



**Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools**

REPORT OF THE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

Statement Regarding the Status of this Report

This report represents a preliminary assessment of the institution based on facts and circumstances that existed at the time of the review. Final interpretation of the Principles of Accreditation and final action on the report and on the accreditation status of the institution rest with the Commission on Colleges.

Name of the Institution: Texas State Technical College-Harlingen

Date of the Review: October 11-13, 2004

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Part I. Overview and Introduction to the Institution

- A. Briefly describe the nature of the institution and its history, e.g., control, enrollment, and student characteristics. Describe the purpose of the committee visit and acknowledge the arrangements and hospitality extended by the institution. (*Personal references may be included here*).

Texas State Technical College-Harlingen (TSTC-H) is one of four institutions comprising the Texas State Technical College system (TSTC). The mission of the TSTC System is to offer educational programs that have a direct impact on the state's economic development. As a result, TSTC-H's curriculum appropriately emphasizes courses of study in technical education for which there is a demand in the State of Texas. The success of the institution in achieving its mission is evidenced by the fact that the job placement rate for all graduates exceeds 90%.

Initially opened in 1967 on a former United State Air Force Base as the John Connally Technical Institute, the institution received its initial accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1968 under the umbrella of Texas A & M University. In 1969, the institution was separated from the Texas A & M umbrella when the state legislature established the Texas State Technical Institute System. Texas State Technical Institute-Harlingen was independently accredited by SACS in 1975. The name of the institution was officially changed to Texas State Technical College-Harlingen in 1991.

At the time of the reaffirmation visit, the total enrollment for fall semester consisted of 2,053 full-time and 2,415 part-time students who were enrolled in programs grouped in five divisions: Computer, Engineering, Health Technology, Manufacturing/Industrial, and General Education. Of the total enrollment of 4,468 students in fall 2004, 88% of the students were Hispanic and 66.8% of the enrollment was comprised of low-income/economically disadvantaged students.

The committee wishes to acknowledge the extraordinary welcome, hospitality and assistance received during the visit. The commitment and dedication of the administration, faculty, and staff to helping students achieve success was impressive. The committee regrets that it is not possible to acknowledge by name all individuals members of the college community who deserve recognition; however, specific acknowledgement of President J. Gilbert Leal and Ms. Blanca Bauer--the director of the Self Study who also served as the institutional contact and who was responsible for local arrangement--will serve as a symbol of the recognition due to the entire TSTC-H community.

- B. List/describe off-campus sites or distance learning programs evaluated as part of the on-site review. Indicate those visited by the Committee.

N/A

Part II. Assessment of Compliance

A. Assessment of Compliance with Section 1

For each of the categories listed below included in Section 1, indicate the Committee's findings. If a recommendation is warranted, provide supportive narrative for a recommendation, and then state the recommendation.

Institutional Integrity

The Committee finds no basis for making recommendations.

The Committee makes the following recommendations due to non-compliance:

Adherence to Commission Policy

The Committee finds no basis for making recommendations.

The Committee makes the following recommendations due to non-compliance:

Substantive Change N/A

The Committee finds no basis for making recommendations.

The Committee makes the following recommendations due to non-compliance:

Representation of Accredited Status

The Committee finds no basis for making recommendations.

The Committee makes the following recommendations due to non-compliance:

B. Assessment of Compliance with the Core Requirements

For each of the Core Requirements listed below, indicate the institution's compliance or non-compliance. For a Core Requirement lacking adequate documentation or evidence of compliance and marked "non-compliance," provide supportive narrative for a recommendation, and then state the recommendation.

- 2.1 The institution has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies. **(Degree-granting Authority)**

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

- 2.2 The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is the legal body with specific authority over the institution. The board is an active policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from it. Neither the presiding officer of the board nor the majority of other voting members of the board have contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution.

A military institution authorized and operated by the federal government to award degrees has a public board in which neither the presiding officer nor a majority of the other members are civilian employees of the military or active/retired military. The board has broad and significant influence upon the institution's programs and operations, plays an active role in policy-making, and ensures that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from the board except as specified by the authorizing legislation. Neither the presiding officer of the board nor the majority of other voting board members have contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution. **(Governing Board)**

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

- 2.3 The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution and who is not the presiding officer of the board. **(Chief Executive Officer)**

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

- 2.4 The institution has a clearly defined and published mission statement specific to the institution and appropriate to an institution of higher education, addressing teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service. **(Institutional Mission)**

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

2.5 The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that incorporate a systematic review of programs and services that (a) results in continuing improvement, and (b) demonstrates that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. **(Institutional Effectiveness)**

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

2.6 The institution is in operation and has students enrolled in degree programs.
(Continuous Operation)

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

2.7.1 The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. The institution provides a written justification and rationale for program equivalency. **(Program Length)**

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

2.7.2 The institution offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated purpose and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. **(Program Content)**

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

2.7.3 The institution requires in each undergraduate degree program the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that is (1) a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts; social/behavioral sciences; and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. The institution provides a written justification and rationale for course equivalency. **(General Education)**

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

2.7.4 The institution provides instruction for all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees. If the institution makes arrangements for some instruction to be provided by other accredited institutions or entities through contracts or consortia, or uses some other alternative approach to meeting this requirement, the alternative approach must be approved by the Commission on Colleges.

In all cases, the institution demonstrates that it controls all aspects of its educational program. **(Contractual Agreements for Instruction)**

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

2.8 The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution. The institution has adequate faculty resources to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs. In addition, upon application for candidacy, an applicant institution demonstrates that it meets the comprehensive standard for faculty qualifications. **(Faculty)**

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

2.9 The institution, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections as well as to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered. These collections and resources are sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs. **(Learning Resources and Services)**

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

2.10 The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students. **(Student Support Services)**

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

2.11 The institution has a sound financial base and demonstrated financial stability, and adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.

The member institution provides the following financial statements: (a) an institutional audit *for Standard Review Report issued in accordance with Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services issued by the A/CPA for those institutions audited as part of a systemwide or statewide audit*) and written institutional management letter for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent certified public accountant and/or an appropriate governmental auditing agency employing the appropriate audit (*or Standard Review Report*) guide; (b) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year; and, (c) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board.

Audit requirements for applicant institutions may be found in the Commission policy entitled "Accreditation Procedures for Applicant Institutions. **(Resources)**

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

2.12 The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan and demonstrates that the plan is part of an ongoing planning and evaluation process.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

(Note: All comments regarding the committee's assessment of this Core Requirement should be included in Part III of this document.)

C. Assessment of Compliance with the Comprehensive Standards

For each of the following sections of the Comprehensive Standards, indicate the institution's compliance with the section's statements. For those standards lacking adequate documentation or evidence of compliance, identify the standard in question, provide supportive narrative for a recommendation, and then state the recommendation.

3.1.1 The institution has a clear and comprehensive mission statement that guides it; is approved by the governing board; is periodically reviewed by the board; and is communicated to the institution's constituencies.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.1 The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the evaluation of the chief executive officer.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.2 The legal authority and operating control of the institution are clearly defined for the following areas within the institution's governance structure:

- 3.2.2.1 the institution's mission;
- 3.2.2.2 the fiscal stability of the institution;
- 3.2.2.3 institutional policy, including policies concerning related and affiliated corporate entities and all auxiliary services;
- 3.2.2.4 related foundations (athletic, research, etc.) and other corporate entities whose primary purpose is to support the institution and/or its programs.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.3 The board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.4 The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies, and protects the institution from such influence.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.5 Members of the governing board can be dismissed only for cause and by due process.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.6 There is a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.7 The institution has a clearly defined and published organizational structure that delineates responsibility for the administration of policies.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.8 The institution has qualified administrative and academic officers with the experience, competence, and capacity to lead the institution.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.9 The institution defines and publishes policies regarding appointment and employment of faculty and staff.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.10 The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its administrators, including the chief executive officer, on a periodic basis.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.11 The institution's chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate administrative and fiscal control over, the institution's intercollegiate athletics program. N/A

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.12 The institution's chief executive officer has ultimate control of the institution's fund-raising activities.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.13 Any institution-related foundation not controlled by the institution has a contractual or other formal agreement that (a) accurately describes the relationship between the institution and the foundation, and (b) describes any liability associated with that relationship. In all cases, the institution ensures that the relationship is consistent with its mission.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.14 The institution's policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of all intellectual property. This applies to students, faculty and staff.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.1 The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded (a) is approved by the faculty and the administration, and (b) establishes and evaluates program and learning outcomes.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.2 The institution's continuing education, outreach, and service programs are consistent with the institution's mission.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.3 The institution publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.4 The institution has a defined and published policy for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution's own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.5 The institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice. These are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.6 The institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.7 The institution ensures the quality of educational programs/courses offered through consortia relationships or contractual agreements, ensures ongoing compliance with the comprehensive requirements, and evaluates the consortial relationship and/or agreement against the purpose of the institution.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.8 The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.9 The institution provides appropriate academic support services.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.10 The institution defines and publishes general education requirements for its undergraduate programs and major program requirements for all its programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.11 The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student academic records and maintains special security measures to protect and back up data.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.12 The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.13 For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.14 The institution's use of technology enhances student learning, is appropriate-for meeting the objectives of its programs, and ensures that students have access to and training in the use of technology.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.5.2 The institution awards degrees only to those students who have earned at least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree through instruction offered by that institution.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.6.1 The institution's post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, and its master's and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.6.2 The institution ensures that its graduate instruction and resources foster independent learning, enabling the graduate to contribute to a profession or field of study. N/A

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.6.3 The majority of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree is earned through the institution awarding the degree. In the case of graduate and post-baccalaureate professional degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns a majority of credits from the participating institutions. N/A

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.7.1 The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline in accordance with the guidelines listed below. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment The committee reviewed the qualifications of the 12 faculty members who were identified by the off-site committee as not in compliance. The committee found that these faculty members were in compliance; however, the committee could not find documentation of work-related experience in the file of one faculty member. Therefore, the committee recommends that the institution provide documentation of work-related experience to demonstrate that the institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution.

3.7.2 The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.7.3 The institution provides evidence of ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.7.4 The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.7.5 The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.8.1 The institution provides facilities, services, and learning/information resources that are appropriate to support its teaching, research, and service mission.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.8.2 The institution ensures that users have access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.8.3 The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff—with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources—to accomplish the mission of the institution.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.9.1 The institution publishes a clear and appropriate statement of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement to the campus community.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.9.2 The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.9.3 The institution provides services supporting its mission with qualified personnel to ensure the quality and effectiveness of its student affairs programs.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.10.1 The institution's recent financial history demonstrates financial stability.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.10.2 The institution provides financial statements and related documents, including multiple measures for determining financial health as requested by the Commission, which accurately and appropriately represent the total operation of the institution.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.10.3 The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.10.4 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial and physical resources.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.10.5 The institution maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.10.6 The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

3.10.7 The institution operates and maintains physical facilities, both on and off campus, that are adequate to serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment The committee was impressed with the care and maintenance of the college campus.

D. Assessment of Compliance with Federal Requirements

4.1 When evaluating success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution's mission, the institution includes, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

4.2 The institution maintains a curriculum that is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates or degrees awarded.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

4.3 The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

4.4 The institution demonstrates that program length is appropriate for each of the degrees.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

4.5 The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

- 4.6** Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices and policies.

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

- 4.7** The institution publishes the name of its primary accreditor and its address and phone number. (The publication of this information is presented so that it is clear that inquiries to the Commission should relate only to the accreditation status of the institution, and not to general admission information.)

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

- 4.8** The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the *1998 Higher Education Amendments*

Compliance
 Non-Compliance

Comment

E. Additional Observations (optional)

Part III. Assessment of the Quality Enhancement Plan

The On-Site Review Committee is responsible for evaluating the acceptability of the QEP in fulfilling Core Requirement Twelve. The primary emphasis of the On-Site Review Committee's evaluation of the QEP will be based on the extent to which the institution has provided evidence that it is committed to a course of action that addresses a topic or issue to improve the quality of student learning. The On-Site Review Committee also provides advice and consultation to assist the institution in strengthening its QEP.

A. Brief description of the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan

B. Analysis of the Acceptability of the Quality Enhancement Plan

Use the following questions to guide your analysis of the extent to which the institution's QEP meets the four primary Indicators of Acceptability.

1. **Focus of the Plan.** (1) Has the institution provided a clear and concise description of the critical issue(s) to be addressed? (2) Has the institution described the relationship between the focus of the plan and student learning? (3) Has the institution provided relevant and appropriate goals and objectives to improve student learning? (4) Has the institution provided a comprehensive and clear analysis of the crucial importance of the Plan for improving the learning environment? (5) Has the institution identified the benefits to be derived from the QEP?

While the focus of the QEP is identified as "Developing Critical Thinking," the plan is actually much broader and essentially intends to transform the culture of the institution from an instruction based organization to one that focuses on learning outcomes. Developing and improving thinking skills is proposed as a means to this end. The institution also recognizes the importance of raising the value of education among its students as evidenced by the following statement on page 15 of the QEP: "The QEP cannot be successful if students do not come to view higher education as more than just another step their peers take next in life." Given this comprehensive approach, the QEP contains relevant and specific goals and objectives which should result in improving student learning. The institution identified three broad goals: (1) Innovation in Teaching; (2) Student Development Learning and Thinking Programs; and (3) Curricular Enhancement—Engaging Students in Thinking. Each of these three broad goals is supported by specific and measurable objectives.

The Implementation Strategy and Timetable format provides a clear understanding of the tasks, timeframe, anticipated outcomes, and measures on a year-by-year basis for each goal. This format with reference to specific activities and outcomes is a notable strength of this particular QEP.

The QEP provides a careful and thorough analysis of the institutional context in which its goals were established. The QEP provides evidence of a broad-based campus community involvement in terms of its focus, adopting a working definition of critical thinking, and identifying the challenges associated with the transformation of the institution. The process was also data-driven in determining the characteristics of the students (see pp. 7-9). A timetable and strategy for implementation are clearly outlined.

- 2. Institutional Capability for the Initiation and Continuation of the Plan.** (1) *Has the institution provided a time line for implementing and completing the QEP?* (2) *Has the institution assigned qualified individuals to administer and oversee its implementation?* (3) *Has the institution provided evidence of sufficient financial and physical resources to implement, sustain, and complete the QEP?* (4) *Has the institution allocated sufficient academic resources and systems to implement and sustain the outcomes of the Plan?* (5) *Has the institution established appropriate administrative processes for maintaining the progress of its quality improvements?*

The college has provided a time line for implementing and completing the QEP. The committee does have concerns about the realistic expectations of this timeline (see section C). The college has assigned individuals to administer and oversee the implementation of the QEP. In order to ensure the success of the program, the institution needs to be sensitive to the critical nature of faculty ownership and take care that the plan is "faculty owned and faculty driven."

The college has shown evidence of a financial commitment to the QEP and has shown verbal and written evidence that it has the financial resources necessary to implement and sustain the plan. The committee, however, strongly encourages the college to create a sufficient budgeting process that will ensure the long-term viability of the program. Sufficient academic resources have been allocated to implement and sustain the outcomes of the plan, as evidenced by the institution's commitment in goal # 1 to study faculty loads to ensure sufficient time for planning and implementation. Appropriate administrative processes for maintaining the progress of quality improvements have also been established.

- 3. Assessment of the Plan.** (1) *Has the institution developed means for assessing the success of its QEP?* (2) *Has the institution identified relevant internal and external measures to evaluate the Plan?* (3) *Has the institution identified an internal system for evaluating the QEP and monitoring its progress?* (4) *Has the institution described how the results of the evaluation of the QEP will be used to improve student learning?*

The college has conducted multiple student surveys and needs assessment instruments to ensure the success of the QEP and has incorporated the information into a well-developed strategic planning process; however, many of these instruments tend to be anecdotal in nature and are related to student attitudes instead of student learning outcomes. The outcome-related instruments that are used to measure the success of the QEP are described as instruments that measure only the "outer layers" of college performance and "do not measure a student's ability to analyze an argument or base a decision on individually developed values or ethics" (p. 18).

The committee advises the college to define more student learning outcomes measures and believes that the success of the QEP could be enhanced by integrating the student development component, the faculty development component, and the student critical thinking skills component into its umbrella concept of a Center for Excellence. These QEP objectives should be tied to the college's budgeting process. While the college's commitment to the financial requirement is evident, development of annual budgets for the QEP would enhance the success potential of this QEP. The QEP has a well-developed internal system of monthly and annual monitoring that is integrated into the institutional effectiveness process.

- 4. Broad Based Involvement of the Community.** (1) *Has the institution described the methods used for the development of the QEP?* (2) *Has the institution demonstrated that **all** aspects of **its** community—faculty, staff, students, board members, and administrators—were involved in the development of the QEP?*

The QEP has described the methods used for the development of the document. The institution has demonstrated that all aspects of the community—faculty staff, students, a board member, and administrators—were involved in the development of the document.

C. Additional Analysis and Comments for Strengthening the QEP

Use this section to highlight strengths that have not been addressed above and to provide advice to assist the institution in strengthening its QEP.

The willingness of a technical college to undertake such a courageous and admirable step towards an institution-wide culture shift is a testament to the pride taken by faculty, staff, and administration in this college. The committee was impressed with the organization and the representative sample of college-wide input. Based on interviews conducted by the committee during the on-site visit, there was evidence of board-based participation in the creation of the QEP. The passion and the commitment to this process were apparent among all constituencies. The student leaders displayed commitment to and an understanding of the QEP as well as great loyalty to the institution. The overall commitment of the entire institution to student learning is impressive.

Advice and Assistance

The committee encourages the leadership of the college to develop a clear philosophy for student development with well-defined objectives. Additionally, the committee encourages review of the QEP in light of the ambitious timelines the institution has set for implementation of the QEP. The institution should also continue to ensure faculty involvement in every stage of the implementation of the QEP. The establishment of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is crucial to the success of the QEP effort. In order to assure the success of the QEP, the committee encourages the college to monitor carefully the effectiveness of the administrators who will be charged with carrying out the implementation of the QEP and to consider carefully the placement of the Center within the organizational structure.

Suggestions for Building the Teaching/Learning Center

When building the Center for Teaching and Learning excellence the following suggestions are provided:

1. Develop a mission statement that is service-oriented.
2. Identify a director who has the heart and passion for people and their ongoing learning.
3. Incorporate faculty leaders into the programming choices.
4. Identify faculty leaders for training in teaching strategies and learning theories (i.e. Ned Herrmann's Whole Brain Learning Theory, Blooms Taxonomy, and Respectful Workplace Training).
5. Bring into the classroom the assessment work of Cross and Angelo for faculty to have immediate feedback from the students concerning the impact of critical thinking activities.
6. Weave the critical thinking work into the Teaching/Learning Center sooner rather than later.

Suggestions for the Student Development Learning and Thinking program (Goal

1. Philosophy

In order to guide the new initiatives and help ensure success, the College should construct a student development philosophy and/or mission statement with well-defined critical elements. Involvement and leadership initiatives should be student generated and directly staff advised whenever possible. This student development philosophy should include growth areas or elements such -as community, leadership, intellectual and personal development and include competencies in these areas that can be measured. Such competencies may include but are not limited to the following:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Critical Thinking | Program Planning |
| Working with Administration | Decision Making |
| Use of Power/ethics | Goal Setting/Attainment |
| Diversity | Time Management |
| Collaborative Relationships | Role of Leader |
| Public Speaking | Individual Wellness |

2. Staffing

The College should consider hiring a student affairs professional to direct the student development aspect of the QEP. The position should require direct experience in leadership development, student involvement/student organization development and campus programming. Experiences should also include experiential learning, freshman seminar, creative syllabi development, knowledge of leadership development theory and familiarity with various leadership models.

3. Leadership Programs

As part of the out-of classroom experiences to be delivered and in order to foster community plus develop critical thinking skills, cohort leadership programs, emerging leaders and multi-semester/year programs should be considered.

4. Freshman Seminar

Related to curricular enhancement and in order to engage students into the process, the institution should consider having the Freshman Seminar team-taught by faculty/staff and a student peer instructor. This enhancement will help to ensure syllabi are applicable to the student concerns and allow for student instructors to be part of creating the learning environment. The College may consider a "part two" of the Freshman Seminar in the second term where students are further nominated for an "emerging leader program." The purpose is to continue to support the first year experience, promote involvement and improve retention after the first term. Stipends could be provided to peer instructors and/or be an extension of the tutoring programs now in place.

5. New Student Orientation Program Considerations

The institution should attempt to train and utilize a student planning team to design and deliver New Student Orientation (NSO). This will facilitate the connection between student planners, student activities and staff in the business areas of the College. As planning partners, students will be working on relevant orientation components using the critical thinking and decision-making skills while collaborating with administrators.

6. Student Organization Development Considerations

Student Development and/or Student Life areas should consider student organization sponsor and officer trainings. This is both professional development for staff and faculty and leadership development for the students. Elements for student leaders should include but not be limited to critical thinking, program planning, negotiation and communication skills, and financial and budget development. The goal of sponsor training is to achieve consistent

advising elements in order to effectively guide the student organizations regardless of program area.

7. Fiscal Considerations

A detailed budget, specifically for student development initiatives, should be constructed to aid in long term planning and appropriate phasing of new co-curricular initiatives that include CT.

8. Assessment Considerations-

The College should consider means of assessment of leadership, involvement and orientation programs including learning outcomes by using the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) promotes standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs for the purpose of fostering and enhancing student learning, development, and achievement.