grow.

Northwest Tech 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. Board policies are legally vetted. College finances are audited annually. Faculty, staff, and administration engage in regular discussion about the college's strategic and operational direction. Administrative policies 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. Northwest Tech promotes leadership with responsible stewardship of resources and there are appropriate controls of budgets and expenditures.

Northwest Tech's strategic plan aligns and allocates resources to match the college's mission and

priorities. The plan contains major initiatives for enrollment growth, teaching and learning, student success, and alliances and partnerships. The plan is supported within an annual planning process that links assessment of student learning and student life to evaluations of college operations. The plan is also supported with a budgeting process that distributes resources to strategic initiatives and establishes regular checkpoints against fiscal and performance benchmarks. The planning process encompasses the college as a whole and considers the perspectives of relevant constituencies. The college has a sound understanding of its current capacity and anticipates new demand for its services in areas such as precision agriculture and other technical training based upon anticipated demographic, technological, social and economic factors.

Northwest Tech works systematically to improve its operational performance. In the last six years, the college has transformed itself from a college with declining enrollment to a technological leader with new academic and athletic programs that are leading to significant enrollment growth. The college continues to strive for student success through its mission of gainful employment, productive personal lives, and lifelong learning. The college has learned from its experience and is committed to improving its effectiveness and capacity. Northwest Tech can say with confidence that its operations are sound and sustainable into the future.

Northwest Tech foresees these challenges going forward:

- There is on-going uncertainty to state post-secondary aid. State and national officials publicly maintain strong support for investments in technical training and education, but budgets have fluctuated. It is unclear whether current levels of support will be maintained. The college plans to use growth to offset stagnant or reduced state funding.
- Student retention is an on-going challenge, but Northwest Tech remains committed to providing tools for student success. The college recognizes that with continued growth, needs for developmental services, guidance, counseling, and placement services will also need to increase.
- As the college grows, Northwest Tech will need to extend its partnerships and alliances with other educational institutions, industry, and the local community.

Northwest Tech will respond to its opportunities and challenges now and in the future.

Sources

There are no sources.