Assurance Argument

Fort Scott Community College

Review date: 10-13-2025

Welcome Message for Review Team

Dear HLC Review Team,

Welcome to Fort Scott Community College. We are honored to host you as part of the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation process and grateful for the time and expertise you bring to supporting continuous improvement in higher education.

At FSCC, our mission is to provide accessible, affordable, and high-quality education that prepares students for the workforce, transfer opportunities, and lifelong learning. We are proud to serve a diverse student body with strong academic programs, dedicated faculty, and comprehensive support services that emphasize student success and community engagement.

As the new President of FSCC, I have framed our direction around the theme of **W.I.N.**:

- **Welcome** every learner with open access and opportunity.
- Be **Innovative** in how we deliver instruction, support services, and partnerships.
- **Never** settle for less than excellence in academic quality and institutional effectiveness.

Our strength lies in people, our students, faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, and community partners, who work together to advance the transformative power of education. We value our family-like culture and are committed to fostering respect, inclusion, and shared responsibility for excellence.

We take seriously our charge to measure outcomes, analyze data, and set ambitious goals. This evidence-driven approach ensures that we are accountable to our students, our community, and the standards of quality that accreditation upholds.

Your visit provides us with an invaluable opportunity to reflect, to highlight areas of success, and to identify opportunities for growth. We welcome your feedback and look forward to the dialogue that will help us strengthen our work on behalf of students and the communities we serve.

On behalf of the entire FSCC community, thank you for your service and commitment to higher education. We are pleased to have you here and look forward to engaging with you throughout this important process.

Warm regards,
Jack Welch
President, Fort Scott Community College

1 - Mission

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

1.A. Mission Alignment

The institution's educational programs, enrollment profile and scope of operations align with its publicly articulated mission.

Argument

Fort Scott Community College (FSCC), Kansas' oldest continuous public community college, was founded in 1919 and has evolved from the extension of Fort Scott High School into an independently governed institution serving southeast Kansas and surrounding regions. The transformation from Fort Scott Junior College to a countywide institution in 1965 reflected the College's expanding commitment to accessible and affordable postsecondary education aligned with community needs. In October 1967, Bourbon County voters approved a general obligation bond issue to purchase the land and construct the first two buildings, and about 200 students moved to the present 150-acre campus.

FSCC's current mission statement, approved by the Board of Trustees at the February 2015 meeting , guides the institution's priorities: "Fort Scott Community College is an institution of higher learning with a long history of culture and diversity that provides affordable academic, technical, and occupational programs to meet student needs while fostering a mutually supportive relationship between the college and its communities." This mission is reaffirmed annually. At the February 2025 regular board meeting , the Board of Trustees reviewed the mission for relevance and confirmed its alignment with institutional operations.

To further articulate the mission and strengthen institutional planning, FSCC implemented a strategic plan in 2016 . Strategic planning at FSCC directly supports the implementation of its mission. The current strategic plan, revised in 2022 , outlines five central goals: fostering relationships with the communities FSCC serves; cultivating quality enhancements for education and learning; promoting student success; ensuring reliable and safe facilities and equipment through fiscal responsibility; and promoting employee engagement. These goals are regularly reviewed to ensure clarity, alignment, and integration with institutional operations.

In the spring semester of 2025, the Executive team reviewed additional supporting documents such as the executive summary, information about the institution, student demographics, guiding framework, operational plan, measurable results and other supporting items that provide further transparency of Fort Scott Community College's holistic approach to strategic planning. The changes were brought to the President's Cabinet for further review before taking the additions to the Board of Trustees in March of 2025 . These additions bring clarity, giving stakeholders a comprehensive view of how Fort Scott Community College plans strategically.

The College's vision statement, reviewed in February of 2025, which declares FSCC's focus as: "Students First, Community Always" through a central emphasis on teaching and learning; advancing strong, innovative programs and departments; maximizing opportunities; initiating effective processes; and developing the region's workforce. The FSCC vision statement supports the overall mission of the institution.

Core values were established in 2020. These values include personal success and growth, integrity and respect, diversity and inclusion, and stewardship. Each of these values reinforces FSCC's commitment to delivering a high-quality, inclusive learning environment and to using its resources responsibly.

Fort Scott Community College's mission statement is articulated through numerous media platforms. It is deeply embedded and prominently displayed across its digital, print, and in-person platforms, ensuring all stakeholders understand and connect with its values and goals. This consistent presence across multiple outlets and communication channels underscores FSCC's commitment to transparency, purpose, and community engagement.

The College's mission statement has a strong website presence. On the www.fortscott.edu webpage, the mission is posted on the "Home" page for all constituents to view. It can also be found under the "About Us" . The mission is published in the online catalog , which is accessed by current and prospective students and faculty. The strategic planning and accreditation documents reiterate the mission, ensuring further articulation.

Promotional banners with the FSCC mission statement are present in each building on campus, and smaller visuals of the mission statement are accessible in each classroom for students, faculty, stakeholders, and visitors to view. Yearly Activity Passes given to each employee have the FSCC mission statement on one side. The campus television reels have a slide that includes the institutional mission statement.

New student orientation and employee onboarding checklist include the mission as the foundation for understanding the institution's values and goals. Staff and faculty are introduced to the mission and its meaning as part of their in-service each school year. The mission statement can be found in the Employee handbook and the Student Handbook , accessible through FSCC's online portal.

At regular monthly Board of Trustee meetings, the mission statement is documented at the beginning of the agenda and read aloud by the Board of Trustees chair. Board Policy documents also display the mission statement, which can be found on the website.

Collectively, these visible displays serve as a testament to the College's unwavering commitment to its mission, continuously reinforcing the institution's guiding values for everyone who enters FSCC's learning environment.

By keeping education affordable, FSCC ensures that students from all backgrounds can remain on track to meet their personal, academic, and professional goals. Additionally, this priority aligns with Strategic Goal 4 : Develop a Culture of Fiscal Responsibility. Specifically, Strategy 4.1 within the Strategic Plan calls for the promotion and continuous communication of a shared fiscal vision, and Tactic 4.1.4, "Review institutional expenditures and processes," highlights FSCC's ongoing efforts to balance affordability with high-quality academic programming. By continuously evaluating its operational and budgetary decisions, FSCC maintains a strong commitment to fiscal stewardship, directly benefiting students, families, and the broader community.

Fort Scott Community College maintains a lower tuition rate than its peer institutions in Kansas. This affordable tuition structure ensures that students can pursue post-secondary education without the burden of excessive student debt, supporting equitable access for all students, including those from lower-income backgrounds.

FSCC has developed a robust scholarship program that addresses multiple student interest and talent areas. Athletic scholarships are available for softball, baseball, volleyball, basketball, track and field, and cross country. These scholarships support student-athletes and encourage academic and athletic excellence. Additionally, FSCC offers activity scholarships for programs such as music, theater, athletic training, the social media squad, rodeo, livestock judging, and meat judging. Academic scholarships are awarded at various amounts providing financial support to students who demonstrate excellence in the classroom.

The FSCC Endowment actively supports students' financial needs through various scholarship funds established by generous donors. These scholarships honor donors' wishes while directly helping students reduce their tuition and fees. In the 2024-2025 academic year, the FSCC Foundation awarded over $300,000 in Foundation Scholarship money , reflecting the community's investment in student success.

FSCC offers a discounted tuition rate of $50 per credit hour for dual and concurrent enrollment courses , with no additional fees. This program enables high school students in FSCC's service area to earn college credits affordably, giving them a significant head start on their post-secondary education while saving money on future tuition expenses.

FSCC's Bourbon County Resident Waiver allows residents of Bourbon County to attend classes at no tuition cost. This initiative promotes educational attainment and community involvement by making higher education more accessible to residents.

FSCC's Financial Aid Office provides comprehensive support to help students identify and secure federal and state aid resources. The availability of grants, loans, and work-study opportunities minimizes financial barriers for students who may need additional assistance beyond scholarships and tuition waivers.

FSCC participates in Excel in CTE , also known as SB155, a Kansas state initiative that provides free tuition for high school students enrolled in designated career and technical education courses. This program allows students to graduate high school with industry-recognized certifications, saving them thousands of dollars in future tuition and offering a seamless transition to careers in high-demand fields.

FSCC's multiple campus locations reduce transportation costs and student housing needs across its service area. By offering consistent programs and services at different sites, FSCC empowers students to choose the location that best supports their educational and financial needs, contributing to equitable access and cost savings.

Academic offerings at FSCC are carefully aligned with the institution's mission. The College provides a broad array of career and technical education programs in fields such as Agriculture, Construction, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Cosmetology, and Criminal Justice. Associate degrees are available in technical (AAS), transfer-focused (AA, AS), and general studies (AGS) formats, supported by certificate programs that deliver targeted workforce skills.

FSCC's mission of providing affordable, accessible, and high-quality academic, technical, and occupational programs is at the core of its educational offerings. By aligning its programs with the Kansas Board of Regents, maintaining robust transfer pathways, and continuously evaluating how programs meet student and community needs, FSCC affirms its steadfast commitment to delivering on its mission.

The College fulfills its mission to meet student needs through robust student support services. The Student Success Center offers tutoring, test accommodations, academic advising, and access to technology. FSCC's TRIO Student Support Services program enhances support through transfer planning, FAFSA assistance, cultural programming, and mentoring. Mental health services , provided at low cost to students through professional counseling partnerships, address issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Academic advising includes specialized support in transfer, career, and accessibility areas.

FSCC supports student engagement and community through an array of extracurricular programs . Organizations such as Phi Theta Kappa, SkillsUSA, the Student Nursing Organization, Rodeo Team, Choir, and Christians on Campus create opportunities for involvement and leadership. The College hosts regular events including social gatherings, painting nights, and stress-relief activities, enhancing student connection and well-being.

FSCC students are also deeply involved in the Fort Scott community through service learning and volunteerism . Many student organizations and athletic teams regularly participate in community service

projects such as food drives, park clean-ups, local fundraising events, and support for area nonprofits. These experiences foster civic responsibility, leadership development, and a stronger connection between students and the community, which supports Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan, Tactic 1.1.2 : Identify opportunities for FSCC students, faculty, and staff to volunteer in the community. By engaging students in meaningful service, FSCC not only reinforces its mission to support the whole student but also cultivates a spirit of giving back that strengthens both the individual and the region.

Fort Scott Community College actively aligns its mission with workforce needs by engaging local businesses, industry leaders, and workforce development agencies through career and technical education advisory boards . These boards are designed in partnership with external stakeholders who are recognized and respected employers in fields directly linked to CTE programs. Advisory board guidance ensures that programs remain responsive to evolving labor market demands, helping students acquire relevant, high-demand skills and positioning students for meaningful employment upon graduation. This collaboration not only supports student career goals but also delivers a clear return on their educational investment at a local scale.

The role of these advisory boards reflects the expectations outlined by the Kansas Board of Regents in its Perkins V Advisory Committee Handbook . The Regents emphasize the importance of local advisory committees composed of business and industry representatives to sustain and enhance CTE programs. These groups are tasked with advising educators and administrators on workforce needs at the community, state, regional, national, and international levels, ensuring that programs remain current and aligned with employment trends.

Together, FSCC's advisory boards and the Regents' guidance synergize to fulfill the institutional mission: ensuring that education remains relevant, accessible, and directly connected to the workforce, thereby supporting both student success and broader community and economic development.

Fort Scott Community College demonstrates that the scope of its operations is fully aligned with its mission through intentional planning, budgeting, and institutional practices. This alignment is clearly reflected in FSCC's current Strategic Plan. For example, Strategic Goal 4 : "Develop a Culture of Fiscal Responsibility," directly speaks to maintaining operations that are both sustainable and mission centered. Tactic 4.1.4 specifically focuses on reviewing institutional expenditures and processes to maximize efficiency and stewardship. Additionally, Strategic Goal 3: "Promote Student Success" supports the mission by ensuring operational decisions—including academic offerings, student services, and partnerships—are focused on helping students achieve their goals through accessible and affordable education.

Institutional policies also reinforce the Mission alignment. FSCC's Board Policy Manuals outlines clear governance expectations and fiscal oversight . Through this policy framework, FSCC creates a culture of accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement, ensuring that its scope of operations consistently supports the mission to serve students and communities through high-quality, affordable education.

FSCC's planning and budgeting priorities further reflect alignment with its mission. The institution uses a zero-based budgeting (ZBB) process , requiring each department to justify its budget annually in relation to strategic goals and student impact. This method ensures funds are allocated purposefully, prioritizing programs and services that directly contribute to student success and institutional sustainability. Monthly financial review committee meetings are held to ensure administrative oversight and integration with strategic planning, further demonstrating how fiscal discipline supports operational decisions rooted in FSCC's mission.

In summary, FSCC's mission is more than a guiding statement; it is a foundational framework embedded in all aspects of the institution. From program offerings and support services to enrollment strategies and fiscal decisions, the College demonstrates a cohesive alignment with its mission to serve students and communities through accessible, affordable, and high-quality education.

Sources

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- 01. Mission Statement 2015
- 02. Review of the Mission Statement
- 03. Strategic Plan 2016
- 04. Revised Strategic Plan 2022
- 05. Supporting Strategic Plan documents
- 06. Cabinet Minutes of Supporting Strategic Plan Documents
- 07. Hollistic Approach Board Approval
- 08. Review of the Vision Statement
- 09. Core Values Adoption
- 10. Mission Statement Website
- 11. About Us Website
- 12. Mission Page FSCC-Academic-Catalog-25-26
- 13. Strategic Plan Website
- 14. Accreditation Documents on Website
- 16. FSCC Mission Statement
- 17. Activity Pass
- 19. 2025 FSCC Student Orientation Presentation August 17 2025
- 20. Onboarding Checklist 25 26
- 21. Fall 2025 Inservice Agenda
- 22. Employee Handbook Mission Statement
- 23. Section 1_ Fort Scott Community College Student Handbook Mission & Contact Information
- 24. Board Meeting Minutes with Mission Statement
- 25. Board Policy Document with Mission Statement
- 26. Revised Strategic Plan Spring 2025 Goal 4
- 27. Tuition from KBOR Data Book
- 28. Athletic Scholarship List 24-25
- 29. Activity Scholarship List
- 30. Academic Scholarship List
- 31. Foundation Scholarships
- 32. Tuition and Fees Schedule 2025 - 2026
- 33. Bourbon County Waiver
- 34. Financial Aid Support
- 35. Excel in CTE SB155
- 36. Multi Campus Locations Website
- 37. Degree and Certificate Programs
- 38. Student Success Center Website
- 39. TRIO Website
- 40. Mental Health Flier
- 41. Advising Website
- 42. Activities Website
- 43. Campus Activities
- 44. Community Service Tracking
- 45. Strategic Plan 1.1.2

- 46.a Advisory Board List
- 46.b KBOR Advisory Board Handbook
- 47. Strategic Plan Goal 4
- 48. Governance Policies
- 49. Fiscal and Business Management Policy
- 51. Fianancial Review Committee

1.B. Mission and Public Good

The institution's operation of the academic enterprise demonstrates its commitment to serving the public good.

Argument

Fort Scott Community College (FSCC) lives out its public mission through academic and institutional decisions that emphasize service to students and the broader community. The mission statement underscores the College's commitment to delivering affordable academic, technical, and occupational programs that meet student needs while fostering a strong, mutually supportive relationship with the communities it serves. This guiding principle shapes academic programming, community partnerships, and the institution's culture.

FSCC demonstrates its commitment to public access and the public good through a tuition structure designed to balance affordability with sustainability. The College's 2025–2026 Tuition and Fees schedule offers tiered tuition rates based on student residency—Bourbon County residents, other Kansas residents, and out-of-state students—reflecting an intentional effort to support the local taxpayer base while still maintaining affordable rates for all learners. In addition, high-cost programs such as Nursing and Allied Health are priced transparently, ensuring students are aware of expenses without hidden fees. FSCC has held online course tuition consistently for the last five years, reinforcing its mission to reduce financial barriers and expand access across delivery formats. This structured yet accessible pricing model supports FSCC's promise to meet student needs while fostering equitable educational opportunity throughout its service region.

FSCC delivers a broad array of academic, technical, and occupational programs that are accessible across its multi-county service area, upholding its mission to serve the public good through equitable educational access. The College maintains multiple instructional sites in Bourbon, Crawford, Linn, and Miami counties and offers over 35 degree and certificate programs designed to meet the needs of diverse learners and local industries. These include specialized programs such as John Deere Ag Tech, Nursing, Construction Trades, Welding, Cosmetology, and Criminal Justice, alongside transfer-oriented associate degrees in arts and sciences. By strategically placing programs at various locations and offering flexible delivery methods, FSCC ensures that students from rural and underserved areas can pursue meaningful educational opportunities without the burden of relocation. This geographic and curricular breadth reinforces FSCC's role as a responsive, community-centered institution.

FSCC partners closely with regional employers and industry leaders through advisory boards that inform curriculum development, supply equipment and materials, and facilitate training opportunities. These advisory relationships ensure that FSCC programs align with workforce needs and support the economic vitality of Southeast Kansas.

The College extends its public service mission through dual and concurrent enrollment offerings as well as career and technical education courses for high school students in Bourbon, Linn, and Miami counties. Students as early as their sophomore year may earn college credit, sometimes even completing full credentials prior to high school graduation. These programs foster college readiness and alleviate the financial burden of higher education on local families.

As a publicly governed institution, FSCC is accountable solely to the constituents of its service region. It is overseen by an independently elected Board of Trustees and is not influenced by private interests or corporate entities. The Board ensures that the college's strategic plan focuses on student success, workforce alignment, and fiscal responsibility. Institutional priorities are detailed in the College's Strategic Plan , which centers on instructional excellence, community engagement, and long-term sustainability.

Accountability and improvement are cornerstones of FSCC's operational model. The College engages in ongoing assessment through program review , student learning outcome assessment , Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) performance agreements , and participation in national benchmarking via the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP) . These tools guide data-informed decision-making, reinforce student-centered practices, and support mission adherence.

Community outreach is an integral part of the FSCC mission. Academic programs and student organizations contribute through volunteerism, community events, and civic engagement. Cosmetology students provide services to care facilities, Allied Health and Nursing students conduct clinics and screenings, and student-athletes support K–12 schools and local events. Events such as the Kids' Fall Fair, Breakfast with Santa, Mental Health Walk, and Constitution Day programming are

made possible through cross-departmental and community partnerships.

Cultural enrichment at Fort Scott Community College is deeply intertwined with the Gordon Parks Museum , creating a symbiotic relationship that benefits both FSCC students and the broader community. Located on the FSCC campus, the museum honors the legacy of Gordon Parks, a renowned photographer, filmmaker, writer, and humanitarian who was born in Fort Scott. The museum not only serves as a tribute to Parks' life and work but also functions as a vibrant educational and cultural hub. It hosts exhibitions, speakers, and workshops that promote diversity, equity, and the arts—all key tenets of Parks' legacy and values echoed in FSCC's mission.

Students and faculty frequently engage with the museum through academic assignments , internships, and volunteerism, enriching their educational experience while contributing to public programming. Community members are welcomed to events such as the annual Gordon Parks Celebration, which includes panel discussions, film screenings, photography contests, and award ceremonies that draw participants from across the region and beyond. These offerings exemplify FSCC's commitment to fostering civic dialogue and cultural understanding, while reinforcing the College's broader identity as a center for community learning and enrichment.

Together, FSCC and the Gordon Parks Museum advance the College's philosophy of "Students First, Community Always" by ensuring that cultural heritage and public service remain integral components of the academic experience. This partnership powerfully supports the institution's mission to serve the public good through education that is inclusive, transformative, and community focused.

Beyond its formal degree and certificate offerings, Fort Scott Community College extends its mission of serving the needs of diverse student demographics through robust Adult Education and GED services , delivered in partnership with Neosho County Community College (NCCC). Through this cooperative model, FSCC hosts the Adult Basic Education and GED coursework within its Bailey Hall Student Success Center, while NCCC provides funding, curriculum oversight, and credentialing for the program. This shared delivery structure ensures that learners in Fort Scott and surrounding areas have access to year-round opportunities to improve foundational skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and digital literacy, regardless of prior academic background.

Adult education services are open to individuals aged sixteen and up—including adults who have not completed high school, with flexible scheduling offered Monday through Thursday, daytime and evening sessions, and a mandatory in-person orientation sequence. Learners incur a nominal materials fee and pay only for GED testing per subject rather than per class, reducing financial barriers for underemployed and returning students.

By hosting GED instruction while collaborating regionally with NCCC, FSCC maximizes its capacity to deliver high impact services without duplicating infrastructure. The partnership embodies FSCC's core value of equitable access, enabling adult learners to achieve academic credentials, pursue further education or career advancement, and contribute to the economic well-being of southeast Kansas. In this way, the Adult Education and GED program powerfully supports FSCC's mission of fostering mutually supportive relationships with its community by providing inclusive educational pathways and measurable public benefit.

FSCC's responsiveness to regional educational needs is exemplified by its proactive collaborations with state universities and the Kansas Board of Regents to strengthen academic pathways and serve the public good. Through participation in the Kansas Systemwide Transfer program, FSCC ensures that courses approved by the Kansas Board of Regents—more than 50 core general education courses—are guaranteed to transfer seamlessly among public postsecondary institutions across the state. Key partners include Pittsburg State University, the University of Kansas, Kansas State University, Wichita State University, Emporia State University, Washburn University, and others, enabling students to pursue four-year degrees without disruption or credit loss.

In addition to statewide alignment, FSCC maintains specific articulation and 2+2 transfer agreements with targeted institutions like Pittsburg State University. These structured programs allow students to begin their education at FSCC and transition directly into designated bachelor's degree pathways at partner universities, often carrying forward their associate degrees and satisfying lower-division major requirements.

Beyond credit transfer, FSCC serves as a hub for Reverse Transfer, empowering former FSCC students who enrolled at four-year universities to receive their associate degree retroactively when they meet eligibility criteria (including completion of at least 45 credit hours and consent to share records).

These collaborative frameworks underscore FSCC's dedication to public good and student success, aligning clearly with its mission to provide affordable educational opportunities and to foster mutually supportive relationships within its community.

Fort Scott Community College exemplifies its public-serving mission through equitable tuition policies, widespread academic access, workforce-aligned programming, and civic engagement. Each decision reflects an institutional

commitment to the educational, social, and economic advancement of the communities it serves.

Sources

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- 02. Online Tuition Cost
- 03. Multi Campus Locations Website
- 04. Advisory Board Information
- 05. Concurrent Enrollment
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- 07. Program Review Webpage
- 08. Student Learning Outcomes
- 09. KBOR Agreements
- 10. NCCBP Institutional Effectiveness Website
- 11. Community Service Tracking
- 12. Community Activities List
- 13. Gordon Parks Events
- 14. Diversity Academic Assignments
- 15. Adult Ed and GED Website
- 16. Adult Ed and GED Website
- 17. Transfer Information
- 18. Transfer Information Articulation and 2 + 2

1.C. Mission and Diversity of Society

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

Argument

Fort Scott Community College embraces its mission to serve the public good by fostering inclusive learning environments and preparing students for meaningful participation in a multicultural society and globally connected world. The College's core values support this mission by promoting a unified institutional culture that emphasizes purpose, shared priorities, and inclusion across academic and co-curricular experiences. FSCC affirms that cultivating diverse perspectives and promoting civic responsibility are essential components of student preparation for leadership in today's complex and interconnected world.

Fort Scott Community College is situated in a predominantly white, rural region and its student body reflects meaningful diversity. In Academic Year 2024, Kansas Board of Regents data indicate that 78.7% of FSCC's students identified as white, while still notable representation came from Hispanic (7.2%), Black or African American (7.1%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.9%), Asian (0.6%), native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.2%), and students identifying with two or more races (4.6%).

This racial and ethnic composition illustrates that more than one in five students comes from underrepresented backgrounds, enriching campus life with multiple perspectives. That diversity supports FSCC's mission to foster civic engagement appropriate to its constituencies, as the institution provides opportunities that build cultural competence, community awareness, and global understanding.

FSCC's commitment to civic engagement and diversity is not only embedded in its mission and values but also operationalized through its Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), most notably the outcome related to Social Responsibility. This ILO Prepare students for civic and community engagement, including social and cultural awareness, inclusion, and citizenship for the betterment of the community. The College assesses this outcome across multiple disciplines through a standardized rubric, and the 2023–2024 academic year assessment results confirm that students are achieving proficiency in this area. Specifically, over 70% of students assessed met or exceeded expectations in demonstrating civic knowledge and ethical responsibility within multicultural contexts.

These results underscore that FSCC's curricular design fosters not only knowledge acquisition but also active citizenship and intercultural understanding. By embedding this learning outcome in courses across the curriculum and measuring it annually, the institution ensures that civic engagement and global awareness are more than aspirational values, they are measurable components of the student learning experience and reflective of the College's commitment to serving a diverse society.

Program-level outcomes further reinforce these commitments in discipline-specific ways. For instance, the Children's Literature class has an outcome that allows students to explore cultural diversity through reading and discussion of multicultural literature. These objectives are not abstract; they are realized through field placements, service-learning opportunities, and alignment with professional practice standards.

FSCC's institutional commitment to civic and multicultural learning extends beyond the classroom. A prominent example is the Gordon Parks Museum , housed on the Fort Scott campus. The museum honors the legacy of Gordon Parks, renowned African American photographer, filmmaker, and civil rights

activist, and offers a range of programming including an annual celebration, art and history exhibits, public lectures, and K-12 outreach. Faculty members across disciplines incorporate museum programming into classroom instruction, reflection assignments, and community service projects, connecting students with powerful narratives about race, equity, and social justice.

In addition to the Gordon Parks Museum, the College hosts a variety of events and initiatives that promote inclusive civic engagement . Constitution Day programming, Black History Month celebrations, multicultural lectures, and community events such as blood drives, parades and fall festivals all offer meaningful ways for students to engage with cultural and civic life. Students frequently participate in these efforts through clubs, course-based projects, and service-learning experiences. The Teddy Bear Clinic, hosted by the Student Nursing Organization during the Kids' Fall Festival , exemplifies how FSCC blends civic outreach with applied learning opportunities.

Meanwhile, the College offers robust support systems for underrepresented students through its TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) , a federally funded initiative that supports approximately 150 eligible students who are historically underserved, including first-generation, low-income, and students with disabilities. Beyond tutoring, advising, and mentoring, TRIO facilitates meaningful civic engagement and intercultural experiences by sponsoring cultural events and workshops that help students engage with diverse perspectives and develop their civic identities. These activities include on and off campus visits, scholarship assistance programs, cultural activities, and group mentoring sessions that foster collaboration among students from rural, urban, and international backgrounds, thereby mirroring FSCC's broader multicultural mission.

Free of charge, TRIO supports students' academic success and personal growth while also promoting opportunities to participate in civic life, through dialogues and events that span cultures and communities, aligning with FSCC's dedication to preparing students for active civic participation in a multicultural and globally connected society.

Fort Scott Community College's hiring practices and workplace policies reflect its institutional mission to foster civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, not only for its students, but also for its employees. As an open-access institution, FSCC is committed to maintaining an inclusive environment through equitable hiring procedures and compliance with federal and state civil rights laws. This commitment begins with a comprehensive, equity-minded selection process that ensures every employment search is structured to support transparency, collaboration, and fairness.

According to FSCC's Board Hiring Policy , the Human Resource Director initiates each search by assembling a representative selection committee composed of individuals from different departments. The committee collaborates to identify the qualifications and attributes most valued in potential candidates, ensuring that cultural competence and experience working in diverse educational environments are considered in the evaluation process. Interview questions are developed with input from the appropriate academic or operational areas and are designed to assess each candidate's ability to contribute meaningfully to a diverse campus community. Final candidate recommendations are based on collaborative review and majority vote, with references checked prior to consultation with the College President. All offers are contingent upon Board of Trustees approval. This inclusive process demonstrates FSCC's intention to ensure a hiring culture that prioritizes not only professional qualifications, but also alignment with the College's commitment to serving a varied and multicultural student body.

The College's dedication to equitable employment practices is reinforced by its publicly stated Non-Discrimination Policy and Non-Discrimination Statemen t, which affirm compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other federal regulations. FSCC explicitly states that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, disability, or any legally protected characteristic in any aspect of employment, admissions, or participation in college programs. These protections extend across all academic and technical disciplines, from Agriculture and General Education to Welding, Health Care, and the John Deere and Harley Davidson programs.

The College's <u>Workplace Compliance webpage</u> , further supports this framework by offering information on Title IX, Section 504, and procedures for reporting concerns, demonstrating a proactive approach to upholding individual rights and maintaining a respectful institutional climate.

By embedding inclusive practices in its employment framework, FSCC ensures that its workforce reflects and reinforces the cultural richness of its student population. A diverse faculty and staff are better equipped to engage students in meaningful dialogue about global issues, lead service-learning initiatives, and model civic participation. Moreover, these hiring and compliance efforts create a working environment where employees are supported in their own professional development and civic engagement, contributing to an institutional culture that values dialogue, equity, and global awareness.

In this way, FSCC's employment policies do more than comply with legal requirements; they advance the College's broader mission by creating a learning and working environment where individuals from all backgrounds are empowered to contribute, lead, and participate in a globally connected, multicultural society. These efforts help ensure that both students and employees are part of a community that embraces inclusive excellence as foundational to educational success and civic responsibility.

In summary, Fort Scott Community College demonstrates a sustained and evolving commitment to civic engagement, multicultural education, and inclusive student development. Through a combination of intentional curriculum design, student support structures, community-based learning, and strategic planning, FSCC equips students to become thoughtful, culturally competent citizens prepared to thrive in a diverse and globally connected society. These efforts reflect the institution's mission in action and position FSCC as a vital contributor to the educational and civic fabric of the region it serves.

Sources

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- 02. Social Responsibility Assessment
- 03. Children's Lit. Syllaus
- 04. Gordon Parks Website
- 05. Civic Activity Opportunity
- 06. 24_FallKidsFair flyer
- 08. TRIO Website
- 09. TRIO Event Flyer
- 10. BOARD HIRING POLICY
- 11. Non-Discrimination Policy and Statement
- 13. Workplace Compliance

Criterion 1 Summary

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

Argument

Fort Scott Community College demonstrates a mission-driven commitment to accessible, affordable, and high-quality education through its alignment of programs, operations, and community partnerships.

FSCC's educational programs, enrollment profile, and scope of operations reflect the mission to provide affordable academic, technical, and occupational programs while fostering supportive relationships with its communities. The mission is affirmed annually by the Board of Trustees and reinforced through the College's strategic plan, vision, and core values. These guiding statements emphasize student success, fiscal responsibility, community engagement, and inclusive excellence. FSCC integrates its mission visibly across platforms, web, print, orientation, policy, and Board meetings, ensuring that stakeholders clearly understand its purpose. Affordable tuition, scholarships, and state initiatives such as SB155 further underscore FSCC's commitment to equitable access. Academic offerings, student support services, extracurricular opportunities, and community service all demonstrate operational alignment with the College's mission.

FSCC fulfills its public-serving mission through policies and practices that prioritize equitable educational opportunity and community benefit. The College maintains tiered tuition rates and transparent pricing to reduce barriers and sustain affordability. Multiple instructional sites and a wide range of degree and certificate programs, including specialized technical pathways, ensure access across its service region. Advisory boards and employer partnerships align programs with workforce needs, while dual credit and concurrent enrollment expand opportunities for high school students. FSCC's accountability to the public is reflected in its elected Board of Trustees, program review processes, assessment practices, and participation in state and national benchmarks. Beyond academics, FSCC advances cultural enrichment and civic engagement through the Gordon Parks Museum, community events, adult education partnerships, and transfer agreements that create seamless pathways for students. Collectively, these efforts affirm FSCC's role as a steward of the public good.

FSCC extends its mission by preparing students for civic participation in a diverse, multicultural, and globally connected society. Institutional Learning Outcomes emphasize social responsibility, intercultural competence, and civic knowledge, with assessment results confirming student achievement in these areas. Academic programs integrate diversity and civic engagement into fieldwork, service learning, and professional practice expectations. Co-curricular activities, including programming at the Gordon Parks Museum, multicultural events, and TRIO Student Support Services, further cultivate cultural competence and civic responsibility. FSCC's hiring practices, compliance policies, and workplace culture reinforce diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring that both students and employees engage in environments that model civic participation and global awareness.

Together, Criteria 1.A, 1.B, and 1.C illustrate that FSCC's mission is not a static statement but a living framework that informs planning, decision-making, and daily practice. By aligning operations with its mission, prioritizing service to the public good, and fostering inclusive civic engagement, FSCC

fulfills its role as a community-centered institution dedicated to student success and regional vitality.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

In fulfilling its mission, the institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A. Integrity

Actions taken by the institution's governing board, administration, faculty and staff demonstrate adherence to established policies and procedures.

Argument

Fort Scott Community College operates with integrity at the heart of its mission, ensuring ethical conduct, transparency, and accountability are embedded in every aspect of institutional practice. This commitment is visible in the actions of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff, who collectively adhere to well-established policies and procedures that guide academic, financial, personnel, and auxiliary functions. The FSCC Board of Trustees leads with purpose, following clearly defined bylaws and ethical guidelines outlined in the Board of Trustees/Administrative Policies Manual. As a locally elected body, the Board ensures that college operations are guided by fair and lawful policies while assigns day to day management to the President and the President's appointees.

Board priorities are also reflected in financial practices, where FSCC demonstrates strong fiscal integrity through adherence to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) protocols, and Kansas state statutes.

Fort Scott Community College employs a zero-based budgeting model, implemented in FY2018, to promote fiscal accountability and ensure that financial resources are strategically aligned with institutional priorities and student learning outcomes. Each department submits an annual budget request that clearly links funding needs to the college's strategic plan . These requests are initially reviewed by vice presidents and then compiled into a draft budget for institutional consideration. Monthly departmental budget reports are prepared by the business office, reviewed by the Vice President of Finance and Operations, and shared with department directors to support responsible spending. When additional funds are needed, a formal request and review process provides oversight and transparency.

The budget process at FSCC is inclusive and comprehensive. Each spring, the Executive Team—consisting of the President, Chief of Staff, Vice Presidents, Athletic Director, Director of Human Resources, and the Foundation Director conduct a thorough budget review, examining revenue forecasts, expenditure trends, and emerging institutional needs. The Board of Trustees is actively engaged throughout the process via budget workshops, public hearings, and the formal adoption of the annual budget, as required by Kansas law. Community stakeholders are also invited to participate in public budget hearings, reinforcing FSCC's commitment to shared governance and transparency. This integrative and collaborative approach ensures that institutional resources are deployed effectively in support of student success and mission fulfillment.

This culture of integrity extends to academic affairs, where the Academic Affairs Committee oversees policies related to academic honesty and curriculum quality. Expectations for academic integrity are communicated clearly through the college catalog ,student handbooks , and reinforced in the First Year Experience course. FSCC leverages tools like Respondus LockDown Browser and Blackboard's Safe Assign, an integrated plagiarism prevention tool, to uphold honesty in online learning environments. Students who violate academic integrity policies face consequences ranging from warnings to expulsion, with formal letters documenting offenses to ensure consistent enforcement. Faculty and staff responsibilities regarding integrity are outlined in the FSCC Civility Policy, located in the Board Policy.

Institution-wide integrity is further supported by a robust structure of committees and task forces, with representation from departments across campus. These groups meet regularly. When specific challenges arise, task forces are created to develop timely, ethical solutions, ensuring shared governance and accountability are reflected in college decision-making across all areas including academic, financial, personnel, auxiliary, and governance. Fort Scott Community College exemplifies a deep and sustained commitment to ethical operations. Integrity at FSCC is not a static goal; instead, it is an active, enduring standard that shapes every interaction, decision, and institutional direction.

Personnel integrity is maintained through equitable underlined hiring practices , structured search committees, and a firm commitment to non-discrimination. Policies related to Title IX sexual harassment, drug-free workplace expectations, and grievance procedures are detailed in the Employee Handbook and reinforced through annual required trainings. Annual in-service programming covers a wide range of ethical responsibilities, including Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) compliance, ALICE active shooter response , CPR/AED training , and conflict of interest disclosures . These trainings are also provided for employees to ensure alignment across all levels of the institution. Additionally, technology use is governed by the Network Use and Privacy Policy ensuring ethical and secure practices across campus systems. The Network Use and Privacy Policy is addressed in employee orientation, as well as in-service training as needed.

Fort Scott Community College has recently implemented Vector Solutions, a comprehensive online training platform designed to enhance learning and compliance for both students and employees. This platform offers an extensive library of video-based courses covering critical topics such as sexual assault prevention, mental health and wellness, diversity and inclusion, and career readiness. These courses are tailored to meet the unique needs of higher education institutions, ensuring that content is relevant and impactful. Vector Solutions also provides robust administrative tools, allowing FSCC to customize training content, automate course assignments, and track completion rates effectively. By integrating Vector Solutions into its educational framework, FSCC demonstrates its commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and well-informed campus community.

FSCC's commitment to integrity is further evidenced in its support for student services and auxiliary operations. Clear policies outlined in the Student Handbook , Housing Handbook and residence hall agreements help ensure fair treatment and safe living environments. Fort Scott Community College is committed to providing safe, supportive, and accessible housing options for students through four distinct residential facilities: two on-campus halls: Greyhound Hall and Boileau Hall and two off-campus options: Garrison Apartments and Greyhound Lodge. Student safety is a top priority in all housing facilities, each of which is equipped with 24-hour surveillance security to help ensure a secure living environment. In addition to surveillance, the College maintains a dedicated team of five resident directors and nine student resident assistants who provide consistent oversight, mentorship, and support.

Further reinforcing our commitment to student safety, a uniformed security guard is visible and on patrol from 7:00 PM to 3:00 AM, Tuesday through Sunday, offering students an additional layer of protection and reassurance during peak evening and overnight hours. Room assignments are managed through a first-come, first-served process, and students are able to request roommates or be matched based on shared interests. Students must acknowledge receipt of behavioral expectations, and harassment policies via the Housing Handbook ensuring they are well-informed of institutional standards.

The College's auxiliary operations also include the FSCC Bookstore and Dining Services. The Fort Scott Community College Bookstore is institutionally owned and operates a textbook rental system, allowing students to access required materials at a significantly reduced cost. Most students receive a book scholarship, enabling them to rent textbooks free of charge and return them at the end of the academic year. In addition, the bookstore partners with local vendors through a consignment program to offer a wider selection of apparel and merchandise, supporting both campus spirit and the local economy. Many faculty members at FSCC have implemented Open Resource Educational Resources (OER) textbooks in order to expand educational access and reduce the cost to students.

Fort Scott Community College partners with Great Western Dining to provide a comprehensive food service program that meets the diverse needs of both on-campus and off-campus students. Offering flexible meal plan options, the program ensures that all students have access to convenient, nutritious dining throughout the week. Beyond daily meals, Great Western Dining actively supports the campus community by donating food and services for student activities and special events, helping to enhance engagement and foster a welcoming, connected campus environment for both students and staff. FSCC also has a student pantry that is run by the Student Services office. The Greyhound Pantry at Fort Scott Community College provides students with essential resources including food, hygiene products, cold-weather gear, housing items, and small appliances. This initiative demonstrates FSCC's commitment to supporting student well-being and success by removing barriers that may impact their ability to persist and thrive academically.

The Fort Scott Community College Foundation plays a vital role in upholding the College's mission and commitment to student success in its operations and outreach. Established in 1975, the Foundation is a nonprofit organization that manages and encourages philanthropic support to enhance FSCC's educational programs and institutional priorities. With assets exceeding $6.9 million, the Foundation operates with accountability and a strong sense of purpose, aligning donor intent with institutional need. In the most recent academic year, the Foundation awarded over $1.09 million in scholarships to 782 students, demonstrating a clear and equitable process for distributing private support in ways that directly benefit students.

To further promote transparency and public trust, the Foundation will release its first comprehensive annual report this year. This report will detail key metrics such as total scholarship dollars awarded, number of recipients, Foundation assets, donor contributions, and funding provided for college initiatives. By publicly sharing this information, the Foundation provides tangible evidence of responsible stewardship and the impact of donor support.

The Foundation also partners with the community through events such as the Foundation Scholarship Dinner, Athletic Hall of Fame Banquet, alumni weekend celebrations, and other fundraising efforts. These activities not only raise funds but also provide visible, interactive opportunities for the public to engage with and support the institution. Together, these efforts reflect the College's broader commitment to integrity in governance, financial management, and community engagement ensuring that all resources are used responsibly to support student opportunity and institutional excellence.

FSCC also demonstrates compliance with federal and state regulations, including FERPA , ADA , and Title IX , and continues to monitor external stakeholder expectations and state and federal requirements. The Title IX Coordinator oversees training, investigations, and compliance, with membership in national organizations such as ATIXA ensuring alignment with best practices.

Emergency preparedness is a priority, with the College maintaining a comprehensive Emergency Action Plan, as well as in-service training to all employees annually on the ALICE program. Students are also trained in FSCC emergency response to violent intruders by an ALICE trainer in the First Year Experience Course. Tabletop exercises with local emergency services strengthen FSCC's capacity to respond effectively to crises ranging from severe weather to violent intruder threats.

Sources

- 01. Board Policy
- 02. Revised-Strategic-Plan-Spring-2025
- 03. Academic Affairs Committee Minutes
- 04. FSCC-Academic-Catalog-25-26
- 06. Student Handbook - 2025
- 07. FSCC Syllabus First Year Experience Fall 24
- 08. Academic Integrity
- 09. Negotiated Agreement 2025-2026
- 10. Hiring Policy
- 11. TIX-Policy-Doc-2020-version-revised
- 12. Drug-free Workplace
- 13. Grievance Procedure Board Policy and Article XII Negotiated Agreement
- 14. Employee Handbook
- 15. VAWA Compliance
- 16. ALICE Active Shooter Response Information
- 18. Conflict of Interest Disclosures
- 19. Network and social media use
- 20. Student Handbook
- 21. FSCC Residence life handbook update 25
- 23. Pantry
- 24. Foundation Annual Report 2024-25
- 25. FERPA
- 26. ADA Website
- 27. TIX-Policy-Doc-2020-version-revised1
- 28. active shooter tabletop exercise
- 05. Civility Policy
- 22. Housing Agreement 2025-26
- 17. AED CPR Policy and Participants

2.B. Transparency

The institution presents itself accurately and completely to students and the public with respect to its educational programs and any claims it makes related to the educational experience.

Argument

At Fort Scott Community College, transparency is a deeply held institutional value and a daily practice. The College is committed to presenting itself clearly and completely to students, families, and the public regarding its academic programs, requirements, costs, faculty and staff, governance, and accreditation relationships. FSCC's official website serves as the primary information hub for both prospective and current stakeholders. The website is organized to support easy access to essential details including <u>programs of study</u> , <u>degree and certificate requirements</u> , <u>Kansas Systemwide Transfer Courses</u> , <u>credit for prior learning</u> , <u>military credits</u> , and <u>semester schedules</u> . The College's <u>academic catalog</u> available online—offers a comprehensive guide to programs and pathways, ensuring students can confidently navigate their educational journey. To further enhance this clarity, the Course Catalog is regularly reviewed to align offerings with institutional updates and state mandates.

Fort Scott Community College has transitioned to the Jenzabar Internet Campus Solution (JICS) as its primary student portal, replacing the previous GIZMO system. This modern platform offers a centralized, user-friendly interface that empowers students to manage their academic and campus life efficiently.

Through JICS, students can:

- Register for courses and manage their class schedules.
- View grades, academic transcripts, and degree audits.
- Access financial information, including account balances, payment options, and financial aid status.
- Update personal information, such as addresses and contact details.
- Plan academic paths using tools like My Academic Plan, which may allow students to map out their courses for future terms, subject to advisor approval.
- Engage with student life by accessing information on clubs, organizations, and campus events.
- Manage housing applications and vehicle registrations.
- Receive targeted communications from the college, ensuring they stay informed about important announcements and deadlines.

Additionally, the JICS portal is accessible via the Jenzabar Mobile App, allowing students to stay connected and manage their college experience on the go. This comprehensive system reflects Fort Scott Community College's commitment to providing transparent, efficient, and student-centered services, aligning with the institution's values of integrity and continuous improvement.

Fort Scott Community College currently utilizes Blackboard as its primary Learning Management System (LMS), providing students and faculty with a platform to access course materials, submit assignments, and engage in online discussions. To enhance the digital learning experience, FSCC is transitioning to Canvas, a modern LMS known for its intuitive interface and robust features. This shift aims to streamline course management, improve user accessibility, and offer a more integrated learning environment. The transition to Canvas reflects FSCC's commitment to adopting innovative technologies that support effective teaching and learning, ensuring that both students and faculty have access to tools that facilitate academic success.

Fort Scott Community College is dedicated to ensuring that students receive timely and effective communication to support their safety, academic progress, and overall well-being. To facilitate this, FSCC utilizes the RAVE emergency alert system, which delivers real-time notifications via text and email during critical situations, ensuring that students, faculty, and staff are promptly informed and can take appropriate actions. In addition to emergency communications, the college has implemented the Jenzabar J1 system, providing a centralized platform where students can access important academic information, financial updates, and institutional announcements, thereby streamlining communication between the college and its students.

Further enhancing student engagement and support, FSCC has introduced the EdSights AI-powered chatbot. This innovative tool communicates with students through personalized text messages, offering 24/7 assistance on a variety of topics, including academic resources, financial aid, and campus services. Beyond providing information, the chatbot proactively checks in with students to assess their well-being, identifying potential challenges such as financial distress, academic difficulties, or feelings of isolation. Based on these interactions, EdSights generates real-time insights, enabling college staff to intervene promptly and connect students with the necessary resources and support systems. By integrating these advanced communication platforms, Fort Scott Community College demonstrates its commitment to fostering a responsive and supportive educational environment that prioritizes student success and safety.

Transparency regarding financial matters is central to FSCC's support for student success. The Tuition & Fees webpage , paired with the Net Price Calculator and the Consumer Information section , offers a full breakdown of costs, including tuition, fees, textbooks, and room and board. These costs are also reflected in printed admissions and recruitment materials and shared with external stakeholders through Kansas Degree Stats. Recognizing the importance of informed financial planning, FSCC strives to improve the visibility of program-specific costs such as tools, testing fees, and licensure requirements, especially in CTE programs. The Consumer Information tab on the website also includes access to key reports and policies: the campus safety report, emergency protocols, accident forms, admissions and retention data, financial aid policies, anonymous reporting forms, and compliance documents such as the VAWA and Title IX policies.

The college demonstrates its commitment to transparency, ethics, and student-centered service through its comprehensive Recruitment Code of Conduct . This policy outlines clear expectations for all recruitment professionals, emphasizing the values of honesty, integrity, fairness, and respect in all interactions with prospective students and their families. FSCC recruiters are required to provide accurate, up-to-date information about academic programs, student services, enrollment processes, financial aid, and campus life ensuring

students can make informed decisions about their futures. Marketing materials are carefully reviewed to prevent misleading claims or high-pressure tactics, and recruiters are prohibited from offering incentives or misrepresenting outcomes such as guaranteed employment. The Recruitment Code of Conduct policy also sets high standards for third-party recruitment partners, protects student data in accordance with FERPA, and limits unsolicited outreach especially to military-connected individuals. Oversight is provided by the FSCC Admissions Office, with regular training to ensure compliance and ethical consistency. Aligned with guidelines from the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), this code reflects FSCC's institutional integrity and its dedication to building trust with students, families, and the broader community.

Institutional oversight is clearly communicated as well. FSCC is governed by a locally elected six-member Board of Trustees representing Bourbon County, Kansas. Board members serve four-year staggered terms and maintain transparency through public meetings, strategic plan reviews, policy development, and approval of the annual budget. The College is also overseen by the Kansas Board of Regents, which supports public accountability and alignment with system-wide goals for higher education in the state.

Fort Scott Community College actively affirms its institutional credibility through transparent and accurate accreditation disclosures. FSCC is fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), and its mark of affiliation is prominently displayed on the College's official website, signaling to students, families, and stakeholders a consistent commitment to quality and accountability. In addition to institutional accreditation, FSCC maintains program-specific accreditations that are listed on the website , further validating the rigor and integrity of its academic offerings. These accreditations not only uphold high educational standards but also play a critical role in aligning programs with licensure requirements, industry expectations, and workforce development initiatives. Through ongoing compliance and active participation in the accreditation process, FSCC demonstrates its dedication to delivering programs that are both reputable and responsive to the evolving needs of students and the communities it serves.

Beyond academics, Fort Scott Community College offers a vibrant, inclusive, and engaging student life experience that supports the personal development and civic engagement of its students. The College actively promotes co-curricular and extracurricular involvement through a wide range of programs, including athletics, honor societies, fine arts, and service-based organizations. Students are encouraged to participate in activities such as rodeo, livestock judging, meats judging, Student Government, Phi Theta Kappa, theater, music, and the President's Ambassadors. FSCC also hosts numerous student-led events that foster community building and cultural enrichment, such as "Grocery Bingo," seasonal festivals, and theatrical productions that span from classic plays to performances rooted in social commentary.

Civic responsibility is embedded into the FSCC student experience, with a strong emphasis on volunteerism and community engagement. A notable example is the First Year Experience course, which requires all first-year students to complete a minimum of eight volunteer hours as part of their coursework. These hours are in addition to the community service that students already perform through their teams, clubs, and organizations. FSCC students regularly contribute to the surrounding community through participation in local events such as the Fort Scott Fourth of July celebration, Trunk or Treat, rodeo setup and support, museum events, and festivals throughout Bourbon County.

To support student well-being and foster a safe, inclusive environment, FSCC offers a robust calendar of student activities throughout the academic year. These include mental health awareness events, student safety programming such as women's self-defense classes, Sexual Assault Awareness Month initiatives, and wellness campaigns. Students also enjoy social programming like Welcome Back Week, Spring Fling, Orientation Week, and a variety of graduation celebration activities that bring the student body together in positive, memorable ways. According to student surveys from the 2024–2025 academic year, FSCC students report high levels of satisfaction with the quality and variety of student life programming and community involvement opportunities. These activities not only enhance the college experience but also reflect FSCC's broader mission to develop well-rounded individuals who are prepared to lead and serve in their communities.

To support transparency and communication, the College maintains an up-to-date faculty and staff directory and a clearly structured organizational chart approved by the Board of Trustees. These tools empower students to locate advisors, instructors, and student support professionals easily.

Additionally, the Student Government of Fort Scott Community College plays a vital role in fostering institutional openness and participatory governance by providing students with a formal platform to express their voices, concerns, and ideas. Through active involvement in campus decision-making and regular collaboration with faculty, staff, and administration, Student Government ensures that student perspectives are represented and valued across the institution.

Its mission reflects this commitment: The Student Government of Fort Scott Community College is dedicated to representing the voice of the student body, influencing the direction and scope of student activities and organizations. We strive to foster a vibrant campus culture by supporting the creation and development of student clubs and organizations, while serving as a bridge between students, faculty, staff, and administration to promote open dialogue, collaboration, and positive change.

By empowering students to take part in shaping campus life and policy, FSCC's Student Government strengthens community engagement, enhances student leadership development, and reinforces the College's core values of transparency, communication, and shared governance.

Through these comprehensive and intentional practices, Fort Scott Community College ensures that transparency is more than a stated value; instead, it is a defining characteristic of the College's operations. From the website to the classroom, from cost disclosures to co-curricular programming, FSCC commits to openness, accuracy, and accessibility in every interaction with its students and community.

Sources

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- 02. Degree and Certificate requirements
- 03. HANDOUT_KansasBoardofRegents_Transfer_April2017
- 04. Prior learning credit
- 05. Military credit
- 06. Course Schedule Online

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- 08. Tuition and Fees on Webpage
- 09. Net Price Calculator on Website
- 12. Recruitment code of conduct
- 13. Accreditation
- 14. Student Surveys
- 15. Faculty staff directory
- 17. Student Government
- 10. Consumer Information Webpage
- 11. Consumer Information Webpage
- 16. FSCC Organizational Structure Chart

2.C. Board Governance

In discharging its fiduciary duties, the institution's governing board is free from undue external influence and empowered to act in the best interests of the institution, including the students it serves.

Argument

Fort Scott Community College is governed by an autonomous, principled, and transparent Board of Trustees that demonstrates an unwavering commitment to institutional integrity, strategic vision, and student success. The Board consists of six members elected at-large by the citizens of Bourbon County, Kansas, in staggered four-year terms. This governance structure ensures continuity, community representation, and democratic accountability. As the official governing body, the FSCC Board of Trustees acts in alignment with the expectations of the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR), the coordinating body for public postsecondary institutions in the state. While KBOR provides oversight and coordination, the FSCC Board maintains independent decision-making authority over institutional direction, academic programming, fiscal operations, and college President appointment.

Operating under a comprehensive Board Policy Manual, trustees are guided by well-defined responsibilities, ethical standards, and a deep respect for shared governance. Trustees' fiduciary duties are conducted free from undue external influence, and board decisions reflect clear priorities to preserve and enhance the institution. Policies related to board member ethics and conflict of interest are robust, requiring trustees to disclose any potential conflicts and abstain from debate or voting when such matters arise. These policies are reinforced during onboarding and through continued professional development, including training sessions with organizations such as the Kansas Association of Community College Trustees (KACCT).

The Board Member Ethics policy , listed in the FSCC Board of Trustees/Administrative Policies Manual, clearly outlines expectations for all trustees. These include:

- Making policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held meetings
- Rendering all decisions based on the available facts and independent judgment, refusing to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups
- Encouraging free expression of opinion by all Board members and seeking systematic communication between the Board and students, college staff, and the community
- Working with other Board members to establish effective policies that delegate administrative authority to the President
- Communicating to other Board members and the President expressions of public reaction to Board policies and college programs
- Becoming informed about current educational issues through study and participation in professional development programs
- Supporting the employment of those best qualified to serve the college and insisting on regular, impartial evaluation of all employees
- Avoiding conflicts of interest and refraining from using Board policies and college

programs for personal gain
- Taking no private action that will compromise the Board or the administration, while respecting the confidentiality of privileged information
- Not expressing any opinion upon or making promises regarding any question that is coming before the Board except during a legal meeting

These ethical expectations help ensure trustees act with integrity and remain focused on the long-term interests of the College and its stakeholders.

Board meetings are held monthly and conducted in full accordance with the Kansas Open Meetings Act, allowing internal and external constituencies to participate and provide input. Guidelines for public comment are clearly outlined in the Board Policy Manual and are practiced consistently, ensuring that stakeholders from students and faculty to community members have opportunities to contribute to institutional dialogue. Meeting agendas are developed collaboratively between the College President and Board Chair, distributed to trustees and the public in advance through local news sources, and followed with detailed minutes that document deliberations and outcomes. Trustees routinely engage with long-range planning, including the review of mission and vision statements and the development of the College's strategic goals. Annual board retreats further support reflective and forward-thinking leadership.

The Board's independence is particularly evident in its exclusive authority to select, evaluate, and if necessary, dismiss the College President. This authority ensures that executive leadership remains aligned with institutional goals and that accountability is sustained through regular performance assessments and open dialogue. While the Board holds final authority on matters of institutional policy and budgeting, it delegates the day-to-day management of the College to the President. This delegation is articulated in the Board-President Relations policy and reinforced by operational policies such as the Operating Budget System policy and Investment of Funds policy . The President, in turn, collaborates with faculty, staff, and department leaders to manage personnel, instructional programs, and student services, ensuring operational decisions are informed by expertise and institutional priorities.

Academic matters are governed collaboratively, with faculty playing a central role in program development, curriculum review, and academic integrity. Faculty-led processes such as Program Review and participation on the Curriculum Committee are formalized through board policies and reflect a strong commitment to academic freedom. These processes support innovation, instructional quality, and responsiveness to student needs, and they affirm the Board's respect for faculty governance and professional expertise.

The FSCC Board of Trustees not only leads but actively learns and evolves. Trustees regularly participate in development opportunities to stay current on higher education policy, governance practices, and institutional trends. Their biographies and professional backgrounds are made publicly available, reinforcing a culture of transparency and trust. Through this combination of ethical conduct, inclusive decision-making, and responsible oversight, the FSCC Board of Trustees exemplifies sound, independent governance ensuring that the College remains focused on its mission, resilient in the face of change, and unwavering in its service to students and the community.

Sources

- 01. Board Conflict of interest and Board Ethics
- 02. Board President Relations
- 03. Operating budget
- 04. Cash reserves savings unemcumbered fund balance

2.D. Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression

The institution supports academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of knowledge as integral to high-quality teaching, learning and research.

Argument

Fort Scott Community College is deeply committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression, recognizing these principles as fundamental to the pursuit of truth, the advancement of knowledge, and the promotion of high-quality teaching and learning. This commitment is clearly outlined in institutional policies, reinforced in faculty agreements, and demonstrated in practice throughout the campus community. The FSCC Board of Trustees and administration actively uphold these values, as reflected in the Employee Handbook and the Board Policy Manual. Both documents affirm the rights of faculty and students to engage in intellectual inquiry, robust debate, and the free exchange of ideas without fear of censorship or institutional retaliation.

Academic freedom is explicitly protected through the Negotiated Agreement between the College and the Fort Scott College Association of Professional Employees (FSCAPE). The agreement guarantees that faculty members are entitled to freedom in searching for more effective instructional strategies, presenting content relevant to their discipline, and expressing opinions within the classroom in an objective and respectful manner. The agreement further ensures faculty members have the right to support or oppose political causes outside their instructional responsibilities and to alter grades and course materials as deemed appropriate, so long as these actions are consistent with their professional duties and academic standards. FSCC acknowledges the importance of protecting faculty from interference that could hinder their pursuit of truth and innovation in their respective fields.

The College also includes clear provisions regarding the rights of faculty to conduct research and publish scholarly work. While research conducted during the workday is subject to approval by the College President or designee, faculty retain the same rights as any citizen when speaking or writing outside their instructional roles. FSCC's policies reinforce that the classroom should be a space for open dialogue and critical thinking, allowing faculty and students to explore differing perspectives without fear of suppression.

Fort Scott Community College's Peaceful Assembly Policy demonstrates the institution's strong commitment to freedom of expression for all members of the campus community including students. As a public educational institution, FSCC upholds First Amendment rights while ensuring that expressions of speech, protest, or demonstration are carried out in a manner that does not disrupt educational activities, compromise safety, or interfere with college operations. The Peaceful Assembly Policy provides clear guidelines for organizing and participating in peaceful assemblies, including designated campus locations, scheduling protocols, notification requirements, and standards for signage, sound amplification, and conduct. Importantly, FSCC affirms that the right to peaceful expression extends to both campus-affiliated and non-College groups, provided they follow established procedures. By balancing institutional mission with constitutional freedoms, FSCC ensures that students have a formal and protected space to voice their perspectives, contribute to civic dialogue, and engage in public discourse reinforcing the College's values of openness, transparency, and mutual respect. Education on these rights and responsibilities is intentional and ongoing. New employees are introduced to academic freedom protections during onboarding, and returning faculty engage in continued professional development through annual in-service training. Students learn about freedom of expression during orientation, and these principles are continuously reinforced through campus events and classroom discussions. This consistent communication helps ensure all members of the FSCC community understand not only their rights but also their role in maintaining a culture of respect and intellectual engagement.

Fort Scott Community College fosters an environment of inquiry, dialogue, and cultural enrichment through a wide range of academic programming and community engagement initiatives. Events such as guest speaker series, cultural heritage celebrations, academic symposia, and classroom panels invite diverse voices and challenge students to think critically about contemporary social, civic, and global issues. Student forums, fine arts performances, and discussions hosted by student clubs and organizations further encourage thoughtful expression and deepen the learning experience. FSCC is also home to the Gordon Parks Museum, which honors the legacy of the famed photographer, filmmaker, and writer through year-round cultural programming that promotes diversity, equity, and social awareness. In addition, the College's TRIO program regularly hosts cultural events that expand students' perspectives and promote inclusivity. FSCC ensures that learning takes place in an atmosphere grounded in academic freedom, cultural appreciation, and mutual respect.

By upholding and communicating robust policies, honoring the professional judgment of its faculty, and creating inclusive spaces for dialogue, Fort Scott Community College demonstrates an enduring commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression. These foundational principles not only support the mission of the College but empower students and faculty to grow as informed citizens, innovative thinkers, and engaged members of a democratic society.

Sources

- 01. Employee Handbook
- 02. Board Policy
- 03. Negotiated Agreement 2025-2026
- 04. Peaceful assembly
- 05. Peaceful assembly

2.E. Knowledge Acquisition, Discovery and Application

The institution adheres to policies and procedures that ensure responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge.

Argument

At Fort Scott Community College, the responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge are core to the institution's academic mission and daily operations. The College fosters a culture rooted in academic integrity, intellectual responsibility, and ethical scholarship by embedding clear expectations across policies, curriculum, and support services. FSCC maintains high standards of professionalism, and this commitment is reinforced through the collaborative efforts of faculty, staff, and administrators.

Fort Scott Community College maintains high academic standards and expects all students to uphold the principles of honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior in their academic work. The College's Academic Ethics Policy that is accessible for students in the college catalog, the student handbook, and the student board policy manual reinforces its commitment to a learning environment rooted in fairness and personal responsibility. Students are expected to conduct themselves ethically in all academic settings, and any form of dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, or falsifying records is considered a serious violation. Specific examples of academic misconduct include cheating on exams or quizzes, submitting plagiarized materials, assisting others during exams, falsifying academic records, and attempting to obtain unauthorized copies of examinations. Violations may result in penalties ranging from a zero on the assignment or exam to receiving a failing grade for the course, suspension, or even dismissal. This policy reflects FSCC's dedication to academic integrity and ensures that all students are evaluated fairly and equitably based on their own merit and effort. Several FSCC instructors have proactively included statements in their course syllabi outlining appropriate use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), reinforcing academic integrity while guiding students in the ethical and responsible application of emerging technologies.

Fort Scott Community College upholds the value of academic integrity through its Academic Dishonesty Policy is accessible for students in the college catalog, the student handbook, and the student board policy manual which applies to all courses and supports both instructional authority and institutional accountability. Instructors maintain the discretion to address violations as they see fit, including actions such as discussing the matter with the student, assigning a failing grade for the specific assignment, or failing the student for the course—resulting in an F on the student's transcript. In addition to these actions, instructors may report the violation to the appropriate Division Chair or Dean, providing documentation of the incident, the student's name and ID number, and any steps already taken. Once notified, the Division Chair or Dean will inform the student's academic advisor, and any sponsors or coaches affiliated with the student. The student will also be formally notified by mail that a second violation will lead to a recommendation for dismissal from the college by the Vice President of Academic Affairs. All reports are documented and maintained to track repeated infractions. Students dismissed for academic dishonesty have the right to appeal, as outlined in the FSCC College Catalog . This policy reinforces FSCC's commitment to academic fairness and integrity while ensuring that students are held accountable for maintaining ethical standards throughout their educational journey.

Faculty responsibilities concerning academic honesty are outlined in the Board Policy under Instructional Program . This philosophy helps ensure a unified institutional approach to academic standards, while also empowering instructors to engage in effective instructional strategies. Faculty are encouraged to pursue continuing education and research in their field, supported through professional development incentives such as salary schedule advancement.

Instruction in the ethical use of information resources is intentional and embedded into the student experience. Many general education courses provide structured instruction on citation practices, source evaluation, and plagiarism avoidance. The First Year Experience course, required for all degree-seeking students, includes formal instruction on topics such as academic honesty, cheating, and responsible research practices. This instruction is aligned with FSCC's general education outcome focused on ethical responsibilities and ensures students develop foundational competencies in information literacy.

Academic support services further reinforce these efforts. The Student Success Center, FSCC Library, and tutoring services offer individualized assistance to students, including support for academic writing, study skills, and responsible research practices. The library maintains resources on plagiarism and citation, and the Director of Library Services provides workshops to English and Nursing classes as well as First Year Experience sections. These services are coordinated by the

Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs and Student Services to ensure holistic, equitable support across disciplines and learning modalities.

Curriculum oversight is another key component of FSCC's integrity framework. The <u>Curriculum Committee</u> and <u>Academic Affairs Committee</u> are responsible for maintaining pedagogical rigor and ensuring that instructional content adheres to institutional and accreditation standards. Through these committees, faculty-led review processes assess course quality, academic expectations, and program alignment with FSCC's mission.

Beyond the classroom, FSCC promotes knowledge application through project-based learning, real-world assignments, and service opportunities that challenge students to connect academic instruction with practical outcomes. Students engage in speeches, writing projects, presentations, and community-based initiatives that deepen their learning and reinforce their ethical responsibilities as scholars and citizens.

Fort Scott Community College is committed to continuous improvement and community engagement, supported in part by the dedicated efforts of its Director of Grants & Special Projects. This position plays a vital role in identifying and pursuing grant opportunities that enhance the College's resources, programs, and student support services. In the past year, FSCC has successfully secured a community foundation grant to expand its student pantry, addressing food insecurity and supporting student wellness. Additionally, a grant was awarded to strengthen the Construction Trades program, providing students with updated tools and hands-on learning opportunities in a high-demand field. The College is also actively pursuing a grant to increase the number of AED (Automated External Defibrillator) devices on campus, aiming to enhance emergency preparedness not only for students and staff, but also for the broader community during public events held at FSCC. These initiatives reflect the College's proactive approach to resource development and its commitment to creating a safe, supportive, and opportunity-rich environment for all.

Recognizing the impact of emerging technologies on academic practice, FSCC is integrating instruction on artificial intelligence (AI), digital research tools, and technology ethics across its curriculum and support services. These forward-looking initiatives ensure that students are not only informed consumers of information but responsible contributors to their academic and professional communities.

Through its structured policies, faculty leadership, student services, and commitment to ethical teaching and learning, Fort Scott Community College creates an environment where responsible knowledge acquisition and application are embedded into every level of the academic experience. This commitment reflects FSCC's mission to advance excellence, integrity, and accountability across its academic community.

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- 03. Academic dishonesty policy
- 04. FSCC-Academic-Catalog-25-26 pgs 21 22 23 35 36
- 05. FSCC Master Syllabus Template Rev 7_2024
- 06. Instructor responsibility philosophy
- 07. Negotiated Agreement 2025-2026
- 08. General outcomes
- 09. Curriculum Committee Bylaws and Procedures for New Program Proposals
- 10. Academic Affairs Committee Minutes

Criterion 2 - Summary

In fulfilling its mission, the institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Argument

At Fort Scott Community College, the responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge are core to the institution's academic mission and daily operations. The College fosters a culture rooted in academic integrity, intellectual responsibility, and ethical scholarship by embedding clear expectations across policies, curriculum, and support services. FSCC maintains high standards of professionalism, and this commitment is reinforced through the collaborative efforts of faculty, staff, and administrators.

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maintaining ethical standards throughout their educational journey.

Faculty responsibilities concerning academic honesty are clearly outlined in the Master Syllabus template, Instructor Responsibilities document, and the faculty Negotiated Agreement. These resources help ensure a unified institutional approach to academic standards, while also empowering instructors to engage in disciplinary-specific scholarship and pedagogy. Faculty are encouraged to pursue continuing education and research in their field, supported through professional development incentives such as salary schedule advancement. The College promotes scholarly inquiry within and beyond the classroom, while retaining administrative oversight for research or publications conducted during regular work hours.

Instruction in the ethical use of information resources is intentional and embedded into the student experience. Many general education courses provide structured instruction on citation practices, source evaluation, and plagiarism avoidance. The First Year Experience course, required for all degree-seeking students, includes formal instruction on topics such as academic honesty, cheating, and responsible research practices. This instruction is aligned with FSCC's general education outcome focused on ethical responsibilities and ensures students develop foundational competencies in information literacy.

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Through its structured policies, faculty leadership, student services, and commitment to ethical teaching and learning, Fort Scott Community College creates an environment where responsible knowledge acquisition and application are embedded into every level of the academic experience. This commitment reflects FSCC's mission to advance excellence, integrity, and accountability across its academic community.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning for Student Success

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The rigor and quality of each educational program is consistent regardless of modality, location or other differentiating factors.

3.A. Educational Programs

The institution maintains learning goals and outcomes that reflect a level of rigor commensurate with college-level work, including by program level and the content of each of its educational programs.

Argument

The institution maintains learning goals and outcomes that reflect a level of rigor commensurate with college level work, including by program level and the content of each of its educational programs.

Fort Scott Community College's mission to provide academic, technical, and occupational programs to meet student needs is evident in the academic offerings. FSCC offers four distinct degrees: Associate in Arts and Associate in Sciences, Associate in General Studies, and Associate in Applied Science. The Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees consist of 60 credit hours and are designed to transfer to four-year institutions. In addition, FSCC offers a general education program to ensure fulfillment of the state mandated core curriculum and acceptance at transfer institutions of a minimum of 35 credits towards the general education requirement of a bachelor's degree.

Technical degrees (AAS) and certificates are designed to equip students with specific skills in preparation for entering the workforce. The academic catalog is updated annually and outlines a comprehensive selection of 26-degree programs , 11 technical certificate programs , and 6 certificates of completion . The requirements for the degrees and certificate programs are available on the college website and the academic catalog.

All AA, AS, and AGS degrees incorporate general education courses aligned with the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) systemwide transfer framework , ensuring rigor, consistency, and transferability. The general education program at FSCC reflects the institution's commitment to producing well-rounded graduates who are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for lifelong learning, civic engagement, and professional success.

FSCC operates under the auspices of the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR), which is the statewide coordinating board charged with approving the courses and credits for associate degrees and certificates. Faculty from across the state and from different disciplines meet annually as part of the Kansas Core Outcome Group (KCOG) to review and revise the course learning outcomes for transfer courses.

For courses in career and technical education, the course offerings align with the requirements at the state or industry standards with input from the CTE advisory board. The CTE Advisory Committees meet biannually (with agendas and minutes on file) to review workforce trends and advise on curriculum development, helping to ensure FSCC programs remain responsive and adaptable. Additionally, programs like Nursing, Allied Health, Harley-Davidson, and Cosmetology are separately accredited through specialized accrediting bodies.

All courses and programs are systematically developed and reviewed to ensure they remain current, academically rigorous, and responsive to student needs. The Curriculum Committee oversees the approval and review process for all college curricula. The faculty are responsible for the creation and revision of the curriculum, as well as ensuring alignment with transfer institutions. The work of the curriculum committee is critical to maintaining the quality and relevance of academic programs at FSCC.

The curriculum quality and learning goals are maintained consistently across all modes of delivery. All credit-bearing courses follow a master syllabus template that includes the course description, learning outcomes, key concepts covered, and assessments tied to the learning outcomes. This standardized template is used by all faculty, including adjuncts and dual-credit instructors, ensuring uniformity across all sections, regardless of the modality or location in which the course is offered.

Sources

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- 03. Technical Programs
- 07. FSCC Master Syllabus Template Rev 7_2024

3.B. Exercise of Intellectual Inquiry

The institution's educational programs engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in practicing modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

Argument

The institution's educational programs engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in practicing modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

Fort Scott Community College is committed to providing educational experiences that prepare students for both academic and workforce success by cultivating essential intellectual, analytical, and communication skills across its curriculum. FSCC's academic programs are designed to intentionally engage students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information, fostering intellectual inquiry and creative thinking, and developing adaptable, real-world skills to serve them in dynamic work.

FSCC has embedded 35 credit hours of the general education program in <u>Associate in Arts</u> , <u>Associate in Science</u> and <u>Associate in General Studies</u> degrees. The credit hours required to complete the general education program require students to complete:

  six credit hours of English,

  three credit hours of communication,

  five credit hours of science,

  six credit hours of Arts and Humanities, and

  six credit hours of social and behavioral science.

Across general education and career and technical education (CTE) programs, FSCC embeds outcomes focused on critical thinking, information literacy, and effective communication. Within the English department, these outcomes are demonstrated through a series of <u>documented essays</u> that require students to synthesize complex information, construct well-reasoned arguments, and support their claims with credible evidence. In <u>English 101</u> , students are introduced to <u>APA</u> formatting where they apply proper citation and documentation standards throughout their essays. In <u>English 102</u> , the emphasis shifts to <u>MLA</u> formatting, allowing students to demonstrate versatility in writing and research methodology. These assignments are intentionally designed to strengthen students' academic writing and research skills. A s<u>ample of student work</u> is attached as evidence of the application of APA formatting in English 101. Students in the <u>public speaking course</u> engage in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information through a structured progression of assignments that build both written and oral communication skills. Students are required to compose messages tailored to specific topics, purposes, and audiences by preparing written outlines and delivering oral presentations. Throughout the course, students refine their ability to transmit messages effectively, using appropriate delivery techniques and receiving feedback from peers and instructors. As competent listeners, students analyze speeches to comprehend content critically, distinguishing fact from opinion, identifying bias, and recognizing the speaker's intent and attitude. Each student completes a minimum of <u>four speeches</u> , each accompanied by written work and peer evaluations, with increasingly rigorous research and logical organization, culminating in live presentations that reflect the development of communication and analytical abilities.

Students taking <u>science courses</u> are involved in collecting, analyzing, and communicating scientific information through a variety of hands-on and analytical activities that reflect real-world scientific practice. Students begin

by understanding the nature of science, demonstrating knowledge of scientific processes and applying the scientific method in <u>lab reports and experiments</u> . Additionally, students develop foundational skills by performing precise measurements with physical apparatus and analyzing collected data, including the identification and treatment of errors and uncertainties. Through experiments and lab investigations, students learn to interpret scientific data to solve problems and draw conclusions, which are then communicated through structured reports. This approach fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication skills essential for scientific reasoning and informed decision-making.

Students in John Deere Tech program gain a comprehensive set of <u>diagnostic and repair skills</u> essential for working with advanced agricultural equipment. Students acquire hands-on experience in testing, diagnosing, and repairing power train systems using advanced computer systems, engine and fuel systems, hydraulics, and air conditioning units. Additionally, students apply the diagnostic and problem-solving skills learned in the classroom through internships with industry partners like Prairieland partners and Heritage Tractor, Inc. These skills prepare students for real-world service technician roles within the agricultural industry, with a strong emphasis on precision, efficiency, and manufacturer-specific expertise.

Similarly, in technical programs such as <u>Welding</u> , <u>Agriculture</u> , and <u>Allied Health</u> , students are trained to interpret technical data and apply it to real-life problem-solving scenarios. These experiences prepare students in these CTE programs to engage in lifelong learning and adapt to professional environments.
FSCC's programs are intentionally structured to support inquiry-based learning and creative problem-solving. Students in Fine Arts explore visual and performance-based mediums through independent projects and critiques, engaging in creative expression and self-reflection. Students in the agriculture and heavy equipment programs apply creative thinking to solve practical, industry-relevant challenges ranging from equipment troubleshooting to land management techniques.

Fort Scott Community College is actively expanding transfer opportunities to support student success and academic progression Through partnerships with regional employers and four-year universities, FSCC designs curricula that reflect the evolving demands of the workforce and higher education. The college recently implemented a <u>Systemwide Associate Degree in Business Administration, Management, and Operations</u> , with the first 62 credit hours of coursework transferring seamlessly to any Kansas public university. Fort Scott Community College is in the process of finalizing a <u>2+2 articulation agreement</u> with Missouri Southern State University for students interested in pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness. Through this pathway, students will complete the Associate in Applied Science in Farm and Ranch Management at FSCC, with all 60 credit hours applying directly toward the bachelor's degree at Missouri Southern. Additionally, in response to the increasing demand for elementary teachers, FSCC partnered with Emporia State University to develop a four-year pathway in <u>Elementary Education</u> . This collaborative initiative allows students to complete their associate degree at FSCC and continue on a clearly defined track toward a bachelor's degree in education.

In technical programs such as Heavy Equipment Operations (HEO), FSCC trains students to use advanced simulation and field-based technology to adapt to innovations in the construction and logistics industries. Similarly, the <u>KCU Rural Health Scholars Pathway</u> , in partnership with MSSU and Kansas City University, offers students a guided academic and professional journey that includes academic benchmarks, GPA expectations, and a guaranteed interview for medical or dental school, demonstrating FSCC's commitment to preparing students for advanced education and service in rural healthcare. These pathway agreements provide students with flexible, affordable options to pursue their academic and professional goals while meeting critical workforce needs in the region.

Fort Scott Community College (FSCC) follows a structured and faculty-driven curriculum development process, as outlined in the <u>Curriculum Committee bylaws</u> . Faculty members initiate the development and revision of course outlines, that then receive review and approval by the Curriculum Committee to ensure academic rigor and relevance. <u>Meeting agendas and minutes</u> document active engagement in maintaining high-quality, up-to-date curricula. The Curriculum Committee also evaluates and approves proposals for new programs and modifications to existing programs. These processes allow the institution and the faculty to respond to changing academic standards and workforce demands.

Program leads at Fort Scott Community College play a critical role in maintaining the relevance and quality of academic and technical programs. They bring forward recommendations based on feedback from advisory

boards and business and industry partners, ensuring that technical programs remain aligned with current workforce needs. A key example is the addition of the <u>John Deere Certificate</u> and the modification of the existing Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Agriculture Technology. Regional dealerships identified workforce gaps, prompting the program's expansion. Previously, students earned three John Deere industry certifications: Electrical, Hydraulic, and Service Advisor. The revised certificate now includes two additional certifications: Air Conditioning (A/C) and Engine Aftertreatment Capstone. These enhancements enable graduates to achieve <u>Level 3 John Deere Technician</u> status and allow FSCC to double the number of qualified technicians entering the workforce, directly addressing dealer needs.

Another key example is the introduction of the standalone <u>Heavy Equipment Operator Certificate</u> in 2024, which was developed in direct response to employer input. This program included updated course titles, revised learning outcomes, and alignment with Perkins V performance indicators to ensure quality and workforce relevance.

Since last year, the <u>Academic Affairs Committee</u> has taken a proactive approach in evaluating existing programs through regular program reviews and identifying new academic and career pathways that respond to student interests, regional workforce demands, and emerging industry trends. This process integrates data-driven decision-making, drawing on enrollment trends, transfer patterns, advisory board recommendations, and student feedback to keep program offerings student-centered and workforce-relevant. A key example of this approach is the development of the <u>Exercise Science pathway</u> , which provides students with a clearly defined pathway. There have been ongoing discussions regarding the addition of a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) program to further expand FSCC's healthcare offerings and address regional workforce needs. These continuous program improvements demonstrate FSCC's strong commitment to delivering high-quality, responsive programs that prepare students for both academic transfer and immediate entry into the workforce.

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- 05. ENG101 Online SP25 Syllabus MAB
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- 07. ENG102 SP25 F2F 1.17.25 Syllabus
- 08. Argument Essay Assignment Sheet-MLA Format
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- 12. Science Syllabi
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- 17. Allied Health CMAHybrid Spring 2025 Syllabus
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- 20. Fort Scott to Emporia State El. Ed 2025
- 21. KCU_RuralHealth_FactSheet-FortScottCC
- 22. Curriculum Committee Bylaws-Revised (1)
- 23. Curriculum Committee Minutes
- 24. Certificate-in-Agriculture-Technology
- 25. Level 3 Certified Technician Roadmap

3.C. Sufficiency of Faculty and Staff

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

Argument

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

Fort Scott Community College (FSCC) is committed to delivering high-quality education and services through a dedicated team of faculty and staff who are appropriately qualified. FSCC follows a formalized hiring process aligned with the college hiring policy . Supervisors initiate personnel requests through their respective Vice Presidents, who present them to the Executive Committee for approval. Once approved, positions are advertised on the college website and social media platforms. Hiring committees consisting of executive, faculty, and staff members conduct interviews and recommend top candidates to the HR Director in ranked order. The final candidate is subject to background checks and Board approval.

FSCC employs a diverse faculty body consisting of full-time, part-time, concurrent, and adjunct instructors who are carefully selected based on their academic credentials, industry experience, and instructional effectiveness. The college utilizes the faculty qualifications document which was adopted based on HLC's Guidelines for Determining Qualified Faculty to ensure that all faculty meet minimum qualifications, whether through academic credentials, tested experience, or a combination of both particularly in career and technical education (CTE) areas. Faculty qualifications are monitored through established hiring procedures that require submission of official transcripts, certification or licensure, and verification of relevant professional experience. All faculty hiring is reviewed by the Office of Academic Affairs in coordination with Human Resources to ensure compliance. A copy of academic transcripts and certifications is retained in personnel files in the human resource office.

All new employees participate in a comprehensive onboarding process developed by FSCC's Onboarding Committee. This cross-functional committee includes full-time faculty and staff and is tasked with fostering a culture of retention and integration that prepares new employees to succeed and thrive at FSCC. Human Resources initiates the onboarding checklist upon hiring, prompting IT to establish FSCC accounts and notifying the mentor assigned to the new employee. The onboarding checklist includes HR protocols, campus tours, IT access, and structured mentoring. Mentors meet regularly with new employees throughout their first year and beyond, ensuring successful acclimation to FSCC culture and responsibilities. In addition to the regular onboarding, faculty continue academic onboarding with an assigned mentor that meets regularly and a monthly Teaching Academy , facilitated by the Director of Library Services. The academy topics include: FSCC technology systems and campus awareness; curriculum, assessment and classroom management and motivation; accessibility; incivility in the classroom; OERs and copyright; semesterly duties; and support and mentorship. These sessions are designed to support instructional development, promote effective teaching practices, and build a strong professional learning community. Additionally, the Director of Library Services acts as a designated Blackboard support professional who provides new faculty training in the learning management system.

FSCC has a structured faculty evaluation process to ensure consistency in educational quality across all modes of delivery and locations. Full-time faculty are evaluated based on the time frame established under Article XXV of the negotiated agreement. Adjunct and dual-credit (teaching high school students) faculty are observed once every year. Courses taught by full-time, adjunct and concurrent faculty are evaluated by the Vice President of Academic affairs, the Division Chair or designee. The process includes completing the faculty evaluation form based on classroom observations, student evaluations , and faculty self-evaluation . After each evaluation, a conference is scheduled where faculty receive feedback in discussions with administrators or observers, identifying strengths and areas for development and developing an action plan. Evaluation of adjunct and

dual-credit faculty follow the same process as for the full-time faculty; however, <u>adjunct evaluation</u> and <u>adjunct self-evaluation</u> forms are utilized. Concurrent faculty evaluations are conducted per the <u>Dual Credit Enrollment Cooperative Agreement</u> . Division Chairs and the Concurrent Coordinator work together with adjunct and concurrent faculty to ensure consistency and rigor in course delivery. This structured evaluation and feedback process helps to foster faculty growth, improve instructional quality, and ensure that the institution's educational programs meet high academic standards across all locations and in different formats.

Staff participate in an annual performance evaluation that is typically conducted in early spring. Each evaluation includes a self-evaluation by the employee and a comprehensive review by their supervisor. The evaluation process involves a one-on-one meeting where the supervisor provides feedback, sets professional goals, and discusses development opportunities to support continuous improvement and job satisfaction.

Fort Scott Community College employs 38 full-time faculty members and approximately 36 adjunct faculty, not including high school instructors teaching concurrent enrollment courses. Full-time faculty members typically carry a teaching load of 30 credit hours per academic year, in accordance with the faculty negotiated agreement. Across all instructional modalities including face-to-face, online, and hybrid, the institution maintains an average student-to-faculty ratio of 14:1, supporting individualized instruction and faculty engagement with students. Course sizes are c<u>apped at 30 students</u> with exceptions for courses like English, Speech, and science classes which have a lower cap. Most Career and Technical Education courses are capped at 20 to facilitate one-on-one hands-on training. This allows faculty to provide personalized instruction and be accessible for student inquiries and mentoring. Per Article XI of the <u>Negotiated Agreement</u> , office hours are posted outside faculty offices, and a copy of the schedule is submitted to the Instruction Office prior to the first day of the class.

FSCC ensures that student academic and support services are staffed with qualified professionals. Support staff hold credentials appropriate to their areas of responsibility and participate in annual professional development focused on compliance, student equity, and holistic student support. Some of the services include academic advising, TRIO, CAMP, tutoring, and the Student Success Center. Last year, FSCC partnered with SEK Mental Health to have a therapist intern on site to address the mental health needs of students. In addition, she held <u>support group services</u> 1st and 3rd Monday of every month during spring semester. The therapist intern educated faculty and staff regarding <u>Creating a Safe Space</u> during inservice. The college is committed to providing mental health services to students and will be adding another part-time therapist to meet students' growing mental health needs.

FSCC supports faculty and staff development through providing institutional funding for external conferences, in-house workshops, and targeted training. Employees request supervisor approval for attending professional development opportunities related to job roles. Professional development helps with enhancing knowledge to support effective teaching and student support practices. Moreover, various sessions are offered during <u>inservice</u> to meet the needs of faculty and staff and promote continuous professional development, improvement, and job performance of all personnel. The topics for the sessions are based on feedback from employees and are relevant to their needs.

Several of the CTE faculty participate in business and internship opportunities. The Internship program allows instructors to stay current with evolving industry standards and practices. Through direct engagement with the workforce, instructors gain exposure to new certifications, updated codes, and regulatory changes that impact their fields. This real-world experience enhances classroom instruction by aligning course content with current industry expectations, thereby better preparing students for immediate employment upon graduation. Students benefit from learning relevant skills, procedures, tools, and safety standards, which increases job readiness and marketability. In turn, employers gain a competitive advantage by hiring graduates who require less onboarding and are equipped with up-to-date knowledge and hands-on competencies. Four CTE faculty were awarded a <u>Kansas Technology Initiative Grant</u> , this summer, allowing them to participate in an internship with a business, industry, or another agency for the purpose of upgrading knowledge and skills.

Professional development opportunities are provided to adjunct and concurrent faculty every year during the <u>adjunct inservice</u> prior to the start of the fall semester, serving as both orientation and professional development. This session, led by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Assessment Coordinator, Director of Library Services, and Registrar, covers expectations such as master syllabus, grading policies, assessment, and

important academic deadlines. These sessions establish expectations and ensure instructional consistency. Additionally, the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Assessment Coordinator visit area high schools annually to provide dedicated training and distribute the <u>Concurrent Faculty Handbook</u> . These visits reinforce academic rigor, align high school instruction with FSCC standards, and ensure concurrent faculty have access to institutional resources and ongoing support.

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- 13. Dual Credit Enrollment Cooperative Agreement
- 14. Course Limit
- 15. Negotiated Agreement 2024-2025 signed Article XI
- 16. Mental Health Support Group
- 17. Creating a Safe Space by Emily Vallely
- 18. Inservice Agenda
- 19. Kansas Technology Initiative Grant
- 20. Adjunct fall 2024
- 21. Concurrent Faculty Handbook

3.D. Support for Student Learning and Resources for Teaching

The institution provides student support services that address the needs of its student populations, as well as the teaching resources and infrastructure necessary for student success.

Argument

The institution provides student support services that address the needs of its student populations, as well as the teaching resources and infrastructure necessary for student success.

Fort Scott Community College is committed to the academic and personal success of its diverse student population. The college offers an array of student support services and teaching resources designed to meet the needs of learners across all modalities, including on-campus, online, hybrid, and off-site locations. These services are designed to provide a supportive framework that enhances student learning, persistence, and completion.

Every student enrolled in AA, AS, and AGS is required to enroll in the First Year Experience (FYE) course. This course integrates academic and social elements critical to student success. FYE courses include modules on time management, study skills, academic integrity, financial literacy, emotional wellbeing, community engagement, and self-awareness and cultural competence. Throughout the semester, campus resources such as advising, financial aid, library services, TRIO, disability services, and tutoring visit the FYE classes to introduce students to the support services available. Students are also introduced to campus clubs, activities, and student organizations that foster social engagement and personal development.

Academic advising is central to FSCC's student success strategy. All students have access to an academic advisor upon enrollment, with advising support tailored to individual needs. The advising team includes two full-time advisors, three TRIO advisors, program directors, and the Dean of Miami County, who assist with course selection, degree planning, transfer guidance, and navigating institutional resources. FSCC uses an early alert system to identify students who may be struggling academically and proactively connects them with needed resources and support.

FSCC's Financial Aid Office offers guidance on FAFSA completion, scholarship opportunities, and institutional aid. Students receive support through one-on-one advising, financial literacy workshops, and ongoing regular communication. Recent improvements include more effective outreach via text and email alerts regarding billing and application deadlines including student billing timeline graphic , as well as early FAFSA submission campaigns starting with the first week of classes to promote financial readiness.

Tutoring services are available in-person and online, ensuring all students have access to academic help regardless of location or schedule. Every semester the tutoring schedule is made available to students and employees via email and the college's website. FSCC serves a large population of first-generation students through the TRIO program, which provides a wide range of services including academic and personal advising, career assessment, transfer assistance, scholarship guidance, cultural enrichment opportunities**,** and skill-building workshops (e.g., financial literacy and life skills).

FSCC promotes an exciting and inclusive campus life through a variety of co-curricular programs and student activities that support personal and social development. Opportunities include participation in student organizations, intramural sports, service-learning, engagement activities, and cultural events. A schedule of activities is published in the weekly student bulletin to ensure students are aware of engagement opportunities that align with their interests and values.

FSCC invests in instructional infrastructure and program-specific facilities that align with current industry and academic standards. These include:

- The Nursing and Allied Health programs utilize state-of-the-art equipment and simulation labs and maintain clinical site agreements to ensure students receive practical, hands-on experience.

- The John Deere Technology Program partners with regional dealerships to sponsor students and provide workplace-based training .

- Students across all programs have access to the FSCC Library, which is a member of the Southeast Kansas Library System and connected to the Kansas State Online Library, offering access to ebooks, audiobooks, and licensed research databases.

To support the development of research skills across all learning modalities, Fort Scott Community College ensures that students have consistent access to instructional resources and research training. The Director of Library Services plays an active role in this process by visiting First Year Experience, English 101, English 102, and Speech classes each semester to deliver targeted instruction on using digital library resources and effective research strategies. These sessions, provided through Library Orientation and Effective Research presentations , equip students with essential skills for navigating and evaluating information.

To reinforce these skills, English faculty integrate research-based assignments that require students to apply what they have learned. For example, some faculty provide additional instruction on using the Kansas Library System databases , offering students deeper, hands-on exposure to credible academic sources. This collaborative approach between library services and academic faculty ensures that research instruction is embedded throughout the curriculum, enhancing students' ability to conduct effective research.

FSCC evaluates the effectiveness of its student services and instructional support through student feedback, service utilization data, and surveys . These insights guide ongoing improvements, such as extending tutoring hours, enhancing early alert outreach, and improving access to digital research tools.

Sources

- 01. FSCC Syllabus First Year Experience Spring 25
- 02. Early Alert System
- 03. Student Billing Timeline Graphic Fall 2025
- 04. Tutoring Schedules
- 05. Weekly Student Bulletins
- 06. Clinical Site Agreement
- 07. John Deere Agreement
- 08. Library Orientation and Effective Research
- 09. Using Kansas library System Databases
- 10. FSCC Student Survey-Spring 2025

3.E. Assessment of Student Learning

The institution improves the quality of educational programs based on its assessment of student learning.

Argument

The institution improves the quality of educational programs based on its assessment of student learning.

Fort Scott Community College has developed and implemented a comprehensive assessment plan to ensure a structured, institution-wide approach to evaluating and improving student learning. The assessment committee worked in conjunction with faculty and staff to develop a multi-year, multi-level comprehensive assessment plan , which includes identifying institutional learning outcomes , general education learning outcomes, program/department learning outcomes, course and co-curricular learning outcomes . The comprehensive process involves collecting data at multiple levels:

- Course

- Program/department

- General Education

- Institutional

- Co-curricular

FSCC articulates the purpose and outcomes of its General Education program and Institutional Learning Outcomes in both the Academic Catalog and on the college website. These public-facing documents communicate to students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders the essential skills and competencies students are expected to develop through their educational experience at FSCC. Other components of this initiative include curriculum mapping and aligning courses with program/department outcomes, which require faculty to critically evaluate the tools used for measuring student learning and implementing action plans based on trend data. The plan also integrates assessment for dual credit, online, and adjunct instruction, ensuring consistency across all delivery methods. To promote consistent and timely engagement with assessment, FSCC has developed institutional tools including the Assessment Calendar and End-of-Year Assessment Day Checklist . The calendar outlines assessment responsibilities and deadlines for faculty, division chairs, and academic leadership throughout the academic year. The calendar includes key deadlines for data submission, timelines for reporting results back to faculty, and scheduled discussions of results at the departmental level. As a shared reference tool, the calendar promotes transparency and encourages ongoing engagement at every stage of the assessment process. It is distributed to all departments and housed within Blackboard to ensure accessibility and accountability. The end of year checklist is used by faculty during the institution-wide Assessment Day to ensure completion of essential tasks such as data review, reporting, and planning for improvements. It provides a structured approach to closing the assessment loop each academic year.

The Assessment Committee, composed of Vice President of Academic Affairs, Director of Library Services (Assessment Chair), English Faculty (Assessment Coordinator), Director of Institutional Research, Division Chairs, play a central role in guiding the implementation and review of assessment processes. Faculty serve on the Assessment Committee for two-year terms, ensuring widespread involvement and continuity across departments. The committee provides guidance and acts as a resource to academic and non-academic areas for ongoing assessment practices. The Assessment Coordinator supports faculty by assisting with the creation of assessment rubrics, alignment of learning objectives, and data collection.

Assessment begins with faculty developing and implementing course and program-level assessment plans. Faculty collaborate to develop comprehensive assessment plans that identify key processes, benchmarks, data collection methods, reporting tools, and documentation practices. Regular departmental meetings provide opportunities for faculty and department chairs to review assessment data from previous academic years, reflect on teaching practices, and implement strategies aimed at enhancing student learning. Within each academic department, faculty collect student learning outcome data at the course level using standardized rubrics and/or blueprinted test questions. Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) are aligned to Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) through curriculum mapping . The data gathered at the course level informs assessment of program, general education, and institutional learning outcomes as depicted in assessment levels framework.

FSCC follows a four-semester assessment cycle for program- and department-level outcomes. While data is collected for all PLOs, faculty prioritize outcomes where student performance indicates the greatest need for improvement. Performance benchmarks are established, data is collected and reported each semester, and faculty reflect on the results by completing the annual mid-cycle (formative) assessment template . In 2022, FSCC implemented the EAC Visual Data Analytics system, which expanded faculty access to tools for generating detailed CLO and PLO reports. These reports provide both disaggregated data (at the course level) and aggregated data (at the program level), helping faculty identify trends and create targeted "mini" action plans. Faculty then continue to collect data to monitor the impact of those interventions. At the conclusion of the four-semester cycle, faculty complete a Program Outcomes (summative) assessment template documenting student achievement and evaluating the effectiveness of implemented strategies. If performance benchmarks are consistently met, a new PLO may be selected for the next cycle. If not, the action plan is revised and reassessed, ensuring an ongoing, data-informed approach to improving teaching and learning. Assessment reports have been compiled for every academic and Career and Technical Education (CTE) program/department for academic years 2022-2023 , 2023-2024 , and 2024-2025 . These reports serve as key evidence of FSCC's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and are included in the documentation to support institutional assessment efforts.

To support centralized documentation and improve accessibility, FSCC has invested in Blackboard as the primary platform for housing all assessment data. Each academic and Career and Technical Education (CTE) department has its own designated organization site that serves as a repository for course-level and program-level assessment data, action plans, annual assessment reports, and comprehensive program reviews. Separate organization sites are also maintained for General Education and co-curricular areas.
To promote usability and consistency across departments, FSCC also maintains a dedicated "Resources" section within each site. This section houses institution-wide assessment tools, standardized rubrics, reporting templates, and instructional guides to support effective documentation and continuous improvement.

In addition to these structural supports, the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA), Assessment Coordinator, and Division Chairs collaborate regularly with academic departments to review and interpret course- and program-level data using the EAC Visual Data Analytics system. These collaborative sessions provide structured opportunities for faculty to analyze performance trends, disaggregate data by modality and student population, and develop evidence-based narratives that reflect student achievement and support continuous improvement. This integrated approach ensures that assessment is not only data-driven, but also meaningfully connected to instructional practice and institutional planning.

FSCC has designated Assessment Days each semester to provide faculty time and institutional support for assessment-related tasks. These days foster departmental collaboration, allowing faculty to review data and make informed decisions about instructional strategies, course sequencing, and curriculum updates. Additionally, the Assessment Committee developed an Assessment Cycle Timeline to guide departments through key checkpoints in the assessment process. The following steps outline the FSCC course/program level assessment cycle, typically conducted over four traditional semesters:

1. Course and Program Level Assessment:
FSCC Basic Department/Program Level Assessment Cycle (4 traditional semesters)

1. Develop department/program student learning outcomes which are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and clear and map course learning outcomes to program outcomes.
2. Identify expected level of achievement (benchmarks) for the outcome(s).

3. Work in conjunction with assessment coordinator to select one department/program outcome to be reported on during the assessment cycle.
4. Identify which courses/assignments will be used as measures.
5. Collect and report data utilizing either the Mid-cycle (formative) Assessment Report or Department/Program Outcomes (summative) Assessment Report. Aggregate data is provided utilizing information reported in Blackboard.
6. Faculty work with assessment coordinator and institutional research offices to analyze trends and data for the selected outcome, if needed.
7. Use analysis of results to identify strengths and opportunities to make improvements or modifications. For programs with multiple faculty members, this must be done collaboratively.
8. Implement changes to improve student learning in the department/program.
9. Repeat the cycle.

2. General Education Outcomes:

FSCC offers four degrees Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Science (AS), Associate in General Studies (AGS), and Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degrees. The Associate in Applied Science degree encompasses FSCC's Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. Each CTE program has developed its own set of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), which are aligned with industry-recognized standards and the requirements of programmatic accrediting agencies. These outcomes are specific to each field and reflect the knowledge, skills, and competencies students must acquire to succeed in their chosen professions. Faculty in CTE programs assess these outcomes using standardized rubrics and mapped course-level assessments. Data collected through this process are used to evaluate student proficiency, inform instructional strategies, and ensure that programs remain responsive to workforce needs and industry expectations.

The general education curriculum at FSCC is designed to provide students with a broad foundation of knowledge and essential skills that transcend specific academic disciplines. Through a carefully integrated selection of courses across the humanities, sciences, mathematics, and social sciences, students develop core competencies in areas such as critical thinking, communication, and quantitative reasoning. All associate degrees at FSCC require some general education curriculum; however, general education assessment is integrated into Associate in Science, Associate in Arts, and Associate in General Studies degrees. Initially, FSCC identified seven general education outcomes. Following a comprehensive review process, these outcomes were revised and consolidated into four core competencies to enhance clarity, align with institutional goals, and improve measurability:

- Mathematical Skills: Students will employ scientific and mathematical principles within the program disciplines.

- Communication Skills: Students will demonstrate effective communication skills.

- Technology Skills: Students will demonstrate effective use of technology.

- Critical Thinking Skills: Students will apply critical thinking skills to evaluate possible resolutions to a given scenario.

General Education Assessment Approach

Fort Scott Community College employs a multiple-measures approach to assess and evaluate student learning across its four general education learning outcomes: communication, critical thinking, mathematical skills, and technology skills. To ensure consistency, reliability, and continuous improvement, FSCC collects both standardized and course-embedded assessment data that allow for longitudinal and comparative analysis.

Capstone Course: Student learning in mathematical and critical thinking skills is assessed through the ETS Proficiency Profile exam, integrated into the Capstone course and course-embedded assessments. This one-credit-hour course is taken by students pursuing AA, AS, and AGS degrees in their final semester, after completing at least 45 credit hours. The Capstone course serves as a culminating academic experience that allows students to demonstrate cumulative learning across disciplines. Approximately 200 students complete

the Capstone course annually. Communication and technology skills are assessed through Capstone assignments and rubric-based course-embedded assessments administered across general education courses. General Education assessment results are reviewed annually by the Assessment Committee, shared with faculty at department meetings and in-service, and included in the Annual Assessment Report to support institutional planning and instructional refinement.

Course Embedded Assessment Model: To strengthen its commitment to assessing general education outcomes in a consistent and valid manner, FSCC implemented a structured course-embedded assessment model beginning in Fall 2023. This initiative complemented the existing ETS Proficiency Profile and addressed the need for more authentic, representative, and program-integrated assessment data across FSCC's four general education learning outcomes: mathematical skills, communication skills, technology skills, and critical thinking skills. The course-embedded assessment process began with a comprehensive curriculum mapping, led by the Assessment Coordinator in collaboration with faculty from English, mathematics, science, computer science, and humanities departments. Faculty reviewed the syllabi and course-level learning outcomes (CLOs) to ensure alignment with the general education outcomes. This alignment process is documented in the Course-to-General Education Outcome Mapping Matrix , which serves as the foundation for identifying assessment points across the curriculum and ensures that general education competencies are embedded and assessed consistently throughout students' academic pathways. A list of key general education courses such as College Algebra, Quantitative Reasoning, Elementary Statistics, English Composition I & II, Introduction to Computers, Business, Micro and Macro Economics and Speech was finalized for assessment participation.

Faculty teaching these courses identify specific assignments that demonstrate student performance in the aligned outcome area. Faculty receive training through professional development sessions and one-on-one support from the Assessment Coordinator to promote consistency in rubric application and data entry. All scores are submitted via a centralized Blackboard Assessment Portal, where data is aggregated and disaggregated by course, instructor type, modality, and location. This comparative coursework model provides multiple assessment points throughout a student's academic journey, rather than relying solely on a single, high-stakes instrument like the ETS exam administered in the Capstone course.

Results and Analysis

Mathematical Skills: FSCC has assessed students' mathematical skills using the ETS Proficiency Profile for the past four years, with the exception of the 2019-2020 academic year due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The ETS Proficiency Profile provides nationally benchmarked performance data, drawing from a pool of over 600,000 students. This assessment allowed FSCC to evaluate both individual and cohort performance in mathematical skills. The Assessment Committee established a benchmark that FSCC students should perform within one standard deviation of the national mean. Students met this benchmark in AY 2021-22 , 2022-23 , and 2023-24 . However, despite these positive results, the committee recognized the need for a more comprehensive assessment model to better understand student learning and pinpoint specific areas for improvement.

In the initial implementation year 2023–24, benchmark performance was not achieved based on the coursework assessment data . However, it was determined that the data did not fully represent all student populations and modalities. In contrast, the assessment data collected for the 2024-25 academic year was more comprehensive and inclusive, capturing student performance across all delivery methods and instructional formats. After analyzing the Fall 2024 data, faculty noted that students successfully met the benchmark for mathematical skills. These results validated current instructional strategies. Moving forward, FSCC will maintain its existing instructional approach while continuing to monitor and analyze performance data to ensure sustained improvement in student learning outcomes.

Communication Skills: FSCC identified a capstone project in the Capstone course to assess communication skills in 2021-22 . The students completed a capstone project by writing a documented five-page paper on their career choice including a minimum of 3-5 sources in either an APA or MLA format. The project also included a budget requiring students to use technology skills requiring the use of Excel and Microsoft Word. Interrater reliability was established in 2022-23 by communication faculty independently assessing a sample (20%) of projects from the capstone course. The faculty discussed the results, noting acceptable interrater reliability among graders. In most cases, faculty rated student performance within 1 point of each other. Communication

faculty assessed the capstone project in 2023-24 and reviewed the results. They noted that 60.95% of the students assessed scored a 3 or a 4 on a 4-point rubric scale. They created a plan including making the interview component of the assignment mandatory, with clearer and more structured guidelines, could enhance student engagement and help them build meaningful career network connections. Additional faculty feedback recommended requiring students to submit a written reflection that cites their interviewee and connects the discussion to their intended career path. Further, requiring students to research the financial implications of their career by citing budgets and cost-of-living data from different geographic areas (with appropriate sources) could increase the assignment's relevance and motivate students to tailor their work to their personal goals.

Another area of concern was the quality and authenticity of student submissions. Several assignments appeared to be partially or fully generated by AI, which raised issues of academic integrity. The suggestion was to redesign an assignment with personalized, verifiable components such as conducting and reflecting on a real interview may help mitigate this issue. Even though the benchmark was met in fall 2024, the faculty discussed ongoing concerns related to student motivation and engagement with the Capstone course with the Assessment Committee. While the Capstone is intended to serve as a culminating assessment of communication and technology skills, many students fail to see the relevance of the assignment, which is reflected in underwhelming performance and low engagement. Although faculty are compensated for assessing Capstone projects, the current model contributes to unnecessary workload and stress, without yielding meaningful or reliable measures of student learning. In light of these challenges, the committee recommended exploring alternative methods of assessing general education outcomes. One proposed approach was to collect and analyze comparative coursework data by mapping relevant course learning outcomes, particularly from English and communication courses to each of the general education outcomes. This allowed the institution to gather multiple data points across the curriculum rather than relying on a single high-stakes assessment. With the assistance of the faculty, the assessment coordinator was able to align the relevant course learning outcomes to communication skills. The results from the Capstone course and comparative course data is shared with the Assessment Committee and posted in Blackboard and on the assessment page.

Additionally, the Capstone course has, in some cases, created an unintended barrier to graduation. Students who have successfully completed all general education coursework have sometimes been unable to graduate due to failing Capstone. Moreover, if these students transfer to another institution, they are often unable to find an equivalent course, resulting in a permanently lowered GPA. With the implementation of the general education framework and adoption of systemwide associate degrees, Fort Scott Community College is actively revising degree maps to incorporate systemwide transfer courses. This strategic effort is intended to maximize student benefit by ensuring seamless transferability of credits to four-year institutions within the state's higher education system.

By aligning degree pathways with statewide transfer agreements and general education competencies, FSCC is working towards enhancing academic continuity for students pursuing baccalaureate degrees, reducing redundancy in coursework, and supporting timely degree completion. These revisions reflect FSCC's commitment to student success and responsiveness to statewide initiatives aimed at improving articulation and transfer efficiency.

Technology skills: This general education outcome is assessed in the Capstone course. Faculty teaching the course utilize a common rubric to assess this outcome. The faculty teaching the course were provided training on utilizing the rubric. They submit the data in Blackboard and the assessment coordinator generates reports. The college started collecting data on technology skills in 2021 in the Capstone course and continue to do so. In 2023, to gather course work data, the courses where the technology skills are practiced were identified and aligned to the technology skill. The technology skills general education outcome has consistently met or exceeded benchmarks through both capstone and coursework assessment methods. Capstone assessment data is drawn from multiple assignments within a single culminating course, while comparative coursework data comes from six general education courses with multiple embedded assessment points across different instructors and delivery modalities. This dual approach strengthens the validity of FSCC's assessment process by confirming that students are consistently demonstrating technological proficiency across different contexts. Additionally, the multiple data points from coursework assessments allow for a deeper understanding of when and where students encounter challenges, informing targeted instructional strategies and supporting continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

Critical Thinking Skills: FSCC has assessed students' critical thinking skills using the ETS Proficiency Profile over the past four academic years, with the exception of AY 2019-20 due to COVID-19-related disruptions. The ETS Proficiency Profile provides nationally normed data and allows for cohort and individual student comparisons against a large sample of similar institutions. To evaluate student performance, the Assessment Committee established a benchmark indicating that student scores should fall within one standard deviation of the national mean. While FSCC students did not meet the benchmark for critical thinking in AY 2021-22 , performance improved in subsequent years, with the benchmark achieved in AY 2022-23 and 2023-24 . Although the ETS exam continues to offer valuable longitudinal and comparative data, the Assessment Committee recommended supplementing it with course-embedded assessments to gain a more comprehensive understanding of student learning and to better identify areas for targeted instructional improvement.

In Fall 2023, the Assessment Coordinator led a mapping initiative aligning relevant course-level learning outcomes from disciplines such as mathematics, English, and science to the general education outcome for critical thinking. Faculty teaching aligned courses identified embedded assignments that could validly assess students' critical thinking skills. Initial course-embedded assessment results from AY 2023-24 indicated that 69% of students met the critical thinking benchmark, a result that narrowly missed the institutional threshold. The Assessment Committee and faculty noted that this initial data set did not yet represent all instructional modalities, including courses taught by adjunct and concurrent instructors. By Fall 2024, FSCC expanded data collection to include all delivery formats and instructional locations, resulting in a more inclusive and representative dataset. This broader assessment scope significantly enhanced the College's capacity to triangulate findings from standardized and embedded assessments, identify performance gaps among subpopulations, and inform evidence-based curricular and instructional improvements.

Moving forward, FSCC will maintain its current instructional strategies while continuing to refine its embedded assessment practices. Faculty will collaborate to identify additional assignments and courses that authentically measure critical thinking skills, thereby supporting the institution's commitment to continuous improvement, accountability, and the development of transferable intellectual skills across the curriculum.

3. Institution Learning Outcomes

As part of Fort Scott Community College's comprehensive approach to assessment, the Institutional Subcommittee, a working group under the Assessment Committee was established in Fall 2021 to lead efforts in institutional-level assessment. The subcommittee was charged with developing and implementing a structured assessment plan that includes identifying institutional learning outcomes, collecting and analyzing data, publishing results, and recommending improvements to the Assessment Committee. The subcommittee established institutional learning outcomes to reflect the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes that students are expected to acquire as a result of their overall educational experience at FSCC. These outcomes represent a broad range of competencies that are relevant across all academic and technical programs whether students are pursuing a certificate, a transfer degree, or an associate degree. The subcommittee identified two institutional learning outcomes that align with FSCC's mission, ensuring that the institution's educational goals are realized consistently and equitably for all learners.

- Academic Success: Students will be in good standing by meeting institutional expectations and making academic progress towards earning their credentials.

- Social Responsibility: Prepare students for civic and community engagement, including social and cultural awareness, inclusion, and citizenship for the betterment of the community.

To support meaningful evaluation of institutional learning outcomes, the Institutional Subcommittee defined specific performance measures and established benchmarks for each outcome. In assessing Academic Success, the subcommittee identified a range of quantitative indicators, including completion and retention rates, successful course completion metrics, financial aid probation status and institutional grade point averages (GPA). Data collection for Academic Success began in the academic year 2021 . While the benchmark for fall-to-fall retention was not met between Fall 2021 and Fall 2022 as evidenced in AY 2022 report. The benchmark was achieved in the following cycle from Fall 2022 to Fall 2023 and reported in AY 2023 , signaling progress in this critical area. Even though the benchmark was met, FSCC created the Strategic Enrollment Committee in Fall 2023 to improve student retention and completion. This cross-functional group has met consistently and identified key indicators, developed actionable goals and tied to measurable outcomes as part

of the <u>Strategic Enrollment Management</u> . Key strategies include:

- Expanding certificate pathways, including the launch of two new certificates in John Deere Technology and Heavy Equipment Operations

- Enhancing mental health support through the presence of a campus-based mental health intern, which has now expanded to include both a therapist and an intern

- Strengthening student engagement by increasing the number of <u>campus activities</u> , which has led to greater student participation and enhanced sense of belonging

- Administering student <u>satisfaction surveys</u> to collect feedback and assess student needs and campus climate

These initiatives are directly aligned with institutional goals to foster student success and holistic development. The positive impact of these strategies has been reflected in student survey results, which demonstrate increased satisfaction and engagement.

The institutional learning outcome of Social Responsibility was strategically selected to empower students to become engaged citizens and to reinforce Fort Scott Community College's core values of integrity and respect, diversity and inclusion, stewardship, and personal growth and success. This outcome supports the broader mission of FSCC by preparing students for responsible participation in their communities and society at large. Social responsibility is assessed through different measures of student involvement in cultural, civic, and community-based activities including engaging in community service, cultural awareness events, and finally a student survey. FSCC is intentional in creating and promoting opportunities that foster awareness of diverse cultures and community needs. Below are some of the key initiatives that FSCC adopted over the last few years to support community service and cultural awareness.

- Gordon Parks Museum Integration: Located on the FSCC campus, the Gordon Parks Museum is an essential resource for promoting cultural awareness. Its programming is integrated into the First-Year Experience curriculum. Each October, the museum organizes a week-long series of events as evidenced in the <u>21st</u> and <u>22nd</u> Annual Gordon Parks Celebration schedule, highlighting the life and legacy of Gordon Parks, fostering engagement with themes of social justice, art, and cultural heritage. Faculty actively support these efforts by taking their classes to these events to deepen student understanding of diversity and history.

- Community Service Requirement: As part of the FYE program, all incoming students are required to engage in community service by completing the <u>Community Engagement assignment</u> , reinforcing the importance of civic engagement from the beginning of their college experience.

- Athletic and Programmatic Volunteerism: FSCC's athletic teams routinely volunteer across the community. More than 90 athletes are involved and the activities include reading to elementary school students, assisting with local chamber events, helping local churches, public library, local charities, and supporting other community-based initiatives. The teams keep track of all the <u>activities</u> they participated in and share with the Athletic director Which is then shared with the Executive team and the Board of Trustees.

- Health Sciences Engagement: Nursing students contribute by volunteering at local events such as the Kids' Fair, where they offer a "Teddy Bear Clinic," and participate in fundraising for Care to Share, a local nonprofit supporting individuals undergoing cancer treatment.

- Course Assignments: Faculty provide assignments and activities related to cultural awareness in their courses which enhance cultural competence and empower students to become more engaged, informed, and compassionate citizens. In AY 2022-23, 41 activities were offered at least 14 different courses and <u>30 activities</u> were offered in AY 2023-24. For example, the theater department provides students with critical opportunities to explore historical and contemporary issues of race, identity, and discrimination

through a combination of classroom discussions, multimedia content, and live performances. In Theater Appreciation classes, students engaged in discussions about the role of African-American slaves in America's fight for independence, following a screening of a medley from the musical Hamilton. These discussions provided historical context and encouraged reflection on the contributions of Black Americans to the nation's founding. They watched videos of performances from Rent and a global rendition of Lean on Me were screened to showcase how artists from all backgrounds collaborate to create powerful, unifying works. In addition, students viewed a documentary about Paul Robeson, considered America's first true Black superstar. His groundbreaking roles in film and theater, as well as his advocacy for civil rights, were discussed. Moreover, extra credit was offered to students who identified Black theater pioneers featured in the college's Black History Month display. The final project in the theater appreciation class involves a presentation on personal experiences with racism and discrimination that is an open event for all students and was attended by a section of English 101 students. The theater department produced Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest with cross-gender casting, continuing a tradition that celebrates diversity and challenges conventional gender roles in theatrical performance and faculty, staff, and students were invited.

Students complete various assignments in the history courses that incorporate critical analysis to support learning outcomes related to communication, critical thinking, diversity, and civic responsibility. Students read Frederick Douglass's speech, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" and respond to guided questions in US History 101 classes. The assignment enhances students' historical empathy and critical thinking by analyzing rhetorical strategies and the speech's critique of American ideals in the context of slavery. They also read excerpts from Abraham Lincoln's writings on slavery and democracy and answer interpretive questions to promote understanding of democratic principles and the moral complexities of leadership during the Civil War era. US History 102 students read Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and Malcolm X's "The Ballot or the Bullet", then respond to analysis questions. They compare and contrast philosophies of civil disobedience and Black empowerment during the Civil Rights era. In addition, Students view video lectures on major Civil Rights events, then rank the top five most significant events, providing justifications for each choice. This supports critical thinking and evaluative reasoning, while helping students understand the broader impact of Civil Rights milestones. Students read Confederates in the Attic, watch video segments on Confederate monuments and symbols, and participate in a week-long discussion board in the online classes. They respond to specific prompts and engage with other students by replying to their posts.

These structured opportunities not only support the institutional outcome but also provide students with meaningful, real-world experiences that enhance their development as socially responsible citizens. Data related to student participation and engagement are collected and analyzed annually by the Institutional Subcommittee, and results are reported to the Assessment Committee and published on the college's assessment webpage to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.

Data for Academic Success was collected and analyzed during the 2021 academic year. Data collection for Social Responsibility began in 2022, with full implementation across all identified measures completed in 2023. The subcommittee has committed to annual reporting, and the resulting reports for AY2021-22 , 2022-23 , 2023-24 are published on the college's public-facing assessment webpage, reinforcing FSCC's dedication to transparency and continuous improvement.

4. Co-Curricular Assessment:

"The FSCC co-curricular experience is learning that supports the academic curriculum. The experience includes but is not limited to involvement in activities, programs, and/or engagement in service learning through mutually supportive relationships of the college and community."

Co-curricular experiences at FSCC provide structured learning opportunities that occur outside the traditional academic curriculum yet complement and enhance student learning. These experiences are intentionally designed to support students' intellectual, personal, and professional development through active engagement. FSCC students have access to a wide range of co-curricular activities offered by various departments across

campus. FSCC's co-curricular programs are guided by three overarching objectives: Academic Support, Campus and Community Engagement, and Personal Growth and Leadership. FSCC has selected five co-curricular programs: PTK, Library, TRIO, Advising, and the Student Success Center. Each program identifies student-centered outcomes designed to provide meaningful educational experiences supporting both academic achievement and holistic development.

Students achieve personal and professional goals, develop leadership skills, engage in community service and fellowship for scholars, and achieve academic excellence by being members of PTK. The learning outcomes for Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) are assessed through a combination of participation tracking, event evaluations, and achievement benchmarks which is then compiled in a report. To evaluate students' progress toward personal and professional goals related to academic achievement, the college monitors GPA requirements and academic honors among PTK members. Leadership development is assessed by tracking completion of the 5-Star Chapter Plan, which outlines milestones in areas such as officer training, chapter engagement, and honors in action projects. Community service engagement is documented through logs of service hours, event participation records. Fellowship and academic engagement are measured through student involvement in PTK events, as well as promoting a culture of excellence.

The library plays a vital role in supporting student success and advancing student learning goals through co-curricular programming and services. Library has measurable student learning outcomes that guide instruction, and resource development, and form the basis for assessment and continuous improvement. The Director of Library Services provides one-shot lessons to English, Speech, First-Year Experience courses specifically on academic integrity and library usage.

Assessment methods include post-instruction surveys, usage data, and library assessment surveys . These results are reviewed annually to guide improvements in instruction, collection development, and support services. Through this process, the library continues to ensure that students and faculty have equitable access to the information and tools necessary for academic and professional success.

Advising serves as an essential touchpoint where students receive guidance on academic planning, degree requirements, transfer pathways, and institutional policies. Advisors visit all First Year Experience (FYE) courses every semester and gain a better understanding of college expectations and are connected to critical campus resources that promote persistence and achievement. Every student is required to complete the degree audit assignment embedded in the FYE course. As part of FSCC's holistic assessment approach, advising is evaluated on outcomes such as students' understanding of academic standards, use of campus resources, and progress toward graduation or transfer. By empowering students with knowledge and support, the advising program reinforces the college's commitment to academic support, personal development, and student-centered success. Advising evaluates students' understanding of degree requirements and academic planning through advising surveys results , leading to improvements in advising resources and communication strategies.

TRIO program focuses on evaluating how effectively the program supports first-generation students, low-income students, and students with disabilities in achieving academic success, persistence, and degree completion. As a co-curricular program, TRIO emphasizes both personal development and academic achievement. Students participating in TRIO are expected to develop strategies for personal growth and leadership, as well as implement strategies for degree attainment. To assess personal growth and leadership, the program tracks student participation in leadership workshops, mentoring programs, and campus engagement activities. Workshops and activities are followed by surveys that provide insight into student experiences and result in continuous improvement of services. The degree attainment rates are evaluated using graduation, graduation or transfer rates, and tracking satisfactory academic progress policy. To evaluate academic progress and degree attainment, TRIO staff monitor key performance indicators such as graduation and transfer rates, course completion, and adherence to Satisfactory Academic Progress standards.

The Student Success Center (SSC) assesses its co-curricular outcomes through service usage data, satisfaction surveys, and outcome-based reporting. To evaluate the effectiveness of free tutoring services, the SSC tracks student usage logs and subjects tutored. Additionally, students who utilize tutoring complete feedback surveys to assess perceived impact and satisfaction. Testing services are assessed by recording the number of tests administered, types of exams offered (e.g., placement, accommodation-based, or certification), and ensuring compliance with proctoring standards. Community services are evaluated through outreach activity logs and

feedback from community partners, including the number of individuals served and the types of services rendered. Each of these programs submits annual assessment reports (AY 21-22 , AY22-23 , AY23-24 , AY24-25) using standardized templates, analyzed results with support from the Co-Curricular Subcommittee, and developed action plans to enhance program impact and alignment with institutional learning outcomes. The results are reviewed annually and included in the Co-Curricular Assessment Reports submitted to the Assessment Committee.

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3.F. Program Review

The institution improves its curriculum based on periodic program review.

Argument

The institution improves its curriculum based on periodic program review.

FSCC had revised its program review document in 2019 based on the need for a more streamlined and functional approach. This revision was based on faculty feedback and aimed to make the process more operationally effective and aligned with institutional planning. Although programs were submitting the document to the instruction office, they were not as robust and sometimes lacked critical information like fully developed action plans. These incomplete submissions required additional follow-up and delayed the integration of program findings into institutional planning. In response, FSCC enhanced the infrastructure supporting program review in 2024 by creating a part-time Institutional Effectiveness Support position. This role was designed to work closely with the Vice President of Academic Affairs to provide ongoing guidance, technical assistance, and quality control throughout the program review cycle. Furthermore, the document was updated that requires each program to conduct a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) and develop a corresponding action plan based on identified findings. The inclusion of a detailed checklist at the end of the template enables departments and reviewers to confirm that all core components such as mission alignment, curriculum mapping, assessment summaries, SWOT analysis, and action planning have been thoroughly addressed. These revisions not only promote consistency and completeness but also build a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

Fort Scott Community College maintains a clearly defined and structured program review timeline that applies to all academic and career and technical education (CTE) programs. Program reviews are conducted on a three- to five-year rotating cycle using a standardized review template , ensuring consistency and comparability across departments. At the beginning of each academic year, the Instruction Office distributes the program review template to department heads with programs scheduled for review, based on the schedule . Faculty within each department collaboratively complete the review, and the completed program review document is submitted to the Instruction Office by the end of the calendar year.

A designated full-time faculty member serves as the Institutional Effectiveness Support, facilitating the program review process in close collaboration with the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Institutional Effectiveness Support ensures that reviews are completed on schedule and aligned with institutional goals and standards of academic quality. Once submitted, all program reviews are reviewed by the Academic Affairs Committee, which provides structured feedback and actionable recommendations. This feedback is returned to the originating departments for revision and refinement as needed. The final findings and recommendations from program reviews inform decision-making in several key areas, including curriculum updates, resource allocation, staffing decisions, program expansion, and, when appropriate, program discontinuation. A summary of each program review including key findings and the resulting action plan is presented to the Board of Trustees during monthly meetings . To ensure transparency and institutional accountability, FSCC publishes program reviews results each academic year on the college webpage, which includes findings, action steps, and status updates for every program under review.

The program review process ensures that each program aligns with the institution's mission, core values, and strategic goals. This process provides programs an opportunity to articulate how their specific goals and measurable objectives contribute to broader institutional priorities such as student success, workforce development, and community engagement while explicitly connecting their work to key targets in the strategic plan, such as improving credential completion rates or expanding regional partnerships. Each program evaluates its relevance and demand using enrollment data, labor market trends, and input from advisory boards for CTE programs; for example, the decision to revise or discontinue a program is often driven by shifting

regional workforce needs and employer feedback.

When revisions occur based on program review, faculty clearly outline changes in curriculum structure, competencies, or delivery modalities. Program content is kept current through review of Kansas Core Outcomes, collaboration with industry stakeholders, and consistent updates to course materials. Academic rigor and content consistency are ensured across all locations and modalities through common syllabi and assessment rubrics. Programs report enrollment, grade distribution, and faculty assignment data, including distinctions between full-time, adjunct, and concurrent instructors. Assessment is central to the review process, with each program listing its outcomes, mapping course to program learning outcomes, and providing detailed findings from both course level and program level assessments. This includes longitudinal data on benchmark attainment and action plans developed to close the assessment loop. CTE programs also provide information on student majors, concentrators, and graduates, as well as third-party accreditations where applicable. Programs document any resource needs such as new equipment, facility upgrades, or additional support staff to ensure quality instruction. This data-rich and reflective process concludes with a SWOT analysis, which guides the development of future plans and action items focused on enhancing strengths, addressing weaknesses, seizing opportunities, and mitigating external threats. Program reviews from all departments, covering academic years 2020 , 2021 , 2022 , 2023 , 2024 , and 2025 , are included as supporting evidence of this comprehensive and strategic approach to continuous improvement.

FSCC uses its program review process as a driver of continuous improvement across academic and career and technical education (CTE) programs. To strengthen this process, a rubric was recently developed to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of program reviews, with particular emphasis on the integration of assessment data into program evaluation and strategic planning. The program review process has had a demonstrable impact on curriculum development, resource allocation, instructional quality, and student learning outcomes. Examples of meaningful changes that have resulted directly from program reviews include:

Assessment data from 2022-23 and course performance trends for the John Deere program indicated that students in the Agriculture Hydraulics course were not consistently achieving semester grades of 80% or higher, and a significant number of students were not passing the hydraulic certification exam on their first attempt. In addition, student performance on diagnostic tasks related to hydraulic systems has not met established program expectations. To address these concerns, the instructors a targeted improvement plan . The course was revised to eliminate outdated content on older fuel systems and instead focus on high-pressure common rail and unit injector systems, which are the standard in modern engines. This shift aligned course content with current industry practices and certification requirements. Additionally, the curriculum placed greater emphasis on diagnostic competencies. Diagnostic instruction was expanded and integrated into the Equipment Diagnostics course, ensuring students gain the applied troubleshooting skills necessary for both certification and field readiness. In addition, the faculty implemented certain strategies in some courses to help students prepare for the high-stakes, John Deere certification tests. One instructor created a game-like strategy to facilitate student learning through creating Kahoot games to quiz students over important course information. The game-like atmosphere helped students relax as instructors quizzed students over important course information. They noted an improvement in student scores and the benchmark was met for 2023-24 . Faculty decided that they will create Kahoot games in more courses to help students focus and reduce test anxiety. These instructional changes aim to increase student success on certification exams, improve diagnostic proficiency, and ensure the curriculum remains aligned with evolving industry standards and student needs.

In the math department, assessment results revealed that students struggle with retention and comprehension of the material and underperforming on the tests. In response, faculty introduced additional practice before test dates. To support retention and comprehension, instructors also provided structured note outlines and developed supplemental worksheets that reinforced graphing concepts, helping students connect individual skills to broader applications. A test correction initiative was implemented on the graphing chapter test, requiring students to not only redo missed problems but also reflect in a written paragraph on their misunderstanding or memorization strategy. In addition, instructional strategies will be enhanced through improved notes and the possible inclusion of supplemental video tutorials.

In addition, the department is working to phase out developmental education courses by Fall 2026. To support this transition and align with state goals, all department faculty successfully completed the Math Pathways Professional Development Series offered by KBOR, concluding in January 2025. These trainings informed

course redesigns, revised placement policy, and curriculum development to better serve students within the new placement and pathway models. The math faculty created a <u>math pathway infographic</u> and efforts are underway to develop a Math Pathways Marketing Video aimed at improving student awareness and understanding of their options under the new curriculum structure. In addition, faculty are building supplemental lab courses to support gateway math courses, including College Algebra, Elementary Statistics, and Quantitative Reasoning. These labs are designed to provide support and increase student success in college-level math. The department is also collaborating closely with Student Services to ensure that course offerings align with student needs and degree requirements. This includes offering Math Pathways courses in multiple modalities, including online during the fall and spring terms. Summer and winter intersession offerings are reviewed and adjusted annually based on enrollment trends to ensure sustainability and student access.

The Music Department at FSCC has experienced significant faculty turnover in recent years, which contributed to a sharp decline in enrollment. In response, the department has launched a proactive recruitment strategy focused on community engagement and outreach. This includes supporting local schools by participating in football and basketball games, hosting open houses and campus tours, and inviting area students to perform with the FSCC Pep Band during Mass Band Days. These initiatives have proven effective, as prospective students often express strong interest in the program once they witness its energy and growth. Recognizing a local gap in post-secondary music education, particularly in commercial music and musical theatre, the department is working to fill this niche. A <u>detailed action plan</u> has been developed, outlining immediate needs and long-term goals over the next 2-3 years. A major milestone in this plan was the recent hiring of a Choir Director, a strategic move aimed at expanding course offerings, increasing enrollment, and enhancing the overall quality and visibility of the program.

The <u>Cosmetology</u> program at FSCC continues to demonstrate excellence in student outcomes and innovative program development. Since April 2024, the program has maintained an outstanding 98% licensure pass rate, reflecting both the strength of the curriculum and the effectiveness of faculty instruction. In addition to licensure success, job placement rates remain strong. Students are actively supported in their transition to the workforce through instructor-led guidance in job searching, self-promotion, and leveraging social media for professional branding.

In a key program enhancement, FSCC launched a High School Manicuring course designed to create a more direct and impactful pathway for high school students entering the field. The revamped program now offers 150 creditable hours toward Cosmetology licensure, a significant improvement from the previous 80-hour model. This change not only strengthens the pipeline into the Cosmetology program but also ensures that students are better prepared and more competitive in the job market. These initiatives collectively support FSCC's mission to provide quality, career-focused education that responds to both student and industry needs.

To ensure transparency and institutional accountability, FSCC publishes the comprehensive program review results each academic year, which includes findings, action steps, and status updates for every program under review on the <u>program review webpage</u> . Additionally, program review findings are closely linked with student learning assessment results. The Assessment Committee and Academic Affairs Committee regularly review outcomes data during the program review process, ensuring that data on student learning informs curriculum and instructional changes. By integrating assessment into program review, FSCC ensures that both processes work together to advance academic quality and institutional effectiveness. This comprehensive, evidence-based approach enables FSCC to remain responsive to student needs, workforce trends, and institutional priorities demonstrating a clear commitment to continuous improvement.

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3.G. Student Success Outcomes

The institution's student success outcomes demonstrate continuous improvement, taking into account the student populations it serves and benchmarks that reference peer institutions.

Argument

The institution's student success outcomes demonstrate continuous improvement, taking into account the student populations it serves and benchmarks that reference peer institutions.

Fort Scott Community College (FSCC) has made significant strides in monitoring, evaluating, and improving student success outcomes by implementing a holistic assessment plan that takes into account the diverse student populations it serves. The College's commitment to continuous improvement is evidenced by the college wide focus on retention, completion, and transfer, as well as by its targeted interventions and comparison to national and regional benchmarks.

Fort Scott Community College (FSCC) systematically collects, analyzes, and uses data to evaluate institutional effectiveness and drive continuous improvement in student success. Data is regularly submitted to IPEDS, the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP), the Kansas Board of Regents (via KHEStats and KSPSD), and the National Student Clearinghouse. Much of this data feeds into public-facing platforms such as the College Navigator, while FSCC also uses these results internally to produce an annual Assessment Report with focused sub-reports for each outcome area.

Over the past three academic years, FSCC has observed a steady upward trend in student course success rates . In general education programs, course pass rates increased from 84% in Fall 2022, to 85% in Fall 2023, and reached 86% in Fall 2024. Career and technical education (CTE) programs demonstrated even stronger growth, with success rates increasing from 88% in Fall 2022 to 90% in Fall 2023, and 92% in Fall 2024. This positive trajectory is directly correlated with expanded efforts in data collection, assessment, and targeted instructional interventions.

Retention and graduation data collected through IPEDS also demonstrate continuous improvement. Full-time retention rates increased from 49% in Fall 2022 to 61% in Fall 2023, exceeding the peer comparison median of 57%. The decline in Fall 2022 can be attributed to lingering regional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the discontinuation of the football program. Graduation rates (calculated at 150% of normal time) improved from 27% in Fall 2022 to 37% in Fall 2023 and 34% in Fall 2024, aligning closely with the peer median of 34%. Transfer-out rates followed an inverse pattern, reflecting the trade-off between graduation and transfer-out rates: 31% in Fall 2022, 22% in Fall 2023, and 29% in Fall 2024, with the most recent data exceeding the peer comparison median of 27%.

FSCC's Career and Technical Education programs also reflect strong student engagement and workforce outcomes. The number of CTE concentrators students earning 12 or more credit hours in a CTE program increased from 573 in AY 2022 to 621 in AY 2023, and showed a decline with 591 concentrators in AY 2024. Of these, industry-recognized credential attainment totaled 311 in AY 2022, 263 in AY 2023, and 361 in AY 2024. Across the 2022–2024 period, 639 CTE concentrators reported employment in related fields, reflecting successful program alignment with workforce demands. FSCC continues to use this data to inform Business and Industry partnerships, guide program development, and ensure curriculum remains responsive to employer needs.

FSCC is committed to promoting data driven decisions that emphasize timely degree completion and actively working towards removing barriers by tracking student progress to improve student success. The college has taken various initiatives that have impacted student success and completion:

- A centralized advising model provides consistent, coordinated advising services across campus. All institutional advisors are accessible in a single location, supporting consistent advising practices.

- FSCC has established several <u>degree maps</u> (transfer pathways), allowing for multiple options for students continuing their education at a four-year institution.

- FSCC has established articulation agreements with the four-year institutions for easy transferability of our students.

- FSCC implemented a multiple measures <u>placement policy</u> to more accurately place students into appropriate courses and introduced Quantitative Reasoning and Elementary Statistics as part of its three math pathway options.

- Institutional data indicated that students who enrolled late (in the second week of the term) experienced lower success rates. In response, FSCC shortened the enrollment period to one week to improve student success and course completion rates. In addition, FSCC created a student <u>billing flyer</u> to send to students to encourage making payment plans and be able to enroll in the next semester in a timely manner.

- FSCC established a cross-functional Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Committee, with representation from student services, faculty, advising, instruction, and the registrar's office. The committee has created a detailed <u>strategic enrollment plan</u> that includes providing resources to improve completion rates and develops strategies focused on enrollment growth, persistence, and student completion.

- The faculty identified a recurring barrier to student success in math and science courses: students were frequently delayed in accessing required digital course materials, particularly lab access codes, due to availability issues through the bookstore. These delays negatively impacted early course engagement and academic performance. In response, the Math and Science departments collaborated with McGraw Hill to establish an <u>agreement</u> that ensures immediate digital access to textbooks and lab materials on the first day of class. This inclusive access model allows students to begin coursework without interruption, thereby promoting early engagement, equity, and improved academic outcomes.

- FSCC has taken significant steps to improve student success in gateway English and mathematics courses through the implementation of a co-requisite support model. Beginning in 2019, FSCC adopted this model for students who initially placed into developmental English, allowing them to enroll simultaneously in a college-level and a corresponding support course. The co-requisite approach has proven particularly effective in English 101, where FSCC observed a notable increase in student completion rates and overall course success. Building on this success, FSCC recently expanded the model to math by launching three gateway math courses Quantitative Reasoning, Elementary Statistics, and College Algebra aligned with students' academic pathways and intended majors. Each of these gateway courses now includes a co-requisite support option, ensuring that students enroll in the most appropriate and relevant college-level math course while still receiving the academic support needed to succeed. With this change, the college is hoping to see an increase in the number of students completing college level math courses.

Student success is expected to improve further when FSCC implements the Jenzabar One student information system in July 2025. This system will expand and enhance the tools that staff and faculty use to engage with students and provide deeper insight into the student experience at FSCC. Jenzabar's CRM and student portal (JICS) will be rolled out alongside Jenzabar One, offering more robust features for students to develop academic plans, manage financial aid, and coordinate with accounts receivable. In addition, the College will implement Jenzabar's Analytics module by 2026, which will provide comprehensive, intuitive reports on program effectiveness, cost-benefit analyses, and student success metrics.

FSCC remains committed to disaggregating student success data, identifying equity gaps, and implementing data-informed strategies to foster academic achievement for all student populations. Innovation, accountability,

and continuous improvement remain at the forefront of FSCC's student success mission.

Sources

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Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The rigor and quality of each educational program is consistent regardless of modality, location or other differentiating factors.

Argument

Fort Scott Community College (FSCC) delivers quality higher education programming, wherever and however its offerings are delivered. Faculty with professional expertise in their identified disciplines utilize best practices of their professions, accreditation, and organizational standards, and policies of the college to maintain appropriate standards in all coursework. FSCC ensures faculty have training and staff assistance in maintaining this same standard of quality in all courses regardless of delivery method, ensuring equal student preparation for all college students. Beginning at entry-level, undergraduate programming, FSCC subscribes to valid and reliable pedagogical frameworks to achieve expected student growth. Student outcomes are clear for each program, and align with the expected abilities of students attaining these same credentials in other institutions of higher learning (as identified by professional accrediting groups). Faculty at the college are all appropriately qualified for their teaching assignments, and although FSCC does work to support faculty scholarship within disciplines, the college continues to look for ways to expand the existing professional development opportunities for both faculty and staff.

Instructors maintain personal relationships with students, and are available to students throughout the week; most of the time beyond the office hours required by the college. FSCC faculty and staff continue to provide concierge-style services for student admission and advisement throughout students' tenure at the college. In addition, the college continues to work to build remediation into coursework, and provide additional support services through things like academic tutoring and social navigation via first generation student group programming. Academic programming at FSCC intrinsically includes opportunities for co-curricular assignments; however, as faculty grow in their understanding of disciplines and higher education pedagogy these opportunities will continue to expand.

FSCC demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its programs, a commitment to educational achievement through assessment of student learning, and dedication to continuous improvement with an organizational focus on student retention, persistence, and completion. The institution's pledge to offer quality programming is upheld through a systematic process of regular program review that engages all constituent groups. Assessment of student learning occurs at the course, program, and institutional level as part of a multi-tiered, cross-functional effort to evaluate learning outcomes and drive curriculum development. Outcome assessment processes and methodologies follow best practices and involve substantial faculty participation.

The college has developed a robust strategy for improving student retention, persistence, and completion that involves every layer of the student experience. This strategy has

provided a clear path to the attainment of ambitious and realistic goals for student completion, and is evident in the reports generated. Institutional efforts regarding program quality, assessment, and student completion are made available to constituents via the departmental annual reports and assessment summaries. This information is strongly considered in the organizational planning process, and programmatic decisions are made after a thorough analysis of program review data with the intent of enhancing the student value proposition.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Sustainability: Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, policies, procedures and planning enable it to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational programs, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

4.A Effective Administrative Structures

The institution's administrative structures are effective and facilitate collaborative processes such as shared governance; data-informed decision making; and engagement with internal and external constituencies as appropriate.

Argument

Fort Scott Community College (FSCC) maintains and continuously strengthens administrative structures that are effective, transparent, and designed to support the institution's mission. Through intentional shared governance, collaborative planning, and the use of data-informed decision-making, FSCC's leadership engages internal and external constituencies to advance educational quality and institutional sustainability.

FSCC demonstrates a longstanding commitment to shared governance that empowers faculty, staff, students, and the governing board to participate meaningfully in institutional decision-making. The Board of Trustees, as the elected representative body for Bourbon County, Kansas, meets monthly in compliance with the Kansas Open Meetings Act. Agendas, minutes , and supporting documentation are posted in advance to promote transparency and public accountability. Typical agendas include minutes from previous meetings, reports on academic and operational areas, personnel recommendations, financial updates , purchasing proposals and presentations by faculty, staff, or students.

These presentations, along with post board sessions with faculty and staff, ensure that employees remain informed and have opportunities to provide feedback. The conversation meetings are open to employees and board members are available through Zoom for off-campus faculty and staff to attend. Additionally, the President distributes weekly updates to the Board to sustain engagement and ensure alignment on key priorities. This practice has evolved into comprehensive reports prepared by the President's Executive Team to support evidence-based governance.

Internal shared governance is further structured through multiple standing committees, as well as faculty and staff in-service including:

- Academic Affairs Committee

- Curriculum Committee

- <u>Assessment Committee</u>

- <u>Retention, Persistence, and Completion Committee</u>

- Faculty Collective Bargaining Unit (FSCAPE)

These groups meet regularly to deliberate on academic requirements, policies, and institutional processes. Their recommendations inform executive decision-making and board action.

The College's executive leadership team, known as the Executive Team, <u>meets multiple times</u> per week to discuss institutional needs, budget planning, personnel matters, and strategic initiatives. Membership includes the President, Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Finance and Operations, Vice President of Student Affairs, Chief of Staff, Athletic Director, Foundation Director along with the Director of Human Resources.

In addition to the Executive Team, the President will convene meetings bi-weekly to share information with his <u>Cabinet</u> , which consist of directors, supervisors from different departments on campus, and a faculty representative. These structures allow broad cross-functional collaboration and align operations with the institution's strategic priorities.

As part of FSCC's commitment to responsiveness, the administration holds <u>inservice meetings</u> at the start of each semester to update employees, provide professional development, and convene committees. Topics routinely include compliance training (Title IX, VAWA, FERPA), technology updates, financial condition and strategic plan progress.

FSCC systematically integrates data into planning and decision-making processes. The Office of Institutional Research plays a central role in extracting, validating, and disseminating key data to inform enrollment management, academic program review, budgeting, and assessment.

Examples of data-informed initiatives include:

- <u>Enrollment Reporting</u> : Twenty-day headcount and credit hour reports are analyzed to project budget scenarios and inform strategic enrollment planning.

- <u>Retention and Completion</u> : The Retention Committee was reinstated to monitor DFW (drop, fail, withdraw) rates, leading to targeted student success interventions.

- <u>Assessment and Improvement</u> (<u>2023</u> , <u>2024</u> , <u>2025</u>):Data derived from assessment activities guide curricular enhancements and resource allocations.

- <u>Grants and External Funding</u> : Institutional data are used to document community and student needs, strengthening competitive grant proposals.

FSCC maintains robust engagement with community partners, advisory boards, and transfer institutions. Faculty participate in the <u>Kansas Core Outcome Group (KCOG)</u> to align transfer course standards statewide. Additionally, the College hosts <u>advisory councils</u> for career and technical programs, ensuring curriculum reflects workforce needs.

FSCC's partnerships with local school districts, employers, and regional universities demonstrate the institution's commitment to regional economic development and student

opportunity. Recent examples include the expansion of the <u>John Deere Technician Program</u>
.

The College regularly reviews administrative structures and governance practices to adapt to changing circumstances. As part of strategic planning, leadership evaluates whether processes remain effective and inclusive. For example, the <u>negotiated agreement</u> is a collaborative effort between the Board of Trustees, the faculty governing body of FSCAPE and the administration. The negotiation team is comprised of the President, Vice President of Finance and Operations, a Board of Trustees representative, and a minimum of three representatives from the faculty. It was agreed in 2016 by the faculty and administration to utilize interest-based bargaining (IBB) negotiations. <u>Negotiation sessions</u> have resulted in data driven decisions on salary increases and changes to retirement plans.

Through its effective <u>administrative structures</u> and commitment to using data for decision making, Fort Scott Community College demonstrates its capacity to fulfill its mission and respond to future opportunities and challenges. The institution values transparency, shared responsibility, and accountability as foundational elements of its culture.

Moving forward, FSCC will continue to refine its structures to promote participation, strengthen institutional effectiveness, and ensure all stakeholders—students, faculty, staff, and community members—have a voice in shaping the College's future.

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4.B Resource Base and Sustainability

The institution's financial and personnel resources effectively support its current operations. The institution's financial management balances short-term needs with long-term commitments and ensures its ongoing sustainability.

Argument

Fort Scott Community College (FSCC) maintains financial and personnel resources that effectively support current operations and position the institution for long-term sustainability. Through careful fiscal management, strategic planning, and continuous assessment, FSCC ensures that financial priorities align with the mission to deliver high-quality educational programs, support student success, and respond to future challenges.

FSCC has consistently demonstrated a stable financial position, as evidenced by annual independent audits 2024 , 2023 , and 2022 with unqualified opinions for over a decade. Recent audits confirm that the College remains in good standing and that fiscal operations comply with applicable accounting standards and legal requirements.

Net position increases and cash balances are examples of key indicators reflecting steady improvement in financial health over multiple fiscal years. Although the institution has faced statewide budget pressures and enrollment fluctuations consistent with national trends, FSCC's leadership has adopted conservative budgeting practices and diversified revenue sources to support operations.

Fiscal years 2021, 2022 and 2023 presented challenges due to budget overruns and overspending by the previous administration. With new leadership in place during 2024 and 2025, spending was significantly reduced to focus solely on needs-based requests, and stricter controls were introduced for all expenditures, for example, all expenditures must have approved requisitions.

A cash reserves policy was approved by the board in 2024; the policy requires transferring three percent of projected revenue monthly with a minimum fund balance of $300,000 annually. The savings account balance as of August 2024 is $409,000, after the first ten months since the policy was approved.

Fort Scott Community College's CFI scores remain mostly in the "Adequate" range indicating sufficient resources to maintain operations. A focus on improving operational efficiency and enhancing revenue streams (concentration on increased enrollment) will help drive financial stability and improvement to CFI scores. FSCC continues to monitor financial performance closely and implement proactive measures to strengthen reserves and operating margins.

The College continues to operate sites in Bourbon, Crawford, Linn and Miami counties, including the main campus, the Harley-Davidson training facility, the Paola site, the Pleasanton site and other specialized centers. These facilities are maintained through annual budgeting process including a capital improvement process informed by strategic planning and annual assessment. Significant progress has been made in addressing

longstanding infrastructure issues, such as roof repairs, HVAC replacements, window replacements, and exterior sealing.

The Information Technology (IT) department supports operations across all locations. FSCC implemented a multi-phase technology upgrade plan , funded in part by dedicated student fees and general fund allocations. Recent improvements include expanded wireless internet coverage, upgraded classroom technology, enhanced cybersecurity protocols, and a transition to the Jenzabar enterprise system.

FSCC employs 137 full-time staff, including 35 full-time faculty, and approximately 38 adjunct instructors each semester. All faculty meet or exceed the minimum teaching qualifications established by the Kansas Board of Regents and the Higher Learning Commission. Faculty qualifications are verified during the hiring process , with supporting documentation retained in personnel files.

The College also maintains a clear process for recruiting, hiring, and onboarding employees . Job descriptions are reviewed and updated before each search to ensure alignment with institutional needs and accreditation requirements. The onboarding process, strengthened in recent years by a cross-functional committee, provides structured support for new employees, including mentoring and training.

Professional development is prioritized through multiple funding streams, including the faculty negotiated agreement , and the board of trustee's commitment to the Faculty Development Fund , Bernita Hill Foundation funds, and Perkins grants. Staff and faculty participate regularly in discipline-specific conferences, technology training, and compliance workshops , which sustain the quality of academic programs and student services.

FSCC implemented a zero-based budgeting model in FY2018 to strengthen accountability and ensure alignment of resource allocations with institutional priorities. Currently, each department prepares annual budget requests which include both operating and capital requests, linking funding needs to strategic plan objectives. The requests are submitted to the Vice President of Finance and Operations and are incorporated into the college's draft budget.

The Executive Team—comprised of the President, Vice Presidents, Chief of Staff, Athletic Director, and Director of Human Resources—conducts a comprehensive budget review, examining revenue projections, expenditure trends, and emerging priorities. The Board of Trustees is engaged in the budget development process through workshops, public hearings, and formal adoption of the annual budget , in accordance with Kansas statutes.

The budget process also integrates public input, as community stakeholders are invited to provide feedback prior to final approval. Monthly departmental budget reports are prepared by the business office, reviewed by the Vice President of Finance and Operations, and shared with department directors to monitor spending. In cases where additional funding is needed, a formal request process ensures appropriate oversight.

This budgeting structure has enabled FSCC to maintain financial stability while investing in strategic initiatives , including technology upgrades, facility improvements, and student support services.

FSCC's recent budgeting efforts have been successful, as demonstrated by the investment

in <u>Jenzabar One</u> —a comprehensive student information system that integrates financial aid, the business office, and student billing. A conversion to the new payroll information system was completed early in 2025. Additionally, the college strategically chose to <u>renovate </u>part of the Hedges Administration Building to bring the Nursing Department back to campus, improving student access to academic, financial, and support services. The Information Technology Department has also partnered with a vendor to further enhance compliance with the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA) in addition to many other IT related infrastructure upgrades.

Further facilities improvements include replacement of various HVAC units, painting and repairs, boiler repairs, ground improvements, lighting replacement, and a ongoing cycle of repairs in the student dorms.

Student Support Services has remained focused on improving student retention and driving enrollment growth, both of which have been key considerations in budgeting for student success initiatives. In 2024, a <u>marketing contract</u> was launched to strengthen FSCC's visibility and outreach. To further support students, a <u>chatbot application</u> was introduced to regularly check in on their academic performance and mental health.

Annually, the <u>Student Tuition and Fee Schedule</u> is presented to the Board of Trustees for review and approval. This schedule, in conjunction with enrollment projections and historical data, serves as the basis for forecasting institutional revenue and determining the student scholarship budget. General fees are allocated to support key institutional priorities, including student scholarships, facility enhancements, technology upgrades, and campus and residential security. Upon finalization of scholarship budgets by category, the Financial Aid Department is tasked with administering and disbursing awards to student accounts in accordance with established guidelines.

FSCC's strategic planning process remains a cornerstone of financial and operational sustainability. The <u>current strategic plan</u> , updated in 2022, reflects input from a cross-section of faculty, staff, and administrators. The plan contains clear institutional goals including:

- Foster relationships with the communities FSCC serves

- Cultivate quality enhancements for education and learning

- Promote student success

- Ensure reliable and safe facilities and equipment through fiscal responsibility

- Promote employee engagement and professional development

These goals guide budget decisions, program development, and infrastructure investments. Annual reviews track progress toward objectives, with the Executive Team making adjustments based on performance data and feedback. In 2022, FSCC completed its first detailed review cycle under the revised strategic plan and implemented improvements in retention initiatives, technology adoption, and academic program delivery.

FSCC's leadership is committed to balancing immediate operational needs with the long-term viability of the institution. Recent examples include:

- Careful management of <u>reserves</u> to maintain adequate cash balances

- <u>Prioritization of deferred maintenance</u> to protect facilities and reduce long-term liabilities

- Implementation of new instructional technologies to remain competitive

- <u>Strategic enrollment initiatives</u> to stabilize tuition revenue

- Ongoing assessment of program viability and alignment with workforce needs

Through a combination of prudent fiscal management, transparent budgeting processes, qualified personnel, and a culture of continuous improvement, Fort Scott Community College demonstrates that its resources are sufficient to sustain operations and support its mission. The College's financial practices are designed not only to address present needs but to position the institution for long-term success in an evolving higher education landscape.

FSCC will continue to monitor and refine its resource management practices to ensure they remain responsive to internal assessments, external expectations, and the needs of students and communities it serves.

Sources

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- 27. Nursing Department Renovation Minutes
- 28. Clarus Contract FSCC
- 29. Fort Scott CC 2024 EdSights Inc. - MSA Order Form.docx
- 30. TUITION AND FEES 2025-2026 rev 07-21-25
- 34. Resolution 2024-65 Cash Reserve Policy
- 03. 2022-FSCC-Single-Audit
- 02. 2023-FSCC-AUDIT-REVISED
- 01. 2024-FSCC-Single-Audit
- 05. Assurance Argument 4B Tables
- 06. Assurance Argument 4B Tables
- 07. PURCHASE TO BE MADE Are you using a new or existing vendor
- 08. Resolution 2024-65 Cash Reserve Policy
- 09. Board Meeting Minutes 10-21-2024 - Approval of Cash Reserve Policy
- 9b. Criterion 4 B Tables CFI Scores Table
- 10. FSCC Operating Budget Procedures
- 11. Capital Improvement Band Student Services Nursing
- 12. Facility Improvement Plan and Invoices
- 13. IT Proactive Strategic Plan
- 14. BOARD HIRING POLICY
- 16. Onboarding Process for New Employees Summer 2025
- 17. Negotiated Agreement 2025-2026
- 18. Negotiated Agreement 2025-2026 Faculty Development Fund
- 19. Employee Professional Development List 24-25
- 20. Zero Based Budgeting Process and Form
- 21. Capital Improvement Band Student Services Nursing
- 22. Annual Budget Adoption

- 23. Special Request Form Zero Based Budgeting Process and Form
- 25. CAPITAL PROJECTS IMPROVEMENTS
- 26. Board Approved Minutes and J1 Contract
- 31. Revised-Strategic-Plan-Spring-2025
- 35. Facility Improvement Plan and Invoices
- 36. SEM 2025 update slideshow

4.C Planning for Quality Improvement

The institution engages in systematic strategic planning for quality improvement. It relies on data, integrating its insights from enrollment forecasts, financial capacity, student learning assessment, institutional operations and the external environment.

Argument

Fort Scott Community College (FSCC) demonstrates a strong commitment to systematic, integrated strategic planning aimed at quality improvement. The institution's processes intentionally link assessment, budgeting, and operational planning, drawing upon data from enrollment trends, student learning outcomes, and the external environment. FSCC has established a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring that financial management balances short-term needs with long-term institutional sustainability.

FSCC's strategic planning process is cyclical, collaborative, and inclusive of internal and external constituencies. Building upon the comprehensive strategic planning initiative launched in 2015–2016, the College finalized a refreshed strategic plan in September 2017. Subsequent annual reviews have included retreats and structured feedback from the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and community stakeholders. In 2022, FSCC completed a new strategic plan identifying goals, objectives, and metrics to align with the priorities of the college for online learning and strategic enrollment management.

FSCC has intentionally aligned its assessment of student learning, operational evaluation, and resource allocation processes. Departments are required to link budget requests to specific strategic plan goals, using data to justify needs. For example, the Budget Special Request Form requires each proposal to cite related strategic objectives and explain how the expenditure supports institutional effectiveness or student outcomes.

The implementation of zero-based budgeting in 2018 further reinforced the connection between planning and resource allocation. All departments submit detailed proposals for anticipated expenses, allowing the Executive Team to prioritize funding aligned with mission-critical goals.

Monthly departmental budget reports and annual audits help monitor execution and maintain accountability. With new leadership in the office of CFO/Vice President of Finance & Operations monthly finance committee meetings began in July 2024 to facilitate communication of financial condition including but not limited to cash balances, planned and un-planned large expenditures, communication and data request for Kansas Board of Regents, discussion of institutional insurance renewals, request for proposals, and sale of property.

The Director of Institutional Effectiveness coordinates assessment and data informed decision-making. The institution supports the work of the IE by adding an Assessment Coordinator to improve program reviews and support the student learning assessment cycles.

Data-informed decision-making reinforces FSCC's quality improvement processes. The College relies on a range of internal and external data sources, including:

- Institutional Research dashboards (enrollment, credit hours, and retention)

- Student Success Index (KHEStats)

- Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Surveys

- Faculty and staff satisfaction surveys

- Academic Program Reviews and learning outcome assessments

- Comparative benchmarks from the National Community College Benchmark Project

Enrollment forecasting for academic departments is updated each term to assess revenue trends and inform budget modeling. The Retention Committee , reinstated in recent years, monitors student progress and identifies interventions to improve persistence and completion. These insights have led to investments in expanded tutoring (e.g., in Nursing and Career and Technical Education), development of a structured mentoring program, and enhancements to online learning infrastructure.

FSCC's planning processes are responsive to demographic changes, technological advancements, and the broader economic environment. For example, the College's response to the COVID-19 pandemic showcased its ability to pivot quickly, moving courses online and implementing health protocols in alignment with public guidance. The experience led to investments in expanded Wi-Fi access, remote learning software, and training for faculty in online pedagogy.

Additionally, FSCC has:

- Expanded CTE offerings (e.g., John Deere technician certificate, Welding programs, Construction Technology, and Heavy Equipment in Bourbon County; added multiple CTE programs at the Linn County/Pleasanton site) to meet workforce demands

- Integrated contextualized Math and English instruction into technical programs through grant-funded curriculum development

- Collaborated with local industries and advisory boards to ensure programs remain relevant and aligned with regional economic needs. As a result of collaboration, the college applied and was awarded two grants, one for the heavy equipment operator program and the other for construction technology.

FSCC completed a comprehensive technology plan review and committed resources to upgrade enterprise systems, culminating in the transition to Jenzabar One to improve student information management and reporting. The implementation and data conversion process were completed July 2025. The new system provides an integrated system that merges the student information system, financial aid, student billing and financial operations gaining efficiencies and reliability throughout the entire student life-cycle.

The College's financial planning balances short-term operational needs with long-term sustainability. Annual budgets are developed through collaborative processes involving

department directors, vice presidents, and the Executive Team. Each budget cycle considers:

- Historical and projected enrollment

- State appropriations and local tax revenue trends

- Grant opportunities and federal funding

- Long-term commitments to facilities and technology investments

FSCC has diversified revenue through competitive grants, including TRIO, High School Equivalency, and Carl D. Perkins funding, which bolster capacity to sustain programs during periods of enrollment fluctuation. The College also maintains an <u>cash reserve</u> to respond to unanticipated expenses.

Recent independent audits (<u>2022</u> , <u>2023</u> , <u>2024</u>) have consistently resulted in unqualified opinions, and <u>CFI scores</u> remain within acceptable ranges, reflecting fiscal health and stewardship.

FSCC systematically implements plans to improve operations and student outcomes. Departments conduct <u>assessments </u>on a four-semester cycle for program- and department-level outcomes, evaluating effectiveness and establishing benchmarks. Insights from these reviews inform strategic and operational adjustments.

Notable recent improvements include:

- Expansion of the Student Success Center by adding a <u>director and a professional tutor</u> to focus improving pass rates in high-enrollment courses

- Adding <u>EdSights</u> , a chatbot application to regularly check on student's academic performance and mental health. Data reports from the application will be used in developing new programs and services.

Feedback loops, such as <u>employee satisfaction surveys</u> and community input sessions, are used to assess the impact of initiatives and identify further opportunities for growth.

Fort Scott Community College demonstrates that its systematic planning processes are informed by data, responsive to internal and external factors, and integrated across operational, academic, and financial domains. These practices ensure the institution is well positioned to sustain high-quality programs, achieve its mission, and continuously improve in a dynamic educational landscape.

Sources

- 01. Revised-Strategic-Plan-Spring-2025
- 03. Budget Special Request Band.Nursing.Student Services
- 04. Budget Special Request Band.Nursing.Student Services
- 05. Monthly Departmental Budget Reports
- 06. FSCC Finance Committee Agendas
- 07. Assessment Coordinator Agreement

- 08. Institutional Research dashboards
- 09. Student Success Index
- 10. Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey Summaries
- 11. Employee Satisfaction Surveys
- 12. Academic Department Assessment Reports
- 13a. NCCBP Benchmark Samples
- 15. Retention Committee Minutes
- 16. COVID Information
- 17. Examples of Expanded CTE Offerings
- 18. CTE Advisory Committee Minutes Fall 23 and Spring 24
- 19. IT Proactive Strategic Plan
- 21. Resolution 2024-65 Cash Reserve Policy
- 23. CFI Scores Assurance Argument 4B Tables
- 24. Summative Assessment Reports
- 25. Board Agenda Director SSC and Professional Tutor
- 28. Employee Satisfaction Surveys
- 22. 2022-FSCC-Single-Audit
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- 26. Fort Scott CC 2024 EdSights Inc. - MSA Order Form.docx

Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, policies, procedures and planning enable it to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational programs, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Argument

Fort Scott Community College (FSCC) is firmly committed to systematic improvement of operations and student outcomes. Until recently, the focus of these efforts has been within the academic divisions. Each academic division engaged in systematic, comprehensive collection and analysis of key data related to student success, division staffing, and academic planning. The academic divisions produced reports that include data on enrollment, student persistence, student retention, graduation rates, staffing for classes, assessment of student learning, and plans for improvement. These reports form the core of critical data that informs decisions and drives actions throughout the academic life of the college. As detailed in Criterion 4, academic leaders used information from these reports and other data to drive decisions establishing new practices for student retention and a renewed focus on student completion.

Fort Scott Community College (FSCC) strives to fulfill its mission through utilization of resources in an organized, consistent, and committed manner. FSCC benefits from operating with a balanced budget and is strategically working to build reserves and secure additional funding sources. As with many colleges, FSCC has faced significant economic challenges and has demonstrated great resilience in the face of these challenges. The goal of providing quality educational programs and controlling tuition has remained in the forefront of administrative, faculty, and staff efforts. Securing funding for initiatives such as a new SIS will allow FSCC to construct facilities that further meet the needs of students and expanding programs. Through active engagement in the development of the strategic plan, physical facility growth and expansion could become reality. FSCC stakeholders remain committed to fulfill FSCC's current mission while strategically planning for positive growth and opportunities in the future.

Sources

There are no sources.

Federal Compliance Filing by Institutions
Effective September 1, 2024–August 31, 2025

Institutions should answer the questions below and provide supporting documentation where applicable. The *Federal Compliance Overview* provides information about the applicable HLC policies and provides an explanation of each requirement. Please review the Overview in its entirety prior to completing this Filing.

The necessary supporting documentation should be directly responsive to specific documentation requested. While there is no minimum expectation with respect to length, the completed Federal Compliance filing, including Appendix A (if applicable), should not exceed 300 pages.

Note that some federal requirements are related to and accounted for in the Criteria for Accreditation or Assumed Practices. Those related Criteria and Assumed Practices have been identified for cross-referencing purposes. Cross-references are also provided to the Code of Federal Regulations. Because HLC requirements may, in some cases, exceed the requirements of the federal regulations, it is important that institutions write to HLC's requirements to ensure their compliance not only with the federal regulations but also with HLC's expectations. Lastly, although cross-references to the Code of Federal Regulations are provided here, an institution is always responsible to ensure that it is in compliance at all times with all such regulations, as they may be updated from time to time.

Submission Instructions

Comprehensive Evaluations
Upload this form, any required attachments and, if applicable, Appendix A to the Assurance System no later than the institution's lock date, unless otherwise noted. Instructions for uploading the documents are provided in the Assurance System.

Other HLC Processes
Submit this form, any required attachments and, if applicable, Appendix A at hlcommission.org/upload. Select the appropriate submission option from the list provided to ensure the documents are sent to the correct HLC staff member.

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Institution name: **Fort Scott Community College**

1. Assignment of Credits, Program Length and Tuition

Provide web addresses to the following:

- Policy (or policies) and procedures for assignment of Credit Hour for all **types** of courses, disciplines, programs, credential levels, formats, regardless of modality.

- Course or program credit assignment procedures. (Note: The Federal Compliance reviewer will contact the institution's Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) after the Federal Compliance materials are received to request a sample of course and program materials. The purpose of the representative sample of materials is to enable the Federal Compliance reviewer to make a preliminary determination as to whether an institution ensures it is adhering to its credit hour policy.)

Provide the web address to relevant policy (or policies):

Link: https://fortscott.edu/board-policy/

Link: : https://fortscott.edu/academics/catalog/ (Federal Credit Hour Definition pg. 39, 25-26 Academic Catalog)

Link: https://www.kansasregents.org/about/policies-by-laws-missions/board_policy_manual_2/chapter_iii_coordination_of_institutions_2/chapter_iii_full_text#courses

Provide the web address to relevant procedure(s):

Link: https://fortscott.edu/academics/catalog/ (Credit Hours Policy pg. 39, 25-26 Academic Catalog)

Describe the process the institution utilizes to verify length of academic period and compliance with credit hour requirements through course scheduling.

Fort Scott Community College (FSCC) follows a systematic process to verify that the length of each academic period aligns with federal credit hour definitions and institutional policy. This process is overseen by the Instruction Office and involves several layers of planning, review, and verification to ensure consistency and academic integrity across all courses and modalities.

Each year, the Academic Calendar is reviewed and approved by the Calendar Committee. The calendar ensures that each full semester (typically 16 weeks) meets the minimum required instructional time per credit hour, as defined by federal regulations. This calendar establishes the framework for term start and end dates, holidays, and final exam schedules. The academic year also includes winter & summer sessions. For courses offered in condensed formats (e.g., 12-week, 8-week, or 4-week terms), adjustments are made to the frequency and/or duration of class meetings to ensure equivalent instructional time. The amount of effort required to complete the course in an online/hybrid format is equivalent to the amount of effort required for a similar lecture or laboratory course for the same credit. This ensures that all courses, regardless of length or delivery modality (e.g., face-to-face, hybrid, or online), maintain consistent academic rigor.

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The academic departments and the Instruction Office handle the process of verifying the length of the academic period and compliance with credit hour requirements via course scheduling.

1. The Instruction Office enters approved courses into the master catalog, which is then reflected in the master schedule.
2. Course credit hours from the catalog are carried forward to the semester class schedule when creating the schedule.
3. The department chairperson, in conjunction with faculty prepares the schedule of classes offered by the department and send it to the Instruction office.
4. The Instruction Office is responsible for accurately entering the course schedule into Poise, the college's information platform. The link to the updated schedule is sent to the departments for review.
5. The departments review course information including credit hours, instructor names, class meeting times, days and other information. The review process ensures that each 16-week term includes the appropriate number of class meetings necessary to meet the expected contact hours per credit hour. For courses offered in condensed formats (e.g., 12-week or 8-week terms), adjustments are made to the frequency and/or duration of class meetings to ensure equivalent instructional time. This ensures that all courses, regardless of length or delivery modality (e.g., face-to-face, hybrid, or online), maintain consistent academic rigor.
6. Once the schedule is finalized, the advisors review it for accuracy. If errors are discovered, the Instruction Office is notified, and the administrative assistant makes necessary revisions.
7. The schedule is released for enrollment in March for fall and intersession semesters, and October for the spring and summer semesters.

For more information see Federal Regulations 34 CFR §§602.16(a)(1)(viii), 600.2, and 668.8(k) and (l).

Related HLC Requirements: Assignment of Credits, Program Length and Tuition (FDCR.A.10.020), Criteria for Accreditation Core Component 3.A. (CRRT.B.10.010), and Assumed Practice B.1. (CRRT.B.10.020)

2. Institutional Mechanisms for Handling Student Complaints

Provide the web address to the institution's complaint policy.

- Link: https://fortscott.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/2025-Section-4-Disciplinary-Process.pdf

https://fortscott.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/2025-Section-5-Student-Appeals-Other-Than-Disciplinary-Areas.pdf

Provide the web address to the institution's complaint procedure.

- Link: https://fortscott.edu/student-complaint-guidelines/

https://fortscott.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/2025-Section-5-Student-Appeals-Other-Than-Disciplinary-Areas.pdf

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For more information see Federal Requirement 34 CFR §602.16(a)(1)(ix).

Related HLC Requirements: Institutional Records of Student Complaints (FDCR.A.10.030), Criteria for Accreditation Core Component 2.A (CRRT.B.10.010) and Assumed Practices A.3, A.4. (CRRT.B.10.020)

3. Publication of Transfer Policies

Provide the web address to the institution's transfer policies.

Link:

https://fortscott.edu/academics/catalog/ (Transfer Students - pg. 24, Credit for Prior Learning – pg. 24, Credits Transferred from Colleges – pg. 38, Reverse Transfer – pg. 41, High School Articulation Agreements – pg. 42, College Transfer Program – pg. 43, General Education Program – pg. 45)

https://fortscott.edu/academics/degree-certificates-programs/

https://fortscott.edu/academics/advising/transfers/

https://fortscott.edu/admissions/placement-tests/

Provide the web address where the public can access a list of all institutions with which the institution has established articulation agreements. Note that there is not a need to provide the full articulation agreements themselves, only the list of agreements that the institution makes public. This list should include the name and location(s) of the agreement partner, the extent to which the institution accepts credit for courses offered by the partner or offers courses for which credits are accepted by the partner, and any credit limitations.

Link: https://fortscott.edu/academics/registrar/transfer-information/

Provide the web address where current and prospective student can ascertain the institution's transfer requirements in addition to what will and will not transfer.

Link: https://fortscott.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/General-Education-Program-2025-2026.pdf

For more information see Federal Regulations 34 CFR §§668.5, 668.8, 668.43(a)(11) and 668.43(a)(12).

Related HLC Requirements: Publication of Transfer Policies (FDCR.A.10.040), Criteria for Accreditation Core Component 2.A (CRRT.B.10.010) and Assumed Practice A.5.D. (CRRT.B.10.020)

4. Practices for Verification of Student Identity

Does the institution have students enrolled in distance or correspondence courses, as defined in federal definitions?

☒ Yes

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☐ No (If no, please move on to the next section.)

How does the institution verify the identity of students enrolled in these courses?

- All online applications screened by the Admin to SS to verify authenticity based on review of the following: names, email addresses, physical address ran through USPS, compare birth year to HS grad year, compare residency state to location of high school, if necessary, review addresses on sites such as Zillow or Realtor.

- Student email addresses are not activated until the validity of the applicant is verified through the process above

- Physical acceptance letter is not mailed until the validity of the applicant is verified through the process above

- Fraudulent applicants are removed as able to self-enroll and noted as "potential fraud" in their notes in Campus Connect.

- If acceptance letters are returned due to a bad address they are placed on a hold and unable to enroll until identity can be verified (phone, text, email)

- Once enrolled, students can only access their courses using a secure login username and password. The username is the student's randomly assigned student id number and the password defaults to the last four of their SSN which they are encouraged to change after the initial login

- Faculty can require proctored exams as a secondary method of student verification if they choose but FSCC does not currently offer a paid proctor service

- Faculty may also require students to utilize Respondus Lockdown Browser while testing and be recorded/show id before a test can begin, at their discretion.

How does the method of verification make reasonable efforts to protect student privacy?

Applicant Verification

- FSCC utilizes a multi-step screening process to verify a prospective student's personal data before granting any access to ensure only legitimate students are enrolled. This prevents unauthorized individuals from accessing FSCC's systems, protecting personal and academic information.

- Cross-referencing to verify addresses through third-parties shows that FSCC is ensuring the legitimacy of applicants which in turn reduces FSCC's risk of fraudulent access to student data.

Controlled Access to Student Accounts

- Since FSCC does not activate student email accounts until identity is confirmed, risk of data exposure to potentially fraudulent applicants is minimized. This ensures PII is only shared once authenticity is verified.

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- Placing students on an enrollment hold if their acceptance letter is returned due to incorrect address adds an extra layer of protection against unauthorized access.

  Secure Student Login

- Utilizing randomly assigned studentid numbers as the username and defaulting to the last four of the SSN as a password provides a level of security in course access. Students are also encouraged to change passwords which enhances privacy protection.

- Course access via a secure login prevents unauthorized access to educational resources and personal data

  Proctoring and Testing Integrity

- By allowing faculty the ability to require proctored exams, recording of exams, and student identify validation before testing, FSCC ensures a heightened level of security around academic testing, which also safeguards academic integrity.

  Monitoring and Removal of Fraudulent Applicants

- Actively monitoring for fraudulent applications and marking them as such adds an additional safeguard to ensure only legitimate students are enrolling and accessing FSCC resources.

Are there any additional costs (e.g., fees associated with test proctoring) charged directly to the student because of this method?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If yes, how are the additional costs disclosed to students prior to enrollment in a distance or correspondence course?

Provide the web address where the public can access information regarding the additional costs.

Link:

For more information see Federal Regulations 34 CFR §§602.17(g) and 602.17(h).

Related HLC Requirement: Institutional Practices for Verification of Student Identity and Protection of Student Privacy (FCDR.A.10.050), Criteria for Accreditation Core Component 2.A. (CRRT.B.10.010)

5. Protection of Student Privacy

Provide the web address to the institution's policy(ies) governing student privacy and the privacy and security of student data, including student records.

Link: https://fortscott.edu/academics/advising/ferpa/

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https://fortscott.edu/academics/catalog/ (pg. 34-35)

Provide the web address to the institution's disclosures about how any personal data collected, including personally identifiable information (PII), may be used.

Link: https://fortscott.edu/academics/advising/ferpa/

Provide a brief narrative below describing how the institution ensures timely training and adherence to the policies referenced in this section by its employees and any third-party contractors acting on its behalf:

FSCC ensures ongoing compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) through annual training and consistent communication with faculty, staff, and students.

All current faculty, both full-time and adjunct, as well as staff members receive annual FERPA training. Each year, a detailed PowerPoint presentation outlining FERPA regulations, institutional policies, and best practices for handling student information is distributed to all employees. This annual training ensures employees understand their legal responsibilities and remain current on FERPA guidelines. In addition, FERPA education is incorporated into the employee onboarding process, and in-person training sessions are occasionally provided during institutional in-service events. FERPA training is also provided to work studies.

FSCC provides annual notification to all students regarding their rights under FERPA. This includes information about their right to inspect and review their education records, request amendments, and understand how their information may be disclosed. FERPA education is also integrated into the First-Year Experience (FYE) course, where the Registrar presents a guest lecture to further explain FERPA rights and answer student questions. This proactive approach ensures students are informed of their privacy rights early in their college experience.

For more information see Federal Regulations 34 CFR §602.17(h).

Related HLC Requirements: *Institutional Practices for Verification of Student Identity and Protection of Student Privacy (FDCR.A.10.050), Recruiting, Admissions and Related Enrollment Practices (FDCR.A.20.020)***,** *Assumed Practice A.2. (CRRT.B.10.020)*

6. Publication of Student Outcome Data

The institution must disclose student outcome data in a manner that is easily accessible to the public. The institution's website should include a webpage containing (or linking to) data related to student achievement that addresses the broad variety of its student populations and programs, including at the undergraduate and graduate levels, as applicable. The information must include retention, completion, required state licensure exam pass data (if applicable), and data about the institution's students after transfer or graduation (such as continuing education, job placement and earnings). The institution must also disclose which student populations are excluded from the data. If an institution uses student job placement data in any marketing or recruitment content, it must also publicly disclose these data on its website along with information necessary to substantiate the truthfulness of its marketing and recruitment

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materials. All student achievement information must be presented in plain language, with any technical terms defined and the institution's methodology for compiling data included.

Are student outcome data published on the institution's website following the specifications above?

☒ Yes

☐ No (If no, please move on to the next section.)

If yes, provide a link to the webpage(s) that contains the student outcome data.

Link(s): https://fortscott.edu/institutional-effectiveness/

For more information see Federal Regulations 34 CFR §§602.16(a)(1)(i) and 668.14(b)(10).

Related HLC Requirements: Public Information (FDCR.A.10.070), Review of Student Outcome Data (FDCR.A.10.080), Assumed Practice A.6. (CRRT.B.10.020)

7. Standing With State and Other Accreditors

List the governing or coordinating bodies in states (e.g. Illinois Board of Higher Education; Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education) in which the institution has a presence.

Courses offered through Fort Scott Community College's Allied Health program meet the regulatory standards set by their respective governing bodies. The Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) and Certified Medication Aide (CMA) courses are approved by the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS). The Nursing Program is governed by the Kansas Board of Nursing. Additionally, the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) course is governed and approved by the Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services.

Note whether there are any pending or final state actions that affect the institution's legal status or authority to grant degrees or offer programs.

NA

List any relationships the institution has with any other recognized accreditor (e.g. Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing; Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation; Distance Education Accrediting Commission).

Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing

Note whether there are any pending or final actions by any other recognized accreditor to withdraw status or impose a sanction, Show-Cause Order or adverse action.

NA

Provide the web address(es) where students and the public can find information about the institution's current standing with state agencies and accrediting bodies.

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Link: https://fortscott.edu/about/accreditation/

https://fortscott.edu/programs/nursing/

For more information see Federal Regulations 34 CFR §§602.28, 668.41 and 668.43.

Related HLC Requirements: Standing With State and Other Accreditors (FDCR.A.10.090), Criteria for Accreditation Core Component 2.B; Assumed Practices A.7, C.4.; Obligations of Membership #8 and #9 (INST.B.30.020)

8. Recruiting, Admissions and Related Institutional Practices

Upload as part of this filing the institution's (i) training materials and (ii) code of conduct (or its equivalent) for its recruiters, admissions counselors, marketing or advertising staff, financial aid advisors, and any other personnel engaged in direct communications with prospective and current students, as required by HLC policy.

Provide a brief narrative below describing how the institution ensures timely training and adherence to its procedures by employees and any third-party contractors acting on its behalf in this area.

Fort Scott Community College (FSCC) maintains comprehensive policies and structured training procedures for all employees engaged in direct communication with prospective and current students, including recruiters, admissions counselors, marketing and advertising staff, financial aid advisors, and academic advisors.

All employees are required to comply with institutional policies outlined in the Employee Handbook. In addition, recruitment personnel adhere to FSCC's Recruitment Code of Conduct, which sets clear ethical expectations grounded in honesty, integrity, transparency, equity, and respect. This Code aligns with best practices established by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). Financial aid staff follow the Financial Aid Code of Conduct established by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), ensuring ethical and compliant financial aid advising.

All employees are given access to Employee Handbook as part of the onboarding process and is available on the website under Employee Resources. Training materials and codes of conduct are shared with all new employees as part of the onboarding process through Human Resources and/or their direct supervisors. Ongoing training is reinforced through annual professional development activities, in-service sessions, and periodic email reminders.

For more information see Federal Regulations 34 CFR §§668.14 and 668.82

Related HLC Requirements: Fraud and Abuse (FDCR.A.20.010), Recruiting, Admissions and Related Enrollment Practices (FDCR.A.20.020), Criteria for Accreditation Core Components 2.A and 2.B (CRRT.B.10.010), Assumed Practice A.2. (CRRT.B.10.020)

Additional Documents

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Please attach the following documents as applicable:

Appendix A .... With respect to an institution's ongoing responsibilities under federal regulations, provide any action letters issued by the U.S. Department of Education that articulate a rationale for any negative actions and any reports issued by the institution, if applicable; and provide information demonstrating the institution's improvement efforts in response to such communications. Negative actions include, but are not limited to limitation, suspension or termination actions by the Department; letter of credit requirements, fines, heightened cash monitoring, or reimbursement payment methods imposed by the Department; or other negative findings on the basis of any Single Audit (or its equivalent) submitted by the institution.