

# **Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (Year 7)**

## **Peer-Evaluation Report**

### **Bates Technical College**

**Tacoma, WA**

**April 19-21, 2023**

NWCCU Liaison to the Peer Evaluation Team:

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A confidential report of findings prepared for the  
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

# Table of Contents

<b>I. Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>II. Assessment of Self-Evaluation and Support Materials.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>III. Visit Summary.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>IV. Topics Addressed as an Addendum to the Self-Evaluation Report.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>V. Standard 1: Student Success and Institutional Mission and Effectiveness.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>a. Standard 1.A: Institutional Mission.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>i. 1.A.1.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>b. Standard 1.B: Improving Institutional Effectiveness.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>i. 1.B.1.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ii. 1.B.2.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>iii. 1.B.3.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>iv. 1.B.4.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>c. Standard 1.C: Student Learning.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>i. 1.C.1.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>ii. 1.C.2.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>iii. 1.C.3.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>v. 1.C.5.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>vi. 1.C.6.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>vii. 1.C.7.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>viii. 1.C.8.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>ix. 1.C.9.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>d. Standard 1.D: Student Achievement.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>i. 1.D.1.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>ii. 1.D.2.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>iii. 1.D.3.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>iv. 1.D.4.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>VI. Standard 2: Governance, Resources, and Capacity.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>a. Standard 2.A: Governance.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>i. 2.C.2.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>ii. 2.C.4.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>b. Standard 2.F: Human Resources.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>i. 2.F.1.....</b>	<b>20</b>

ii.	2.F.4 .....	20
c.	<b>Standard 2.G: Student Support Resources</b> .....	20
i.	2.G.1 .....	21
ii.	2.G.7 .....	21
d.	<b>Standard 2.H: Library and Information Resources</b> .....	21
i.	2.H.1 .....	21
e.	<b>Standard 2.I: Physical and Technology Infrastructure</b> .....	22
i.	2.I.1 .....	22
VII.	<b>Summary</b> .....	23
VIII.	<b>Commendations and Recommendations</b> .....	23
a.	<b>Commendations</b> .....	23
b.	<b>Recommendations</b> (each recommendation must reference one or more standards) .....	23
	<b>Addendum: Distance Education</b> .....	25

## **I. Introduction**

A 4-person peer evaluation team conducted a Year Seven Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (EIE) visit to Bates Technical College from April 19-21, 2023, in response to the *Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report* submitted by Bates Technical College to NWCCU on February 21, 2023. The comprehensive visit covered Standard One, provided follow-up to elements from Standard Two, and addressed one outstanding recommendation. BTC had no findings from the Year-Six Policies, Regulations, and Financial (PRFR) report.

## **II. Assessment of Self-Evaluation and Support Materials**

Bates Technical College's (BTC) year seven *Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness Report* was a comprehensive report focused on the areas of Standard One, specific to institutional mission (Standards 1.A), institutional effectiveness and improvement (Standards 1.B), student learning (Standards 1.C), and student achievement (Standards 1.D). Additionally, this report provided an update on recent institutional changes and an account of progress made on Recommendation 1 from BTC's *Fall 2010 Focused Interim Evaluation Report* and *2011's Year One Peer-Evaluation Report*. A copy of BTC's year six Standard Two Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review Report (PRFR) along with the PRFR summary report was provided to the Evaluation Team. Both reports were well written and provided valuable information about the history and status of the college. Collectively, these reports represented BTC's work to create a culture of continuous improvement centered on institutional goal achievement and mission fulfillment. BTC helped provide the Evaluation Team with additional materials relevant to the comprehensive review.

## **III. Visit Summary**

The Evaluation Team conducted visits with various members of the Bates Technical College community. These visits included members of the Board of Trustees, Executive Cabinet, College Council, Institutional Research, the Budget and Planning Committee, the Assessment Task Force, Academic Deans, the eLearning committee, Student Affairs leadership, frontline student service staff, personnel associated with BTC's Guided Pathways, Title III, and DEI groups, and representatives from each of BTC's labor-management groups. Meetings with Program Advisory committees and distinct program leadership included site visits to the South and Central campus locations. The Evaluation Team also attended open forums for faculty, staff, and students. General topics of discussion focused on

college challenges and achievements, student support services, college communication and strategic planning, and general opportunities for BTC to achieve mission fulfillment.

#### IV. Topics Addressed as an Addendum to the Self-Evaluation Report

Bates Technical College was asked to address (1) Recommendation 7 (renumbered as Recommendation 1) from BTC's *Fall 2013 Year Seven Peer Evaluation Report* and (2)a Distance Education verification report as a part of the Year Seven Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (2023)

**Recommendation 1:** Bates Technical College's Fall 2013 Year Seven Evaluation Report directed that "the College fully implement student learning outcomes assessment across all courses, programs, degrees, and general education and systematically use the results of assessment to influence planning and resource allocation for improvement of the College's instructional and student support programs", relevant to Standards 1.C.

This recommendation was carried forward from BTC's 2010 *Focused Interim Evaluation Report* and 2011 *Year One Peer-Evaluation Report*. BTC provided updates to this recommendation in the *Fall 2018 Ad Hoc Self-Evaluation Report* (pages 36-46) and the 2022 *Year 6 Standard 2, Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review report* (see pages 45-46).

BTC's current assessment work was discussed in detail in Standard 1.C, referencing Standards 1.C.5 and 1.C.7 specific to this recommendation. BTC's response to this recommendation addressed the comprehensive, systematic, and improvement-based nature of its student learning outcomes assessment efforts.

**Distance Education Verification:** The Distance Education Verification report was provided to the Evaluation Team as an addendum and served to verify BTC's authority to offer distance education. This report affirmed that BTC has a clear identity verification process with no additional fees for student identity verification. BTC has clear guidelines for course design and instruction to support regular and substantive interaction. The report also documented the training and support provided to all faculty teaching online or hybrid courses to assure the student experience is commensurate to BTC's face-to-face highly experiential instruction and course assessment follows the same course and program learning outcome assessment procedures. Additional items related to distance education verification were addressed in *Bates Technical College's Year Six, Standard Two Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review report* (2022).

**V. Standard 1: Student Success and Institutional Mission and Effectiveness**

**a. Standard 1.A: Institutional Mission**

**i. 1.A.1**

*The institution's mission statement defines its broad educational purposes and its commitment to student learning and achievement.*

Bates Technical College's mission serves to enrich diverse communities by inspiring student learning, challenging greater achievement, and providing education for employment. Approved by the BTC's Board of Trustees (July 2014), this mission statement clearly articulates the college's purpose to provide career and technical education focused on student learning, achievement, and diversity. BTC operationalizes its mission through four strategic goals: (1) providing high-quality and innovative Workforce Education, (2) augmenting student success through Student-Centered learning and support services, (3) creating well-rounded learners with General Education knowledge and skill attainment, and (4) establishing strong Community Relationships with local and global business, industry, labor, and public service resources. BTC's mission statement is published on the college website, linked to institutional and program learning assessment documents, and other published materials.

**b. Standard 1.B: Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

**i. 1.B.1**

*The institution demonstrates a continuous process to assess institutional effectiveness, including student learning and achievement and support services. The institution uses an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement.*

BTC has an established annual planning cycle centered on the college's strategic plan. Systematic evaluation references updated trend data on goal metrics and other evidence gathered from individual work plans generated by instruction and student support services each year (spring quarter). This information informs the President's Workplan which annually identifies specific goals and actionable targets related to the strategic plan. The President's Workplan is approved by the Board of Trustees at a late-summer retreat and communicated to the Executive Cabinet and College Council in advance of the complementary unit and academic department workplan development fall quarter. Mid-year and end-

of-year reports on the President's Workplan are communicated to the Board of Trustees and the college community.

Student learning and achievement are measured through cyclical Program Effectiveness Review and the assessment course student learning outcomes (SLOA), which are mapped to program learning outcomes (PSLO) and institutional learning outcomes (ISLO). The program review process is completed by the program faculty, advisory committees, and the dean. The assessment of course and program learning outcomes is accomplished by faculty and the Assessment Task Force. Recently, BTC piloted a new program review process that incorporates data and reflection from student and program learning outcomes, including disaggregated program-level student data, into the program review process. Programs that do not have explicit goals around the disaggregated data are tied to the college's strategic goals of decreasing equity gaps in program retention and graduation.

**Compliment:** The new program review process, once launched, will provide a more comprehensive analysis of program achievement that substantially improves the use of data and assessment to inform institutional workforce and general education strategic goal achievement.

**Concern:** The college's data feedback loop lacks (1) consistency, (2) cohesion, and (3) timeliness. For example, (1) unit achievement reports are task-focused and map to the President's Workplan but do not include baseline or target metrics. Individual plan accomplishments are intended to support mission fulfillment but are not clearly integrated with institutional planning. BTC's retention specialist positions support the President's Workplan and have a rigorous quantitative evaluation, but the metrics are not incorporated into any strategic plan evaluation.

(2) Resource allocation for line-item or one-time fund requests lacks a systemized tie to strategic goals and planning. Line-item resource allocation happens at the cabinet level through a request process initiated by faculty and reported by deans or directors to respective vice presidents. One-time fund requests are submitted to the Planning and Budget Committee using a supplemental budget form. While the supplemental budget form asks applicants to identify the strategic goals or objectives promoted by their request, no clear priority or rubric exists for fund allocation.

Committee work at the college is not explicitly tied into institutional planning. Chairs of committees tend to be unit or department heads who have assigned goals in their respective work plans that appear unrelated to the BTC's strategic plan. Currently, there is no committee tasked with organization or accountability for all the institution's work plan efforts and

overall mission fulfillment. All committees and task forces, including the Planning and Budget Committee, report annually to BTC's College Council, which ideally fills this role but lacks an official charge, a defined reporting structure, and training.

(3) Data for BTC's overall Strategic Plan Scorecard comes from the previous fall quarter, which (in some cases) fails to reflect timely progress. Title III and GP are loosely aligned plans that, due to the timing of the advent, have data-driven evaluations that function independently of the college's strategic plan and general assessment of mission fulfillment.

**Concern:** There is no systemic program review process for non-instructional areas of the college. Non-instructional areas utilize annual workplans to determine their work, but a systematic review of an area's contribution to the mission or effectiveness is not currently part of the college's institutional effectiveness process.

ii. 1.B.2

*The institution sets and articulates meaningful goals, objectives, and indicators of its goals to define mission fulfillment and to improve its effectiveness in the context of, and in comparison, with regional and national peer institutions.*

BTC has developed eleven objectives within each of the strategic goals of Workforce Education, Student Centered, General Education, and Community Relationships. Indicators of achievement are associated with common indicators of student achievement (persistence, graduation rates, etc.) that can be benchmarked against regional and national peer institutions. The Strategic Plan Scorecard reports metric trend data related to distinct metric baselines and targets to help BTC ascertain areas of objective and strategic goal improvement and achievement. BTC has recognized Washington state's four other technical colleges as regional peers and identified three technical colleges in Georgia as national peer institutions.

**Concern:** Some strategic plan objectives lack or have ill-defined measures. For example, survey data currently associated with the program advisory metric lacked scale, rationale, benchmark, and a target making it hard to determine if the current score was needing improvement, was on target, or at a level of achievement. There is an objective around increasing enrollment of prospective students, but no metrics to address this objective (despite the college utilizing metrics in their work). Some objective metrics such as "Students are provided with opportunities to develop workplace behaviors for professional success" are process goals rather than observable achievement outcomes.



**Concern:** The identified goals and objectives do not generally seem to reflect the highest priorities of the institution. Project work around Guided Pathways, Title III, DEI, capital planning, high school partnerships, and career readiness and job placement indicate college goals that are more important to BTC than those outlined in the strategic plan. Additionally, data-driven information collected in unit and individual workplans suggests better measures are available that better inform goal achievement and mission fulfillment. For example, workforce placement was consistently mentioned as an indicator of program and overall student success. These high placement rates are not associated with any indicators of college success. Program placement rates aggregated to a college placement rate provide measurable and regionally comparable evidence of the Workforce Education strategic goal and BTC’s “educating for employment” mission.

**Concern:** The regional and national peer institutions are recognized but how well the comparable data points help inform meaningful measures related to BTC’s mission fulfillment is unclear. For example, on the SBCTC dashboards, the college has outperformed its regional peers on headcount enrollment for the past two years. Similarly, BTC is ahead of its regional peer group in apprenticeship and professional/technical placement. These data points were not referenced or connected in any meaningful way to BTC’s strategic plan or scorecard rationale.

iii. 1.B.3

*The institution provides evidence that its planning process is inclusive and offers opportunities for comment by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.*

Input to the President’s Workplan comes from data provided by the Institutional Research Office, deans, and student services managers, who have informal opportunities to provide input to their respective Vice Presidents, and College Council, a group that solicits achievement reports from various campus committees and task forces, including the Budget Planning Committee, the Curriculum Assessment Committee, and Assessment Task Force. Academic Deans appear to serve as gatekeepers of information to and from Cabinet to individual departments. Additional avenues for information and constituent input are provided by monthly leadership listening sessions held at each campus location, special town halls, labor/management meetings, college-wide events, and the President’s Newsletter. The president regularly visits program areas and meets with other leadership groups representing students, labor, and governance (e.g., College Council). BTC’s Board of Trustees is well-represented by BTC’s

diverse community and is well-apprised of BTC's strategic plan, scorecard, President's Workplan, and achievement reports.

**Compliment:** There is notable warmth and closeness among all BTC employees regardless of title or classification. This collegiality facilitates informal channels of communication.

**Compliment:** Employees at all levels exhibit a high level of trust in leadership and report comfort in accessing senior leadership with concerns or ideas.

**Concern:** While collegiality is recognized and appreciated, well-understood communication systems would contribute to better transparency. Neither faculty nor staff reported a direct way to give input into the President's Workplan, nor did they express great familiarity with its contents. Much of this is attributed to a high turnover in Deans leaving faculty disconnected from informed decision-making channels. Better communication around strategic planning and explicit opportunities for staff and faculty input is needed.

iv. 1.B.4

*The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system, it considers such findings to assess its strategic position, define its future direction, and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, planning, intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement of its goals.*

The college has access to excellent comparator data from all Washington schools as well as state forecast data on employment growth. The college has access to national comparator schools but does not currently utilize those data in its planning. Advisory committees give regular input on local employment trends and expectations, as does the college's participation in JTACs. The college does not appear to do environmental scans on labor trends. Information from employment forecasts is utilized in the Program Sustainability Analysis Procedure that determines the continued viability of programs.

**Compliment:** The program advisory committees at BTC seem remarkably engaged and participatory. Their members provide a great deal of information about the local and state labor market for each program.

c. Standard 1.C: Student Learning

**i. 1.C.1**

***The institution offers programs with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission, culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes that lead to collegiate-level degrees, certificates, or credentials, and include designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.***

The institution offers credentials commensurate in content and rigor with its mission as a technical college. These include Associate of Applied Science degrees, certificates, and an associate-level transfer degree in business. The variety of subjects offered shows breadth within the CTE field and includes offerings in culinary, allied health, computer information technology, cybersecurity, early childhood education, transportation, barbering, STEM, public safety, and trades. Program-level outcomes are displayed at the top level for all programs in the catalog and are based on Bloom's taxonomy. Course-level outcomes are listed within each catalog course entry.

Credentials are defined by college policy, and rigor is maintained and updated through various external mechanisms, including advisory committee input and state and national standards where applicable). Internally, the Curriculum and Assessment Committee and the E-Learning Committee work to ensure that offerings are of sufficient quality. Curriculum documentation is managed through the Watermark platform.

**ii. 1.C.2**

***The institution awards credits, degrees, certificates, or credentials for programs that are based upon student learning and learning outcomes that offer an appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis of learning.***

The institution's catalog clearly lists degree requirements and the number of credit hours for each course. Program-level outcomes show summative student achievement, and within the programs, course-level outcomes indicate appropriate sequencing, depth, and synthesis of learning, which also happens at the programmatic level. Where appropriate, programs are specifically sequenced to provide an optimized learning experience and ensure iterative skill development. The course-program- and institution-level documents (SLOA, PSLO, ISLO) are mapped in a way that allows the assessment of course-level outcomes to feed into both other outcome levels.

**iii. 1.C.3**

***The institution identifies and publishes expected program and degree learning outcomes for all degrees, certificates, and credentials. Information on expected student learning outcomes for all courses is provided to enrolled students.***

Degree and graduation requirements, along with course descriptions, course outcomes, and program outcomes for all credit-bearing degrees, certificates, and credentials are listed in a comprehensive and organized form in the institution's catalog. The catalog is accessible to all enrolled students. Last spring, BTC commenced the transition to ctcLink, a statewide software tool that offers up-to-date functionality for employees and students. Through ctcLink, students will be able to access their specific degree requirements and effectively map courses along their degree pathways.

**iv. 1.C.4**

***The institution's admission and completion or graduation requirements are clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible to students and the public.***

The institution is open-enrollment, and admissions processes along with graduation requirements and all other relevant information are available in published college policies. The admissions policy allows conditional admission if the applicant is not in good standing at another institution. A high school diploma or the equivalent is required for college-level studies to comply with Title IV regulations. Completion and graduation requirements are controlled by a published college policy. Steps to Enroll are published on the college website and provide clear instructions for student enrollment. Additionally, there is a comprehensive academic progress policy that is clearly visible to students and other stakeholders within the catalog.

**v. 1.C.5**

***The institution engages in an effective system of assessment to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs. The institution recognizes the central role of faculty to establish curricula, assess student learning, and improve instructional programs.***

The institution provides ample evidence of progress toward building and enacting a college-wide system of assessment that is well-designed and well-supported. The Curriculum and Assessment committee is centrally placed within the curriculum and student learning efforts and the institution and is supported by a full (1.0) FTE curriculum and assessment coordinator and a full (1.0) FTE instructional designer. The institution has developed tools and resources to aid in the construction and mapping of measurable outcomes. These include the "Bates Outcome Builder," the "Master Course Outline Dashboard," and a college-wide syllabus template, all of which help create unified resources and compliance. This shows a substantial investment of human capital and resources on the part of the institution.

Evaluation of student learning is conducted principally through the assessment of Course Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs), Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs), and Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs). Assessment of all these outcomes begins at the course level and is being used to inform curriculum sequencing and leveling, program structure and effectiveness evaluation, and generalized instructional practice. Data from the CSLOs are used to inform both PSLOs and ISLOs, the latter of which has been incorporated into the President's Workplan. For example, the Human Diversity ISLO was examined, assessed, and determined as needing improvement. The current President's Workplan includes updated actionable items related to improving the Human Diversity outcome such as faculty and training guidelines on ISLO assessment supported by an outside facilitator and BTC's diversity, equity, and inclusion officer. Faculty are at the center of this process, which fosters discussion among faculty about course, instruction, and/or program improvement.

**Compliment:** Specialized accreditation is also a part of this process but does not replace the process. Faculty accept the assessment associated with specialized accreditation and use the internal SLOA process to further assess the courses and outcomes not directly associated with distinct program accreditation, seeing it as a welcome opportunity for additional reflection upon their teaching.

**Concern:** The Assessment Task Force provides information but needs a formal avenue for reporting and accountability connected with institutional budget and planning for improved line-item resource allocation. The role of the Assessment Task Force and the data that is collected at the course level for continual course, program, and institutional learning improvement is at an emerging stage and needs to be more firmly ensconced as institutional best practice. This includes continued monitoring, documentation, and tracking of the results of work plan interventions and activities.

vi. 1.C.6

*Consistent with its mission, the institution establishes and assesses, across all associate and bachelor level programs or within a General Education curriculum, institutional learning outcomes and/or core competencies. Examples of such learning outcomes and competencies include but are not limited to, effective communication skills, global awareness, cultural sensitivity, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, problem solving, and/or information literacy.*

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) are common across all programs and represented in general education courses. BTC's ISLOs are Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, and Human Diversity. These learning outcomes involve core competencies that prepare graduates for lifelong learning and the necessary soft skills for the workplace and civic success. Each Master Course Outline (MCO) identifies the ISLOs embedded in the course allowing for BTC to map ISLO achievement across the curriculum.

General education at BTC is a distinct academic department that offers courses in communications, mathematics, science, and social science. Collectively, these courses form a program and, under the direction of the dean, complete the same course (CSLO), program (PSLO), and institutional learning assessment (ISLO) processes as other BTC programs.

**Concern:** Assessment of ISLOs is through an annual faculty survey despite data being collected at the course level that informs ISLO knowledge and/or skill acquisition. Specific course and program level measures mapped to embedded ISLO knowledge or skills provide authentic and quantifiable data that should be referenced by rubrics to better inform institutional learning outcome achievement.

vii. 1.C.7

*The institution uses the results of its assessment efforts to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes.*

The SLOA process at BTC is designed to be informative and constructive. The process incorporates data-driven results with well-constructed assessment forms to maximize the usefulness of assessment information while minimizing the burden of reporting. The results of assessment efforts combine predetermined assessment methods and results with instructor self-reflection and plans for improvement to curriculum or pedagogy. The Assessment Task Force incorporated a set of checkboxes to the SLOA form, inviting faculty to identify resources necessary for learning outcome improvement. The Assessment Task Force coordinates non-monetary resources such as library support, instructional design, or professional development to the faculty member. Line-item monetary support is coordinated by the faculty member and program dean. One-time monetary support is solicited using the Budget and Planning Committee form and process.

Iterative assessment encourages the faculty member to submit a subsequent quarter's SLOA on the same PSLO to assess the effectiveness of any

interventions. This is tracked in dashboard form and data extracts to inform the faculty member, deans, the Curriculum and Assessment Committee, College Council, Executive Cabinet, and program advisory committees on progress. Process assessment occurs each summer quarter and allows faculty to reflect on the previous quarter's collective assessment results. BTC plans to incorporate faculty evaluation of assessment tools and practices with the summer reflection.

**viii. 1.C.8**

*Transfer credit and credit for prior learning are accepted according to clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible policies that provide adequate safeguards to ensure academic quality. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that such credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic rigor, and quality.*

Transfer of credit and credit for prior learning are clearly defined in a college policy with links in the catalog, as is credit for prior learning.

**ix. 1.C.9**

*The institution's graduate programs are consistent with its mission, are in keeping with the expectations of its respective disciplines and professions and are described through nomenclature that is appropriate to the levels of graduate and professional degrees offered. The graduate programs differ from undergraduate programs by requiring, among other things, greater: depth of study; demands on student intellectual or creative capacities; knowledge of the literature of the field; and ongoing student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression, and/or relevant professional practice.*

Bates Technical College does not offer graduate programs.

**d. Standard 1.D: Student Achievement**

**i. 1.D.1**

*Consistent with its mission, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational programs. It orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely,*

***useful, and accurate information and advice about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.***

BTC provides a variety of outreach and recruiting activities to potential students. These include information sessions at middle schools and high schools, recruitment campaigns, scholarship events, virtual sessions, campus tours, and presentations. BTC maintains strong relationships with area high schools and is successful at attracting many students to its on-campus high school programs. All new students must complete a mandatory advising session, a required orientation session, and select an area of study along BTC's guided pathway paradigm. Extensive information is available on the website about choosing a program, including an aptitude quiz to help students select a program, contact information for advisors, placement information, and a step-by-step guide on how to become a BTC student. Program maps and graduation requirements on the Career Pathways pages are linked to all the "getting started" webpages. The Career Pathway information also includes wage information, time to completion, and links to advisor contacts. All new student onboarding information is available in several languages.

Mandatory advising is required for all new students as a pre-requisite for registration. New students are also required to attend New Student Orientation, which is sponsored by BTC's retention specialists. Both the student and faculty forums communicated a strong consensus that new students seemed well-oriented and generally knew how to access the information or support they need. Faculty members serve as the major source of information, advising, and guidance for the students in their program. Faculty members are aware of BTC's student support services and take the time to personally connect students to those resources. BTC has an early-alert system that identifies underperforming students and links them to I-Best academic support instructors, retention specialists or other resources.

**Compliment:** Advisors, retention specialists, and support staff across the campuses work collaboratively with faculty to provide strong support for students.

**Concern:** Information about degree pathways and links to course/program maps was inconsistent. For example, the Machinist program could only be viewed as a downloadable Excel form; the Cybersecurity program did not have a course map; and Carpentry was offered as a browser-viewable PDF. Consistency in format, presentation, and accessibility for all degree pathways and course/program maps provides stability of information to better guide and retain students.



ii. 1.D.2

*Consistent with its mission and in the context of and in comparison, with regional and national peer institutions, the institution establishes and shares widely a set of indicators for student achievement including, but not limited to, persistence, completion, retention, and postgraduation success. Such indicators of student achievement should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, first generation college student, and any other institutionally meaningful categories that may help promote student achievement and close barriers to academic excellence and success (equity gaps).*

As described in Standard 1.B.2, BTC has recognized Bellingham Technical College, Clover Park Technical College, Lake Washington Institute of Technology, and Renton Technical College (all from Washington) as regional peer institutions, and Athens Technical College, Augusta Technical College, and Savannah Technical College (all from Georgia) as national peer institutions. BTC publishes its student achievement data in links from a webpage labeled “Facts and Figures.” Comparison data is presented about BTC’s regional peers. Regional peer data is managed by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) which aggregates information statewide. Disaggregation of national peer data is limited to IPEDS retention and completion data. Regional data disaggregation was more comprehensive and presented in a way that facilitated the evaluation of equity gaps.

Concern: BTC should consider addressing the intent of standard 1.D.2 as it embarks on a new strategic planning process. With BTC’s desire to raise its profile as a prominent technical college, there needs to be a more deliberate and thoughtful approach to identifying, evaluating, and holding itself accountable against meaningful regional and national peer benchmarks. IPEDS is sufficient for national peer comparisons but additional data from a more competitive peer group better supports the aspirational goals BTC has set for itself.

**Concern:** Disaggregated achievement data is difficult to find, evaluate, or interpret in the college’s strategic plan context. Modest improvements such as an indicator webpage that is prominent, contextual, interpretive, and clearly linked to the college’s strategic plan would make disaggregated achievement data accessible to a variety of internal and external constituents.

iii. 1.D.3

***The institution's disaggregated indicators of student achievement should be widely published and available on the institution's website. Such disaggregated indicators should be aligned with meaningful, institutionally identified indicators benchmarked against indicators for peer institutions at the regional and national levels and be used for continuous improvement to inform planning, decision making, and allocation of resources.***

BTC publishes disaggregated indicators of student achievement according to gender, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status on the Facts and Figures website. As noted in Standard 1.D.2, benchmarking of the disaggregated indicators against national peer institutions and access to all disaggregated measures of student achievement needs thoughtful planning. Current disaggregated data compared to regional peers is used for continuous improvement and does inform planning. For example, lower enrollment rates for underserved students prompted BTC to connect with the Metropolitan Development Council (a community organization providing support for underserved members of the community). This relationship serves as a conduit for outreach and recruiting activities to address and mitigate the enrollment gap. Wage data from Washington's Employment Security Department (ESD) indicated that associate-degree earners had higher earnings compared to certificate or non-certificate completers. Upon review of institutional data on delayed completion of general education English and math requirements, BTC invested in strategies to promote early completion of these classes. Specifically, the math disaggregated data were used to implement a math boot camp for specific student populations.

**iv. 1.D.4**

***The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing indicators of student achievement are transparent and are used to inform and implement strategies and allocate resources to mitigate perceived gaps in achievement and equity.***

As noted in Standard 1.D.3, BTC used indicators of student achievement to develop outreach activities to close enrollment gaps and designed a math boot camp to support associate degree completion. In both the self-study and during the site visit, BTC presented extensive evidence that it is actively collecting and analyzing indicators of student achievement and using the data to make resource allocation decisions.

BTC is committed to greater data transparency as noted in the creation of a data governance infrastructure. Ad Hoc reports produced by the Institutional Research Office are well-written,

include explanatory notes and source material, and support college initiatives linked to the President’s Workplan. More formally, BTC has created a Data Governance Initiative in response to a mandate by SBCTC to implement more stringent controls over data.

**Compliment:** The Institutional Research office appears to be very responsive and engaged with stakeholders across campus in supporting mission fulfillment.

**Concern:** With the launch of a new strategic planning process in the fall quarter of 2023, more priority needs to be given to the Data Governance Initiative, specifically around improved data transparency. This transparency needs to clearly link indicators of mission fulfillment to overall college planning, committee processes, and the ongoing and one-time allocation of institutional resources.

## VI. Standard 2: Governance, Resources, and Capacity

The following Standard 2 elements were specifically reviewed during the visit as either PRFR findings, items included in the self-evaluation report addenda, or areas of interest resulting from meetings during the visit. BTC’s PRFR Committee feedback report did not have any findings or requests for additional information as a part of the Year Seven Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness.

### a. Standard 2.A: Governance

#### i. 2.C.2

*The institution’s policies and procedures related to student rights and responsibilities should include, but not be limited to, provisions related to academic honesty, conduct, appeals, grievances, and accommodations for persons with disabilities.*

The institution’s procedures in this regard are both up-to-date and actively used, and evidence was viewed and discussed during the site visit that indicates that processes are functioning properly.

#### ii. 2.C.4

*The institution’s policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records must include provisions related to confidentiality, release and the reliable backup and retrievability of such records.*

BTC’s Student Services division has made significant progress in secure archival storage of student records during the post-pandemic period,

including the revision of storage procedures and physical location improvements.

**b. Standard 2.F: Human Resources**

**i. 2.F.1**

*Faculty, staff, and administrators are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination.*

The college has an integrated process for updating job descriptions yearly as part of the annual evaluation process for non-faculty groups. Collective bargaining agreements are available for viewing and are up to date. College procedures for all employment-related processes and employee groups not covered by collective bargaining agreements are available in a single repository. The college follows contractual procedures for complaints, grievances, and investigations related to these matters.

**ii. 2.F.4**

*Faculty, staff, and administrators are evaluated regularly and systematically in alignment with institutional mission and goals, educational objectives, and policies and procedures. Evaluations are based on written criteria that are published, easily accessible, and clearly communicated. Evaluations are applied equitably, fairly, and consistently in relation to responsibilities and duties. Personnel are assessed for effectiveness and are provided with feedback and encouragement for improvement.*

The college has a regularly updated system for tracking evaluation scheduling and completion that does not show significant gaps in compliance on a percentage or area basis. Contracted faculty are evaluated initially as part of the tenure process, and then on a regular ongoing basis. All other employee groups are evaluated on an annual basis, usually based on the employee's start date, and roughly in alignment with the fiscal year for exempt employees. Instruments and evaluation procedures are prescribed by collective bargaining agreements, with college procedures driving the exempt employee evaluations. Human resources provided evidence during the EIE site visit of evaluation completion and scheduling for each employee group. Annual evaluations or check-ins with all employees include conversations about professional development.

**c. Standard 2.G: Student Support Resources**

**i. 2.G.1**

***Consistent with the nature of its educational programs and methods of delivery, and with a particular focus on equity and closure of equity gaps in achievement, the institution creates and maintains effective learning environments with appropriate programs and services to support student learning and success.***

Using state and federal funding, BTC has made significant progress in integrating student support specialists into the college's programs. "Retention Specialists" are supported by Title III funding and provide early alert-based intervention and some holistic support services, commensurate with the college's guided pathways work. Washington state funding has supported the hiring of several I-BEST instructors, who are academic affairs employees. The I-BEST employees provide co-located co-curricular support for qualified students and are placed within or adjacent to those programs with the largest student enrollment.

Students and faculty find both the retention specialists and the I-BEST instructors to be effective and efficient means of addressing gaps in basic skills and this appears to supplement a lack of resources in basic skill tutoring. Because the services are externally funded, this is an area that merits ongoing attention, data collection, and support to maintain appropriate effectiveness and scale.

**ii. 2.G.7**

***The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in such a course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures that the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.***

See Addendum

**d. Standard 2.H: Library and Information Resources**

**i. 2.H.1**

***Consistent with its mission, the institution employs qualified personnel and provides access to library and information resources with a level of currency, depth, and breadth sufficient to support and sustain the institution's mission, programs, and services.***

The library employs qualified personnel from three employee groups (faculty, classified, exempt) in various roles to perform work on the three distinct campuses, which all have their own library facilities. The amount and quality of resources provided (both physical and electronic) appear to be more than sufficient to meet the educational and programmatic needs of the institution. Library staffing is somewhat thin, which can lead to operational difficulties in the case of unanticipated employee absence or training.

**e. Standard 2.I: Physical and Technology Infrastructure**

**i. 2.I.1**

*Consistent with its mission, the institution creates and maintains physical facilities and technology infrastructure that are accessible, safe, secure, and sufficient in quantity and quality to ensure healthful learning and working environments that support and sustain the institution's mission, academic programs, and services.*

The college has undertaken an aggressive plan to address deferred and preventative maintenance in recent years, and facilities are generally well-maintained. Employees have expressed confidence in health and safety efforts in various venues. The Facilities Masterplan was last updated in 2017 and will be updated again as part of BTC's new strategic planning process. Facilities conditions surveys are conducted every two years, and space utilization surveys are conducted regularly. Staff engage in significant emergency training, and AEDs are being reinstalled in many spaces.

**Compliment:** The institution has made significant progress in its implementation of the statewide ctcLink software, which has resulted in numerous process improvements and better integration with state systems. Although that work continues at the present date, the institution has properly prioritized it and the migration of legacy systems and data. Additionally, the institution is making progress toward an IT organization that more effectively supports the mission and strategic plan of the institution in cooperation with state-level technological resources.

**Concern:** Public Safety needs to be a continued priority. Due to the amount of square footage (appx. 800,000) on 3 dispersed campuses with significant and mobile homeless populations nearby, there is a high burden placed upon public safety officers. Therefore, supporting staff and equipment updates should be an institutional priority to ensure the security of capital resources and the safety of learning and working environments.

## **VII. Summary**

Bates Technical College's Standard One Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (EIE) report was well-written and documented to provide a comprehensive self-appraisal of the institution. The main report, linked documents, and other files provided during the site visit provided evidence of institutional planning and improvement guided by BTC's strategic plan and operationalized by the President's annual work plans. BTC's self-study also provided self-recognition of improvement opportunities for all Standard One criteria.

The site visit was complementary to the BTC's report. Personnel were well prepared to answer questions, provide additional documentation, and speak candidly about the progress of the institution. The Evaluation Team appreciated the engaged transparency of all personnel in addressing each of the standards. A unified spirit of collaboration deeply committed to student success was apparent in all meetings and throughout all levels of the institution. All materials and interactions served to recognize BTC's commitment to "enrich diverse communities through learning, achievement, and employment education" and become a regional and national technical education leader.

## **VIII. Commendations and Recommendations**

### **a. Commendations**

#### **i. Commendation 1:**

The peer evaluation team commends the institution for the college's pervasive student-centered mindset that provides high-quality student support services and student-faculty interactions.

#### **ii. Commendation 2:**

The peer evaluation team commends the institution for excellent and participatory program advisory committees.

#### **iii. Commendation 3:**

The peer evaluation team commends the institution for an evident culture of cooperation and collegiality at all levels of the institution.

### **b. Recommendations (each recommendation must reference one or more standards)**

#### **i. Recommendation 1:**

The peer evaluation team recommends that the institution develop a planning process that integrates its committee structure, evaluation processes, Program Review, and budget allocation process to align with the college's Strategic Plan (1.B.1)

#### **ii. Recommendation 2:**

The peer evaluation team recommends that the institution review and establish institutionally meaningful goals and related metrics that comprehensively measure goal achievement and effectively inform institutional effectiveness in the context of and in comparison, with regional and national peer institutions (1.B.2, 1.D.2)

iii. **Recommendation 3:**

The peer evaluation team recommends that the institution continue the development of a comprehensive and systematic college-wide system of student learning outcome assessment that represents all programs including general education. The institution should show demonstrable evidence of continuous improvement resulting from the assessment cycle. (1.C.6, 1.C.7)



## **Addendum: Distance Education**

NWCCU practice requires an institution's distance education programming to be reviewed as part of the comprehensive evaluation process. As a part of BTC's evaluation of institutional effectiveness, the evaluation team reviewed the following according to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Distance Educational Guidelines provided in the NC-SARA Policy Manual.

- 1. The institution has in place effective procedures to ensure that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit.**

As part of BTC's PRFR Report submitted to NWCCU spring of 2022, specific to Standard 2.G.7, student identity verification begins at admission and registration. All admitted students receive a unique identification number and personal identification number (PIN) to access the college's online services. Students are encouraged to personalize their PIN at the initial log-in. These credentials are required to register for courses. After registration, additional verification measures are implemented according to BTC's Identify Verification and Academic Integrity Policy. Only students can enroll in courses using their individual ID and personalized password. BTC faculty monitor the veracity of submitted student work using an Academic Integrity Checklist which covers general academic integrity in course content, the use of academic integrity resources (e.g., Honorlock, Unicheck, and Canvas resources), the maintenance of high-stakes courses through direct observation of secure third-party applications (lock-down browsers), and the use of multiple methods of assessment of student work.

- 2. The institution makes clear in writing that these processes protect student privacy.**

BTC's Identity Verification and Academic Integrity Policy clarifies the student authentication processes. Additionally, if a student or faculty member loses a college or Canvas LMS password, IT staff will reset these credentials only to the original, verified, college-generated username and password. Assistance on usernames and password reset procedures is provided to verified student email address accounts.

- 3. The institution notifies students at the time of registration and enrollment of any additional student charges associated with the verification procedures.**

No charges are applied to identity verification or proctoring.

- 4. The institution has established appropriate academic policies and procedures for its instructors to implement the requirements for regular and substantive interaction in all courses/programs delivered via distance education.**

Instructors receive an Academic Integrity Checklist that details the use of multiple methods of assessment of student work, some of which require interaction from the instructor. Additional training and written guidelines on regular and substantive interaction are provided to all instructors. BTC's Online Learning Center provides faculty

with resources and examples of high-quality student-faculty interaction. BTC's instructional designers work with faculty to maximize the amount of regular and substantive interaction by providing faculty with course content templates and one-on-one support sessions, specific to assessment and feedback.

**5. The institution has established a system for monitoring or periodically evaluating its online programs to ensure that its instructors continue to observe such policies for regular and substantive interaction.**

BTC's distance education offerings are the result of the COVID-era transition to online instruction. The hands-on nature of BTC's curriculum, however, is ill-suited for that modality long-term. Currently, most of BTC's courses have returned to face-to-face or hybrid delivery, restoring the college's focus on experiential learning using labs, shop time, clinical practice, and studio experiences under the faculty's direct and immediate guidance. The review of instructional modality options best suited to distinct course instruction is incorporated into BTC's Student Learning Outcome and Program Review processes.

**6. The institution's distance education programs are consistent with the mission and educational objectives of the institution (Standard 1.C.1).**

All face-to-face, fully online, or hybrid courses are a part of BTC's regular offerings and are reviewed by the Curriculum and Assessment Committee, as stated in BTC's Review and Approval of Curriculum, Degrees, and Certificates policy. Additional review for hybrid and online learning components is completed by the Online Learning Center. The eLearning Committee also reviews and discusses eLearning tasks and procedures that affect the campus community.

**7. Institutions that offer the same program in multiple modalities ensure learning outcomes and levels of student achievement are comparable across modalities (Standard 1.C.6).**

BTC stresses the importance of "equivalent educational experience" in all training, resources, assistance, and evaluations associated with distance education. All online and hybrid courses are evaluated as a part of the regular Student Learning Outcome Assessment process (SLOA).