Bates Technical College

Year Seven | Standard One
Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness

Self-Evaluation Report | Spring 2023

A report prepared for the
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Bates TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (Year 7)

Self-Evaluation Report

Bates Technical College

Tacoma, Washington

February 21, 2023

A report prepared for the
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

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Institutional Overview

Bates Technical College traces its roots back to Sept. 4, 1940, when technical education courses were first offered in the basement of Tacoma's Hawthorne Elementary School. During the 1941-42 school year, the program became known as the Tacoma Vocational School. In 1944 the Tacoma School District hired L. H. (LaVerne Hazen) Bates as the school's director. The school was renamed as the Tacoma Vocational-Technical Institute in 1947. When Mr. Bates retired from the director's position in 1969, the Tacoma School Board changed the Institute's name to the L. H. Bates Vocational Technical Institute in honor of Mr. Bates' service and dedication to the Institute and vocational education.

In 1991, state legislation separated the state's vocational technical institutes from local school districts and merged them under the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). Bates is one of five career-technical colleges within SBCTC's 34-member institutions.

Today, Bates Technical College annually serves approximately 3,000 career training students in some 40 program areas. As detailed in BTC's 2023 Field Guide, about 40 percent of those students identify as people of color and 40 percent as female, with just under 30 percent receiving need-based aid. Beyond its core offerings, BTC serves another 10,000 community members each year through programming in Continuing Education, Child Studies, High School Dual Enrollment, General Education and Basic Studies, and others.

Bates offers two-year associate of applied science degrees, certificates of competency, certificates of training, industry certifications and, in specific programs, prepares students for state licensure. Over 1,000 Bates students are completing apprenticeships. In addition, the college maintains articulation degrees with several four-year institutions, making some of the college's two-year degrees transferable. Core programs operate four quarters per year.

A leader in hands-on learning, Bates maintains classroom settings that mirror the workplace, providing students with opportunities to practice and develop skills to levels required for successful employment. Programs are distributed across three sites — Downtown, South, and Central — each with its own set of career emphases (see Table 1).

Table 1. Program Clusters by Instructional Site

Site	Program concentrations
Downtown	Allied Health, Electronic Equipment Service, Advanced Manufacturing
Central	Broadcasting/Video Production, Engineering Technologies, Computer Technology/Cybersecurity, Electronic and Communications Systems
South	Automotive/Marine/Motorcycle; Carpentry/ Cabinetmaking; Diesel and Heavy Equipment/CDL; Early Childhood Education; Facilities Maintenance; Fire Service/EMT; Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning; Welding/Sheet Metal

The three sites form the backbone of BTC's organizational structure. Rather than forming traditional academic divisions, BTC's 95 fulltime and 47 part-time (17 FTEF) faculty are assigned to their program's location. Each campus houses its own administrative supervisor(s) and support staff. Executive administrative offices are downtown.

Beyond its walls, Bates engages actively in the surrounding community, both to extend its services outward and to bring additional resources inward to support BTC enrollees. In a literal sense, the most visible example is BTC's longtime role as owner and operator of PBS-affiliate public broadcasting station, KBTC Public Television. Originally licensed to Tacoma Public Schools as KTPS-TV in 1961, KBTC became a part of Bates in 1992. The station now serves more than 4.3 million viewers from Southwest Washington to Southern British Columbia, allowing BTC's video and broadcasting students to experience a highly professional, large-market operation firsthand.

Other collaborations similarly reflect BTC's mission-level commitment to community relationship-building. Last year's digital media students, for example, partnered with the Chinese Reconciliation Project Foundation to produce a documentary on the World War Two-era relocation of Tacoma and Fife-area Japanese residents to internment camps. On an ongoing basis, the college works with Tacoma Public Schools, MultiCare, Virginia Mason Franciscan Health, and other stakeholders to expand student pathways and reduce workforce gaps in the healthcare professions. Meanwhile, partnerships with Tacoma's community-based organizations, including the Metropolitan Development Council and Tacoma Community House, have strengthened services to career-seeking adults, both on and off campus.

The five-member Bates Technical College Board of Trustees both reflect and represent the local community in guiding the college's efforts to meet its mission. The 285 professionals who work at Bates take pride in serving that community, providing high-quality career-technical education, and advancing both the quality and equity of Tacoma's socioeconomic landscape.

Preface

Update on Institutional Changes

Nearly a decade has passed since Bates Technical College's last comprehensive evaluation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. In the most recent of those years, Bates has faced some especially difficult challenges, including:

- A 2019 cyberattack that, among other consequences, prompted BTC to delay its original 2021 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness visit to 2023
- A nearly complete and, in some respects, disruptive turnover of executive leadership between 2018 and 2021
- The COVID-19 pandemic, which had especially acute effects on BTC's overwhelmingly hands-on curriculum

Predictably enough, these events have delayed and interrupted a variety of institutional processes, as later sections of this report will occasionally note.

Despite the challenges, however, Bates has demonstrated considerable stability and resilience over recent years. Today, BTC enrollments have rebounded at a faster pace than statewide averages, perhaps reflecting the college's steady commitment to its mission of community-relevant career-technical education. Meantime, the college's roster of executive leaders has stabilized and its members continue to cohere as a team. Building on those foundations, Bates has celebrated other achievements in very recent years:

- A 70,000 square-foot Center for Allied Health Education opened April 2021, providing state-of-the-art learning environments for BTC's growing suite of healthcare programs.
- As part of BTC's post-cyberattack recovery, College Council coordinated a major policy updating initiative between 2019 and 2021, generating the Bates Policy Library.
- In 2020, the U.S. Department of Education awarded Bates a $2.25 million Title III grant to focus strategically on student support, completion, and retention.
- Last spring, the college transitioned its enterprise systems from a 40-year-old legacy platform to ctcLink, a statewide software tool offering up-to-date functionality.
- In fall 2022, First Lady Jill Biden visited Bates on a tour of programs that connect youth to hands-on workforce education. In December, BTC's president attended a White House holiday reception hosted by President Biden and First Lady Jill Biden.

Of course, there have been new challenges, too. A few current issues deserve mention here:

Enterprise system conversion

Despite its overall success, early May's transition to ctcLink has triggered slowdowns in a handful of operational areas, most prominently in purchasing, curriculum updating, and

student financials. In finance, for example, new transaction protocols have generated unexpected conflicts with longtime local procedures. Instruction, meanwhile, has faced challenges from data-migration corruptions and compatibility issues with local curriculum-management tools, including BTC's catalog software. In response, division leaders have taken steps to resolve the remaining obstacles, including:

- Convening vertically-integrated training sessions so that staff teams can experience ctcLink's processes start-to-finish
- Rewriting local procedures, such as purchasing, to align with ctcLink's process sequencing and data-input requirements
- Setting earlier and firmer timelines for processes like course scheduling
- Promoting greater cross-training and inter-staff collaboration so that more people can identify — and resolve — input errors and operational conflicts

Staffing turnover and workload

Reflecting wider trends in today's employment market, staff resignations and retirements are up, and recruitments are less predictable. Amid the challenges of the post-pandemic recovery and ctcLink migration, staff have felt keenly the impact of vacant positions. In response, the Human Resources Department has proposed new efficiencies in the hiring process, such as:

- Mapping and re-sequencing the steps in the recruitment process
- Fixing salary ranges within which Human Resources can independently negotiate
- Pre-approving searches for anticipated vacancies and, where possible, allowing an overlap period to reduce training-time windows
- Strengthening collaboration between Instruction and Human Resources to ensure timely generation of faculty contracts

Fiscal caution

As the worst challenges of the past few years begin to fade, a sense of anticipation and, in some cases, expectation has understandably begun to take hold. At the same time, however, COVID-era funding is running out, economic recession looms, and enrollment recovery is slowing, particularly in BTC's core audience — adult enrollees in fulltime workforce programs. While better times may indeed lie ahead, there remains a need to sustain enrollments, seek new initiatives, and manage resources conservatively.

Of course, the final outcomes of these efforts remain to be seen. But the work hopefully helps to illustrate BTC's continuing commitment to self-reflect and to act on both the opportunities and threats that the college community identifies. Despite the challenges that all colleges face, Bates has weathered the last few years well, emerging stronger in many ways than before. The college is well positioned to enter its next accreditation cycle.

Response to Requested Items: Recommendation 1

Recommendation 7 of Bates Technical College's *Fall 2013 Year Seven Peer 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.

The language carried forward, renumbered as Recommendation 1, in NWCCU's response to BTC's *Fall 2010 Focused Interim Evaluation Report* and 2011's *Year One Peer-Evaluation Report*.

BTC provided an update on this recommendation most recently in its spring 2022 *Year 6, Standard 2, Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review* (pages 45-46) and, before that, in a *Fall 2018 Ad Hoc Self-Evaluation Report* (pages 36-46).

The current status of BTC's assessment work is discussed in detail in Standard 1.C., particularly Standards 1.C.5 and 1.C.7. Here, a summary of that section's key elements may help to highlight BTC's efforts to satisfy Recommendation 1's elements.

Comprehensiveness

To address the directive to conduct assessment "across all courses, programs, degree, and general education," Bates adopted a three-pillar model of learning assessment, with course-level outcomes at the center (Figure P1). Within BTC's Master Course Outline (MCO) database, course-level student learning outcomes (CSLOs) are mapped both to program (PSLOs) and institutional outcomes (ISLOs), allowing the broader outcomes to be evaluated and analyzed through aggregation of classroom, lab, and worksite assessment data. General education has been incorporated into that framework, both through the college-wide ISLOs and through program-level assessment in the General Education Department.

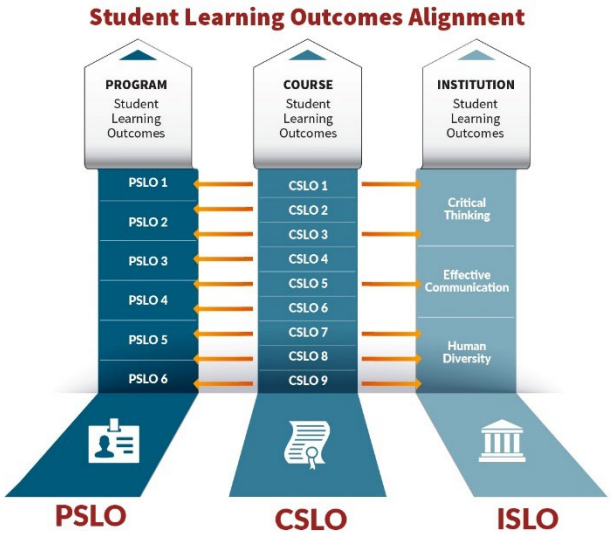

Figure P1: Three-Pillar Student Learning Outcomes Model

Systematic processes

BTC faculty lead the college's assessment efforts through the Curriculum and Assessment

Committee and its offshoot Assessment Task Force. Though the model has evolved somewhat, particularly in the wake of COVID-19, BTC has established clear systems for SLO assessment:

- *ISLO assessment:* The Institution Student Learning Outcomes (ISLO) cycle calls for a yearly assessment, focusing sequentially on each of BTC's three ISLOs — Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, and Human Diversity. After running successfully from 2016 to 2019, the cycle was suspended during the height of the pandemic. The college revisited the process in 2020-21 with a dual commitment to (1) follow up on earlier recommendations to update the Human Diversity ISLO and, in the meantime, (2) to craft a program-level set of general education outcomes that could be mainstreamed into the quarterly Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) cycle.

- *SLOA:* The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) cycle concentrates on program-level outcomes (PSLOs) through assessment of their related course-level outcomes (CSLOs). Consistently, 90 percent or more of BTC programs complete their SLOAs each term. As with ISLOs, the results roll up to a database, allowing for analysis through the SLOA Dashboard.

Improvement

Bates has set a clear expectation that the purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. To that end, the process encourages candor and self-reflection as the foundation of improvement. The SLOA form requires faculty to reflect on what they learned from each assessment and how, based on those findings, they plan to alter their pedagogy, assessment tools(s), or curriculum going forward. Both text and video SLOA instructions are available.

To provide an institutional view of faculty's individual reflections, last year BTC launched a SLOA Dashboard that compiles the results from each assessment cycle, allowing for tracking of responses over time by a variety of elements — by program, program pathway, assessment iteration, and CSLO, PSLO, ISLO level. As a result, data collected from the SLOA form can now be analyzed and presented in ways that can inform faculty professional development, curriculum changes, and ultimately the improvement of student learning, performance, and job preparedness.

More recently, the Assessment Task Force has built a more direct connection between self-reflection and resources, adding to SLOA an opportunity for faculty to request the specific supports they need to sustain improvement, whether through professional development, curriculum guidance, instructional design, or tangible resources. Requests are routed to the appropriate respondent(s), including deans, the library, e-learning staff, and ATF itself.

Figure P2 (following page) provides a schematic view of these integrated processes.

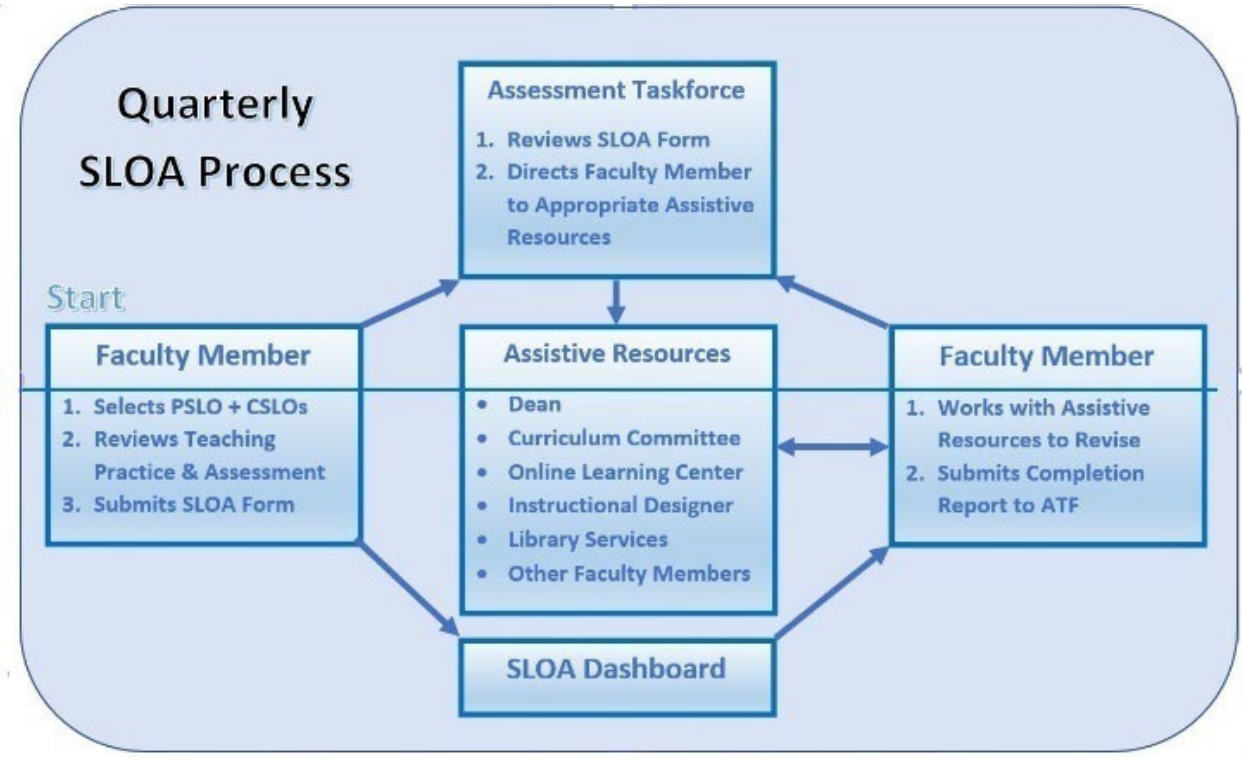

Figure P2: SLOA Flowchart

The Assessment Task Force (ATF) deserves a good share of the credit for BTC's assessment progress over recent years. A commendably engaged and creative group, ATF has garnered support from academic leadership, research, and instructional support areas, building an environment that encourages good assessment, expects it to continually improve, and sustains a focus on self-reflection and student learning.

A more detailed explanation of BTC's assessment practices — with particular attention to Recommendation 1 — appears in the chapters for Standard 1.C, particularly 1.C.5 and 1.C.7.

Standard 1: Student Success, Mission, and Effectiveness

Standard 1.A: Institutional Mission

Standard 1.A.1: The institution's mission statement defines its broad educational purposes and its commitment to student learning and achievement.

In response to a recommendation from the 2013 Year Seven Comprehensive Evaluation, BTC's Strategic Planning Council — a pre-cursor to today's College Council — began a process of mission review. That review revealed that the college constituency wished to retain the framework of the previous mission of "Inspire, challenge, and educate," but to expand upon it to improve clarity and measurability. The current mission statement was approved by the board of trustees and adopted in July 2014:

> *Bates Technical College enriches our diverse communities by inspiring student learning, challenging greater achievement, and educating for employment.*

The language articulates BTC's purpose as a provider of career-technical education, with an explicit focus on student learning, student achievement, and diversity.

Within its mission, Bates has identified four Strategic Goals:

- *Workforce Education:* We are committed to providing high quality training that helps students realize their potential for growth and success through innovative instruction.
- *Student Centered:* Bates supports students, enabling them to succeed, to aspire to education, to reach their educational goals and transition successfully to further education or employment.
- *General Education:* Bates recognizes that the skills and knowledge attained through general and related education are essential to success and ensuring well-rounded learners.
- *Community Relationships:* Strong local and global partnerships with business, industry, labor and the public make the college a respected, effective community resource, contributing to local community vitality.

The college measures its effectiveness through these four goals. For each, BTC maintains a comprehensive set of objectives and metrics that guide institutional planning processes.

The college's mission and goals are further augmented by expressions of institutional vision, values, and commitments to responsiveness, customer service, collegiality and respect, and diversity. Collectively, these board-approved statements appear on the college's public website and, as appropriate, in other public documents.

Standard 1.B: Improving Institutional Effectiveness

Standard 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.

System continuity

Bates Technical College maintains a stable, ongoing system of institutional self-evaluation and planning that embeds annual assessment cycles into a multi-year strategic plan.

Strategic planning timetable

The college's Strategic Plan serves as the assessment system's foundation. Slightly updated from an earlier 2016-2021 version, the current plan spans the three-year period from 2019 to 2022. Shaped around the institution's four strategic goals, the plan itself articulates objectives and metrics that serve as yardsticks for self-evaluation. Looking ahead to the next five-year cycle, BTC's leadership has already begun shaping a process to craft a new five-year plan, beginning fall 2023.

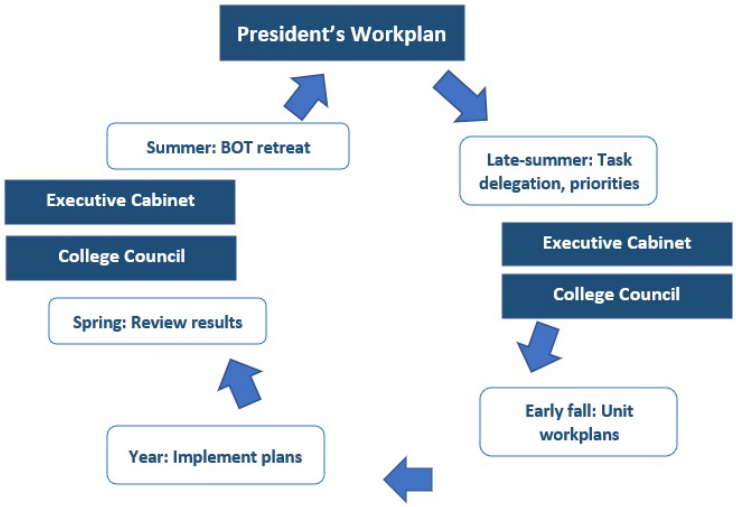

Figure 1.B.1: Annual Planning Cycle

Annual assessments

As directed by board policy, each year, BTC assesses its progress against the current Strategic Plan's goals. As its measurement tool, the process relies on BTC's Strategic Plan Scorecard, published internally, which presents annually-updated trend data on each goal's metrics. Data review, planning, and assessment steps follow a well-defined cycle (Figure 1.B.1) that begins with the trustees' late-summer retreat. There, based on a careful review of prior-year data and College Council input, the president and board

set priorities for the year ahead. Those priorities inform the annual President's Workplan, which in turn shapes unit plans. Scorecard data undergo a mid-year review at the January or February board meeting to ensure that progress is on track. The check-in allows the college to identify areas for attention before the final, year-end data review at the next summer's board retreat, where the sequence repeats.

Application to improvement

Keyed to the Strategic Plan Scorecard's results, the President's Workplan allocates both human and fiscal resources to the accomplishment of each year's priorities, with funding provided through the college's budget process. As the sample from 2021-22 (Table 1.B.1) illustrates, the workplan sets annual targets for improvement, linking them directly to student achievement, learning, and equity goals and identifying specific task assignments to advance those objectives. The same is true of other years' workplans, including the most recent 2022-23 plan.

Table 1.B.1: Sample President's Workplan Strategies, 2021-22

Strategic Plan Indicator	Objectives	Strategies/Notes for 2021-2022
Goal 2 *Student Centered*	*Objective 4* *Increase percent of students with a 2.00 quarter GPA or higher from 71% in Fall 2020 to 75% in Fall 2022*	• Use Bates' Guided Pathways plan to identify and target interventions for students who need extra help getting through their course(s) • Implement an early alert system to improve student retention and success • Improve tutoring and support services for targeted students • Convene faculty learning communities on topics related to teaching and learning, equity, and supporting student success
Goal 3 *General Education*	*Objective 1* *Increase percent of students passing college-level math in the first year from 20.3% to 22%*	• Explore ways to improve schedule efficiency for students and programs • Provide faculty with professional development opportunities to learn about curriculum redesign strategies (ex. math co-requisite courses) • Ensure that placement processes are student-centered
Goal 3 *General Education*	*Objective 2* *Increase percent of students passing college-level English in the first year from 12.8% to 18%*	• Explore ways to improve schedule efficiency for students and programs • Provide faculty with professional development opportunities to learn about curriculum redesign strategies (ex. tiered English courses) • Ensure that placement processes are student-centered

Program evaluation

In identifying annual targets and task priorities college-wide, the President's Workplan serves to direct the work of operational units and, at year's end, affords accountability for their performance through annual achievement reports submitted to the President's Office.

The college rounds out this approach with unit-level evaluation processes.

Instruction programs

For instruction areas, BTC maintains two distinct but related evaluation systems. Faculty assess student learning outcomes quarterly through the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) process, discussed in greater detail below. Meantime, on a three-year basis, programs undergo an operational Program Effectiveness Review, as

outlined in Article 8.21 of the 2021-2024 Faculty Agreement. An updated procedure and PER forms were developed during the 2020-2021 academic year. However, implementation was delayed by the challenges resulting from COVID-19, ctcLink implementation, and staff turnover. Instruction and the faculty union have adopted a schedule to pilot the revised process during the 2022-2023 academic year.

Any challenges that PER identifies are referrred to a committee for a more in-depth Program Sustainability Analysis Procedure (PSAP). The PSA Committee also meets quarterly to review enrollment data and make recommendations to programs to start the PSA process. Both the PER and PSA processes are described in the Faculty Agreement (Sections 8.21 and 8.22).

Non-instructional departments

Unit-level evaluations vary somewhat by organizational division at Bates, with each executive determining the most task-appropriate format for assessment of departmental effectiveness. The fundamental campus-wide measure, however, is the President's Workplan. Divisions review their workplan goals quarterly and and evaluate what was accomplished at the end of each year. As part of submitting their annual reports to the president, division leaders develop new goals or continue existing ones.

Standard 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

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Objectives and indicators

For each of its four Strategic Goals — Workforce Education, Student Centered, General Education, and Community Relationships — BTC has developed a set of objectives, each designed to be meaningful, measurable, and sustainable. Through an extended and rigorous process led by College Council, the proposed objectives were ultimately reduced from 70 to 11 (see Table 1.B.2, following page).

Once the objectives were in place, the next step was to associate indicators with each of the objectives to form the Strategic Plan Scorecard. In most cases, the indicators are tied to student achievement data — quarter-to-quarter retention, gateway course completions, and credentials earned. A few objectives, such as "Partnerships enhance instructional programs" in the Community Relationships goal, required the creation of new data sources — in this instance, a survey administered to advisory committees on an ongoing basis.

Table 1.B.2: Strategic Goal Objectives	
Strategic Goal	Objectives
Workforce Education	1. Curriculum is current and in compliance with state and industry requirements
	2. Students are provided with opportunities to develop workplace behaviors for professional success
	3. Students are provided with opportunities to develop culturally appropriate workplace behaviors for professional success
Student Centered	1. Identify and implement new or enhanced strategies to retain a diverse student population.
	2. Decrease the equity gaps between students based on specific, identified groups.
	3. Enhance the processes that increase enrollment of prospective students.
	4. Identify and intervene with students who are not making satisfactory progress towards their educational goals.
General Education	1. Students complete their college level Math in first year.
	2. Students complete their college level English in first year.
Community Relationships	1. Partnerships enhance instructional programs.
	2. Partnerships have a direct, positive and visible impact to our college and local community.

Inter-institutional comparability

As an element of its institutional effectiveness measures, Bates has identified several peer institutions as reference points. Within Washington, the local and regional institutions are the state's four technical colleges — Bellingham Technical College, Clover Park Technical College, Lake Washington Institute of Technology, and Renton Technical College. Data from all these institutions is readily available to the college through the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), which offers detailed dashboards for analysis not only of enrollments and completions, but also student momentum milestones. From these data, BTC generates a unified analysis of local performance against its peer cohort. The results are published on the Facts and Figures page of the college's public website.

Nationally, through a nationwide search of Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data, Bates has identified three technical colleges in Georgia as peer institutions — Athens Technical College, Augusta Technical College, and Savannah Technical College. Interestingly, only Georgia provided a cohort of institutions matching BTC's IPEDS designators for enrollment, degree of urbanization, highest level of offering, and designation as a technical college. For these outside-Washington peers, BTC's comparison points are limited to those tracked in IPEDS — primarily graduation rates (150% of normal time) and fulltime student retention. A single Tableau workbook compiles and publishes the analysis.

Standards 1.D.2 and 1.D.3 provide additional detail on BTC's student attainment metrics.

Application to institutional effectiveness

As noted above, the complete suite of institution-wide goals, objectives, and indicators appears in the college's Strategic Plan Scorecard, which is updated annually with current-year actuals.

In an earlier form, the Scorecard's results were shown in a color-coded table format (Figure 1.B.2.1), with mission fulfillment set at "having at least eighty percent (80%) of all indicators falling in the Meets (yellow) or Exceeds (green) Expectations" (*Fall 2019 Ad Hoc Report*, page 9).

Fulfillment Rating	Percent of Target	Color
Exceeds Expectations	90-100%	
Meets Expectations	80-89%	
Below Expectations	0-79%	

Figure 1.B.2.1: Original Scorecard Ratings

While that approach had clear strengths, it presented some limitations as well. For one, its format and single-year analysis did not easily reveal trends. Further, the mathematics of color-assignment was opaque to most readers. In response, College Council recommended that, instead of color codes, each indicator should be represented by a graph comparing trends against the target level over time (Figure 1.B.2.2).

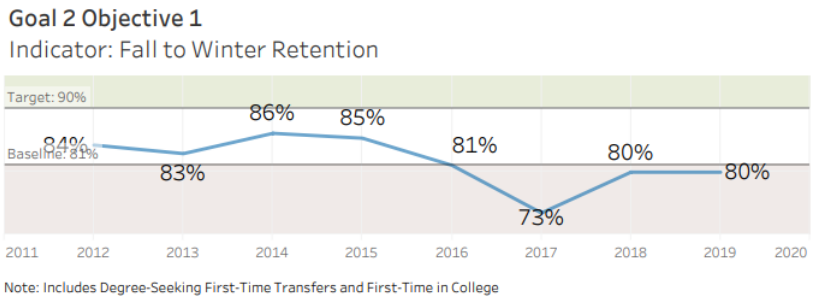

Figure 1.B.2.2: Revised Scorecard Rating Format

The trend-line format has proven to be more transparent and, as a result, more useful in generating meaningful discussion of the data, particularly at the College Council, Executive Cabinet, and board levels. The full Strategic Plan Scorecard is available to all Bates employees. Its subset of student achievement measures are publicly available on the Bates website as the Student Success Scorecard.

Whether in its original tabular format or later graphic form, the scorecard has continued to inform an overall assessment of institutional effectiveness. The threshold for mission fulfillment remains at 80 percent of indicators remaining above baseline each year. While that overall tally is useful, the President's Annual Workplan has taken a more and more central role in prioritizing improvement-directed initiatives on a day-to-day basis.

Standard 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.

Bates Technical College's dedication to inclusive governance and feedback is demonstrated in many ways and at many levels. BTC's practice of including broadly representative perspectives in decision-making is sprinkled throughout the college's structures and planning efforts.

Inclusive practice

BTC's commitment to inclusivity is reflected in leadership practice.

Board of trustees

In keeping with state law, the five-member board of trustees is appointed by the governor with "consideration to geographical diversity, and representing labor, business, women, and racial and ethnic minorities, in the membership." In addition to the board's community-wide representation, the process for the public to provide comments is prominently outlined on the Bates Technical College Board of Trustees' meeting schedule page. The simplicity of the process and clarity of the schedule make it easy for anyone to share their thoughts and feedback directly to the board.

College leadership

Members of the Executive Cabinet consistently invite feedback directly to them and promote an open-door policy. In addition to this open invitation to direct communication, the leadership maintains a schedule of events and communications designed to encourage open communications:

- Monthly Leadership Listening Sessions are open to employees and students on a rotating schedule among BTC's three campuses.
- Special Town Halls invite constituent input on extraordinary situations such as budget decisions or the shape of operations during COVID.
- Labor/Management Meetings occur monthly between representatives of labor groups and representatives of management.
- College-wide events like Opening Day, Professional Development Days, and Commencement Day are all opportunities for the employees of Bates to gather to share information about the college's current status with projects and planning.
- The President's Newsletter collects news from constituencies across campus, summarizing and redistributing the information by email to all employees.
- The president regularly visits program areas and meets with leaders of student government, labor, and governance groups like College Council.

Planning governance structures

Building on its inclusive campus climate, Bates has established formal decision-making structures that invite, process, and act upon constituent interests in institutional planning.

That structure places College Council at the center of communications between BTC's positional leaders and its other internal stakeholders. The Council bylaws indicate that membership will be "as diversely representative of the College and community as possible with primary attention on work group, campus location, and equity characteristics." Accordingly, its 15 members represent various college constituent groups, including student government leaders. The Council further serves as a hub for other committees and task forces campus-wide. Its charter invites the membership to make recommendations on a wide variety of topics, from day-to-day operational matters to mission-level assessment, direction-setting, and policy. Figure 1.B.3 illustrates the governance model.

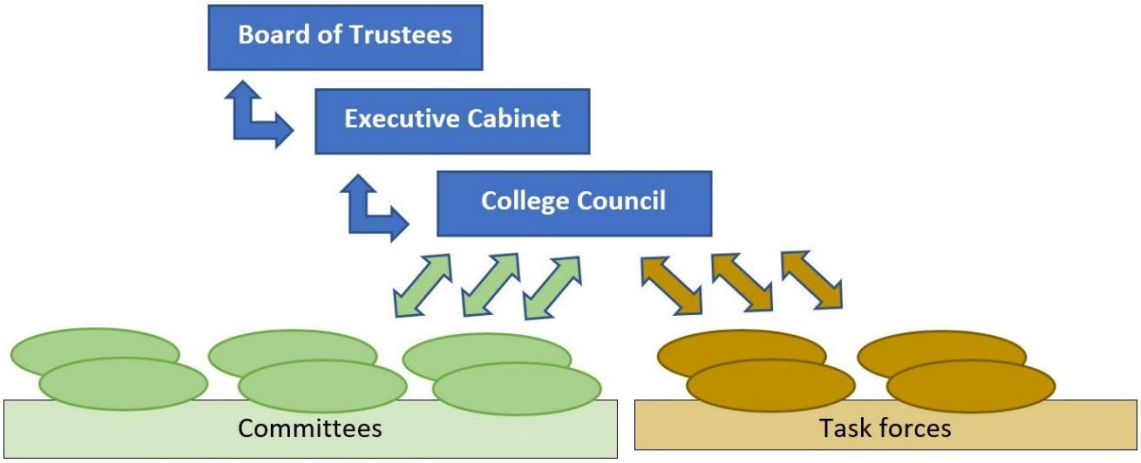

Figure 1.B.3: Governance Groups and Structures

Processes

As one of its many functions, College Council plays a central role both in construction and monitoring of institutional plans. Under its bylaws, several of College Council's objectives involve reviewing and advising on the college's cyclical planning processes. As noted in Standard 1.B.2, the group served as BTC's primary sounding-board and recommending body for the current Strategic Plan, including refinement of the plan's pillars, objectives, and metrics. It has been tasked with a similar role in the development of BTC's next five-year plan. Further, on an ongoing basis, the Council monitors BTC's annual progress toward its goals. As the first-in-line to review each summer's Strategic Plan Scorecard data, College Council provides direct input on priorities that arise from the Scorecard's metrics, helping to shape the board's and president's deliberations on the year's data.

Resource allocation

As a relatively small institution where high-cost programs predominate, Bates has limited budget flexibility year to year, leaving few options for reallocating resources without direct impact to student pathways and core services. However, as noted above, the college's planning system has proven to be effective in prioritizing existing resources — largely people's time, energies, creativity, and teamwork, along with technology tools — around advancing the President's Workplan priorities.

That's not to say that no dollar investments are linked to the achievement of strategic planning objectives. For one thing, the college has been rigorous in securing new funds to support institutional priorities. The Title III grant and annual Guided Pathways allocations, for example, have yielded substantial investments in staff support for student attainment. Additionally, though under $100,000 is typically available there, the college's annual supplemental budget process provides a source for some strategic investments. The request form's Question 11 asks programs to tie their applications to strategic goals — a factor that is weighed carefully in the committee's award deliberations.

Whatever types of resources are tapped to enact change, BTC's cycles of review and collective, cross-constituent feedback continuously shape leadership's efforts to implement improvements to the organization.

Standard 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.

Bates Technical College monitors its external environment through various methods that identify emerging trends, patterns, and developments impacting the surrounding communities.

System data

As a public institution within Washington's community and technical college system, Bates enjoys regular and easy access to data on state budget forecasts, college enrollment trends, and college performance, among other topics. Dashboards maintained by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) make many environmental factors readily available for study, including enrollments, finances, and student achievement. BTC's leadership draws on these information sources, along with state system meetings, to make predictive judgements that, in turn, shape institutional plans.

Community engagement

Reflecting its mission as a community-serving institution, BTC relies on forging relationships with local nonprofits, organizations and businesses, government, and elected officials. Information gleaned from strategic industry partnerships allows the college to evaluate and enhance program curricula so the college can meet workforce needs. For example, as a founding member of Tacoma Public Schools' Healthcare Careers Academy, Bates has forged a strategic collaboration with Pierce County's two major health care organizations both to address the area's shortage of medical workers and to attract diverse students into allied health programs at the college. A partnership with Land Rover of Tacoma allows the college's Automotive Technology program to prepare students for employment in the high-end auto mechanic field, answering the need to fill vacancies in that segment of the industry.

Throughout the academic year, the president meets with legislators and other elected officials to forge meaningful relationships, increase awareness of the college's technical education programs, and illustrate BTC's impact in the South Sound. Meantime, many college employees volunteer to serve on various non-profit and workforce boards, routinely provide informational presentations to community and neighborhood organizations, and participate in local outreach events like fairs and open houses. Relationships with external partners help the college deepen its understanding of community needs and illuminate opportunities for the college to make an impact on the South Sound.

State and local advisory committees

As a career-technical institution, Bates places an especially strong weight on input from local employers. When program advisory committees meet to review curriculum, they also offer feedback on current and emerging trends shaping the future workforce. At the state level, Bates Technical College collaborates with Washington's state-approved Joint Apprenticeship Training Consortiums (JATCs) in providing training curricula for apprentices to upgrade job skills. To secure the Washington Labor and Industry Department's approval of program standards, Bates Technical College and JATCs have been working closely in curriculum development and updating. Because the JATCs represent industries statewide, they provide the college with most up-to-date information regarding large-scale industry changes and trends.

Standard 1.C: Student Learning

Standard 1.C.1: The institution offers programs with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission, culminate in the 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

Mission alignment

Bates Technical College's programs focus exclsuively on its mission-level commitment to "inspiring student learning, challenging greater achievement, and educating for employment."

Credential designators

Consistent with other two-year technical institutions, BTC awards Associate of Applied Science (AAS) and post-secondary training certificates, as well as a transfer-directed Associate in Business. College policy defines those credentials. Offerings span 40 recognized career-technical fields. A full list of programs appears in the Course Catalog.

To promote equitable access, BTC offers pre-college preparation and high school dual-enrollment options. Further, several of BTC's most in-demand career training programs have adopted the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) model, which pairs career-technical faculty with co-instructors who provide contextualized instruction in math, English, and reading. The model allows students immediate entry into college-level coursework while they simultaneously build academic skills. A variety of general education courses complement BTC's degree programs and allow students to transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Bates prides itself in developing and maintaining strong community partnerships to facilitate student mobility, including articulation agreements with industry, K-12 schools, and other colleges and universities. To support on-the-job training, Bates is affiliated with several state-approved apprenticeship training programs ranging from aerospace to fire services.

In service to the wider community, Bates also offers adult education programs including Adult Basic Education (ABE), adult high school (High School-Plus and pre-GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses.

Currency and rigor

In keeping with its career focus, BTC looks largely to the professional community for assurance that its programs reflect up-to-date practices and expectations found in the workplace.

Industry guidance

Outside the campus, BTC gathers feedback from industry sources that range from local advisory committees to state and national organizations.

- *Advisory committees*: All of BTC's professional and technical programs maintain program advisory committees that provide input on curriculum and alignment with the latest workplace standards and trends. Committees consist of community members from businesses and the workforce who provide constructive feedback and advocate for high quality career and technical education. Meetings take place at least twice per academic year in accordance with State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) policy. Advisory committee members also provide

resources for BTC's programs, assisting with training supplies, internship placements, grant opportunities, and employment for graduates.

- *State and national standards:* More than a third of Bates' programs have programmatic accreditation or affiliations with state and national organizations. These programs have additional requirements such as data reporting and site visits to ensure rigor, consistency, and alignment with the profession. Specific programs include several allied health programs, machinist, electrical construction, business, culinary arts, early childhood education, and fire services.

Internal assessments

Alongside its external sources of guidance, BTC also leverages the professional expertise of its own faculty and staff to assess instructional rigor and relevance.

- *Curriculum and Assessment Committee:* The Curriculum and Assessment (C&A) Committee provides a streamlined, faculty-led process of submitting, reviewing, assessing, and approving new and updated program and course curriculum submissions. The committee ensures all curriculum meets relevant standards. During the review, additional guidance is solicited from the college's registrar and financial aid director to ensure compliance with other governing bodies.

  Though the C&A Committee was once expected to subsume the former Assessment Committee's work, recent events have paused that merger, leaving assessment in the hands of the reconstituted Assessment Task Force for now. The C&A Committee has recently moved its curriculum submission and approval process to a new integrated system, which Bates also uses for the course catalog storage and organization. The new application will make it easier to track approvals, update all college departments on new and updated curriculum, and transfer the information directly to the Course Catalog upon approval.

- *E-Learning Committee:* BTC's distance education offerings, whether partially or wholly online, follow the same outcomes as their face-to-face counterparts and, accordingly, are mainstreamed into BTC's learning assessment processes. To support those efforts, the faculty-led eLearning Committee is tasked with making decisions affecting BTC's e-learning community and seeking input from various groups regarding e-earning procedures and processes. Along with e-learning staff, students, and management, the committee includes a cross-section of faculty groups, including representatives from each campus, from fulltime and adjunct appointments, and from general education and career training. In recent years, the committee has developed campus-wide definitions of teaching modalities, guided training topics and logistics, designed resources for faculty, and facilitated multiple changes in Canvas processes and procedures.

Standard 1.C.2: The institution awards credit, 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.

Curricular sequencing

Bates' 40 programs are organized into 12 career pathways (Figure 1.C.2.1).

Figure 1.C.2.1: Bates Technical College Career Pathway Clusters

Each program has a recommended course sequence so that students can stay on track in their studies. Along each path, skills are built deliberately from novice to workplace-ready. Quarter-by-quarter course maps appear in the Program Offerings links under each Career Pathways tile.

Synthesis of learning

BTC's three-pillar model of outcomes ensures synthesis of learning. That model places Course Student Learning Outcomes (CSLO) at the center. Each CSLO is aligned with at least one Program Student Learning Outcome (PSLO) and many to an Institution Student Learning Outcome (ISLO), as described on pages 38-46 of the *Fall 2018 Ad-Hoc Self-Evaluation Report* and pages 45-46 of the *Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review*. Figure P1, reproduced here, illustrates the design.

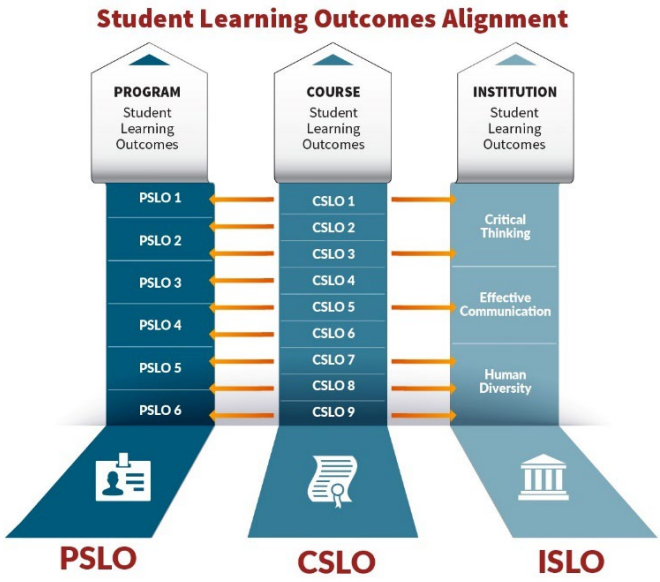

Figure P1: Three-Pillar Student Learning Outcomes Model

- *CSLOs:* Course-specific CSLOs guide lesson planning, instruction, and assessment of student mastery of content and skills. CSLOs are the concrete learning objectives through which the learner interacts with the curriculum and instruction, as well as by which the students' progress toward achieving the outcomes of each pillar is measured.
- *PSLOs:* Career training programs align their PSLOs with knowledge and skills that students need for success in the workforce as well as, if applicable, programmatic accreditation requirements. General education faculty have likewise identified a collective set of PSLOs for their courses.
- *ISLOs:* Three Institution Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) — Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, and Human Diversity — are shared by all career programs and general education courses. ISLOs are discussed in greater detail in Standard 1.C.6.

Because all three outcomes levels are recorded in Master Course Outlines (MCOs), a unified Master Course Outline dashboard allows users to see the distribution — and, by extension, synthesis — of CSLOs, PSLOs, and ISLOs across their program(s).

Synthesis is further promoted through the college-wide integration of Bloom's Taxonomy as an additional element of analysis for each learning outcome and the assessment method used. In setting course and program objectives, BTC faculty also assign each learning task with a Bloom's value — *R/U* (Remember and Understand), *A/A* (Apply and Analyze) *or E/C* (Evaluate and Create). Because these data are also captured on the MCO, dashboard users can evaluate curricular synthesis not only through outcomes-level linkages but also through Bloom's levels.

Other practices further reinforce the college's emphasis on synthesis and sequencing. For example, as part of its course-approval process, the Curriculum and Assessment Committee uses a rubric to check all submissions for clarity of alignment among title, description, mode of delivery and credits, student learning outcomes, Bloom's Taxonomy level, and assessment method. Committee members also support faculty in writing high-quality CSLOs.

Additionally, many BTC programs require a final capstone, project, internship, or fieldwork experience to fulfill course and degree requirements.

Standard 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.

Institutional records of course-level outcomes are maintained within the Master Course Outline dashboard and published on course syllabi and Course Descriptions within the Course Catalog. Because Course Student Learning Outcomes (CLSOs) form the foundation of BTC's learning assessment process, the college has devoted considerable attention to their development and refinement over time, supporting the work through assessment-related committees and online

resources like the Bates Outcomes Builder (BoB). Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) are published in the catalog as well, linked to each program's catalog overview. Internally, course outcomes are recorded and matched to program outcomes in Master Course Outlines (MCOs). The resulting curriculum maps are viewable internally via the Master Course Outline dashboard. Faculty utilize the college's syllabus template for consistency and to ensure breadth of information is available for all students. Faculty are required to submit current-term syllabi to their dean prior to the end of the first week of each quarter.

In addition to the support provided by members of the Curriculum and Assessment (C&A) Committee, the college employs a dedicated full-time curriculum and assessment coordinator who works with faculty to develop clear and measurable course outcomes. As part of Bates' Title III grant, the college also recently hired a full-time instructional designer to assist faculty in implementing best practices in course design. Moving forward, the designer will collaborate with the Online Learning Center team and a group of faculty members to develop competency-based outcomes for several programs.

Standard 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.

Admissions

Bates Technical College's Admissions Policy reflects both state law and system policy. As an open-access institution, Bates admits students who can profit from BTC's curricular offerings and are 18 or older, or a high school (or equivalent) graduate, or an enrollee in a high school dual-credit program. Guidelines appear on the college's Steps to Enrollment website and the Student Handbook (page 5). The policy itself also appears in the college's public Policy Library.

Students may apply through the online admissions process or in person at any campus with a paper application. Once students are admitted, the Steps to Enrollment information walks them through the remaining requirements to register. They are assisted through this process by the college's enrollment specialists.

Completion

College policy defines the fundamental requirements to complete degrees and certificates at Bates. The primary source for completion requirements is the online Course Catalog. From the catalog's Program Offerings page, students can locate the requirements for each credential. The college's Student Satisfactory Academic Progress policy defines academic standards for continuation of studies leading to completion. When students apply for graduation, the Registration Department provides a final check to assure that all requirements have been met.

Program-specific requirements also appear in the Career Pathways portion of BTC's website.

There, the format not only defines the requirements but also shows their recommended sequence as a course map, clickable from the program overview template (Figure 1.C.4).

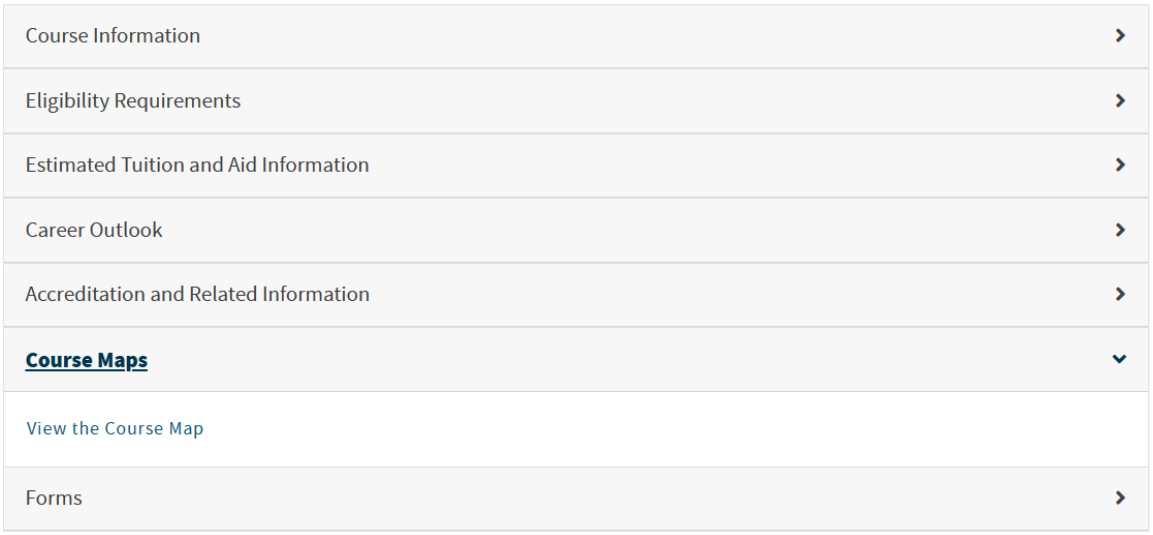

Figure 1.C.4: Program Website Template Course Map Location

Standard 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.

Bates Technical College recognizes and values its faculty's expertise and their crucial role in development of curricula, evaluation of instruction, and ongoing and iterative assessment of student learning.

Curricular control

Working from advisory committee input, professional licensure requirements, and other sources of industry expectations, Bates Technical College faculty hold primary responsibility for developing and revising their curricula. Under college policy, the faculty-led Curriculum and Assessment (C&A) Committee reviews proposed changes to courses and programs, providing collegial oversight and support to the curriculum-maintenance process.

System of assessment

The college's Assessment Task Force (ATF), a faculty-driven subcommittee of the larger C&A Committee, guides BTC's efforts to sustain a manageable but effective process for instructors to reflect on and revise their teaching and assessment practices, as well as identify needs for curricular change and additional supports, based on direct assessment of student learning.

Under Section 8.1.2 (Table B) of their Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), BTC faculty are required to participate in outcomes assessment. To meet that expectation, all teaching faculty complete a Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) form on a quarterly basis. In keeping with BTC's three-pillar outcomes model, SLOA emphasizes the relationships between course-level and program outcomes. The course-level to institutional-level outcomes assessment process is described in Standard 1.C.6.

Since implementation of the SLOA process, participation of program faculty at BTC has consistently been high. For each cycle, program faculty collaboratively select a program learning outcome (PSLO) to assess through aligned course learning outcomes (CSLOs) in one or more courses taught that quarter. On the SLOA form, the instructor(s) indicate(s) the methods for teaching and assessing each CSLO, how many students exceeded, met, or did not meet the CSLO, and what potential changes the instructor thinks may improve the delivery and assessment of the PSLO and/or CSLO, going forward. New to SLOA this year, an additional element now asks instructors to document what supportive resources they may need to make those improvements (see Standard 1.C.7).

Though primarily a self-reflective tool, SLOA analysis extends beyond the current quarter and program level. As the data from the forms are collected each quarter, they automatically populate a SLOA database and, from there, roll up into an online SLOA Dashboard. The dashboard is designed to display the most salient data in tables and graphs, allowing the user to select from a variety of data points and combinations of data sets for analysis. For example, an instructor may choose to see the SLOA results only from one or more CSLOs in a single quarter or over several quarters. As users build their sophistication with these tools, a faculty member might choose to see PSLO-level data for one or more program outcomes, whether in a single quarter, from a single instructor, or from multiple quarters and/or instructors. A dean or other college administrator might select a different tab to view different data points, including longer-term trends for a single program or even multiple programs in related fields. Going forward, this information can be useful in planning professional development activities, requesting personnel or other supportive resources, or preparing reports for the college president, advisory committees, or the board of trustees.

Standard 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

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Bates Technical College centers general education as one of its four Strategic Goals,

underscoring the institution's commitment to providing graduates not only with technical skills but also with the communications, quantitative reasoning, and interpersonal skills required for long-term success in the workplace and the community.

Curricular requirements

For any credentials exceeding 45 quarter-credits, Bates Technical College maintains a set of general education course requirements. The universal pattern is a 15-credit block, divided across three areas: Communications, Quantitative, and Humanities/Social Sciences/Natural Sciences. Applicable courses are college-level and numbered above 100. In many cases, the courses are transferable to other institutions. The majority are listed in the state system's Common Course Numbering (CCN) reciprocity agreement.

Learning outcomes

As described in Standard 1.C.2, Bates Technical College has established three pillars of learning outcomes, with course-level outcomes (CSLOs) supporting both program-level and institution-wide outcomes. That structure has particular application to general education at Bates.

Institutional outcomes (ISLOs)

The Institutional Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) are held to be common across career-technical programs and general education courses. They are Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, and Human Diversity. These learning outcomes encompass core competencies that prepare Bates graduates for life-long learning in their careers by giving them the tools to navigate and participate in a diverse and ever-changing community of ideas and challenges (Figure 1.C.6.). Each Master Course Outline (MCO) identifies the ISLOs embedded in that course, allowing BTC to map ISLO infusion across the curriculum.

Figure 1.C.6: Bates ISLOs

General education program outcomes

Alongside the college-wide ISLO structure, general education exists as an academic department at Bates, guided by its own dean and offering courses in communications, mathematics, science, and social science. Collectively, these courses form a program, with a defined set of Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs), most recently updated in 2019.

Assessment

Given that BTC's general education outcomes are framed both institutionally and departmentally, their assessment systems reflect that two-level structure.

ISLO assessment

BTC's ISLO assessment protocol calls for one ISLO to be assessed college-wide each year. The practice is designed to solicit evidence from faculty through an annual springtime survey, with results fed back to the Curriculum and Assessment Committee for analysis and, as indicated, for reaction. Samples of ISLO reports are available publicly, with a full archive accessible to employees. The system ran successfully through three cycles beginning in 2016-17, with two sets of results reported in BTC's 2018 Ad Hoc Self-Evaluation Report (page 45).

Of particular significance, however, was 2019's assessment of the Human Diversity ISLO. In anticipation of that assessment, a group of BTC faculty and staff attended the Teaching and Learning National Institute (TLNI) at the Evergreen State College. After the conference, the group drafted a comprehensive two-year plan to assess the Human Diversity ISLO including rubrics. Regrettably, that plan was suspended due to the disruptions of the 2019 cyberattack, faculty and staff turnover in several critical positions, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative was not permanently abandoned, however. In 2020-21, BTC revisited the Human Diversity ISLO, beginning this time with a dashboard analysis of diversity-related CSLOs as an element of the Strategic Plan Scorecard. The disappointing results led, with College Council's support, to the establishment of a 2021-22 President's Workplan goal to "Increase [the] percent of students taking human diversity courses" (Priority 2).

The renewed emphasis on BTC's Human Diversity ISLO dovetailed with current institutional initiatives to refine and deepen the college's understanding of equity. In spring 2022, the vice president of instruction convened several members of Assessment Task Force and the remaining faculty and staff who attended 2019's TLNI at Evergreen. Based on their feedback, a Human Diversity ISLO task force will be convened to develop faculty training and guidelines on ISLO assessment during the 2023-2024 academic year. This work will be supported through an outside facilitator and BTC's diversity, equity, and inclusion officer.

General education program (PSLO) assessment

Meantime, as a program unit, BTC's General Education faculty have engaged fully in BTC's Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) process, using their Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) as a framework for course- to program-level assessment. As with career-technical programs, the SLOA process in general education yields CLSO and PLSO student performance data that, in turn, fosters faculty reflection

and invites resource requests, as noted in Standards 1.C.5 and 1.C.7.

Through its parallel processes of ISLO and PSLO assessments, Bates has gleaned — and continues to glean — meaningful information on student mastery of general education outcomes. Whether the college will restart its ISLO assessment system remains, at this date, an unsettled question. But whether in its original or a revised form, the effort will continue.

Standard 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.

Bates Technical College recognizes and embraces the importance of using assessment data to inform academic decisions, planning, and practice. These data offer the opportunity to reflect on, revise, and improve both specific instructional practices and the overall learning experience for students by enhancing teaching methods, curriculum, and instructional supports.

Institution-wide learning improvement

The college's work with its Human Diversity ISLO illustrates BTC's capacity to link learning assessement to institution-level planning — reflected, in this case, through the 2021-22 President's Workplan priorities. Similar linkages are evident in such Strategic Goals as improving English and math attainment. In focusing directly on first-year completions of those requirements, Strategic Goal 3 has directed resources, planning, and energy to engancing student attainment in those courses, leading to new instructional supports in math and large-scale revisions of placement policy in both English and math. The 2021-22 President's Workplan priorities called for evaluation of those interventions, as well as new efforts in exploring co-requisite models.

Course- and program-level improvement

At the program level, the SLOA process helps identify needed adjustments to outcomes alignment, curriculum development, and/or instructional and assessment practices. It also provides an avenue for directing resources to the faculty in support of continuous improvement.

Self-reflection

The foundation of this work is self-reflection. As teaching faculty members complete a Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) each quarter, they choose one of the Program Learning Outcomes (PSLO) for their career program that is addressed in one or more courses. The instructor indicates these outcomes on the SLOA form and includes the methods by which they are taught and assessed. The instructor then assesses how

well the outcomes have been achieved through instruction by indicating the number of students in the class as "not meeting," "emerging," "met outcome," or "not observed." Based on these data, the instructor then provides a reflection and sets plans regarding any changes to instruction or assessments. Through repeated cycles of this process, faculty have a continuing opportunity to rethink and refine their teaching.

Resource requests

Though a necessary starting point, self-reflection alone is insufficient to sustain improvement. Recognizing that fact, the Assessment Task Force (ATF) has incorporated a set of check-boxes into the SLOA form, inviting faculty to indicate what supportive resources they may need to make further improvements in instruction or assessment. As a standing agenda item, shortly after each quarter's SLOA deadline, ATF reviews each form to determine the best resources to meet the respondent's needs. The ATF then coordinates a referral for the faculty member to one or more departments or individuals who can help. Options might include a dean or other administrator, an instructional designer or professional development resource, the library, the C&A Committee, or ATF itself. In addition, given ATF's familiarity with all BTC programs, a referral to other faculty who are making similar adjustments may be the best option.

The complete SLOA model appears as Figure P2, repeated here.

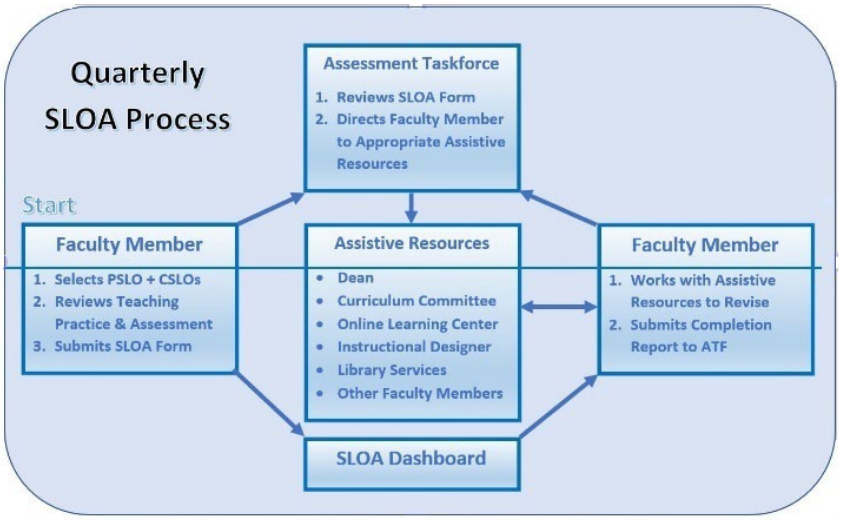

Figure P2: SLOA Flowchart

Closing the loop

In addition to the task of directing instructors to needed resources, ATF's processes incorporate other elements that help close the assessment loop. These include:

- *Iterative assessment:* ATF encourages faculty to submit a subsequent quarter's SLOA for the same PSLO to assess the effectiveness of change(s).

- *Tracking:* Because SLOA data are compiled in dashboard form, data can be easily extracted for analysis and report building to inform program faculty, the C&A Committee, instructional deans and staff, the College Council, Executive Cabinet, and program advisory committees. The frequency of data collection, as well as the easy access for analysis, informs decision-makers at all levels of the institution.
- *Process assessment:* It is valuable to have faculty take time to reflect on the overall assessment process. During each summer, in lieu of submitting a SLOA form for that quarter, faculty participate in a reflective activity of the previous quarters in that year, as well as the previous year's assessments. Summer 2022's reflection, for example, provided global feedback for ATF's use in further SLOA refinements. Going forward, potential summer activities will include asking faculty to reflect on their own assessment tools and practices, analyze data compiled on the SLOA Dashboard for their own and other programs, and review completion reports submitted to the ATF.

Sustainability

The SLOA process is designed to be meaningful, constructive, and sustainable. To those ends, it incorporates technology to maximize usefulness while minimizing the burden of reporting and tracking. Most importantly, it is faculty-led and built on the principle that good instructors are already engaged in reflection on the effectiveness of their curriculum and teaching methods. The SLOA process formalizes and facilitates this natural process, allowing faculty a mechanism not only for scheduled, systematic examination of their program and instructional practice, but also as a means for collecting and tracking data to support informed decisions, to see how their colleagues have been engaged in those same processes, and to connect with supportive resources across campus, fostering the building of a collaborative community focused on positive and effective learning experiences for BTC students.

Standard 1.C.8: Transfer credit and credit for prior learning is 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.

Applicable policy

BTC's Award of Transfer Credit Policy directs the college to accept credit from regionally accredited institutions. A comparable policy governs credit from international colleges and universities, nationally accredited post-secondary institutions, military training, and prior or extra-institutional learning from within business, industry, or agency environments. BTC's policies align with state law on acceptance of Advanced Placement, International

Baccalaureate, and Cambridge International Exams.

Student communication

The college's credit-transfer polices are publicly available in Section 6000 of BTC's online Policy Library. Incoming transfer students are provided with specific guidance in the Steps to Enrollment – Transfer Students website. Information regarding these processes appears also in the Course Catalog. Students are further informed of these options when they meet with their career advisor during their required entry advising meeting. Career advisors assist students with the paperwork and documentation to apply for credit acceptance.

Comparability safeguards

Content and quality alignment is maintained through a combination of faculty oversight and higher education system practices. All incoming transcripts are sent to the registration office to be evaluated by the transcript evaluator. For general education courses, BTC draws heavily on the Common Course Numbering (CCN) protocols of the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges or the university transfer guidelines of the state's Intercollege Relations Commissions (ICRC). For career-technical programs, transfer standards have been established through a cooperative process between the credentials evaluator and the instructional department. When questions arise regarding the acceptance of specific credits or non-traditional learning, the credentials evaluator will reach out to the appropriate instructional department to evaluate the depth and rigor of the course to determine its equivalency.

Standard 1.D: Student Achievement

Standard 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.

Recruitment

Bates Technical College's recruitment and outreach practices are governed by its College Recruitment and Outreach Activities policy. Outreach activities place priority on the college's equity goals, including fostering gender equity across technical offerings and increasing admission of historically underrepresented groups into high-wage programs. The college is also deeply committed to providing equal opportunity to veterans and people with disabilities. To these ends, BTC maintains a full calendar of recruitment and outreach activities, making them

as accessible as possible to the community. Information sessions are available face-to-face and through weekly virtual sessions. Furthermore, to remove financial barriers, BTC has opted to eliminate application fees and as well as fees for identification cards and parking.

Admissions

As an open-access institution, Bates admits all adults who can benefit from the college's programming (see Standard 1.C.4). Criteria are described in BTC's Admission Policy. The Getting Started website provides instructions on assessment of student readiness, including how to access assistance with math and English readiness. In recent years, as a matter of policy, Bates has moved away from reliance on a single standardized test to determine placement, instead inviting students to document readiness through high school proficiency exams, transcripts, and ACT, SAT, or other placement tests. A free Math Bootcamp and English Directed Self-Placement procedure are available to prepare students for program entry.

Programs with specific legal or licensure requirements list those requirements on BTC's public website via a clickable Eligibility Requirements tile. Under college policy, any such requirement must be satisfied prior to the date of enrollment into that program.

Orientation

BTC's New Student Orientation (NSO) program, facilitated by each campus's student retention specialists, is specifically designed for students with no prior college experience. Attendance is mandatory prior to the beginning of the first quarter. Further, in keeping with college policy, new enrollees are required to meet with the career advisor of their chosen program. The advisor assists students in determining their start date (depending on program entry points and waiting lists), type of credential they wish to obtain, and general education course work to be taken based on placement. In addition, these sessions introduce a variety of advising services, including placement options, college resources, program requirements, program costing, and information on BTC's policies and procedures.

Advising

Throughout a student's journey through Bates, career advisors provide continued support. The college's General Student Services Policy requires that an assigned career advisor assists in developing an educational plan for each student who registers at Bates. To meet that requirement, an appropriately qualified advisor is designated to each of Bates' three campuses. Advisors utilize a wide range of tools including course maps and academic checklists to guide students through programs of study. Information on advising services is also available in the Student Handbook (p. 28).

Going forward, the college's Guided Pathways implementation will further empower students to succeed in their program of study through integrated scheduling and mapping, learning outcomes alignment, and a revitalized Academic Advisement Report (AAR) tool to provide

students, instructors, and advisors with real-time report of remaining courses.

Retention

Though critically important, advising is only one element of BTC's retention supports. The hands-on emphasis, continuous faculty presence, and project-oriented teamwork of the college's educational model itself serve to promote engagement and a sense of belonging among enrollees. Building on the foundation, the recent addition of retention specialists at each site provides yet another person-to-person avenue to secure support. In the virtual environment, BTC's Online Learning Center offers help with online instructional resources, while the myBates student portal catalogs a broad set of student resources. Finally, as noted elsewhere in this report, BTC's community networks have drawn a variety of external resources to campus, including free bus passes, a pantry, and career development supports.

Standard 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)

Bates extracts student achievement data from three distinct sources, depending on whether the comparison is to local historical trends, regional peers, or national peers (Table 1.D.2.1):

Table 1.D.2.1: Data-Analysis Applications and Associated Datasets

Intended data use	Data source
BTC local scorecard	Legacy (pre-ctcLink) student management system data
Regional (in-state) peers	System-generated (SBCTC) Student Achievement Initiative data
National peers	Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data (IPEDs) data

Though at times cumbersome, the multi-dataset model is the by-product of misalignments in the vintage, analytical tools, and data attributes of the available sources. BTC's scorecards, for example, were developed on legacy data systems alongside BTC's 2016 Strategic Plan, before the statewide conversion to the ctcLink system and the development of newer, better dashboards by Washington's State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). Similarly, IPEDS tracks only fulltime retention and 150-percent completion rates, with only Georgia providing a comparable out-of-state cohort of semi-urban technical colleges.

Going forward, new data systems — among them, the Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) — will likely provide better options for interstate and inter-college comparability. Meanwhile,

Bates is taking advantage of SBCTC's newer data tools to construct scorecards for the college's next Strategic Plan. Through the national Guided Pathways initiative, BTC is exploring additional avenues to identify outside-Washington peers that are tracking comparable metrics.

In the meantime, to maintain stability and facilitate longer-term trend analysis, the college has opted to sustain the Student Success Scorecard as its primary effectiveness measure, triangulating the data through side-by-side comparisons to the other metrics.

Indicators of achievement

Although each of these data sources defines its indicators somewhat differently, they all include measures of retention, persistence, completion and post-graduation success that echo the student attainment measures embedded in BTC's Strategic Plan, as the Table 1.D.2.2 illustrates:

Table 1.D.2.2: Indicators of Achievement by Data Source

Attainment Indicator	Strategic Plan objective	BTC-internal scorecard data	SBCTC regional peer data	IPEDS national data
Retention	Goal 2, Objective 1	Fall-to winter re-enrollment	Fall-to fall re-enrollment	Year-to year retention
Persistence	Goal 2, Objective 4 Goal 3, Objective 1 Goal 3, Objective 2	Students maintaining 2.0 gpa First-year math completion First year English completion	15 credits in first year	N/A
Completion	Goal 2, Objective 2	Three-year graduation rate	Year 2 completions	Completions 150% time
Post-graduation success	Goal 1, Objective 1	Graduate employment rate	Year 4 transfer rate Year 4 earnings	N/A

Disaggregation

The college's Student Success Scorecard disaggregates the college's student attainment goals by a set of institutionally meaningul attributes:

- Historically underrepresented/non-historically underrepresented (race/ethinicity)
- Age groupings (under 20, 20-29, 30-39, 40-plus)
- Gender/sex identification
- Pell-eligibility as a proxy for socioeconomic status

The choice of categories reflects the college's attention to both its program mix and its community. For example, given BTC's emphasis on trades and professional-technical jobs, the college recognizes the natural tendency for some enrollees to sort themselves into stereotypical gender and age groups by program, a phenomenon that Bates strives to resist.

The college is equally aware of socioeconomic inequities in Tacoma's highly diverse community and its historically industrial economy, placing extra weight on indicators of race/ethnicity and wealth.

In addition to the publicly available Student Success Scorecard and its disaggregation tables, on-campus users have self-serve access to disaggregated student data through SBCTC's dashboards. Though the SBCTC data elements differ slightly from BTC's legacy scorecards, faculty and staff can review the numbers at the program and pathway level. As these finer-grained datasets attract more campus interest, student privacy will require safeguarding, particularly in BTC's many small programs. A local data governance initiative, based on a corresponding statewide initiative, promises to provide guidance on balancing these interests.

The available data on post-graduation employment cannot, at present, be disaggregated. The number of BTC graduates who transfer elsewhere is too small to support meaningful analysis.

Standard 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

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Publication

The college publishes its student achievement results collectively on its Facts and Figures web page. At that single site, the public can access:

- BTC's Student Success Scorecard
- In-state peer comparison dashboard
- National peer comparison dashboard

As noted elsewhere in this report, Bates also references its student achievement data through public information, community engagement events, and tours. Internally, communications avenues include meetings of the trustees, President's Cabinet, College Council, Guided Pathways committees, Student Services and Instructional Deans, and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

The college's full Strategic Plan Scorecard is posted on the employee intranet.

Benchmarking

Bates continues to mature in its benchmarking processes. Standard 1.B.2 (above) describes the color-coded benchmarking of BTC's original Strategic Plan Scorecard. That initial framework assumed a level of perpetual improvement, year-over-year, in the college's performance on

each indicator, with red, yellow, or green designators denoting whether that year's improvement margin was unmet, met, or exceeded. In effect, the approach set each year's actual performance as the benchmark for the next year's.

As Standard 1.B.2 goes on to explain, while the color-coded format was effective in drawing attention to successes and challenges, the reports proved difficult both to calculate and to interpret, ultimately prompting College Council to revisit the scorecard's design in 2020. Today, rather than a single-year chart of color-coded boxes, the scorecard follows year-by-year trendlines of performance, sandwiched between a minimally acceptable benchmark and an aspirational target (see Figure 1.B.2.2). While that methodology has made it easier to see whether BTC is trending upward or downward relative to past performance, the college recognizes that the baselines remain fundamentally arbitrary as local snapshots-in-time.

College Council, executive leadership, and the trustees have acknowledged the opportunity to transition to external comparison data as an additional resource for benchmarking. As Bates develops its next Strategic Plan and associated metrics, peer averages will augment and/or replace year-over-year performance figures as tools for target-setting and annual evaluation.

Standard 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

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Continuous Improvement

As noted at the outset of this report, Bates currently uses the Strategic Plan Scorecard to annually review the college's progress in respective areas of its mission. The results of these annual assessments shape the President's Work Plan and related workplans for the different areas of the college. Each workplan commits people, energy, and tangible resources to improving BTC's performance.

For the subset of scorecard items that specifically pertain to student achievement (see Standard 1.D.3), each year's work engages not only individual departments, but also the college-wide committees that steer BTC's institution-wide student success initiatives — the Guided Pathways Steering Committee, Title III Team, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Figure 1.D.4 (following page) illustrates those relationships.

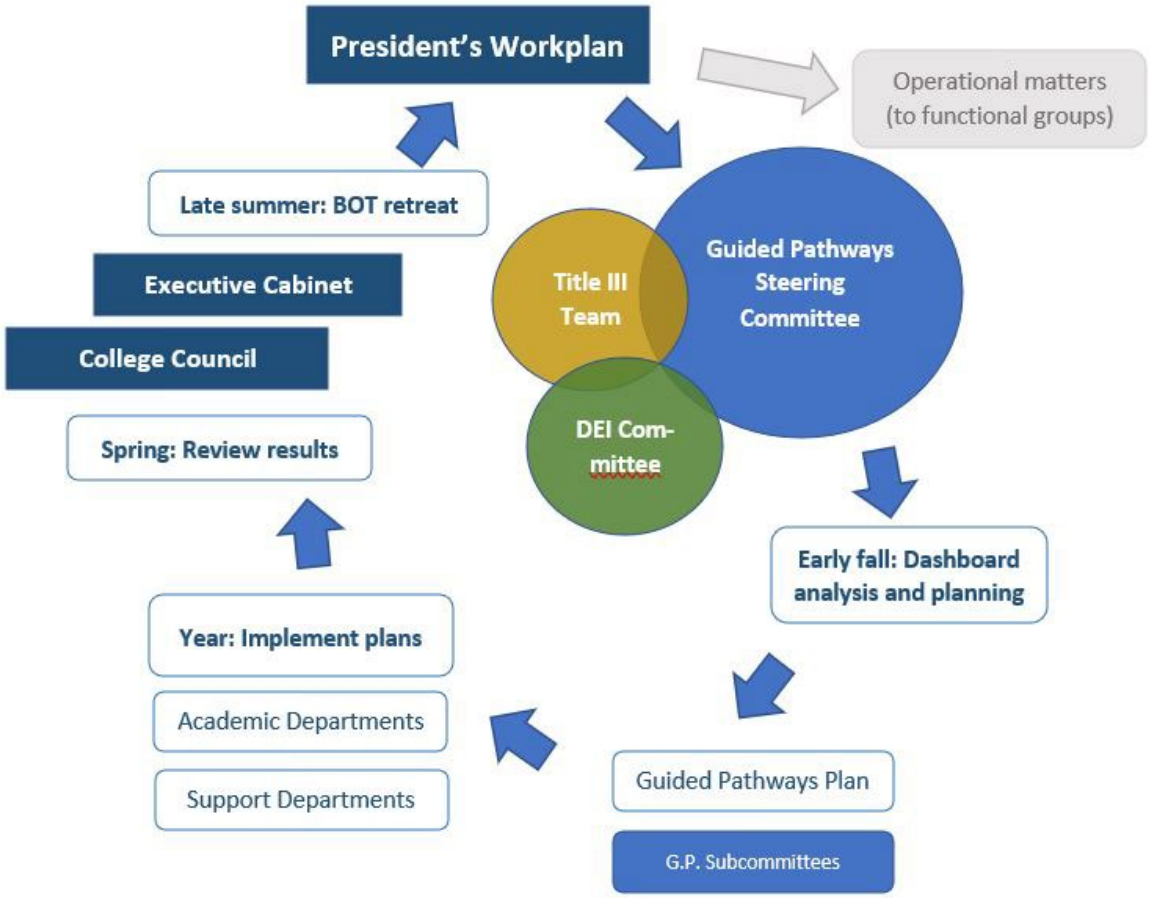


Figure 1.D.4: Annual Planning Cycle (Student Attainment)

These three advisory groups are, in turn, tasked with coordinating and spearheading the college's major student success initiatives at the department and unit level, with support from cross-constituent Guided Pathways subcommittees.

Given that the Guided Pathways initiative provides the broadest umbrella for BTC's student success initiatives, each year's priorities are reflected in the Guided Pathways Workplan. Each element has an identified leader(s), an articulated connection to the college-wide Strategic Plan, and academic and non-instructional departments tasked with implementation.

Though the specific year-to-year priorities may vary somewhat from one President's Workplan to the next, the central focus on student achievement is sustained by the alignment of college goals, student data, the annual planning cycle, and the Guided Pathways framework.

The 2022-23 Guided Pathways priorities and their alignment with Bates Technical College Strategic Goals are summarized in Table 1.D.4 (following page).

Table 1.D.4: Guided Pathways Plan and Strategic Plan Alignment		
Initiative Area	2022-23 Plan Priorities	Strategic Plan Metric
English/Math Pathways	• Review courses and program requirements • Ensure courses align • Determine what is being taught in programs • Review the placement processes	Goal 3, Objectives 1 & 2: First-year English/math
Recruitment and Onboarding	• Refine communication structure • Enhance customer service • Outreach to admitted students	Goal 2, Objective 1: Fall-winter retention rate
Course Mapping	• Develop a consistent format • Build out Academic Advisement Requirements (AARs)	Goal 2, Objective 2: 3-year completion rate
College Success Class	• Determine who is required to take the class • Finalize outcomes and curriculum	Goal 2, Objective 4: Students w/2.0+ GPA
Retention Specialists	• Determine new process to connect with students • Build processes to assist current students • Build more structure into New Student Orientation	Goal 2, Objectives 2 & 4: Students w/2.0+ GPA 3-year completion rate

Conclusion

Throughout the self-study process, Bates has focused on the opportunities for self-reflection that accreditation provides. The college's pre-visit deliberations, messaging, and professional development activities have emphasized institutional candor and continuous improvement, rather than external compliance alone, as the process's highest values. At one level, the self-study has provided a venue for celebration of accomplishments — particularly in recovering from the infrastructure, leadership, and delivery disruptions of 2016 to 2021. But it's also offered insights into potential next steps.

In the following paragraphs, we conclude by summarizing what we see as both our strengths and opportunities relative to NWCCU Standards.

Standard 1.A: Institutional mission

Strengths

Our college's mission continues to reflect accurately Bates Technical College's intentions and our place in the community. The statement has been augmented by meaningful expressions of college values and expectations. Finally, the mission's four-pillar structure has provided us with a stable, actionable set of strategic goals and objectives for internal evaluation.

Opportunities

We look forward to our next Strategic Plan as a chance to build on the lessons of 2016-22's planning cycle. As our current Strategic Plan winds down this year, we see our Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness as a valuable source of feedback to consider before we launch a new cycle next fall.

Standard 1.B: Improving institutional effectiveness

Strengths

We believe our mission, goals, and indicators accurately describe what we are trying to be as a college, and the gathering and reporting of the data associated with the indicators help guide us toward greater mission fulfillment.

Opportunities

Early in the process of revising the Strategic Plan and mission statement, and developing the associated goals, plans, and indicators, the then-college president emphasized the "Plan-Do-Check-Adjust" cycle.

Now that the last decade's work has been implemented, we've arrived at the "Adjust"

step, where we regularly reflect on successes and struggles and make adjustments. Historically, that's most commonly been done at the individual or program level, but we're learning how to do that equally well as an institution. We can now see the results of our data-gathering, where we're succeeding, and where improvements are needed. This is helpful. This gives us direction. This helps us to better plan for the next year, two years, five years and more. We have been building a foundation for this, and now the building is starting to go up.

In addition to sustaining that development, we have identified some key refinements for the next few years. For one, because the college's current Strategic Plan was built under the 2010 NWCCU Standards for Accreditation and prior to the statewide conversion to ctcLink data, we see opportunities to more fully incorporate comparisons within Washington and with other states in establishing benchmarks for accountability. We also envision wider deployment of self-serve dashboards and analytical tools that can make institutional data more useful in department-level evaluation and planning.

Standard 1.C: Student learning

Strengths

Our comprehensive learning assessment plan, as articulated in our *2018 Ad Hoc Self-Evaluation Report*, was ambitious. Most of its elements — among them, the three-pillar curricular outcomes model, the incorporation of Bloom's Taxonomy, and the Institution Student Learning Outcomes (ISLO) cycle — were institutionalized pre-COVID. Since 2020, the faculty-led Assessment Task Force has furthered that work, promoting authentic, faculty-wide engagement in assessment at the Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO) level. Thanks to ATF's leadership, participation rates in the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) process have been high. SLOA invites self-reflection and, more recently, has clarified the avenues for programs to articulate and direct their assessment-driven resource requests. ATF continues to build more sophisticated systems for SLOA data analysis at the institution-wide level.

Opportunities

While we have continued to assess general education outcomes at the Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO) level, we welcome the opportunity, going forward, to revisit and refine our Institution Student Learning Outcomes (ISLO) processes, beginning with a deep conversation around what the Human Diversity ISLO should mean. This initiative offers an important opportunity to align assessment with the work of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee efforts.

Standard 1.D: Student achievement

Strengths

Thanks to skilled local research staff and a robust set of state system resources, our data capacity is strong, offering us the ability to monitor student achievement across a set of momentum milestones. We disclose the results publicly, disaggregating them by demographic traits that have meaning for us, particularly in light of our program mix and our community's diversity and socioeconomic inequities. The college's student achievement metrics are tied to our Strategic Plan, offering a mechanism for the President's Workplan to direct resources and energies to current attainment priorities. Finally, our momentum has been strengthened significantly by our engagement in the state's Guided Pathways initiatives and, more recently, our successful Title III grant.

Opportunities

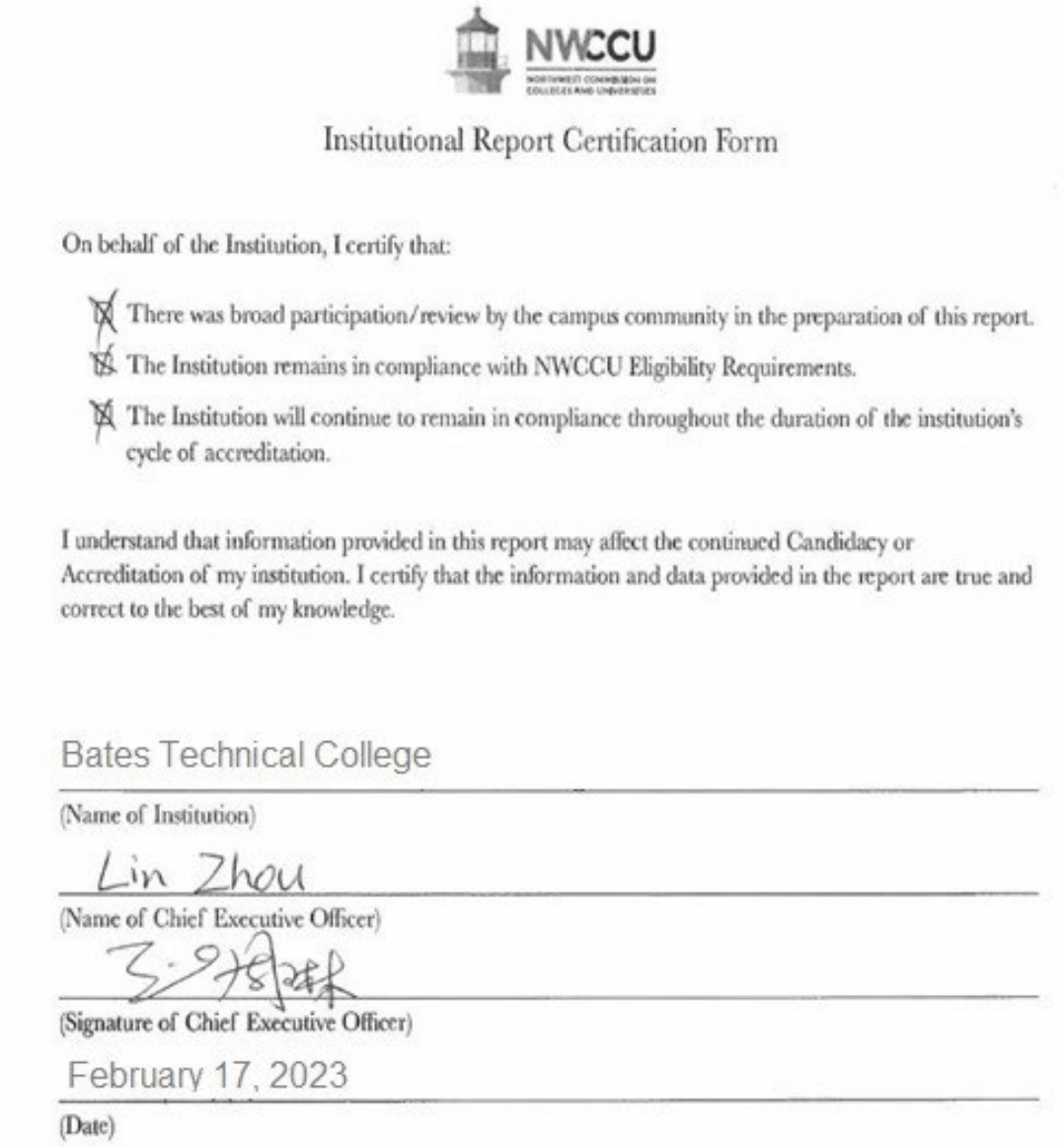
We have room to grow in two areas. First, we can develop further our application of data disaggregation. While we've long reported, tracked, and acted upon a limited set of demographic priorities, we have tended to focus on side-by-side measures such as completion rates among historically underrepresented (HU) populations versus the general population or the male- to female-identifying balance in historically gendered professional areas. Going forward, we see opportunities to gain sophistication in more granular, sustained analysis of specific race/ethnicity groups and other attributes such as economic status and educational history. As we pursue those efforts, we will look for opportunities to make our datasets, which now draw on multiple sources, more sustainable and inter-comparable. Self-serve access to the state's robust dashboards will help to democratize those analyses. Our data governance initiative will help keep this conversation going, as will our next Strategic Plan's development.

A second, related area for growth lies in benchmark-setting. As mentioned several times in this report, there is strong institutional support for continuing along a path that moves us from internally referenced benchmarks to incorporate peer cohort averages. Again, the college's new Strategic Plan's development can incorporate this work as its new scorecards are built.

Efforts are already underway to address many, if not all, of the opportunities we have identified here. We look forward to feedback.

Appendices

Institutional certification



NWCCU

Institutional Report Certification Form

On behalf of the Institution, I certify that:

- [x] There was broad participation/review by the campus community in the preparation of this report.
- [x] The Institution remains in compliance with NWCCU Eligibility Requirements.
- [x] The Institution will continue to remain in compliance throughout the duration of the institution's cycle of accreditation.

I understand that information provided in this report may affect the continued Candidacy or Accreditation of my institution. I certify that the information and data provided in the report are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Bates Technical College

(Name of Institution)

Lin Zhou

(Name of Chief Executive Officer)

(Signature of Chief Executive Officer)

February 17, 2023

(Date)