

Saint Paul College-A Community & Technical College

HLC ID 1989

PROBATION

Review Date: 12/7/2020

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Context and Nature of Review

Review Date

12/7/2020

Mid-Cycle Reviews include:

- The Year 4 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Biennial Review for Applying institutions

Reaffirmation Reviews include:

- The Year 10 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Review for Initial Candidacy for Applying institutions
- The Review for Initial Accreditation for Applying institutions
- The Year 4 Review for Standard Pathway institutions that are in their first accreditation cycle after attaining initial accreditation

Scope of Review

- Reaffirmation Review
- Federal Compliance (if applicable)
- On-site Visit
- Multi-campus Visit (if applicable)

- COVID-19 Response Form

Institutional Context

Saint Paul College (SPC) is a comprehensive community College founded in 1910; one of the first colleges in Minnesota. In 1995, Saint Paul Technical College became part of the Minnesota State Colleges and University System (alternatively referred to as the Minnesota State System), and in 2002, became Saint Paul College- A Community and Technical College. SPC offers 54 associate degree programs, and 74 career certificate and diploma programs to more than 10,000 credit and 5,000 non-credit students in downtown Saint Paul, MN. SPC is noted as one of the most diverse institutions of higher education in Minnesota, with students of color comprising more than 65% of the annual enrollment.

The purpose of this comprehensive evaluation was to enable a team of peer reviewers to determine whether SPC has ameliorated the findings of noncompliance that led to the imposition of Probation and whether SPC otherwise meets the criteria for Accreditation, and to make a recommendation about whether the Board should remove Probation or take other action.

Interactions with Constituencies

Chancellor of the Minnesota State System Office

Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs System Office

Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, System Office

System Director of Academic Programs and Quality Assurance, System Office

Minnesota State Board of Trustees (3)

SPC President

SPC Vice President, Academic Affairs

SPC Vice President, Student Affairs

Vice President, Finance and Operations

Dean of Student Success, Equity and Inclusion

Dean of Institutional Research, Planning and Grants

Executive Director, Friends of Saint Paul College Foundation

Chief Information Officer

Senior Human Resource Officer

Interim Executive Director, Marketing and Communications

Director of Pathway Advising

Co-Curricular Assessment Coordinator

Power of You and Make It Count Director

Dean of Academic Effectiveness and Innovation

Director of Mental Health

Physical Plant Director

Dean of Strategic Enrollment Management

Director of Rights and Responsibilities

Director of Financial Aid

Director of Academic Support

Director of College Partnerships

One Stop Director

Director of Admissions, Registration and Records

Director of Student Life and Diversity

Director of TRIO

Title III Grant Project Director

Director of Career Placement and Internships

Director of Access and Disability Resources

Faculty Department Chairs (Welding, CNC, Truck Tech, Construction Electricity, Chemistry, Math, Office Management/Business, Culinary, Child Development, English, Philosophy, English for Academic Purposes, Sterile Processing/Surgical Technology)

Staff (AFSCME, MAPE, Commissioners Plan Staff (82 participants))

Dean of STEM

Dean of Liberal and Fine Arts

Dean of Business, Service, Continuing Education, and Workforce Training

Dean of Career and Technical Education

Dean of Health Sciences

Associate Dean of Faculty and Staff Development

Student Senate Officers (7)

Student General Assembly/Club Leaders (2)

Senior Research Analyst (2)

Business Intelligence Analyst

Director of Strategic Planning and Effectiveness

Process Analyst

Dean of Strategic Enrollment Management

Assessment Committee (23 individuals)

Academic Affairs and Standards Council (11 individuals)

Faculty open forum (63 participants)

Academic Human Resources Specialist

Business Office Manager

AR Supervisor

AP Supervisor

Director of Auxiliary Services

Director of Budget and Special Projects

Director of Public Safety

Building Maintenance Foreman

President's Advisory Council and Friends of SPC Foundation Board (19)

Criterion 1 and 2 open forum (40 participants)

Criterion 3 and 4 open forum (103 participants)

Criterion 5 open forum (110 participants)

Additional Documents

There are no additional documents reviewed.

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

The Saint Paul College mission statement is articulated publicly. It can be found in various materials such as the College Catalog, Student Handbook, Strategic Plan, on the website in multiple locations, and in a variety of other print and electronic media. The online publication of the mission in the catalog and on the website ensures that it is readily available to the public. As was shared with the team during the visit, the mission is also discussed within the context of the strategic planning process as well as serving as a cornerstone in the development of all College plans. It was confirmed during the visit that the administration works to embed the mission, vision and values alongside the institution's embraced philosophy as an Anti-Racist and Trauma-Informed (ARTI) institution into everything that it puts into practice.

SPC updates and revises its mission, vision, and values through its strategic planning process. The most recent review was completed during the development of the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. Clear evidence exists that a process is in place for the development and review of the institution's mission and vision and that it is consistent and well-suited for the institutional learning outcomes and cultural purpose of the institution.

Review of the Minnesota State Board of Trustee meeting minutes from June 20, 2012 verified the reaffirmation of the College's current mission and vision. Per Minnesota State Colleges and

Universities (Minn State) Policy 3.24, the vision and mission of SPC were found to be “consistent with statute, policy, and regional accreditation requirements.” Meetings on campus confirmed that all internal and external stakeholders are actively involved in the strategic planning process which includes mission review, providing valuable feedback for these guiding documents. It was reported to the team that given the current presidential search process, a comprehensive review of the mission and vision will be undertaken in 2021-2022 as part of the development of the College’s next strategic plan.

New employee orientation for staff and faculty includes a discussion of the mission, vision and values and the role they play in informing the College’s direction and its commitment to providing inclusive, dynamic, and relevant learning experiences that are accessible to all. Communicating the mission and the College’s values is also part of the new student orientation process. The variety of campus documents, training opportunities, and campus discussions that reinforce the mission is commendable and serves to fully communicate the essence of SPC to internal and external stakeholders.

Saint Paul College considers its mission, values and vision in the development and implementation of the strategic plan and when constructing the annual priorities, Executive Work Plan, budget, and various other department and divisional plans. Departmental and employee plans are aligned with the College’s Strategic Goals as demonstrated in the Master Academic Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Technology Master Plan, Strategic Enrollment Plan, and the Equity and Inclusion Plan. Staff and the human resource department reported that professional development plans reinforce skill sets and knowledge in keeping with departmental goals, and in turn, the strategic goals of the College.

As confirmed during the visit, the College has a clearly articulated budget process that is transparent and understood by the administration, faculty and staff. In multiple meetings during the visit, College personnel explained that budgeting priorities align with the mission and strategic planning goals and that use of the Strategic Planning Online (SPOL) platform allows every employee to have a voice in the development of the budget and the funding priorities.

Mission documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of SPC’s programs and services. The documents express a commitment to providing comprehensive learning opportunities in technical and transfer education with a purposeful intention of not only enhancing personal knowledge but also advancing economic opportunity for its students. For example, as reported by members of the President’s Advisory Council, career programs are designed and revised with input from advisory boards to meet the changing needs of employers in the community.

During the visit, external stakeholders acknowledged that SPC has made a difference in the community through its educational leadership, calling it “a beacon of hope” for students, providing career sustaining education that will enable students to break the cycle of poverty and pave the way for future generations to realize economic prosperity.

The College’s core values of excellence, integrity, and respect inform all College initiatives and are supported by a commitment from administration, faculty and staff that all institutional actions will reflect the institution’s core values. Through numerous meetings with faculty, staff, administration, and the Board of Trustees, the team confirmed the institution’s dedication to these core values and the students and community served by the College.

SPC’s mission is embedded in the culture of the institution. The team found an uncompromising commitment to students throughout the institution, with clear evidence that everyone understands

and demonstrates great empathy for the challenges faced by their students. The work being done in the area of equity and inclusion and the College's commitment to become an Anti-Racist and Trauma-Informed institution reflects their understanding of the impact on their students and employees of the pandemic and the social and racial unrest taking place in their community and in our country. The College's understanding, recognition, and response to the effects of these traumatic events as demonstrated through multiple conversations with faculty, staff, and community leaders, stands as an exemplary example of an institution in tune with its mission and aligned with its internal and external communities.

The College's enrollment profile is consistent with its stated mission and the community it serves. The College's 2020 Fact Book indicates that 66 percent of the student body identify as students of color, with 62 percent being first generation college students. In addition, College staff reported that a large number of students present with high financial and basic needs insecurities (45 percent of FY20 students were Pell eligible with the College reporting that 87 percent of first and full-time FY19 students received financial aid or scholarships) and that the College has aggressively implemented programs and services to assist these students. An example offered during the visit includes the emergency funding made available by the SPC Foundation to provide students with funds to manage life challenges, particularly during the Pandemic.

SPC offers many personal enrichment non-credit courses and workforce training as well as programs and activities for the community. During the visit, community members identified the College as a key player in many economic development initiatives, grant proposals, and community enhancement activities.

SPC prepares students in programs consistent with its stated mission to offer comprehensive learning opportunities in career and transfer education. As verified in the College Catalog, the College offers over 100 degree, diploma and certificate programs in Liberal and Fine Arts, Business, Career and Technical, Health Sciences, Service, and Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) fields. Co-curricular opportunities support the mission and values of the College. The institution brings the mission to life for its students through campus life activities, such as new student orientation, student groups and organizations, cultural activities, Student Senate, and service learning.

The College supports comprehensive academic and student support services directly aligned with its mission, vision and values, including Summer Bridge Programs, Learning Communities, Early Alert, tutoring services, student organizations, advising, TRiO, Title III grant activities, Power of YOU Program, and other co-curricular activities.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

The College's mission documents and values demonstrate a commitment to serving the public good. SPC's overarching values – excellence, integrity, and respect -- emanate from the mission and are utilized to align planning and resource allocation processes ensuring consistency with the mission. The Strategic Plan is aligned with the three tenants of the Minnesota State System Strategic Framework and staff spoke to the importance of this directive in all of its planning initiatives.

Roles and duties of the Board, as well as a Minnesota State Board of Trustee Conflict of Interest Policy (Policy 1C.1.) and an institutional Employee Conduct and Ethics Policy (01.12.01.0), help further ensure fulfillment of the College mission and serving the public good. As public officials and as articulated in the State Strategic Framework, the Board understands the College's obligation to serve the citizens of Minnesota.

During an open forum on Criterion 1 and 2, participants articulated numerous examples of how the College demonstrates its commitment to serving the public good. These examples included the outreach work of the Foundation and the faculty and staff during these unprecedented times, the Project Care initiative with a local elementary school, the work in student life to support the community's basic life needs, and continuing work by the College in its journey to be an anti-racist, trauma-informed institution.

SPC is recognized as one of the most diverse colleges in Minnesota and as such, it has taken proactive steps to be a leader in the Minn State System in eliminating educational inequity and setting the standard for equity and inclusion. As prioritized in the 2020 Executive Work Plan, the development of an Anti-Racist and Trauma-Informed Plan that includes priorities and action items will guide this important work over the next three to five years. Administrators, faculty, staff and community members all emphasized during the visit the importance of this work in continuing to meet the needs of SPC students and the greater community.

Beginning with the College's Mission and intertwined throughout the Strategic Plan, Executive

Work Plan, annual priorities, numerous department and division plans, the budgeting process, and the College's policies and procedures, SPC demonstrates its understanding of its role to serve the public. The Board, faculty, staff, and community members clearly demonstrated during the visit their understanding that in its educational role, SPC serves the communities as articulated in its mission statement.

As an open admission institution, SPC serves students that, according to faculty, staff and community members, would not otherwise attend a higher education institution. This assertion was validated through a review of the institution's student profile data and a review of the educational attainment data for Saint Paul, Minnesota.

In addition to serving students with the intent to transfer to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution, SPC also prepares students for college-level work via developmental education, as well as for employment via vocational programs. As reported by the community, SPC plays a key role in economic development in the region offering customized training for area employers and as an active participant in grant and community-based initiatives. Members of the President's Advisory Council reported that there has been a notable change in the last 10 years regarding the College's outreach and its commitment to providing career sustaining education. The Council members reported that the support and education being offered by SPC "is changing the fabric of the State" and "changing lives and offering opportunity."

SPC engages with its external constituencies and primary communities by hosting community events, providing facilities for area organizations and business activities, and engaging the community in the President's Advisory Committee as well as many program advisory committees. An active and engaged foundation provides scholarship and emergency fund support to students and, as reported during the visit, has an empowered voice at the institution to assist in strategic planning.

As a public community college, operating under the auspices of the Minnesota State College and Universities System and in compliance with Board policy, SPC's education purposes take primacy over any other interests. As a state public institution, there are no shareholders or others who benefit financially from the revenue generated by SPC. Rather, the College relies on state money allocated by the legislature, tuition revenue, state and federal grants, and local philanthropy to remain operational. As reported in a meeting with the Board of Trustees, Board members confirmed that they function autonomously, allowing the educational mission of the College to remain the sole purpose of its work.

The Board of Trustees, and through delegated authority to the Chancellor, autonomously make decisions in the best interest of the institution and ensure the institution's integrity. As reported during the visit, the Board has an oversight role for the institution and closely monitors the financial health of the College, performance metrics and reports to ensure that SPC is meeting its educational mission.

The Board includes standing committees to oversee important aspects of the Minnesota State System to meet its legal and fiduciary responsibilities. It was reported during the visit that the accreditation concerns at SPC brought about a review of the System's processes to monitor the colleges in the System. Outcomes of this investigation include development of new policies to improve the communication flow between the colleges and the System Board, a higher level of engagement by the System office staff with the colleges, and development of a new statewide position for accreditation and assessment.

At the College level, ensuring that educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes is accomplished through the institution's comprehensive and inclusive strategic planning process, establishment of its strategic work plans, and the alignment of the budgeting and planning and assessment processes. A review of institutional documents and processes supported via discussions with the administration, faculty and staff confirmed this to be true.

The College identifies stakeholder groups and distinct expectations and pinpoints needs through one-on-one interviews, surveys, focus groups, advisory committees and specialized accrediting associations. Response to need is demonstrated through collaborations, such as with K-12 school districts, area employers, and federally funded programs such as TRiO and Title III.

The College has successfully aligned its Career and Technical Education programs with industry needs, and continues to adjust programs to meet new challenges. Active advisory committees reported that they have worked with faculty and administrators to identify skill needs and anticipate demand for future workers as well as identify resources to enhance educational programs. Those attending the Presidential Advisory Committee session confirmed the work of SPC within the community and expressed their enthusiastic support for the College. Programmatic accreditation also provides avenues for feedback to help the institution meet the needs of constituencies.

SPC actively monitors and responds to its community as evidenced by its work to willingly provide community leadership during social and civil unrest and the COVID-19 Pandemic. Hosting community conversations and partnerships to address basic needs such as food insecurities stands as an example of how the College engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

SPC offers a variety of multicultural learning opportunities for students, employees, and community members. These opportunities are supported by a foundation of written policies and outcomes, which, taken together, reflect the College's values. All courses, student services, and activities are anchored around five Common Learning Outcomes (CLOs), which include global citizenship and civic responsibility, and five Co-Curricular Learning Outcomes (CCLOs), which include community involvement. In addition, the College's Equity and Inclusion Plan outlines objectives for building cultural competence and ensuring inclusion in the application of student services. Finally, SPC maintains formal policies on equity, inclusion, and nondiscrimination that govern its practices. Examples include policies on Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination in Employment and on Employee Conduct and Ethics. The Minn State System also maintains a Respectful Workplace procedure.

Evidence provided in the Assurance Argument reflects the College's commitment to help students acquire the knowledge and skills needed for citizenship and workplace success. Examples include capstone projects, research projects, and internships. For example, the College's science technician research project, included in the evidence file, infuses research, applied skills, and mentoring in real-world experiences. Other examples include the Student Senate, campus blood drives, and a campus food truck. During the 2019-2020 academic year, the Student Senate was awarded a LEADMN Democracy in Action grant related to advocacy work for the US Census. A rubric for assessing student learning of global citizenship and civic responsibility has been created by the College and is being used to assess student learning.

Evidence of the College's commitment to inclusion and equitable treatment can be found in initiatives for students, faculty, and all employees. For students, initiatives on curricular pathways and adoption of EAB Navigate ensure equitable access to resources as students matriculate through their programs. Another example for students is the Orientation Packet, which reinforces expectations on inclusion in student clubs and organizations. In the classroom setting, reviewers confirmed a new workgroup that is focused on inclusivity in navigating controversial classroom

conversations. This is especially helpful for faculty designing and leading discussions. Finally, across the College, affinity groups and workgroups are creating safe spaces for engaging in dialog on diversity and inclusion.

SPC ensures continued growth in understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion through professional development. The College offers a suite of workshops in the Equity Training Series, and students sponsor a Solidarity Series focused discussion of topics related to diversity and multiculturalism. The College's Academic Effectiveness and Innovation Office leads professional development for faculty on culturally responsive pedagogy. Finally, the College maintains an Operational Effectiveness Committee to develop and modify policies through an equity lens. The College's Equity and Inclusion Officer (EIO) is a member of the Cabinet and this committee.

Evidence that SPC fosters respect for all backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives comes in the form of awareness about the general climate and ethos across campus. Following its Institutional Actions Council hearing in spring 2019, the College launched a campus-wide survey and self-examination of its climate, which led to a recommitment around equity which continues today. World events happening in 2020 heightened this commitment even more. For example, remote work necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic raised awareness of inequities and the roles played by SPC students, faculty, and staff in fostering safe environments. Evidence is provided in the form of emails from the Dean of Students/EIO about professional conduct and respect. In another example, global outrage following the death of George Floyd heightened awareness of anti-racist and trauma-informed priorities and led to the formation of a workgroup to prioritize practices that eliminate bias, exclusion, and discrimination.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Rationale

The Saint Paul College mission statement is articulated publicly and can be found in a variety of print and electronic formats. The mission, vision, and values are updated through the strategic planning process which includes internal and external stakeholder input and Board of Trustee review. New employee orientation for staff and faculty includes a discussion of the mission, vision and values and the role they play in informing the College's direction and its commitment to providing inclusive, dynamic, and relevant learning experiences that are accessible to all. Communicating the mission and the College's values is also part of the new student orientation process. The mission, values and vision play an integral role in the development of the annual priorities, Executive Work Plan, budget, and various other department and divisional plans. Mission documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of SPC's programs and services. They express a commitment to providing comprehensive learning opportunities in technical and transfer education with a purposeful intention of not only enhancing personal knowledge but also advancing economic opportunity for its students.

SPC's mission is embedded in the culture of the institution. The team found an uncompromising commitment to students throughout the institution, with clear evidence that everyone understands and demonstrates great empathy for the challenges faced by their students. The work being done in the area of equity and inclusion and the College's commitment to become an Anti-Racist and Trauma-Informed institution reflects their understanding of the impact on their students and employees of the Pandemic and the social and racial unrest taking place in their community and in our country.

The College's enrollment profile is consistent with its stated mission and the community it serves. Consistent with its mission, SPC offers comprehensive learning opportunities in career and transfer education. In addition to its credit courses, SPC offers many personal enrichment non-credit courses and workforce training as well as programs and activities for the community. The College supports comprehensive academic and student support services directly aligned with its mission, vision and values.

SPC's Mission documents and overarching values – excellence, integrity, and respect – demonstrate a commitment to serving the public good and are utilized to align planning and resource allocation processes ensuring consistency with the mission. SPC is recognized as one of the most diverse colleges in Minnesota and as such, has taken proactive steps to be a leader in the State System in eliminating educational inequity and setting the standard for equity and inclusion.

The College has successfully aligned its Career and Technical Education programs with industry needs, and continues to adjust programs to meet new challenges. Active advisory committees work with faculty and administrators to identify skill needs and anticipate demand for future workers as well as identify resources to enhance educational programs. Programmatic accreditation provides avenues for feedback to help the institution meet the needs of constituencies.

The College demonstrates a commitment to prepare students for citizenship and workplace success as seen in its capstone projects, research, and internships as well as its Student Senate, campus blood drives, and a campus food mobile. Curricular pathways, the adoption of EAB Navigate, and information shared during Student Orientation demonstrate the College's commitment to inclusion and equitable treatment. Professional development opportunities underscore the institution's commitment to growth and understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

SPC updates and revises its mission, vision, and values through its strategic planning process. The most recent review was completed during the development of the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. Clear evidence exists that a process is in place for the development and review of the institution's mission and vision and that it is consistent and well-suited for the institutional learning outcomes and cultural purpose of the institution.

Review of the Minnesota State Board of Trustee meeting minutes from June 20, 2012 verified the reaffirmation of the College's current mission and vision statements. A revision to Policy 3.24 on May 22, 2013, no longer necessitates that the College mission be reviewed by the Board every five years but does require Board approval for any major changes to the mission statement and requires that "students, faculty, staff, and members of local civic, nonprofit, and business communities" be involved in the mission review process. It was reported during the visit that the next comprehensive review of the College mission and vision will take place in 2021-2022 as part of the strategic planning process.

The financial integrity of the college is safeguarded through its commitment to open and honest communication about college finances through the Budget Plan menu posted on the College's website under Planning and Research, development of the annual operating budget through a participatory process, integration of the budget planning process with the Strategic Plan, and completion of an independent audit as part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Annual Financial Report. The College has clearly defined budgeting principles that build the framework for development of the annual budget. Strong internal controls safeguard College assets and ensure that policies and procedures are followed. During the visit, members of the College community expressed that they have a clear understanding of the budgeting principles and process. It was reported that recent efforts by the administration now provide clearer and complete information about the state of the College

and that “the veil has been lifted” in regard to the financial viability of the institution.

The integrity of SPC's academic programs is safeguarded through both internal and external methods. Externally accredited programs meet rigorous accrediting standards essential to validate that graduates have a solid educational foundation and are ready to enter their fields. Supported by a new position in human resources, all faculty credentials are evaluated in keeping with HLC requirements and System and College procedures. Addressing concerns raised during the last visit regarding consistency of performance evaluations, the team confirmed during the visit that evaluations are now performed on a regular basis and used to inform professional development opportunities and highlight the contributions being made by each employee in support of the College's mission. A review of the College Catalog confirmed that all course descriptions and program requirements are listed for each diploma, certificate, and degree.

Saint Paul College has policies and collective bargaining agreements to ensure the fair and ethical treatment of all employees and students. The College's nondiscrimination policy offers a commitment to equal opportunity for education, employment, and participation in College activities. The policy clearly articulates that harassment “has no place in a learning or work environment” and that the College is committed to eliminating violence in all its forms as well as eliminating barriers to admissions or participation at the College. A commitment to expand the staffing and services of the human resources department has helped to address concerns that the institution was under-resourced. It was reported during the visit that over 70 positions have been filled at the College since the last HLC visit and that the institution is investing time and talent toward its staff retention practices. Strong hiring practices coupled with professional development to help employees understand how to navigate new and existing processes and value each other have helped to change the culture at SPC. During the visit it was reported that faculty and staff feel valued and that their thoughts and opinions matter. In addition, the administration reported that it is working to increase the diversity of faculty to more accurately reflect its student population and community and has actively provided education and training to build awareness and sensitivity.

The administration has embraced a commitment to transparency, accountability, power sharing, and creating a culture that is inclusive and empowered. Staff reported that the culture is now one of energy, growth, and collaboration with everyone working together to serve students.

SPC has made remarkable progress in the last two years in regard to its campus climate. A comprehensive campus climate study performed in 2019 and the resulting recommendations from the consultant have been used to facilitate open and intentional discussions about how to improve SPC. It was reported that dramatic improvement has been made under the new administration in creating and using inclusive communication channels that facilitate authentic and direct conversations, making sure that committees are high-functioning and have the autonomy to make decisions and recommendations, facilitating campus-wide engagement, fostering trust and respect, and building a culture that is vested in a deep sense of commitment to each other and our humanness. The Campus Climate workgroup guides this important and informative work, providing regular updates to the faculty and staff.

College policy and Minn State procedures ensure that the auxiliary functions of the College operate in support of the academic experience and are provided to enhance student life and provide financial stability for these operations. Auxiliary services at SPC include the café, catering services, bookstore, and parking. A reoccurring theme in the HLC student survey appeared to be a concern over parking fees charged to students during the COVID-19 Pandemic when many courses and services were moved to an online format. The College may want to consider providing information to the students

on how these funds are used and why the decision was made to continue to collect the parking fees during this time.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Saint Paul College clearly communicates with its students and community via delivery methods that meet the needs of its audiences. Information is presented on the College website, in printed format, via social media, and by way of informational meetings and new student orientation.

The College maintains a dynamic website that offers extensive information to the public about the institution. The site is easy to navigate and provides general information about the College as well as specifics on academics, student services, admissions, campus life, and continuing education. The College uses a decentralized approach for web content to empower the areas responsible for content and activities with the responsibility of keeping information current and relevant. Marketing and Communications works with the end-users to be sure that content is designed and posted in line with website brand identity and the IT Department manages site functionality. A Web Request form is utilized to facilitate employee input on website updates and improvements. The College reports that it is using a website analytics product to inform improvements in site performance and content quality.

The College Catalog and Student Handbook are available on the website and are updated and published annually. In addition, the College utilizes a variety of communication materials to keep students and the community informed about the College and its programs and services. A review of a sampling of these publications confirms that the College is presenting itself clearly and completely to its public.

SPC utilizes social media platforms including YouTube, Facebook and Instagram to provide information to students in formats that correspond to communication preferences. A Saint Paul College app is also available to download from their website to help students stay informed about campus events and to assist in navigating their SPC experience.

The College's Fact Book, available on the College's website, is updated annually and provides data about enrollment, degrees, majors, student demographics and student

outcomes. This valuable tool presents accurate information about the College to all stakeholder groups.

The Institutional Research, Planning and Grants (IRPG) Office serves as the data repository for the College and provides all official data to the College community. As was reported during the visit, the College has made a significant investment in adding staffing and resources to the IR Office to support data collection. IRPG staff stated that this expansion has allowed the department to move from reactive to proactive. Examples given include a commitment to expanding data analysis, utilizing process analytics, supporting planning, and creating dashboards as well as providing training on data literacy to faculty and staff so they understand how to access and best use the data.

SPC makes consumer information available to the public on its website via a “Student Consumer Information” page accessed from the “About Us” tab on the homepage. Information provided includes Student Right to Know, accessibility services, financial assistance information, campus security and crime statistics, and completion and graduation rates. As was reported by the 2018 HLC Visiting Team, the federally mandated Student Right to Know and Campus Crime information is easily accessible on the website.

The Minnesota State Board of Trustees annually sets maximum tuition growth rates for two-year public colleges and provides guidance on tuition and fee structures via Board Procedure 5.11.1. SPC establishes their tuition rates within these guidelines and posts this information on its website along with other financial information and the Net Price Calculator.

The College clearly identifies its accreditation status with the Higher Learning Commission on the “About Us” page as well as a listing of accredited programs with links to each program’s accrediting body’s website. Certified and accredited programs are also identified in the College Catalog.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

The governing Board is sufficiently autonomous and works in the best interest of the institution as evidenced by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Policies and Procedures manual, which set general standards of conduct for each trustee in his/her role on the Board. Policy 1C.1 Part 5 specifically outlines prohibited activities including use of the position to secure benefits and use of influence to affect hiring and/or awarding of contracts.

Thirty-seven Minnesota State colleges and universities are governed by a single 15-member Board of Trustees appointed by the governor for six-year terms. The inclusion of three student members and a geographically balanced State Board of Trustees provides support as the governing board considers issues from internal and external constituencies. The Board meets at least seven times per year and all Board meetings are open to the public. The duties of the Board are clearly delineated in its policies which clarify the scope of its decision-making authority. When new members are appointed to the Board, a comprehensive orientation takes place to acquaint them with the Minnesota State System, legal and fiduciary responsibilities, and budgeting. Additional training is received at annual retreats and during Board meetings.

During the visit, members of the Board clearly articulated an understanding of the Board's oversight role and their fiscal, human resource, and leadership responsibilities. In discussing SPC's accreditation, Board members expressed that the evaluative processes in place at the time of the last visit did not appropriately flag the underlying problems occurring at SPC. Since that time, the Chancellor, System staff, and the Board have worked to revise and update policies and practices to open lines of communication and ensure that the Board is receiving information in real time so appropriate monitoring of the colleges can take place. Minn State has used SPC's accreditation journey to learn and improve its processes for all member colleges and universities. They explained

that they are “listening differently” now and they are in the process of hiring an accreditation and assessment director to function system-wide.

Much of the work of the Board is accomplished through its standing committee structure. Per Policy 1A.2, “all members of the Board serve as ex-officio members of every committee to which they are not appointed” and are given the authority to fully participate in committee discussions and deliberations. Standing Committees include: the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Human Resources Committee, Academic and Student Affairs Committee, Audit Committee, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, Facilities Committee, and Nominating Committee. Other ad hoc committees and working groups may be appointed as needed. A review of Board meeting minutes and standing committee minutes demonstrate that the Board is involved in issues and discussions that preserve and enhance SPC programs and services for its students.

The Board entertains public comment at its discretion at Board meetings and schedules reports from various constituencies to share input during its deliberative process. Evidence of the Board’s commitment to hearing multiple voices as it charts Minn State’s future course and builds policies and procedures, is confirmed in the work being done on the Reimagining Minnesota State initiative. The Reimagining Process, as outlined on the Minn State website, has included open dialogue and input from stakeholders about “what it means to be a public higher education system in an environment of rapid and accelerating change.”

The Board preserves its independence from undue influence through strict adherence to Board Policies and Procedures. Examples can be seen in the Board’s Code of Conduct Policy.

Day-to-day management of the College is assigned to the College President per Minn State policy 4.2 which states in part that “the president is the chief executive officer of the college or university. The president shall report to the chancellor and is responsible for leading the college and/or university faculty, staff, and students in developing and implementing the college or university mission, consistent with the board mission and goals.” Members of the President’s Cabinet confirmed during the visit that the College’s President, and in turn the administrative team, is given the authority to lead and manage the institution.

As outlined in the Assurance Argument and confirmed during the visit, oversight of academic matters is assigned to the faculty per the collective bargaining agreement. Specifically, the contract affirms that the faculty hold a critical role in academic decision-making and that this role is enforced through the Academic Affairs and Standards Council. This body serves as the vehicle for management and faculty “to bring all proposals regarding academic affairs and standards.” The Council has authority to approve requests and set academic standards.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

2.D was "met with concerns" during the prior visit. Since that time, SPC has made significant progress and fully meets this standard. The change in culture and climate is notable, as documented in evidence provided and documented in this report.

A review of the relevant Minn State and College policies provide evidence of SPC's formal commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. When asked about student academic freedom and freedom of expression, faculty members discussed and shared a draft policy document, which articulates student rights and responsibilities in freedom of expression in the classroom.

SPC's organizational structures and committees provide mechanisms for engaging stakeholders in decision making. Minn State leadership, the Board of Trustees, and administration, faculty, staff, and students confirmed that all voices are heard and considered at SPC. During several formal meetings and during open forums for Criterion 1 and 2, evidence was provided that communication and shared governance has improved significantly since the last comprehensive visit. Scores from the most recent PACE survey also provide evidence that employee satisfaction at SPC has improved significantly.

Faculty and staff expressed confidence in their ability to freely express opinions, ideas, dissatisfaction, and issues. During the team visit, there was no evidence of any attempt by the Board, System leadership, or College leadership to impinge on academic freedom. This was affirmed by faculty and staff during the visit. Students expressed satisfaction in their opportunity to share divergent perspectives and engage in freedom of expression.

While some of the comments in the student survey indicated concerns about being heard, when the review team discussed these comments with stakeholders during the virtual visit, both employees and students noted many of them were due to pandemic struggles with remote instruction and services. SPC is focused on addressing those concerns and supporting student freedom of expression through this challenging time and described strategies to improve the student experience.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

SPC's Assurance Argument and discussions with the review team provide evidence the College supports research and follows all standards of compliance, ethical behavior, scholarly practice, and fiscal accountability by having processes for following the requirements of grantors and oversight entities, such as the National Science Foundation, United States Department of Education, and the Minnesota State System. While research is not a primary function at SPC, faculty and staff are aware of research requirements, and has processes in place to support any research activity. The college relies on its institutional researchers and Institutional Research, Planning and Grants (IRPG) to assist in research activities.

Saint Paul College describes its work in providing training and support services for faculty and staff who conduct simple research projects and offers evidence of doing so. Currently most resources are available through IRPG department and the College webpage. IRPG provides guidance in ethical standards and overall research integrity and provides approval for research projects. SPC is exploring formation of an Institutional Review Board (IRB); which will provide additional support and guidance to research projects. As SPC continues its discussions about forming an IRB, it may also want to consider how that work might inform processes and training for students conducting applied undergraduate research within classes.

Students at SPC learn about ethical research practices in several ways. The Library provides research guides and scholarly articles. Some General Education courses include instruction on research ethics. Student Services provides information about citations, sources, and how to correctly cite sources. The syllabus template includes academic integrity language faculty may use. The Student Code of Conduct delineates responsibilities and sanctions related to academic dishonesty.

SPC documents, in handbooks and other communication, its policies and processes for enforcing academic honesty and integrity. In reviewing the policies, the review team found the evidence to be clear, the processes to be consistent and appropriate, and helpful. Additionally, the Director of

Student Rights and Responsibilities creates a report that outlines trends in violation of the policy. It is not clear how SPC uses the trend report to inform change and improvement in how students are informed about academic honesty and integrity; this information would be useful to share with a variety of internal audiences.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Rationale

Saint Paul College meets all of the Core Components of Criterion 2 and provided strong evidence of specific actions that support a commitment to act with integrity in all interactions, and to conduct its business ethically and responsibly. The Governing Board and the Minn State System Office have documented policies and procedures which guide local policy development. In the two years since its last review, SPC has spent significant time and effort to collaboratively revise and develop local policies and processes appropriate to its mission, values, and goals.

Review of the evidence demonstrates integrity in financial, academic, human resource, and auxiliary functions. SPC presents itself in a clear and ethical in the manner to students and other stakeholders and makes no claims that cannot be supported by evidence. Marketing and public relations is multi-modal and consistent in its messaging.

The Minn State Governing Board functions appropriately and is invested in the success of the College, but leaves day-to-day decisions to the Chancellor and SPC Leadership. The College has developed and effectively communicates policies for academic freedom, freedom of expression, and acquisition of knowledge. Recent diversity and inclusion work supports improved academic freedom and freedom of expression policies and processes for students, who have been given a strong and significant voice at SPC.

Faculty, staff, and students report significantly improved communication systems at SPC. Evidence was provided in the Assurance Argument and in several meetings and open forums that the administration has fully embraced shared governance; employees stated that they feel appreciated and that their opinions and ideas are both heard and considered as institutional decisions are made.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

SPC has strong processes in place to ensure that courses are current and that outcomes are appropriate to the credentials that the College awards. Many of these processes are governed by the Minn State system. The Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) reviews and approves all curricular changes and new programs. Conversations with faculty and administrators revealed that academic programs work closely with their respective program advisory committees (PAC) to ensure that their curriculum is current, and in the case of technical programs, that it is in line with what is needed by employers in business and industry.

The department of Academic Effectiveness and Innovation (AEI) works with all faculty to ensure that course outcomes are appropriate for the level of the course and are aligned with program and College outcomes. A review of the Minn State Board Policies confirms that all courses must have outcomes listed on syllabi.

An examination of program assessment reports revealed that course and program are well constructed. Conversations with faculty in the Criterion 3 and 4 open forum confirmed that colleagues in the AEI department work alongside faculty to provide assistance in crafting course outcomes.

SPC has processes and procedures in place to ensure the consistency of their courses in all modalities and locations. These processes are in place for all institutions in the Minn State System. In particular, SPC has strong processes for their dual (or concurrent) enrollment offerings. The College matches each high school concurrent enrollment teacher with a SPC faculty mentor. The mentor

conducts a site visit and completes a site visit evaluation form. An examination of a completed form and conversations with faculty who serve as concurrent enrollment mentors confirmed significant engagement with this process.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

The general education program at SPC is designed to meet the broad general education requirements of the Minnesota State System so that students at SPC may easily transfer to any state university or college, including institutions in the University of Minnesota system. The learning outcomes for general education courses meet the outcome requirements for the ten goal areas in the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC). The general education requirements are clearly spelled out in the Program Requirements Guides. The Academic Effectiveness & Innovation (AEI) department support faculty who are developing new general education courses to ensure that the course outcomes meet the requirements with the respective general education goal area in the MnTC.

The ten goal areas in the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum have been thoroughly vetted by faculty throughout the Minnesota State System. The goal areas help to ensure that students receive a broad knowledge and skills base. The ten areas include: (1) communication, (2) critical thinking, (3) natural sciences, (4) mathematics/logical reasoning, (5) history and the behavioral and social sciences, (6) humanities and fine arts, (7) human diversity, (8) global perspective, (9) ethical and civic responsibility, and (10) people and the environment.

SPC faculty recently revised College Learning Outcomes (CLO) to ensure that all students at SPC, particularly students who are not in the Associate of Arts transfer program, engage with a common set of outcomes. The five outcomes are: (1) communication, (2) creative & critical thinking, (3) global citizenship & civic responsibility, (4) information & technology literacy, and (5) personal responsibility & life skills. Well developed rubrics have been developed for each of these CLOs. All

programs use these rubrics and enter their assessment data into the Strategic Planning Online (SPOL) system.

SPC has a highly diverse student population and is located in an urban environment within the city of St. Paul. Both the academic curriculum and the cocurricular programs reflect the diversity of the student population. The global citizenship & civic responsibility College Learning Outcome category helps to ensure that students in all programs are provided opportunities to participate in diversity related activities. An examination of course offerings at SPC reveals numerous courses that engage students in these areas.

Conversations with students revealed an abundance of enthusiasm for how SPC supports students. The students interviewed represented the diversity at SPC, and expressed how culturally responsive they have found SPC to be. The students also discussed how faculty, staff, and administrators at SPC have helped to empower them to be involved in local issues, including get-out-the-vote campaigns, helping homeless families in the community, and helping other SPC students who are in need.

The faculty and students at SPC engage in scholarship, intellectual inquiry, and creative endeavors that are appropriate for a community and technical college. A review of College documents and conversations with students and faculty demonstrate that students have several opportunities outside of the classroom to participate in intellectual discovery. Examples include the Minnesota Skills USA competitions and discipline specific honor societies.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

SPC strives to ensure that the faculty and staff composition reflects the demographics of the community it serves. Policy 4.37.00.0 assures hiring processes provide for thorough, well-documented, open and competitive searches that result in hiring the best qualified candidates. Moreover, the policy assures that the applicant pool and college workforce reflect the diversity of its service delivery area as an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. During the most recent Strategic Planning process one of the identified key performance indicators (KPIs) was to increase diversity among faculty and staff to 30% in 2022-2023. The College is currently at 25.4%.

SPC has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff. Faculty to student ratios by academic division represents best practices for areas of study and are aligned to peer institutions.

To address institutional and departmental capacity concerns, new positions have been added to increase personnel in understaffed areas and to reduce turnover. Human Resources confirmed that over 70 positions have been hired and onboarded in the past 15-18 months.

Faculty credential standards are established by Minnesota State Academic Affairs College Faculty Credentialing Unit, housed at the Minnesota State system office. While the system establishes faculty credential standards, it is the responsibility of the College to monitor faculty credentials in alignment with established standards. The College's academic deans and Human Resources department conducted a comprehensive audit of all faculty credentials in March 2019.

During the comprehensive visit in 2018, an audit of all faculty credential files, including academic and occupational experience, revealed some missing documentation. All faculty credentialing files were updated, and any credentialing compliance issues were addressed. The College has added a Faculty Credentialing and Recruiting Coordinator to Human Resources to ensure faculty are qualified per HLC and state guidelines. A review of faculty files during this review found no issues; the College has created a robust and well documented process to make sure faculty are qualified per Minn State and HLC requirements.

As a result of issues related to faculty evaluation identified in the July 2019 HLC Action Letter, the College created a comprehensive Faculty Development and Evaluations process which was approved at a July 2020 Faculty Shared governance meeting. The process includes a faculty professional development plan, classroom observations, student surveys, and a summative comprehensive review of all aspects of the faculty member's responsibilities. .

The College supports and prioritizes access to professional development for faculty and staff. The Academic Effectiveness and Innovation (AEI) department provides professional development activities on campus, and the also supports additional off campus professional development opportunities. Faculty have access to on-demand consultation with curriculum designers, professional development training sessions and links to outside resources and opportunities. A New Faculty Academy supports new faculty and includes a 3-day orientation, mentoring, monthly lunch and learn sessions and formative observations.

The Minnesota State College faculty (MSCF) Contract, Article 11 stipulates that, for faculty teaching General Education Disciplines, each instructor shall post and maintain one office hour per week for each three credits taught to a maximum of 15 credits. If a faculty member's entire teaching assignment is online, the office hours can be held entirely online. If the teaching assignment is onsite, the office hours are held onsite. If the teaching assignment is mixed, the office hours are mixed in reasonable proportions to allow for faculty availability to students. Faculty teaching in non-General Education Disciplines shall post and maintain two office hours of student availability per week on campus outside the instructor's scheduled instructional time.

Staff members providing student support services are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development. Professional development opportunities are available through AEI, led by an Organizational Developer, hired in 2019 to support staff with enrichment and professional development opportunities. All Staff Development opportunities are held in the fall and spring and offices are closed to enable all staff to attend.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Saint Paul College provides students with support services required to be successful. The College Services Directory includes information about all support services including: Access and Disability Resources, Career Services, Counseling, Financial Aid, International Student Services, One Stop, Pathway Advising, Power of You, Student Rights and Responsibilities, Student Life and Diversity, Registration and Student Records, Title IX, TRIO Student Support Services, Tutoring, and Veterans Services. Each of these student support services is designed to meet the unique needs of SPC's diverse student population. Each department has a physical location on campus and also offers remote access to staff and services.

As a result of a request from Student Senate, the College now offers mental health counseling services. A request from Student Senate to implement a Classroom Free Expression and Inclusion policy to guide the actions of faculty and students during difficult classroom conversations was also granted; the College developed the policy to specifically address protocol to ensure that all are comfortable and understand the responsibility for respectful dialogue.

SPC provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. The College has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared. SPC has traditionally used ACCUPLACER to assess the reading and mathematics skills of new students and followed the placement scores required by Minn State Board Policy 3.3. In 2020, in response to COVID-19, Minn State provided guidelines for each in the absence of ACCUPLACER. SPC is using Multiple Measures for assessing academic placement by using recent high school GPA, ACT, SAT, and MCA scores.

For students who do not have recent high school GPA, ACT, SAT, or MCA scores, a guided self-placement process was developed by Student Affairs staff, in consultation with faculty, and is used to facilitate student placement.

At Saint Paul College students receive support in navigating academic programs and degree requirements through academic advising, an electronic degree audit resource, an early warning system, and student mentoring. A pathway advisor is assigned based on each student's educational goals to assist with college navigation, course planning and sequencing, as well as transfer resources. In addition to curricular advice, students are supported through degree audit systems, time management training, transitioning to college support, and referrals to additional college services. Specialized advising in cohort programs for specific student populations also is offered, such as the Power of You for first generation, low income students from Saint Paul Public schools, and TRIO Student Support Services.

The College provides faculty and students myriad technology resources. SPC provides access to technology and software for academic programs, including both PC and Mac labs. A tour of campus confirms that classroom and laboratory spaces are tailored to meet program needs and to effectively support teaching and learning. All classrooms are equipped with technology for instructors to lecture and facilitate learning in the classroom.

The library provides students access to books and magazines, digital resources, and study spaces. The Library is integrated into the MnPALS consortium, providing access to over 100 other MnPALS libraries. Students who need to access technology at home can check out a Chromebook and/or a WiFi hotspot through the library. In response to the COVID-19 transition to remote instruction and service, SPC purchased 70 additional Chromebooks and 10 hotspots for check out. This purchase was made in response to the results of a March 2020 COVID-19 student needs survey in which thirty percent of survey respondents indicated that they had a need to check out a laptop or hotspot.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Rationale

Saint Paul College offers quality programs for its students. The College has comprehensive and effective policies and procedures in place to ensure that its programs are appropriately rigorous. The College has enough quality faculty and staff to meet the needs of their students, and documents processes and procedures in place to make certain that their faculty are properly qualified, including those teaching dual enrollment courses.

SPC has a very diverse student population and is located in an urban setting in Saint Paul. The college takes full advantage of the diverse urban setting in which it is situated and provides its students with ample opportunities to engage in the rich diversity of its community. The global citizenship and civic responsibility College Learning Outcome category provides opportunities for all students to participate in diversity related activities.

SPC has developed a comprehensive Faculty Development and Evaluation process, recently approved at a Faculty Shared Governance meeting. The College prioritizes access to professional development opportunities, delivered primarily through the Academic Effectiveness and Innovation department. Faculty and staff expressed support and appreciation for the work of the AEI, and of the rich and varied opportunities provided them to improve their knowledge and skills.

SPC has revised its College Learning Outcomes (CLOs) to ensure that all students leave the College with a set of skills and knowledge that prepares them for further education or the workplace. Well developed rubrics are developed for each of the CLOs, and are used by all programs as a part of the comprehensive assessment of student learning.

In addition to quality and rigorous academic programs, students receive support in navigating their college journey through a wide range of services, including academic advising, early warning interventions, electronic degree audit resources, pathway advising services, and transfer support services. Specialized advising in cohort programs for specific student populations is also provided. Students expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the services provided by the Student Affairs division, identifying it as 'the heart of the College'.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

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

Rating

Met With Concerns

Rationale

In spring 2019, SPC revised its program review process to ensure broader participation by all programs and greater use of data to make decisions. The visiting team confirmed use of a new Program Review Handbook and templates for annual and comprehensive reporting. The team also confirmed evidence of new data dashboards and analysis of data related to curricula, learning outcomes, and program costs. The College is utilizing Strategic Planning Online (SPOL) software and the Employee Portal to manage program review recordkeeping. The new program review process includes updated schedules for review, with a third of SPC programs reviewed each year on 3-year cycles. Expectations of the review process are outlined in the new handbook, and feedback is welcomed from deans, peers, and the Assessment of Student Learning Committee.

SPC has developed the capability and structure to confidently act on program evaluation results.

Sample reports from two certificate programs and three degree (AAS and AS) programs are provided in the Assurance Argument; the results highlight insights and resource needs that have been derived from data analysis. This information is beginning to inform future planning and budgeting, as described in Core Component 5C, and several specific examples were provided during the comprehensive visit. Faculty who participated in meetings and forums during the visit praised the new program review process for providing an effective structure for programs to 'tell their stories.' Faculty interviewed during the comprehensive visit acknowledged some slight challenges – entering/extracting data from SPOL and managing workloads in smaller departments – but nearly everyone interviewed, and especially faculty, expressed strong support for the new program evaluation process.

The program review system also connects to the College's system for assessing program learning outcomes (PLOs), which is detailed in Core Component 4B. Each sample program report contains maps which align courses with PLOs. Faculty assess student mastery of PLOs through a variety of methods (exams, papers, projects, skill demonstrations, signature assignments, etc.) as identified in their assessment plans. SPC aggregates scores across courses and sections. The Assessment of Student Learning Committee reviews aggregated data across the institution.

The team confirmed the significant progress SPC has made since receiving a probation sanction in 2019. The College acknowledges that work toward improving processes began prior the sanction, and even as early as SPC participation in the HLC Assessment Academy in 2017. Even with the work beginning in 2017 the pace with which the College revamped its culture of assessment is remarkable. Through evidence provided in its Assurance Argument and confirmed during the team's visit, SPC is embarking on a journey that will allow the College to demonstrate full compliance with Core Component 4A.

As the SPC's review processes are very new – e.g., the program review system in Core Component 4A and the CLO assessment system in 4B contain just one cycle of data – the team was unable to ensure continued sustainability, or evidence of improvement in student learning as a result of program review and assessment practices. A majority of the College's programs have not yet participated in comprehensive program reviews, which occur on a rotating 3-year basis and while the College provides ample evidence for many essential elements of review – e.g., evidence of shared responsibility in creating outcomes and designing rubrics – other elements have yet to be tested. For example, data analyses and interpretations are incomplete in many of the program examples. Benchmark targets for some learning outcomes did not hit their marks, leading to uncertainty in how they were set. For other outcomes, data is missing entirely, although plans for data analyses are outlined. While SPC is on a clear path to fully meeting Core Component 4A, more data and evidence are needed to ensure full implementation and a completed review cycle for all programs. SPC's systems are still being tested; they are not as systematic as they will likely be in a few years' time. For these reasons, the team requests an embedded monitoring report to be included in the 2024-25 comprehensive evaluation.

Other components of educational quality are clear and evident in Core Component 4A. The visiting team confirmed the College's use of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum for evaluating credits accepted in transfer. They also confirmed policies on credit transfer by examination, experiential, and prior learning, and by review by independent third-party evaluators. Credit evaluation policies are evident at both the state and College levels and explained on the SPC website. Relatedly, through an updated assessment process and review by the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC), the College assures the quality and rigor of all of its courses, including prerequisite courses, and

expectations for student learning. The College follows a prescribed workflow for all course proposals and modifications as well as new program proposals. In a meeting with the AASC, team members confirmed sufficient state oversight of curricular processes for all programs and the use of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum for transfer programs. A Curriculum Assessment Coordinator, hired in 2018, ensures compliance with SPC and Minn State standards and works directly with programs to ensure that any modifications meet stated PLOs. Finally, team members confirm that the College retains primary oversight and control over learning resources in its learning management system.

The College's processes for ensuring quality of its Concurrent Enrollment (CE) Program were cited as unclear in prior reviews. In this Assurance Argument, the College provides detailed explanation and direct evidence of the consistency between CE courses taught by high school instructors and the same courses taught by SPC faculty. Program reviews contain learning outcome data for concurrently enrolled students and formal processes for mentoring of high school instructors, including in-class observations. Direct disaggregation and discussion of CE data could be of benefit in future program reviews and in the Strategic Enrollment Plan, where Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) tracking is listed as a goal.

Specialized accreditations in many of SPC's professional career programs are listed in the Assurance Argument and confirmed on the College's website; a review of the College website confirms that all are current. SPC acknowledges and HLC is aware of all conditions related to probation status associated with the College's practical nursing program, which is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, and several of its business programs, which are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs.

SPC ensures the success of its graduates and evaluates their success. Visiting team members confirmed that a Next Destination Questionnaire is used to assess employment outcomes of graduates of career programs, the data from which appear on program review dashboards. The College also assesses the success of transfer graduates through continued enrollment indicators provided by the National Student Clearinghouse, and these figures also appear on program review dashboards.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

Embedded Monitoring for 2024 Comprehensive Evaluation

The review team requests a monitoring report to be embedded in SPC's 2024-25 comprehensive evaluation. The report should illustrate to the 2024-25 team that the essential components of program review are fully implemented and sustainable. SPC is encouraged to use time advantageously during the intervening years to supplement the early evidence it cites in this 2020 report.

The monitoring report should demonstrate the following:

- Consistent application of the program review process. SPC should demonstrate completion of one cycle of comprehensive program review for all programs, and clear evidence of data analysis, interpretation, and resulting changes across the College. Much of this is happening, but more cycles of data will ensure continued viability of program review, and will allow the College to continually refine the process.
- Evidence of embedded assessment of student learning data into program reviews. SPC should ensure that assessment data continues to be included in program reviews and that such data is interpreted holistically along with other data, such as student success measures.

- Robust connection of program review to budgeting. While connections between program reviews and budget planning are occurring now, the 2024-25 embedded report will give SPC an opportunity to demonstrate specific connection between program review outcomes and budget decisions.
- Evidence of broader College-wide decisions informed by program review. Because of the newness of SPC's program review and assessment systems, insights derived from their use are currently limited to those that are program-specific. The new program review process will be significantly more robust through an examination of broader themes that emerge across programs to inform larger institutional strategies. For example, SPC is beginning several new goals on equity (in the Anti-Racist Trauma Informed Plan) and student success (in the Title III Grant). An examination of how those goals are informed by program reviews will help SPC triangulate the role program review plays in overall cross-departmental (institutional) improvement.

In summary, while SPC has made significant progress since its probation sanction, many of the reports and processes cited as evidence, while promising, are too new to demonstrate sustained practices and subsequent improvement in programs as a result of analysis of review outcomes. With an embedded report in 2024-25, SPC will be able to clearly document in the 2024-25 Assurance Argument that all of the new program review and assessment processes implemented in the last year are indeed tested and robust.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Saint Paul College continues to make improvements to their assessment of academic and cocurricular programs. In conversations with faculty and administrators it was quite apparent that the intensive in-service trainings that were provided in the 2018-2019 academic year have had a significant impact on the assessment practices of faculty and staff at SPC. In 2019 SPC approved new learning outcomes for all programs and courses. A review of syllabi and discussions with faculty confirmed that course level learning outcomes are clearly articulated to students. An examination of departmental assessment reports reveals that program outcomes exist for programs in each academic department, and are assessed regularly.

SPC utilizes the software system Strategic Planning Online (SPOL) for gathering assessment data, the same software that is used for budgeting at the institution. The decision to use this software was made by faculty, and there is significant buy-in to its use. Conversations with faculty revealed that SPOL has worked well for them. SPOL is also used for budgeting, which has helped programs to connect their assessment results to budget requests.

Cocurricular assessment processes at SPC are well designed and implemented across the College. SPC has developed five cocurricular learning outcomes (CCLOs) that staff in Student Affairs assess. Each Student Affairs department uses the Co-Curricular Assessment – Department Plan & Report template to develop their assessment plan. The template is well developed, straightforward, and easy to use. Similar to the academic programs, Student Affairs departments enter their data into SPOL.

Discussions with faculty confirmed that the new assessment processes for both academic programs and cocurricular offerings are developed to be both manageable and meaningful. The student learning outcomes in all areas are clearly written, and allow for a variety of assessment strategies to measure student learning. SPC should be commended for the progress they have made in the development of these assessment processes.

Although the revised assessment processes at SPC are still new, the process has already yielded

changes and improvements to both academic and cocurricular programs. A review of provided documents and conversations with faculty, staff, and administration revealed concrete examples of changes that have been made to curriculum or delivery strategies based on assessment data. These examples exist in all areas: academic departments, general education, and cocurricular programs. Because the current assessment process is relatively new, an area of growth for SPC is to close the assessment loop in all areas in which weaknesses have been identified and changes made; to ensure that the changes actually make a difference and positively impacts student learning. The current processes that are in place and the faculty and staff enthusiasm for these processes signify that the College is committed to the long-term implementation of the assessment plan.

The documents provided and from conversations with faculty, staff, and administration, evidence was provided that there is now substantial participation in the assessment processes at SPC, and is genuine and authentic. In the Criterion 3 and 4 open session many faculty and staff enthusiastically talked about the culture shift around assessment at SPC. Much of that enthusiasm has been attributed to the high level of quality assessment support that SPC faculty and staff receive from the department of Academic Effectiveness and Innovation (AEI).

The Assessment of Student Learning Committee reviews all assessment reports for academic and cocurricular programs and provides detailed and rigorous feedback. A review of the assessment planning and report templates for both academic and cocurricular programs reveals that SPC is using best practices in higher education assessment.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

SPC has established goals for student retention, persistence, and completion. The updated goals were set in spring 2020 by the Strategic Enrollment Planning (SEP) Committee. They are informed by the College's historical data and compared against other Minnesota State colleges, Metro colleges, and the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP). Review of SPC's Fact Book, program review reports, and SEP meeting minutes confirms analysis of data occurs regularly. Data in these reports is disaggregated by year, enrollment intensity (full-time vs. part-time), and academic division. With new equity goals set by the Minnesota State system and growth in minority populations at SPC, the College should consider strengthening processes for disaggregating by race/ethnicity and other demographic characteristics.

The College's planning processes are informed by data on retention, persistence, and completion. A designated data team works with the Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) Committee to shape action plans and assist with gathering and interpreting data. Review of actions currently underway in the Strategic Enrollment Plan confirms that they mirror the same interventions explained throughout the Assurance Argument. Examples include actions pertaining to enrollment and retention of dually enrolled high school students, late registrants, and participants in SPC's retention tracking and course scheduling initiatives. The Strategic Enrollment Plan also contains unique KPIs at more detailed levels than those included in the College's general dashboards – such as enrollment rate by initial placement and completion rates by cohort – as well as long-term projections.

Goals for retention, persistence, and completion are well communicated to all SPC stakeholders. The team confirmed inclusion in a campus flyer, the Fall 2020 President's Community Summit, and an

employee SharePoint site (Data Matters). The Institutional Research, Planning, and Grants (IRPG) Department provides training to the campus community on how to access and analyze data that is broadly used throughout the institution. While the Strategic Enrollment Plan is fairly new (spring 2020) and implementation began only in summer, 2020, it does provide a strong framework for continued oversight and accountability across the College.

The strategies that the College has adopted to improve practices and services as a result of data analysis are still mostly untested by several cycles of collection and review although several concrete examples were provided to the team. Evidence is provided for how retention data helped inform changes in SPC's reading, sports science, and psychology programs. Further evidence shows the impacts that analysis of retention data is having on various services, including pathway advising (EAB Navigate) and a summer bridge program (Title III Grant). Analysis of retention, persistence, and completion data had already informed recent changes in how the College communicates with students who are not making sufficient academic progress (i.e., the Satisfactory Academic Progress process).

The methodologies SPC uses to examine retention, persistence, and completion reflect sound practice. The College maintains its own definitions of these metrics, yet also compares itself against the Minnesota State System definitions. The student record system used at SPC allows the College to analyze data on retention, persistence, and completion at various time points and by various student demographics.

To inform broader understanding of retention and completion, the IRPG Department has created a series of automated 'live' reports of interim benchmarks that drive the larger metrics. These reports, which are updated daily, include information on enrollment progression/funneling, course fill rates, and grade distributions. Taken together, the evidence provided in Core Component 4C demonstrates that SPC is an institution that is committed to understanding and improving student retention, persistence, and completion.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Rationale

Saint Paul College has made significant improvements in its assessment of student learning and cocurricular programs. In the spring of 2019, SPC revised its program review process to ensure broader participation by all programs, and to use data more effectively to make decisions. The new program review process includes updated schedules for review, with a third of the programs undergoing review each year. All course and program outcomes have been recently revised to align with better assessment processes. Faculty express high satisfaction with the level of support they now receive from the Academic Effectiveness & Innovation (AEI) department with program review and assessment. Cocurricular programs also have outcomes that are assessed and data collected to ensure that any changes to programs are measurable. The newly revised processes are nicely integrated with the budget request process. As a result of this new process, SPC can confidently act on program evaluation and assessment results and recommendations. Although the revised processes are still new to the College, they have already yielded changes and improvements to both academic and co-curricular programs. Concrete examples were provided to the team of changes that have been made to curriculum or delivery strategies as a result of assessment outcomes. These examples exist in all areas: academic departments, the general education program, and co-curricular programs and activities. Faculty reported strong support for the new system, and enthusiasm for how the results will be used in planning and budgeting at the College.

SPC should be commended for the significant changes made in assessment and program review. Because the process is new, an area of growth for SPC is to close the assessment loop in all areas in which problems or challenges have been identified, to ensure that changes made make a difference in a positively impacts student learning and success. More cycles of program review will be needed to determine if the process remains sustainable.

Appropriate methodologies are used in gathering alumni success data and also in gathering student retention, persistence, and completion data. Updated goals were set in the spring of 2020 by the Strategic Enrollment Planning (SEP) Committee, and are informed by SPC historical data, and compared against other Minnesota State colleges, Metro-area colleges, and the National Community College Benchmarking Project. The College's planning processes are informed by the data collected on retention, persistence, and completion. A designated data team works with the SEP Committee to shape action plans and assist with collecting and interpreting data.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

As documented in the Assurance Argument and affirmed during the review team's virtual visit, Saint Paul College, the Minnesota State System, and the Board of Trustees follow the standards, formally articulated in legislation and state, system, bargaining units, and college policies and procedures. The Board and Chancellor and his staff are appropriately knowledgeable of SPC's actions and activities. The College leadership team has collaboratively improved and/or developed processes – formal and informal – to increase faculty, staff, students, and community member involvement in SPC's governance. Communication about these processes is clear and open. There is also a process for reviewing and improving policies and processes, which are memorialized in a repository available for stakeholder review. The College's organizational and committee structures offer mechanisms for engaging constituents in offering input in planning and decisions. During the review team's virtual visit the Board of Trustees, the Chancellor and staff, and SPC's administration, faculty, staff, and students affirmed constituents have involvement and voice at an appropriate level. SPC constituents expressed significantly improved satisfaction with open communication and their involvement in shared governance since the previous visit. This is further affirmed in improved scores in the PACE survey. In preparation for its year four assurance filing, as well as to enhance SPC's overall success in navigating a post-pandemic environment, SPC may want to develop specific strategies for sustaining its commitment to, and practice of, authentic shared governance.

Saint. Paul College documents and describes how it more effectively uses data for decision-making

and the College has invested in new and/or improved staffing, processes, and tools to provide data to faculty and staff to decentralize data analysis and increase data literacy. This supports a number of processes, including strategic planning, program review, and assessment of student learning outcomes. Additionally, there now exists significant training and professional development in the use of data to inform planning and decision-making. SPC also uses several nationally-normed surveys/assessments for tracking and benchmarking improvement and results. While much of this work and improvement has happened in a relatively short period of time, SPC leadership and employees indicated buy-in and commitment to continued use of the college's research and planning infrastructure to sustain these practices. The review team was impressed with the speed in which this work occurred and the authentic and widespread commitment from stakeholder groups to continuing this work. Numerous examples were offered during the visit to support evidence presented in the Assurance Argument. SPC faculty and staff are optimistic about the institution's current state, despite the recent additional strain of the pandemic, and are forward-thinking about using data to support SPC's future goals and plans.

Saint Paul College provided strong evidence of using formal processes, college committees, shared governance, and collaboration with faculty, and students to establish and update its academic requirements, policy, and processes. As a member of the Minnesota State System, some elements of academic planning and policy are determined at the state or system level; others are at the local level. SPC's administration states its commitment to engaging constituents in this work. During the virtual visit, the review team affirmed this commitment is both authentic and effective; numerous examples were provided of improved collaboration and communication from employees and students. The College has invested in staffing, technology, and software to enhance academic planning and review and provided appropriate training for those using these tools.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Saint Paul College has qualified and trained operational staff. In FY19 SPC employed 184 full-time staff members and 17 administrators. To address staff shortages in key areas, positions have been added or filled for increased staffing for One Stop, Advising, Student Mental Health Services, Access and Disability Services, Academic Support Services, Academic Effectiveness and Innovation, Human Resources and Institutional Research, Planning and Grants since the beginning of 2018-19 academic year. These positions expanded capacity sufficiently to support College operations. SPC has infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered, including physical space, equipment, and technology. A tour of the campus confirms that SPC provides all operations necessary for students, including classrooms, administration, staff and faculty offices, and social gathering spaces.

SPC's mission statement is appropriate to a community and technical college, and as part of the Minnesota State System, is approved by the Board of Trustees. The mission statement is realistic as it addresses both transfer and occupational programs as well as the diverse constituents served by the College. SPC's stated goals are realistic and demonstrate its awareness of its resources and opportunities to meet the needs of its stakeholders.

Since the last site visit, SPC has moved to a transparent budgeting and planning process. Cabinet sets the budget priorities for the upcoming year. This helps to determine the base budget while additional requests are considered via a prioritization list. This planning process is open to the entire campus via budget and spending workshops held throughout the year for anyone to attend. SPC delegates budget authority to employees based on the nature of their position and responsibilities. When an employee designated as a cost center manager is hired, the Accounting Supervisor leads new employee orientation on the responsibilities of managing resources and monitoring a cost center budget.

Despite enrollment declines as a result of COVID-19, SPC's fiscal allocations ensure it educational

purposes are achieved. The College was able to manage the financial impacts of COVID-19 in FY20 and realize a surplus of approximately \$1.4 million. Non-personnel spending decreased dramatically as operations and classes moved remote. As of September 2020, SPC achieved better than expected summer enrollment. Actual fall enrollment is slightly better than the FY21 Budget projection.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

SPC aligns its resources with its priorities through processes in place for systematic and integrated planning and budgeting. The College's annual Alignment of Budget and Planning process ensures resource allocations align with annual priorities. Annual priorities derived from the Strategic Plan are determined with involvement of faculty, staff and administration. Objectives and budget requests are aligned and prioritized accordingly, ensuring the institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

Saint Paul College utilizes SPOL (Strategic Planning Online) to integrate assessment into the planning and budgeting process. Assessment data, benchmarking, and analysis are also utilized in program review to inform program planning, development, and resource identification. During the planning and budgeting cycle, requests from academic departments are reviewed and prioritized by Academic Affairs leaders. Academic Deans present findings from program review and assessment to Cabinet and institutional operations data is reviewed as the foundation for the annual planning and budgeting cycle. The utilization of SPOL and the program review process systematically integrate findings of assessment with planning and budgeting processes.

SPC uses a robust planning process that incorporates the institution as well as external groups. Staff and faculty planning symposia are held annually to discuss and affirm the strategic priorities for the upcoming year, including live events and surveys. The College further involves stakeholders in collaborative decision making in annual planning and budgeting. The four phase process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the

perspectives of various constituent groups throughout. The College also consults with external constituent groups to ensure additional perspectives are included in the planning process. The needs of external stakeholders are considered through Program Advisory Committees, the Friends of Saint Paul College Foundation, and the President's Advisory Council.

The College has a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment. The Vice President of Finance and Budget Director consider all possible fluctuations in state funding, caps on increases in tuition or fees, and projected change in enrollment. Budget scenarios used in the integrated planning and budget process consider the impact of all such factors. The College is developing an improved projection model to better predict future cash flow that will support the College's ability to make strategic decisions during the annual planning process.

SPC utilizes its planning processes to anticipate changing external factors. The College recognized that the state's population of traditionally-aged students is shrinking. In 2017, the average student age at Saint Paul College was 26, and the College enrolled 49% of nontraditional (24+) students, and the percentage continues to increase. Saint Paul College has taken pro-active steps to offer educational opportunities for various student groups, developing programs that support traditional (Power of You) and non-traditionally-aged students (TRIO). The Technology Committee proactively assesses the College's technology infrastructure and identifies possible improvements.

Saint Paul College continues to implement plans to improve its operations and student outcomes. A Process Analyst was hired in August 2019 to engage the campus community in process mapping, streamlining processes, and creating clear documentation for decision making. Processes that have been improved and implemented include Onboarding, Faculty Credentialing, Hiring, and College Admissions. Additional continuous improvement projects include roles in EAB (Educational Advisory Board's Navigate), Satisfactory Academic Progress, Bookstore, and projects in the Strategic Enrollment Plan. Saint Paul College has processes in place to improve academic programs and learning.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Rationale

Saint Paul College provided strong and significant evidence of using formal processes for systematic and integrated planning and budgeting. The MnSCU staff, the Board of Trustees, and the College have worked together to strengthen communication, and to implement processes to increase faculty, staff, student, and community member involvement in SPC's governance. Communication about any changes in process or policy is clear and open to questions. SPC involves College committees, shared governance practices, and works in collaboration with faculty and students to establish and update its academic requirements, policy, and processes. The College has made dramatic strides in its planning and improvement processes.

Budgeting and planning are transparent and involve the campus community as well as external partners. Cabinet sets the budget priorities for the upcoming year; budget and spending workshops are held throughout the year for all staff to attend. SPC delegates budget authority to employees based on the nature of individual positions and responsibilities. The College has sufficient staffing and technology to fulfill its mission and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Saint Paul College uses Strategic Planning Online (SPOL) to integrate assessment into the planning and budgeting process. Assessment data, benchmarking and data analysis are also used in program review to inform program planning, development and resource identification. The utilization of SPOL for both program review/assessment sharing and budgeting allows for systematic integration of the findings into the planning and budgeting process.

Sustained efforts and progress as noted in both the Assurance Argument and during the virtual visit, will provide the College a significant opportunity to continue its improvement journey and realize additional results by the next comprehensive visit in 2024-25. The entire College is to be commended on its focused efforts to improve and/or establish processes and structures for planning and resource allocation. The reviewers have been provided evidence that SPC has the capacity and will to address future challenges and opportunities. Important work is before the College as it assures the sustainability of the new processes and systems, and engages in continuous improvements, even as post-pandemic funding and enrollment changes may affect allocation of resources.

FC - Federal Compliance

Rating

Does not require monitoring

Federal Compliance Filing Form

- SPC_FedCompFiling_2020_FINAL

Rationale

1. ASSIGNMENT OF CREDITS, PROGRAM LENGTH AND TUITION

Conclusion (Choose one of the following statements and delete the other two.):

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

St. Paul College follows State of Minnesota guidelines for the awarding of credit (and this is the same as federal definition): one credit equals one hour of class-time and with the expectation for approximately two hours of additional work. Online and accelerated course formats also follow this guideline and a review of sample syllabi confirmed that all course formats adhere to the federal guidelines. On a local level, St. Paul College's Academic Affairs and Standards Council maintains guidelines and oversight of the awarding of credit and different formats and its policy conforms to the state and federal definitions.

All of SPC's degree programs are of appropriate length and are guided by the requirements in the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum, with attention to distribution requirements to facilitate transfer to baccalaureate programs. The Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Science programs are 60 credits in length. The Associate of Fine Arts program is 68 credits in length. Diploma and Certificate programs are of variable lengths and are focused for education in specific vocations.

Outside of offering a tuition discount for senior citizens, SPC charges the same tuition for all courses, regardless of residency. They do offer variable credit for online vs. face-to-face classes and no rationale was provided in their filing.

2. INSTITUTIONAL RECORDS OF STUDENT COMPLAINTS

Conclusion (Choose one of the following statements and delete the other two.):

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

A student complaint policy and process are articulated on its website. This policy also defines what a complaint is - and what a complaint is not. The site also contains a link to forms for submitting complaints online.

3. PUBLICATION OF TRANSFER POLICIES

Conclusion (Choose one of the following statements and delete the other two.):

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

St. Paul College participates in the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum, which has been established to facilitate transfer from associate colleges to baccalaureate institutions within the State of Minnesota.

SPC therefore ensures that its curricular offerings give its students a seamless transfer to other community colleges to universities in the state system.

SPC has clear and reasonable policies for admission of transfer credit that do not fall in the purview of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. These steps are clearly articulated in the college catalog and on SPC's web site. The policy also includes a process for students to appeal any transfer credit decision.

SPC's website has a variety of resources to students for transfer information, for students wishing to transfer to SPC, out of SPC and into bachelor programs, information on the MTC, and outside of the state. This latter is facilitated by SPC's use of Transferology, a network of institutions that have created course equivalencies.

4. PRACTICES FOR VERIFICATION OF STUDENT IDENTITY

Conclusion (Choose one of the following statements and delete the other two.):

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

St. Paul College is a part of Minnesota State system that utilizes the StarID system. This allows students access to campus and system-wide systems. Students are initially assigned a unique username and password. Students are required to change their passwords at regular intervals.

While they do state that they charge extra for verification of student identity, it is not clear that they do. These fees are applicable to all students.

Rationale:

5. TITLE IV PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Conclusion (Choose one of the following statements and delete the other two.):

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

See SPC Federal Compliance Filing documentation

6. PUBLICATION OF STUDENT OUTCOME DATA

Conclusion (Choose one of the following statements and delete the other two.):

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Information about SPC's graduation and transfer rates is supplied on the "Student Consumer Information" web page on the college's website. SPC also includes results from a recent (2018) administration of a graduating student survey, which displayed employment data for graduates and also noted how many of these graduates continued their education elsewhere.

Rationale:

7. STANDING WITH STATE AND OTHER ACCREDITING AGENCIES

Conclusion (Choose one of the following statements and delete the other two.):

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

In addition to its accreditation with HLC, SPC maintains specialized accreditation with eleven other accreditors and these are noted on SPC's website. While some accrediting agencies do not publish member information on their web sites, those that did showed SPC as members.

The SPC accreditation web page notes it is accreditation by HLC and also notes (and explains) its probation status with HLC.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

Review Dashboard

| Number | Title | Rating |
|--------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Mission | |
| 1.A | Core Component 1.A | Met |
| 1.B | Core Component 1.B | Met |
| 1.C | Core Component 1.C | Met |
| 1.S | Criterion 1 - Summary | |
| 2 | Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct | |
| 2.A | Core Component 2.A | Met |
| 2.B | Core Component 2.B | Met |
| 2.C | Core Component 2.C | Met |
| 2.D | Core Component 2.D | Met |
| 2.E | Core Component 2.E | Met |
| 2.S | Criterion 2 - Summary | |
| 3 | Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support | |
| 3.A | Core Component 3.A | Met |
| 3.B | Core Component 3.B | Met |
| 3.C | Core Component 3.C | Met |
| 3.D | Core Component 3.D | Met |
| 3.S | Criterion 3 - Summary | |
| 4 | Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement | |
| 4.A | Core Component 4.A | Met With Concerns |
| 4.B | Core Component 4.B | Met |
| 4.C | Core Component 4.C | Met |
| 4.S | Criterion 4 - Summary | |
| 5 | Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning | |
| 5.A | Core Component 5.A | Met |
| 5.B | Core Component 5.B | Met |
| 5.C | Core Component 5.C | Met |
| 5.S | Criterion 5 - Summary | |
| FC | Federal Compliance | Does not require monitoring |

Review Summary

Interim Report(s) Required

Due Date

Not Set.

Report Focus

The review team recommends an embedded report in SPC's 2024-25 Comprehensive Evaluation visit. The report should illustrate that the essential components of program review are fully implemented and sustainable.

The monitoring report should demonstrate:

- Consistent application of the program review process, SPC should demonstrate completion of one complete cycle of comprehensive program review for all programs, and clear evidence of data analysis and interpretation, and resulting changes across the College.
- Evidence of embedded assessment of student learning data into program reviews. SPC should ensure that assessment data continues to be included in program reviews and that such data is interpreted holistically along with other data, such as student success measures.
- Robust connection of program review to budgeting. While connections between program reviews and budget planning are occurring now, the 2024-25 embedded report will give SPC an opportunity to demonstrate specific and sustained connections between program review outcomes and budget decisions.
- Evidence of broader College-wide decision informed by program reviews. The new program review process will be significantly more robust through examination of broader themes that emerge across programs to inform larger institutional strategies.

Conclusion

Saint Paul College has made remarkable progress in ameliorating the findings of noncompliance that led to the imposition of Probation status with the Higher Learning Commission. This team visited a college that has been transformed through significant work by the administration, faculty staff, and students, and with support and guidance from the Minnesota State office and the Board of Trustees. The team found a highly engaged faculty and staff (evidenced by a high level of participation in the visit meetings) who were eager to share evidence of changes made to improve the climate of the college through the development of policies and processes that address shared governance and strong communication systems. Intentional focus on listening and valuing all voices and implementing grass-roots planning and engagement is a significant factor in the culture change; faculty, staff, and students feel valued and that their voices are heard. Faculty and administration worked collaboratively to create a new and robust program review process, strengthen the assessment plan, and use findings and recommendations to inform budget decisions. Hiring additional staff, and revising and increasing professional development opportunities has led to more support for students, and greater ability to collect and use data to make institution-wide decisions. The team found an uncompromising commitment to students, and to improving programs that promote diversity and inclusion, ensuring all all students feel welcome and safe at Saint Paul College.

The program review, data collection, and additional assessment processes are still very new; the College can best determine the effectiveness over time, and make adjustments as needed. A full cycle of comprehensive program

review for all programs, and determining trends in data through collection of retention, persistence and completion rates will allow the College to adjust where necessary to ensure that the processes are effectively measuring student academic achievement and success. By the comprehensive review in 2024-25, SPC should have developed a robust system that confidently informs decision making and student success.

Saint Paul College is commended for its hard work over the last two years to address concerns identified in the Probation sanction. The College has in place systems to support its students, faculty, staff, and the community of Saint Paul, and to measure, and improve where needed to meet the needs of all of its stakeholders.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation

Met With Concerns

Sanctions Recommendation

No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation

Limited to Standard

Federal Compliance

Does not require monitoring