

Assurance Argument
Eastern Oklahoma State College - OK

1/27/2017

Introduction

Every great future has a beginning. For anyone who dreams of becoming an entrepreneur, teacher, engineer or nurse, there's a beginning point when you choose a path and start working toward your goal. For many students in southeast Oklahoma, a successful future starts at Eastern Oklahoma State College.



Eastern's 1,669 students attend courses in four locations in southeast Oklahoma – Wilburton, McAlester, Idabel and Antlers. The college's ten-and-a-half county service area parallels that of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, one of five locations designated by President Barack Obama's administration for its anti-poverty "Promise Zone" initiative. Unsurprisingly, more than 78 percent of Eastern students are first generation college students. With that in mind,

- Our students experience small class sizes, individual instruction, hands-on learning, global education opportunities, thorough advising, and robust student support services.
- Our faculty and staff teach, work, imagine and create together. Their highest mission is to create a supportive environment for students to succeed.

If there's one thing our students share, it's a desire to not only improve their lives, but also the world around them. Eastern offers open access to a high quality postsecondary education, the opportunity to achieve personal growth, an affordable steppingstone to a four-year degree, or a strong start to a successful career. No matter our students' goals, their futures can start here.

The college itself has a storied history and a modest beginning. Originally established as the Oklahoma School of Mines and Metallurgy in 1908, the institution began offering degrees in mining engineering during the height of mining activity in Wilburton, Oklahoma and the surrounding area. By 1924, the local mining industry had significantly declined and the institution dropped mining engineering and added teacher training and extension courses to the curriculum. Then in 1927, the school underwent a long overdue name change to Eastern Oklahoma State College and a new mission to offer pre-college level instruction. In 1941, the again renamed Eastern Oklahoma State College Agricultural and Mechanical College moved under the control of the State Board of Agriculture as a junior college. Finally, in 1972, the legislature settled on the name Eastern Oklahoma State College and created a separate board to govern the institution.

Since its humble beginnings, Eastern has grown into a comprehensive community college providing instruction in a wide range of curricula. The college has become a state leader in offering innovative and unique academic courses and programs such as aquaponics, ranch management-stocker operations, and meat science and food safety. Eastern has a 4,000 acre farm, two aquaponics greenhouses, and a meats lab that is equipped to conduct livestock slaughter and meat cutting and processing in support of teaching and research.

An early adopter of distance education technology, Eastern has become a frontrunner in associate-level course delivery with five fully-online degree programs. Eastern evaluates online courses to ensure they meet Quality Matters standards and currently has nine instructors that have Quality Matters certified courses. Due to recent grants, Eastern has also made great strides to improve the technology used to support teaching and learning. In addition, Eastern makes a tremendous impact on the regional economy, providing educational opportunities for students ranging from concurrent high school juniors and seniors to nontraditional working adults. The latest report indicates that for every \$1 invested in Eastern, \$5.21 is returned to the local economy. Additionally, Eastern has experienced continuous accreditation by The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association since 1954.

We are very proud of our students' achievements, our faculty's dedication to their students' success and the college's overall mission to help improve southeast Oklahoma. Each of these goals and accomplishments helps convey the story of Eastern's past and its future. On behalf of our students, faculty and staff, it is our pleasure to welcome the Higher Learning Commission evaluation team to Eastern Oklahoma State College.

The HLC Steering Committee

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Argument

1.A.1 The Eastern Oklahoma State College Board of Regents, the governing body for the institution, was presented the current Eastern Oklahoma State College [mission statement](#) on November 11, 2016. The mission statement is a clearly articulated, well-publicized statement of the purpose of the institution, which is to generate student learning and engage in educational programming to promote regional economic and community development. The mission has served the institution well and provided the foundation for the institution's [2011-2016 strategic plan](#) and the [2017-2022 strategic plan](#). The first two goals of both plans highlight the importance Eastern places on providing high quality educational programs. The third and fourth goals center on effectively utilizing resources and engaging the community. Clearly, both the mission statement and the strategic plan reflect the institution's commitment to student success and community service. The committee that developed the 2017 strategic plan also revised the [mission, vision, and core values](#) to help guide the institution for the coming years.

The mission statement and strategic plan are regularly reviewed by a variety of stakeholders, guided by the strategic planning committee, which includes representatives from Academic Affairs, Business Affairs, staff, faculty, and students. During this review, the mission statement's significance is compared to the trends of its constituents. The [working strategic plan](#) is shared with the leadership team and others across the institution. Data from the key performance indicators for the current strategic plan was [presented](#) to the Board of Regents and other stakeholders for review prior to development of the 2017-2022 strategic plan. A committee developed the plan and then presented it to various stakeholders including the Board of Regents, the Alumni Board, the Eastern Foundation Board, the Faculty Council, and the Staff Council for input. Each of these groups offers a unique perspective on the institution that has helped shape our strategic planning.

The institution embeds the mission into its operations. All institutional areas facilitate continuous improvement by directly tying decision making to the mission through clearly identified objectives and goals. More information will be provided in Criterion 4.B.

1.A.2 [Academic programs](#) serve identified constituencies. Currently, Eastern offers 21 associate level

programs, eight applied associate level programs and four certificate level programs with more than 60 degree options. These serve to provide the foundation Eastern's students need to further their education or proceed into the workforce.

In order to reach and serve constituents in the outlying regions of its service area, Eastern Oklahoma State College operates in [four different locations](#).

Eastern's main campus is located in Wilburton and offers a more traditional college atmosphere to students. The campus features multiple classroom buildings and four residential housing options, including apartment-style housing completed in 2012. In addition to these buildings, the campus also houses a student center, which features multiple dining options, a ballroom, and a common area. The recently renovated student enrollment center in the library building is a one-stop destination for new and current students. Other renovations include the newly completed Johnnie Wray Theatre in Pratt Hall and complete renovations of Gunning and Baker Halls.

The McAlester Branch location opened in 1998 and includes two classroom buildings. These facilities house 29 classrooms, 11 interactive TV classrooms, two computer labs, a library with computer facilities, and college offices. The campus [offers courses](#) from Eastern Oklahoma State College, East Central University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, and other Oklahoma schools. Most courses are taught in the evenings, and some are available during the day and on weekends. This unique arrangement provides students the opportunity to begin their collegiate experience with Eastern and complete a bachelor's or even master's degree at the McAlester Campus. With full-time academic advising provided through Eastern, East Central, and Southeastern, students are assured accurate degree completion.

In addition, students can take courses at two other teaching sites. Eastern students can take classes at Southeastern Oklahoma State University's McCurtain County Campus in Idabel in one of [12 degree programs](#). Eastern also offers a variety of day, evening, and distance learning classes at the Kiamichi Technology Center in Antlers. The first year of general education courses can be completed, including developmental classes.

Looking at trend lines in [student enrollment data](#), Eastern Oklahoma State College has put great emphasis toward its online programs. Adapting to this trend, Eastern began offering [five fully-online degree programs](#) in the Fall 2016 semester. This achievement was aided by the [Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions \(NASNTI\) grant](#). Additional enrollment trends help Eastern focus on its mission to generate student learning and engage various types of students.

Eastern is also developing new academic programs that are in alignment with both national and state-wide trends. Eastern is currently developing [two different AAS programs](#): ranch management and respiratory therapy.

Eastern launched the [AAS program in ranch management-stocker operations](#). Because of its stocker operations focus, this program promises to address local constituent needs while aligning with [current economic trends](#) in Oklahoma. Faculty and staff in this AAS degree program consults with an [advisory board](#) of ranch management professionals.

The respiratory therapy program, which is still in development, will operate at Eastern's McAlester campus in partnership with McAlester Regional Health Center (MRHC) and other regional healthcare facilities. Eastern will also be partnering with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in this allied health program. The [advisory board](#) is made up of representatives from various health care facilities across our service area in southeastern Oklahoma.

In addition to the academic programs, Eastern currently has a TRIO grant and a [Title III grant](#) that provide support to students. Previously, the institution had a [NASNTI grant](#) that also provided support to students. All of these grants serve to fulfill Eastern's mission by serving specific populations of students in ways that enhance their learning opportunities. The [2013-2014 TRIO report](#) shows the grant is helping with student success in the area of persistence and completion. The NASNTI grant helped the institution increase access to student services and courses. An additional benefit of the grant was the creation of an Engagement Center that promotes student success and fulfills the mission of the institution to engage in [educational programs](#) and to generate student learning. The Title III grant has allowed for the continued use of the Engagement Center.

Eastern supports students in a variety of ways, including [services offered](#) through the TRIO grant, the Title III grant, student engagement center, [student disability services](#), and [veterans services](#). The Office of Enrollment Management provides a range of services to meet the needs of a diverse student population. Services provided include, but are not limited to, note taking, test reading, specialized equipment, interpreting services, veteran services, financial aid, and default management.

Eastern's [demographic enrollment profile](#) aligns with the mission statement. The diversity of Eastern's student body reflects the general population of the counties it serves. The demographic data indicates that Eastern serves a diverse group of students in age, gender, and ethnicity.

The [mean age](#) of Eastern students was 25.5 in fall 2015. To help meet the needs of this important part of the student-population, Eastern offers many online and evening courses in an effort to serve the non-traditional student. Eastern is also a part of the Complete College America initiative which aims “to significantly increase the number of Americans with quality career certificates or college degrees and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations.”

As another avenue to assist adult learners, Eastern participates in [Reach Higher](#) – Oklahoma’s degree completion program. Eastern offers an associate in arts or associate in science in enterprise development (general studies or business administration) designed for working adults who have already earned at least 18 hours of college credit and want to finish an associate degree. The Reach Higher associate programs provide on-campus and online class options, personalized schedules and courses of study that meet career goals, and flexible enrollment periods year-round.

Eastern has a [veterans affairs coordinator](#) who serves in the Office of the Registrar. The coordinator assists students who are eligible to receive educational benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. All degree plans offered by Eastern have been approved by a state accrediting agency for payment of federal benefits. In addition, Eastern evaluates prior credit earned through military education and training and grants credit as appropriate to the degree.

High school students are an important part of the enrollment profile as evidenced by the growing population of [concurrently enrolled students](#). Concurrent enrollment provides high school juniors and seniors in Oklahoma the opportunity to take college-level courses and earn college credit while still in high school. Students may take courses at Eastern’s campuses, online, or through ITV courses at participating high schools. Concurrent enrollment provides a great opportunity for local students to get an early start on their college career while still in high school.

As per the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) [policy](#), after students have completed their junior year, but before high school graduation, eligible students may receive a tuition waiver of up to six credit hours per semester, or summer term (a maximum of 18 credit hours). Eastern will waive up to six credit hours of tuition per semester for eligible students (a maximum of 12 credit hours). The waiver is for the fall and spring semester of their junior year. These tuition

waivers do not include the cost of fees, books or supplies.

In addition, the [Advisory Council for Eastern's Student Success \(ACCESS\) Committee](#) was formed in an effort to increase student persistence. The committee includes staff and faculty from Academic Affairs, Financial Aid, and Student Services. This committee did not meet regularly during the 2015-2016 academic year and regular meetings were unable to be scheduled during the fall 2016 semester due to a reduced number of employees. However, the administration understands the importance of retention and persistence and is committed to making data driven decisions in this area. Data continues to be collected and reviewed with the intent of starting formal meetings again during the spring 2017 semester.

[Student Disability Services](#) is committed to providing assistance to students in order to facilitate their independence and academic progress. Students can utilize these services to support their academic goals. Reasonable accommodations are based on appropriate documentation and disability-related needs. Students should be aware that services will be designed in a manner to remove barriers in the classroom that could hinder a student's ability to learn. Services are not intended to give the student an unfair advantage over other students in the class. Each case is viewed individually and determinations made upon the documentation submitted and discussion with the student. When providing accommodation for disabilities, institutions of higher education are not required to lower academic standards or compromise the integrity of the school or program.

Eastern Oklahoma State College, in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Higher Education Act), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal and state laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, genetic information, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, or status as a veteran, in any of its policies, practices or procedures. This provision includes, but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services.

1.A.3 The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission of the institution. The College relies on four main sources of revenue: state aid, tuition and fees, auxiliary enterprises, and state and federal grants.

Prior to FY 2016, the institution used a cooperative budget approach, which allowed for departments to submit changes in their budgets and request the same amount of dollars each year. However, after budget cuts were necessary, the administration responded by implementing [a zero-base budgeting technique](#). This requires departments to determine and justify the items needed to meet their needs.

Organizational changes, development and revision of the strategic plan, and re-staffing of essential positions within the institution's organizational structure are initiatives that are in place to ensure that Eastern continues to align with and support its mission. Eastern's [strategic plan](#) and the capital campaign [feasibility study](#) ensure that the institution is in alignment with its mission.

Four goals encompass the strategic plan and are used to develop departmental budgets and ensure that all departments in the College are using resources in alignment with the overarching goal of student learning. The goals are to:

1. provide high quality educational programs and services to increase educational opportunities for individuals and organizations
2. increase the percentage of students who progress toward and achieve their academic and career goals

3. enhance and efficiently use the College's's human, financial, facility and technological resources
4. engage the College's's wider community with educational and cultural programs and economic development

In order to support the College's's mission, Eastern relies heavily on state and [federal grants](#) that have helped develop online programs and create two new degree programs. These grants include the Student Support Services (TRIO), Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution, and Title III grants. Over the past six years, Eastern has received over \$21 million in grant funding.

Further and more in-depth examples of mission alignment and budgeting are addressed in Criterion 5.C.1.

Sources

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Argument

1.B.1 The Eastern Oklahoma State College mission statement is clearly articulated in many different ways. The mission is prominently displayed within the [college catalog](#), [faculty handbook](#), [staff handbook](#), and [student handbook](#). It is also displayed on campus monitors, aired on the campus radio station, and presented in various other College publications and on the website.

The academic catalog is updated annually. The catalog includes the mission statement, functions of the College, and the history of Eastern. Each of these helps to articulate our purpose and commitment to our community. Annual publications such as the [FactBook](#) and [InReview](#) highlight our progress toward meeting our mission. The FactBook shares the mission and vision statements as well as Eastern's core values. InReview magazine provides a message from the president and highlights news and campus activities that illustrate how Eastern fulfills its mission.

1.B.2 In alignment with the mission statement, Eastern Oklahoma State College has a vision statement and together these guide the institution. The vision statement was created under planning guided by the [strategic planning committee](#) which includes representatives from Academic Affairs, Business Affairs, staff, faculty, and students. Eastern's vision statement was revised in 2016. A draft of the new vision statement was created by a committee and then presented to the Board of Regents, Faculty and Staff Councils, and other stakeholders for review. The final draft of the [mission statement, vision statement](#), and [strategic plan 2017-2022](#) were presented to the Board of Regents on November 11, 2016.

Through the alignment of the mission and vision statements, Eastern graduates students who are prepared to obtain productive employment and lead enriched lives of learning. The College also engages in educational and cultural programming that relates to activities that promote regional economic and community development.

To achieve the mission and vision statement, Eastern Oklahoma State College has established four primary goals. Each goal includes key performance indicators that describe specific areas or programs targeted for growth or improvement. The target measurements will help Eastern determine and define success. Eastern's administration and leadership team work with faculty, staff, alumni, and community members to [implement, monitor, and achieve the following four goals successfully](#):

1. Provide high quality educational programs and services to increase educational opportunities for

individuals and organizations.

The Strategic Plan 2017-2022 has identified key performance indicators that focus on ACCESS for the student. These include:

- credit hour and headcount change from prior periods
- percentage of enrollment from outside service area
- new programs
- courses and program enhancement
- financial support strategies to responsibly increase enrollment and student financial literacy

Currently, Eastern offers [21 associate level programs](#), eight applied associate level programs and four certificate level programs with more than 60 degree options. In an effort to expand its service to students, Eastern operates at [four different locations](#). These locations offer traditional and non-traditional students more opportunities that fit their needs. Eastern has also expanded its online reach by offering five fully-online degrees that began in the fall of 2016.

Eastern works to identify [current employment trends](#) and align programs to fit these needs. Two new academic programs, ranch management-stocker operations and respiratory therapy, were developed after the need for these types of certifications was established.

2. Increase the percentage of students who progress toward and achieve their academic and career goals.

The strategic plan 2017-2022 has identified key performance indicators that focus on the SUCCESS of the Eastern student. These indicators include:

- fall-to-spring persistence
- fall-to-fall retention rates
- number of graduates
- Complete College America goals
- first-time licensure rates for graduates (NCLEX and CLEET)
- reduction in student debt in correlation to increased financial literacy
- increasing course success of students in credit and developmental courses
- student satisfaction after graduation

Eastern is also a part of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's [Complete College America initiative](#), which focuses on retention, graduation, and persistence. The College also is a participant in the [C4 initiative](#). This is a national community college completion initiative that helps all college students understand the benefits of completing a degree. In addition, the [Advisory Council for Eastern's Student Success \(ACCESS\) Committee](#) was formed in an effort to increase student persistence.

3. Enhance and efficiently use the College's's human, financial, facility and technological resources.

The strategic plan 2017-2022 has identified key performance indicators that focus on helping constituents UTILIZE RESOURCES. These indicators include:

- reviewing technology needs of College campuses
- financial stewardship
- increasing non-state funding

- human resource and professional development
- facilities upgrades and maintenance
- implementing and strengthening programs and processes to meet new federal regulations
- data-driven decision making

4. Engage the College's wider community with educational and cultural programs, and economic/workforce development partnerships.

The strategic plan 2017-2022 has identified key performance indicators that focus on PARTNERSHIPS within the College's wider community. These indicators include:

- regional economic development and enhanced relationships with community partners
- alumni involvement
- increasing the number of curricular and co-curricular activities that enhance student acceptance of domestic and international diversity

The College also focuses on diversity and global learning through its [Culture, Global Awareness, and Social Responsibility General Education Learning Goal](#). This goal states: Students will recognize the beliefs, behaviors, and values of diverse cultures from a global perspective. Students will recognize the value of meaningful civic and scholarly activities.

The College's educational and enrichment programs, curricula, faculty, staff, and students share the goal of promoting multi-ethnic/multicultural awareness and acceptance on campus and within the community. Eastern is proud to serve the region's Native American population--about 30% of Eastern's students are Native American. Eastern enhances and promotes the free exchange of ideas in an environment that celebrates the dignity, worth, and contributions of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds as a means of enabling individuals to reach their greatest potential.

Eastern's strategic plan also includes the institution's core values that guide Eastern in all of its endeavors. These core values were identified in 2011 and modified in 2016 as values that are important to the institution and its constituents. These core values are:

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE – Eastern expects and maintains high educational standards consistent with the needs of the students, region, and changing workforce. Our faculty and staff are committed to providing high quality educational opportunities and services in a student-centered environment. We strive for an environment of teamwork, cooperation, collaboration, innovation and creative problem solving for students and employees.

RESPECT – Eastern values the faculty, administration, staff and students. We admire their diverse life experiences, appreciate their contributions to our learning community and encourage their individual, personal and professional development.

HONESTY AND INTEGRITY – Eastern upholds the highest ethical standards in striving for academic and professional integrity in all that we do. We endeavor to foster an environment of trust and responsibility in every aspect of our institution.

COMMUNICATION – Eastern promotes open, effective, and honest dialogue, feedback and active listening, flowing in all directions.

DIVERSITY – Eastern embraces and appreciates the importance of providing an education and environment that encourage the individuality of students, faculty, staff and the communities we serve.

Diversity is crucial in providing an atmosphere that enhances the educational experience and celebrates differences among individuals.

SUCCESS OF ALL STUDENTS – Eastern strives to produce academic, athletic and student life programs that will encourage student success in an ethical and learner-centered environment.

SAFE & HEALTHY WORKING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT- Eastern is committed to protecting the safety and health of our students, staff and the people of the communities in which we serve.

COMMITMENT TO LIFE-LONG LEARNING – Eastern is committed to providing a learning organization that continually adapts and improves by evaluating its services in order to promote life-long intellectual and personal development among the students, faculty, staff and community it serves.

General education at the institution emphasizes learning of facts, values, understandings, skills, attitudes, and appreciations believed to be meaningful concerns that are among all students by virtue of their involvement as human beings living in the twenty-first century.

1.B.3 Eastern continuously monitors its progress in achieving the aforementioned goals . During the annual leadership retreat, the executive staff reviews the goals, strategies, key performance indicators (KPIs), budget allocation alignment, reasonableness of indicators, and alignment with the mission. Eastern is careful that the mission and vision statements are available publicly and explain the nature of the institution's programs, services, and intended constituents.

Eastern focuses on providing a diverse student population with learner-centered programs and student support services that lead to a career or to the university. The institution has identified five core [general education learning outcomes](#). These outcomes are met within the requirements for an associate's degree and provide the foundation for an educated student.

Eastern entered into the [Higher Learning Commission's Assessment Academy](#) in 2012 in an effort to strengthen these [learning goals](#). Eastern's success in the Academy can be further seen in Criterion 4.

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1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

1.C.1 The mission and vision statements, institutional core values, and goals all strongly emphasize Eastern's commitment to the diversity of its constituents. The most relevant core values for this criterion are respect, honesty and integrity, diversity, and the success of all students.

Eastern Oklahoma State College has a number of resources reinforcing its commitment to diversity. Cultural programming is directly addressed in the goals summary of the [strategic plan](#). Most notably, Goal 4 states: "Engage the College's wider community with educational and cultural programs, and economic development partnerships." This goal focuses on non-credit and continuing education enrollment, alumni involvement, and Native American activities.

Eastern Oklahoma State College is located in the heart of the Choctaw Nation, which also happens to be one of President Barack Obama's first five [Promise Zones](#). All of Eastern's locations serve a large percentage of economically disadvantaged households as reflected in the fact that 83% of undergraduates and 78% of full-time, first-time students received "[any grant aid](#)" in 2015-16. In addition, 50% of students received Pell grants and 25% received federal loans, which is significantly higher than the comparison group. Eastern's location within the Choctaw Nation is reflected in its [student make-up](#), as Native Americans or Alaskan Natives comprised 26% of the student body in fall 2014.

Eastern's [student demographics](#) reflect the institution's commitment to educating a diverse student body, as only 58.9% of the students were white in fall 2015. The average age for students is 25.5 and 68% are first generation students.

The College hired a [compliance and employee training coordinator](#) in 2015 in an effort to keep in compliance with federal and state regulations. Eastern also employs a Title IX coordinator, who is responsible for prevention and reporting of any incidents that may occur.

Eastern takes acts of sexual violence and sexual harassment seriously. Eastern promptly and thoroughly [investigates and resolves complaints](#) alleging sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence, including sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and domestic violence. Eastern's policies and resources related to these issues, as well as an online complaint form and an overview of the complaint process, can be found on its website. In 2015, the College began an annual campaign known as "[kNOw more.](#)" which aims to educate students, faculty, and staff on sexual violence and harassment. In 2016, the College partnered with the Choctaw Nation to present [Tomorrow's Hope](#), a suicide prevention and education program. Through its Student Life department, Eastern launched the "[I am Remarkable](#)" [campaign](#) to bring awareness to the problem of suicide in the United States. Eastern's Mathematics and Science Division hosts an annual [Wellness Week](#), which specifically focuses on the benefits of proper nutrition and increased physical activity.

In 2015, Eastern also formed a partnership with Wilburton's Health and Wellness Center to help students who may struggle with [physical and/or mental illnesses](#). The mission of Student Health Services is to promote high-quality student healthcare and wellness. Covered services are provided free of charge for students without health insurance. Costs will be charged to private insurance for students who have coverage. These services include, but are not limited to, treatment for minor illness and injuries, basic office visits, lab tests and x-rays, prenatal care and specialist visits, prescriptions, and mental health services. In 2016, an [agreement](#) with Caring Hands was arranged to provide similar services to our students on the McAlester campus.

In recognizing that there are differences in student abilities and in readiness for college, Eastern provides students with support depending on their needs. Eastern's Student Disability Services is committed to providing assistance to students that will facilitate their independence and academic progress. As noted in the [Student Disability Services Handbook](#), "the faculty, staff, and administration at Eastern Oklahoma State College will adhere to the policies as set in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and are committed to making reasonable accommodations for all with disabilities who are qualified to be in an associate degree program."

Eastern offers two developmental mathematics courses, a fundamentals of English course, and a developmental reading course. These courses are designed to [prepare students](#) who may not be ready for college gateway courses. After being awarded the Pathways to Success grant, the College has hired a student development coordinator, who, along with success coaches, develops coaching and [intervention processes](#) for academically at-risk students.

In an effort to help students progress into credit classes, Eastern is working on creating co-requisite model courses in both mathematics and English. In addition, Eastern is revising our placement procedures to allow for alternative assessments. Starting in fall 2017, Eastern will use a combination of a placement score (ACT, ACCUPLACER, etc) and a rubric with other factors of placement (GPA, high school rank, years since relevant course, etc). Faculty and administration are currently working toward implementing a multiple measure placement process. Data will be collected and used to help revise the placement instrument and process.

Eastern is committed to providing assistance to meet the needs of students who are eligible to receive educational benefits from the Department of [Veterans](#) Affairs. All degree plans offered by Eastern have been approved by a state accrediting agency for payment of federal benefits. In the fall of 2016, Eastern provided a lounge that is specifically dedicated for use by student veterans.

1.C.2. Eastern joined the [Higher Learning Commission's Assessment Academy](#) in 2012. During this process, the College developed five [general education learning goals](#). Goal 5 addresses culture, global awareness, and social responsibility. This goal states:

Students will recognize the beliefs, behaviors, and values of diverse cultures from a global perspective. Students will recognize the value of meaningful civic and scholarly activities. Toward attaining these goals, students will:

- display basic knowledge of social, political, economic and historical concepts as they relate to the United States
- identify the responsibilities and choices of involved citizenship
- examine the global interdependence of humanity
- explain social and cultural customs within their historical context
- recognize and assess the significance of cultures and societies and describe the

commonalities/differences among cultures from a global perspective

Student [survey data](#) shows 74.74% of students believe their ability to see the world from someone else's perspective is a somewhat or major strength. Additionally, 73.68% believe that tolerance of others with different beliefs is a strength. 86.32% of students also feel that promoting racial tolerance and respect is very important or essential to their role as a responsible citizen.

Within its curriculum, Eastern requires that all associate degree programs include six credit hours of humanities as part of the general education requirements. While these courses vary in content, the core humanities courses are [Global Humanities I and II](#). The College's academic catalog describes Global I as "a study of the significant ideas and works of various cultures from the ancient world through subsequent generations by examination of universal human values, beliefs, and emotions expressed through intellectual and artistic landmarks." Global II's catalog description is "a global and multicultural study of significant ideas and works of various cultures that inform the ideas and values of the modern world by selective examination of intellectual and artistic achievements representative of specific time periods."

The institution has long supported the opportunity for students to travel internationally. Groups such as the Photo Club have traveled regularly throughout Europe since the 1990s. In 2014, Eastern began hosting an annual group of Danish students from the Silkeborg Business College in Denmark for one week. These visits allowed Eastern students to host a "Den-pal" for the visit, as the visiting Danes were shown the experiences of a small Midwestern community. In the Spring of 2016, Eastern sent 12 students to [Denmark and Germany](#) in partnership with Silkeborg, making it a true exchange. The students who participated in this study abroad program earned a 3-hour Global Humanities credit. The institution foresees this being an annual event.

In the 2014-15 academic year, Eastern Oklahoma State College introduced a new men's and women's [soccer program](#). These programs have brought a wide range of ethnic and culturally diverse students to Eastern. In 2015, there were students representing seven different countries around the world. This has created an opportunity for students from mostly rural southeastern Oklahoma to learn and understand different perspectives from many countries and cultures.

Because of the growth of the [international student population](#), the Multi-Cultural Club has been re-established at the institution, in an effort not only to offer support for the international students but to help educate other students on different countries, customs, and culture.

In 2010, Eastern was awarded a Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTI) grant. An outcome of this grant was to create a Native American Engagement Center (NAEC) in an effort to increase Native American success. The NAEC works in close partnership with the Choctaw Nation to ensure that support and activities are delivered to the constituents of the institution.

Throughout the year, the College hosts many public events that are aimed at promoting cultural diversity and global awareness. The Julian J. [Rothbaum Distinguished Lectureship Series](#) was created to help Eastern bring recognized authorities to campus to address issues of public affairs at the national, state, or local level. Recent lecture topics have included terrorism, the needs of veterans, and water issues within the state of Oklahoma. Other cultural programs have included lectures concerning women in Islam, Black History Month, Women's History Month, and Native American heritage.

The Eastern Office of Human Resources is committed to offering equal employment opportunities and providing a discrimination-free environment. According to Eastern's [hiring manual](#), "Eastern Oklahoma State College does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, age, religion, national

origin, status as a veteran or disability in the educational programs or activities which it operates. Such non-discrimination applies to all policies, practices, and procedures, including those pertaining to admission.” The faculty at Eastern are somewhat limited in diversity, but reflect the student population we serve. Eastern recognizes additional efforts should be made to hire other [minority groups](#), specifically African American faculty and staff.

The institution promotes diversity in terms of gender equality in [leadership](#), as women hold vice presidency equivalencies in Academic Affairs and Business Affairs. Women also hold the majority of dean positions among the faculty.

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1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1.D.1 Since the institution's founding in 1908, Eastern Oklahoma State College has remained dedicated to the public good and to the surrounding community. [Originally created](#) as the Oklahoma School of Mines and Metallurgy, the school has evolved over the years to focus its efforts on the economic and social success of the region.

As stated in its [mission](#), Eastern engages in "educational programming and related activities that promote regional economic and community development." This commitment is also expressed in the College's strategic plan. [Goal 4](#) of this plan is to "Engage the College's wider community with educational and cultural programs, and economic development partnerships." In [meeting this goal](#), the College has focused on regional economic development, alumni involvement, enhancing relationships with community partners, and increasing curricular and co-curricular activities that enhance an acceptance of domestic and international diversity.

The College hosts several events each year that are focused on the inclusion of the public, local leaders, and alumni. For instance, both the McAlester and Wilburton campuses hold an annual [Halloween carnival](#) that brings families to the campus. Eastern also hosts the [Sapphire Ball](#). The Sapphire Ball is an annual black-tie fundraiser in which individuals and organizations that have made a significant impact on the College or in their community are recognized. The evening includes dinner, a silent and live auction, student entertainment, the awards presentation and a dance. Starting in 2016, Eastern's Division of Agriculture hosted a ["Barn Bash"](#) to raise funds for improvements to the school's small animal farm. Both alumni and local community members helped raise over \$8,000 dollars. The local community gathered to take part in a BBQ dinner and a chance to win an off-road ATV. Eastern alumni also hosted a dance for the event.

The [Rothbaum Lectureship Series](#) was created with a \$25,000 gift from the late Julian J. Rothbaum, a Hartshorne native and Tulsa attorney. Once matched by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, the gift became a \$50,000 endowment to fund the lectureship series that is designed to help Eastern bring recognized authorities to campus to address issues of public affairs at the national, state or local level. Eastern Oklahoma State College helped raise awareness about a critical topic during an educational program held in January 2014. "[What's the Big Deal About Water in Oklahoma?](#)" was presented as part of the College's 10th Julian J. Rothbaum Distinguished Lectureship Series. The event, which was free and open to the public, featured a panel of experts speaking about the issues surrounding water in the state of Oklahoma, including resource management, access, conservation and quality. Major Ed Pulido presented [Challenge, Triumph, &](#)

[Change](#) for the 2015 lectureship. He presented his story and provided information about the Folds of Honor Foundation and Warriors for Freedom. [Terrorism, Geo-Politics and National Security](#) was the topic presented for the 2016 Rothbaum Distinguished Lecturship Series. Colonel Sean Herrom the commander of the McAlester Army Ammunition Plant shared his views on terrorism and threats to national security.

Eastern recognizes the needs of its community and external constituents by observing [trends in local employment](#) by providing training and education in areas that are specific to the needs of the area. In 2008, Eastern partnered with the Defense Ammunition Center (DAC) to create an AAS degree program in [ammunition management and safety](#). This program benefited the DAC internship program for those students and allowed them to complete a degree from anywhere in the world through online class offerings. More recently Eastern has added [ranch management-stocker operations](#) program in response to shifting economic trends.

In response to a changing economic climate and local healthcare priorities, a respiratory therapy program will be added to meet the needs of local hospitals and healthcare organizations. An [advisory committee](#) began meeting in July of 2016 and will work toward accreditation for this program.

Eastern is also developing a four-county [small business development consortium](#) with the Oklahoma Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The four counties are Pittsburg, Latimer, Leflore, and Haskell. The purpose of the SBDC is to connect local entrepreneurs with subject-matter experts who can assist with growing their business. This will help Eastern reach its mission of economic development for the College's area. An employee was hired in fall 2016 to serve as the small business development specialist on the Wilburton campus.

As a reflection of Eastern's commitment to the public and its history, Eastern has the only training institute for miners in the nation. The [Oklahoma Miner Training Institute \(OMTI\)](#) is operated under the direction of the Oklahoma Mining Commission. The Institute, located at Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton, provides training in all aspects of mine safety and health. Regularly scheduled classes are provided at the school or at the mine sites throughout the state to minimize the inconvenience to both miners and operators. All training provided by the Institute is free of charge to the mining companies who hold permits in Oklahoma.

In 2014, Eastern developed the [Pathway to Eastern](#). Pathway to Eastern is a gap-funding scholarship program that provides free tuition to graduates of Latimer County schools who enroll at Eastern the fall immediately after they graduate high school. Students can earn free tuition for up to 64 attempted credit hours or three consecutive years, whichever comes first. The focus of this program is to reach out to local high school graduates and offer them an affordable opportunity for higher education closer to home. Unfortunately, this program will be suspended in 2017 because of budget cuts.

Eastern received two [grants from the United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#) providing new distance learning equipment to the McAlester campus and area high schools. Again, Eastern strives to reach out to the local communities, offering them higher education opportunities while lowering economic and geographical barriers.

Eastern Oklahoma State College has established relationships with many external constituents. These relationships vary, but usually come in the form of [advisory boards](#) and [corporate partnerships](#). Also, McAlester and Wilburton locations host public and civic group meetings regularly on campuses.

Eastern entered into a partnership with AT&T to launch the institution's own commercial [radio station](#), KWLB, 93.1 FM. An agreement was negotiated with AT&T to construct a 350 ft. tower on

campus, as well as a new road to the tower and equipment house. In April 2013, AT&T provided a \$645,000 gift for the tower project. Eastern provided AT&T free use of its property for 15 years. Thereafter, the rent will be \$2,000 per month starting in 2028. Eastern uses the tower to broadcast its radio station, which is tied to the mass communication degree program. The radio station also entered into a partnership with Dunn-Country Ford. Dunn-Country entered into a "trade-off" agreement for an SUV and advertising. Lastly, the radio station offers free public service announcements, regularly invites local artists to perform on-air, and provides a forum for local leaders to promote community involvement.

Eastern, in partnership with Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, is home to the Oklahoma [Forage-Based Meat Goat Buck Test](#). The objective of the buck test is to identify individual bucks, as well as their sires and dams, which carry genetics expressing economically important traits in commercial meat goat production. Additionally, the test allows breeders to compare genetics within their herd to make better management decisions as to herd lines that will produce profitable progeny for future herds.

Eastern partnered with [Symbiotic Aquaponic](#), a nationally recognized and award-winning company, to install an aquaponics system in the College's 2,880-square-foot greenhouse. The greenhouse serves as a living laboratory for students in horticulture, agriculture education, agronomy and forestry classes. Through this partnership, continuing education courses are offered throughout the year. This partnership has expanded to include a second greenhouse that will be an agri-business incubator to teach others about this sustainable farming technique.

The Office of [Continuing Education](#) offers non-credit courses for those seeking to expand their knowledge of a particular subject or improve their professional skills. Examples include deer processing, aquaponics, self-defense and concealed carry firearms courses, water aerobics, and kitchen and food safety seminars.

[Honors Program](#) students and other [student organizations](#) continue to lead an initiative to increase recycling efforts on the Wilburton campus and within the community. Because of students' efforts, Eastern purchased a recycling trailer and recycling bins to make it convenient for students, faculty and staff to dispose of large amounts of paper, plastic and cardboard on campus. The students also planned and organized several community events and promotional materials to raise awareness about Eastern's efforts to "go green."

Eastern also provides [students with employment](#) through the Federal Work Study Program and through Regular College Employment (RCE). These programs provide students job opportunities on and around campus. Many of these jobs are directly related to the students' academic program.

1.D.2 As a [state-supported community college](#), Eastern operates as a public, non-profit institution and has no investors or parent organization. Eastern's primary purpose is serving the student population in its service area in order to facilitate student learning that effectively prepares graduates to enter their chosen vocational field or to continue their educational experience. The Eastern Oklahoma State College [Foundation](#) was established to deal primarily with donors and other external constituents to handle fundraising, donations and contributions, and other monetary endeavors keeping the Eastern Board of Regents apart from financial or material transactions, and thus, apart from opportunities for misuse or mishandling of such funds. The administration and Board of Regents carefully consider the value the College offers its constituents, which is demonstrated by the affordable tuition and fees, the outreach to local employers to provide training funded with state grants, and the array of relevant academic program offerings that lead to career entry.

The Eastern Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization guided by [By-laws](#) and a [Board of Directors](#) that direct the operations of the Foundation. The Board of Directors meets quarterly.

1.D.3 As stated in 1.D.1, Eastern engages in partnerships with external constituencies and is actively involved in the [communities it serves](#). In addition to offering facilities for outside organizations to meet, many employees of the College serve in the organizations, including the Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, Wilburton Main Street, Pride in McAlester, and Rotary.

Eastern works closely with local businesses and with [Kiamichi Technology Centers](#) to meet the technical and occupational education part of our mission. Administrators from both organizations meet twice a year to discuss ways to enhance the partnership to benefit the institutions and the community. The Choctaw Nation is a strong partner and helps provide educational and cultural experiences for our students.

The board encourages active employee participation in civic non-profit organizations benefiting community, state, regional, and national affiliations. College employees serve on their local school boards as well as on regional and national boards. Eastern hosts the [District 18 Superintendents](#) meetings for superintendents from surrounding counties. At the meeting held on April 20, 2016, 21 public school superintendents, the superintendent from Kiamichi Technology Center, two representatives from the State Department of Education, and three administrators from Eastern were present to discuss the state budget, testing, and other issues of concern. Eastern plans to continue to host and participate in these meetings with our public school and career technology partners.

[Food drives](#), holiday [toy drives](#), blood drives, and community clean-ups are examples of how students and employees have incorporated service learning to fulfill the College mission to its external constituents.

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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

The mission of Eastern Oklahoma State College is the core of who we are and what we do. The mission statement is made public on Eastern's website, catalog, and many marketing materials. The mission states that Eastern will “generate student learning through its associate's degrees and other academic programs which effectively prepare graduates to complete baccalaureate degrees, obtain productive employment and lead enriched lives and contribute to society as informed citizens. It is simultaneously the mission of the College to engage in educational programming and related activities that promote regional economic and community development.” This mission guides the institution in all areas of our operations.

The previous mission statement underwent revision and a new mission statement was implemented in 2017. This new mission statement will guide the institution for the next five years. Both mission statements were developed through a process that involves key stakeholders of the College. The leadership team annually reviews the strategic plan to ensure it aligns with the mission, vision and core values. The mission is adopted by the governing board. Eastern's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission. Faculty, staff, and administration understand their role in educating students, engaging the public, and serving the constituents of southeastern Oklahoma.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Argument

2.A Eastern strives to maintain a sense of institutional responsibility as evidenced by its policies and procedures. Eastern has various [policies and procedures](#) that assist in governing college operations. These policies and procedures are periodically updated and reviewed to ensure they are relevant. Eastern will continue to work to ensure that all policies and procedures are up to date with the latest requirements. This is an ongoing challenge, but one that will be dealt with in the future by a standing federal compliance policy review committee that will meet twice a year. These policies outline appropriate procedures regarding budgeting, collecting funds, and audits. Criterion 5 will provide more insight into these functions.

The practices of Eastern faculty and staff reflect these policies. The faculty at Eastern are well informed of relevant policies and procedures. Regular meetings and [defined hierarchies](#) help ensure policies and procedures are known and followed appropriately. The faculty's voice is incorporated into the campus-wide [mission statement](#). Faculty rights and responsibilities are clearly stated in the [faculty handbook](#). Eastern employees are invited to become involved in and to participate in helping to ensure Eastern meets the goals outlined in its mission statement. Staff guidelines are clearly stated in the [staff handbook](#). The College also helps provide clear and delineated avenues for faculty and staff to [report](#) inappropriate or illegal conduct without the fear of retribution. These guidelines are clearly outlined in the faculty handbook and staff handbook.

The institution [educates](#) faculty, staff, and students on all relevant federal and state statutory requirements and regulations. [ADA](#) requirements, [HIPPA](#), [EOC](#), and [FERPA](#) are followed as strictly as possible across all Eastern locations. Copies of these acts can be found in multiple locations from the website to the campus-wide syllabus template. The administration, faculty, and staff are all committed to providing safe and accessible campus locations to make higher education available to as many students as possible.

Eastern has implemented a number of activities and policies that have helped to create a culture of compliance and accountability. For example:

- Eastern has adopted numerous policies designed to avoid potential abuses in areas including [purchasing](#), development, and [nepotism](#)
- The Board of Regents approved [policies and procedures](#) for collecting funds, auditing, and budgeting
- Eastern's financial transactions are ensured by an [audit policy](#) from the Oklahoma State

Regents for Higher Education

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and Oklahoma Legislature established the [Board's policies and procedures](#). The [Eastern Board of Regents](#) is comprised of independent regents who are financially literate and meet the standards as required by the Oklahoma Governor and Oklahoma legislature. Board members are appointed for staggered terms of seven years. Board agendas are posted on campus buildings on all campuses and the Eastern website. Board packets are placed in the Eastern library for public review. Board meetings meet all legal requirements; if requested, representatives from the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office will be present.

In March 2014, Eastern Oklahoma State College underwent a Department of Education (DOE) program review. The focus of the review was to determine Eastern's compliance with relevant state and federal regulations as they pertain to Eastern's administration of Title IV programs. This was the first program review conducted at Eastern by the DOE since 1989. More detailed information is presented in the Federal Compliance section with documentation in [Appendix H](#) and [Appendix I](#).

The [DOE program review](#) resulted in 21 initial findings. As a result of the DOE program review, Eastern was placed on the financial aid payment method of Heightened Cash Monitoring Status (HCM2 status) on May 29, 2014. Upon notification of the findings, [Eastern promptly responded](#) and 18 of 21 findings were resolved. Eastern sought legal counsel on how to best address the three remaining unresolved findings.

[Finding 4](#)

This finding was in regard to the classification of the Antlers site as a qualified location rather than a "first year experience," as Eastern had originally intended. In Finding 4, the DOE report referred to the Antlers site as an "Ineligible Additional Location." It was found that Eastern offered the first year of two year programs as well as developmental classes at the Antlers site resulting in offering more than 50% of the general studies degree program. Eastern was initially ordered to repay liabilities stemming from the incorrect classification of the Antlers site. This review of the time in question resulted in an initial total liability of \$885,427.45 in ineligible aid and added interest related to the Antlers site classification. Soon after being notified, Eastern [filed](#) with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) to change the status of the Antlers, OK, location to properly align the site classification with the percentage of courses offered within a degree program. After receiving approval from HLC, Eastern received [approval](#) from the DOE to provide federal funds for students attending that location.

[Finding 7](#)

This finding stated some Title IV funds were not recouped from students who did not qualify for financial aid based upon their final grade(s) and last date of attendance(s). [Federal requirements](#) mandate an institution to determine the amount of Title IV assistance a student has earned prior to their withdraw date. The policy at Eastern stated that if a student received a failing grade, that student was assumed to have earned that grade. In the DOE's ruling, a grade of "F" with lack of attendance constitutes an unofficial withdrawal. This led to some students receiving financial aid when, in fact, they had not met the DOE's requirements for such aid.

In consultation with DOE officials, it was determined that a date of last attendance should be added to grades that result in a student not receiving academic credit. This resulted in ineligible disbursements of financial aid. The total liabilities with interest were \$155,075.54. The Office of Academic Affairs requested last date of attendance information from faculty for students who

received grades that resulted in no academic credit. This request was made to ensure compliance with [DOE's policies regarding unofficial withdrawals](#), and this data has been tracked every semester since this DOE report was published.

[Finding 15](#)

The third unresolved claim resulted from lack of documentation in two student files. Finding 15 dealt with verification violations. The first issue in this finding dealt with Student #3. This claim centered around Eastern's failure to collect IRS transcripts for verification. Eastern also failed to resolve a student reported household discrepancy. These issues were quickly resolved. This resulted in a reduction of liability associated with this error.

The information in a second student file was also deemed to be inadequate. Student #28 improperly listed dependents on the FAFSA. Eastern failed to verify whether the listed dependent information was correct when, in fact, there was an error. This led to liabilities and interest totaling \$1,401.33.

In total, the DOE program review initially resulted in liabilities and interest of \$1,086,608.70. Eastern promptly prepared a contingency plan to cover these unplanned liabilities. Eastern had just completed payments on a master lease bond, so those monies were left in the budget and set aside to make payments toward the DOE liabilities.

All faculty and staff were [made aware](#) of the DOE program review and the situation was addressed at faculty and staff meetings thereafter. Students were also notified of this issue and related procedures via email. The community was informed of the program review via an initial [press release](#) and follow-up releases in which Eastern administration provided candid analysis and proposed remedies. Eastern's Board of Regents was made aware of the situation by the president with an initial letter and subsequent updates.

After being placed on HCM2 status, Eastern responded by addressing the issue in a [timely manner](#) but still remains on HCM2 status as of early December 2016. Up until September 4, 2015, Eastern was sending batches of student financial aid information to the DOE for review and approval. After a spreadsheet was sent to the DOE, a random selection of 100 students was chosen and their physical financial aid files were copied, boxed, and mailed securely to Dallas for DOE review.

After the batches were approved, financial aid was released to Eastern as reimbursement for those students that had previously been paid by Eastern. Of the files selected by the DOE, all batches of student files have been deemed at least 90% accurate. On September 4, 2015, Eastern was approved for Reduced Documentation of HCM2; this meant that Eastern no longer had to copy and mail boxes of files. Financial aid has been dispersed to students in as timely a manner as possible. Eastern has [responded quickly](#) and transparently despite the DOE regularly exceeding projected response times in reviewing files.

In October 2016, the DOE and Eastern came to terms on a [settlement agreement](#). The conditions of the settlement were that Eastern agreed to pay back a total of \$593,853.42 in liabilities, hire a third party financial aid servicer, host representatives of the DOE's Dallas office for a compliance assistance visit, resolve all outstanding reconciliation issues, and provide a plan to address a [high cohort default rate](#).

Eastern agreed to pay the monetary liabilities stemming from Finding 4 for a period of three years as well as post judgment interest of 1%. Eastern's Business Office has enacted a [plan to ensure payback](#)

via the terms of the settlement.

The Eastern Foundation has [agreed](#) to provide a loan to the college for an initial payment of one quarter of the current liabilities. In addition, Eastern will use the money previously set aside to pay a bond to cover outstanding DOE liabilities. Uniform payments will be made quarterly until all liabilities are paid. Currently, Eastern is predicting full [payback](#) by October of 2020 to the DOE and by early 2012 for the Eastern Foundation.

Eastern also took steps to satisfy the second settlement condition. Eastern retained [FA Solutions](#) as its third party financial aid servicer through June 2017. FA Solutions will provide spot checks of financial aid information as well as provide training for Eastern employees.

In addition, Eastern entered into a contractual relationship with Campus Logic. [Campus Logic](#) will provide additional support in the form of software and employee training. The software is designed to integrate with Eastern's current data platforms while streamlining the financial aid process. Per the terms of the contract, Campus Logic documentation is required to meet all federal compliance guidelines. In addition, Eastern is working on an internal cross-training program. Employees from Enrollment Management and the Financial Aid Office will work together to provide additional checks and balances and better communication designed to strengthen internal financial aid processes.

On November 2-3, 2016, Eastern hosted two institutional improvement specialists from the DOE's Dallas office. During the entire visit, the Eastern president, vice president of Business Affairs, director of Marketing and Communications, director of Financial Aid, and other staff were present to answer questions as well as to help direct the DOE representatives to the proper institutional channels. As a [result of this DOE visit](#), a request was made to modify some policies and procedures to ensure uniformity across various locations. Immediately following this visit, financial aid staff began working on the outstanding reconciliation efforts and the administration began rewriting policies and updating the financial aid policy and procedures manual. The requested policy work was completed and approved by the DOE in January 2017. This DOE visit has highlighted the need to continuously review and update policies and procedures across the institution. Review of policies in various locations will continue into the spring 2017 semester. All policies requested as a result of the compliance visit have been submitted and approved. Eastern received a [close-out letter](#) on January 10, 2017.

These experiences with the DOE illustrate that Eastern operates with transparency in financial and academic functions. The findings from DOE were not a result of the lack of integrity in financial and academic functions, but rather "human error" mistakes that were quickly corrected. The established policies and procedures that are followed illustrate that Eastern operates with integrity in personnel and auxiliary functions. Policies have been established and followed to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff. Eastern will continue to review and update policies and procedures to make sure [federal requirements](#) are met and services to students and the community are maintained.

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Argument

2.B Eastern is a two-year community college with the main campus located in Wilburton, OK. Eastern is fully [accredited](#) by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The [HLC mark of affiliation](#) is openly displayed on the Eastern website. Eastern is governed by a [seven-member board](#) that is appointed by the Governor of Oklahoma. The Board of Regents and meeting procedures comply with all Open Meeting and Open Records Acts as required by the State of Oklahoma. [Meeting minutes](#) are taken and recorded as a part of standard operating procedures. Institutional oversight for Eastern is provided by the [Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education \(OSRHE\)](#). Eastern acts in accordance with the policies and procedures promulgated by the OSRHE, the laws of the State of Oklahoma, and the federal government.

Transparency with students and the public regarding programs offered, program requirements, faculty and staff, institutional organization, costs to students, and accreditation is a priority at Eastern. Eastern provides up-to-date information on its website to ensure transparency and accessibility.

Eastern's [website](#) is the primary public medium for both internal and external audiences to gain access and information about the college. In March 2012, in10sity Interactive, a website design firm based in Knoxville, Tennessee, was hired to redesign the college's website. After a two-year process that included feedback from students, faculty and staff, the website was launched in December 2012.

The website is managed and maintained by the Office of Marketing and Communications. The department is responsible for ensuring accuracy and updating all pages on an as-needed basis. Academic departments and other campus offices are involved in annual reviews of their website content and submission of necessary updates. The Office of Marketing and Communications works closely with Academic Affairs, Business Affairs, Academic Division deans, and other departmental directors to ensure all information is accurate and up-to-date.

The Office of Marketing and Communications also manages the college's [social media accounts](#), including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr, and SnapChat. These accounts are also used to communicate to both internal and external audiences. Eastern's social media is used to publicize new programs and campus accomplishments, announce activities and events, and communicate weather-related closings. The staff continually monitors all social media accounts to ensure timely and accurate responses to questions on the sites. The Office of Marketing and Communications also regularly submits [articles to area newspapers](#) and makes them available on the college's website.

In an effort to keep the campus connected, administration, faculty, and staff meet multiple times a year for the purpose of informing stakeholders and to aid in aligning institutional goals across disciplines and departments. More information is presented in *Criterion 5B*.

[The Eastern Viewbook](#) provides prospective students with information on campus sites, academic programs, student organizations, athletics, housing, resources, financial aid and scholarships, and

tuition. The publication is available on the college's website. Eastern's [strategic plan](#) and an annual [fact book](#) are also made available for public viewing on the website. These publications provide information about the college's historical development to evaluate trends and make strategic planning decisions based on data.

Eastern's radio station, [Mountaineer Radio](#), is broadcast on the Internet, as well as two frequencies – 93.1 FM serving areas including Red Oak, Wilburton, Hartshorne, and McAlester; and 104.9 FM serving Broken Bow and Idabel. The radio station provides entertainment, news, weather, and other local information for students, faculty, staff, and the general public. The radio station is also used to publicize Eastern's programs, events and activities, as well as communicate news and weather-related closings. Eastern's full mission statement airs at least once per day on the broadcast. The Office of Marketing and Communications works closely with the Mountaineer Radio staff to ensure all college-related communications and advertisements are accurate and up-to-date.

Eastern's [academic catalog](#) is the primary document to communicate academic policies, costs, program requirements and course descriptions to current students. The catalog is published online and in print every year on or around August 1. It is distributed in hard copy to campus admissions offices, recruiters and faculty. It is posted on the website in PDF format. Annual review of the catalog at the academic department, division, and institution level ensure currency and accuracy. The Office of Academic Affairs oversees this review process, which begins in the late winter/early spring of each academic year. The Office of Student Services reviews and submits any policy or informational changes relating to student activities, services, standards of conduct, and housing. The Office of Business Affairs reviews and submits any policy or information changes related to tuition and fees, housing costs, and financial aid. In addition, the president of Eastern provides timely campus [updates via email](#) and the vice-president of Academic Affairs provides [monthly newsletters](#) to keep the interested parties informed of updates or changes on campus.

[In Review magazine](#) is published annually following the end of an academic year. It is mailed to around 600 alumni and friends of the college and is published on the college's website. The publication contains news, events, and activities from the previous academic year. The stories often highlight new programs and initiatives, news from students, alumni, faculty and staff, campus events, and information related to endowed scholarships. The magazine is produced by the Office of Marketing and Communications, including story ideas, interviews, writing, editing, creative conception, photography, design, and print production. The proofing process for the publication includes the Office of the President, Office of Institutional Advancement, Office of Academic Affairs, and Office of Business Affairs to ensure accuracy and integrity.

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

2.C.1 Eastern is a public, non-profit organization that is governed by a [seven-member Board of Regents](#). The Board of Regents is comprised of members appointed by the Governor of Oklahoma and confirmed by the Oklahoma Senate. Board members represent a cross section of industry leaders, educators, and community leaders. This cross section helps provide a diverse board that can best serve the varied and diverse faculty, administration, staff, and student body. Board members represent a broad geographical region spanning seven counties in Southeast Oklahoma.

2.C.2 The board members are appointed to staggered seven-year terms. They then sign an oath of loyalty and are sworn in during a campus-wide ceremony. A new member is appointed or re-appointed every year. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education [established](#) the board's policies and procedures in accordance with state statute. [Board agendas and minutes](#) are available in accordance with the laws of the State of Oklahoma and federal government. Meeting frequencies and times are outlined in the policy. If requested, individuals from the community and employees of the institution are allowed to make informal comments during comment periods to ensure the concerns of the community and institution are heard.

2.C.3 The board acts autonomously while implementing and following its policies and procedures, which were [adopted](#) by Eastern's Board of Regents in 2007 and are reviewed periodically. From an institutional perspective, the [board's policy and procedures](#) help clarify the specific rights and responsibilities of all Eastern board members. The board has scheduled [meetings](#) eight times a year to review college business and to offer their guidance on the best course of action to advance the institution. Members of Eastern's administration, the faculty and staff council chairs and other staff are present at board meetings to provide information to board members regarding the operations of the college. When requested, a state attorney can be present at board meetings to answer any questions and to provide legal oversight. The board's adherence to [Eastern's mission statement](#) reinforces the board's responsibility to assist in providing educational and employment opportunities in southeast Oklahoma and surrounding regions.

Eastern is a publicly funded non-profit institution. There are no stakeholders who influence the board's ability to be a neutral decision-maker. This allows the board to act in the best interest of Eastern. After board members are appointed, they pledge to adhere to clearly defined [policies and procedures](#). The policies and procedures help define what is considered to be ethical behavior and

outline the responsibilities of the board.

2.C.4 The Board of Regents and the administration at Eastern work toward developing the proper trajectory for the institution. During each meeting, the board receives updates from the president and executive staff about the current state of and needs of the institution. Board members are provided with [detailed financial summaries, funding receipts, and allotment reports](#) from the institution's chief financial officer. This information helps guide educated Board decision-making.

The Board of Regents does not participate in day-to-day operations. Instead, much of the day-to-day decision-making falls within the purview of the president of the college. This assignment of powers ensures the smooth operation of the college. According to [Board of Regents rules and regulations](#), the board delegates powers to the administrative branch of the college to ensure the day-to-day operations are handled accordingly.

Although board members do maintain relationships with donors and legislators, these relationships are limited to a professional nature. To further limit the possibility or appearance of impropriety with regard to monetary dealings, the Eastern Oklahoma State College Development [Foundation](#) was established to handle donations, fundraising, and other financial endeavors. This delineation helps reinforce the [separation of powers](#), thus limiting the opportunity for the mishandling or misuse of institutional funds.

The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) with its own set of established by-laws that help outline the expectations and obligations of the Foundation. They have a [board of directors](#) that meet quarterly. All Foundation board meetings comply with Oklahoma Open Records Act and Open Meetings Act as well as federal law.

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

2.D Freedom of expression in teaching and learning and the pursuit of truth lie at the core of Eastern's [values](#). Eastern has policies that help ensure the integrity of the faculty as well as the rigor and relevance of the curriculum being taught. The college's [academic freedom statement](#) is located in the faculty handbook.

Academic freedom at Eastern is based on academic tradition and on the College Board of Regents' adopted policies. In addition, the protected rights of the faculty that fall within the rubric of academic freedom are balanced against the protected academic freedom rights of the college and of the students. A faculty member is entitled to speak or write as a citizen of the nation, state, and community without fear of institutional censorship or discipline. He or she must avoid the impression that he or she speaks or acts for the college when speaking or acting as a private person. A faculty member is entitled to full freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject that he or she teaches. However, a faculty member using controversial material in the classroom should introduce such material only as it has a clear relationship to the subject field. Faculty members are free to pursue scholarly inquiry without undue restriction and to voice and publish individual conclusions and results. However, in the spirit of academic freedom, faculty members should be tolerant of other viewpoints, seek an attitude of scholarly objectivity, and support the free exchange of ideas.

This policy outlines an instructor's responsibility and freedom in the classroom. This policy helps ensure faculty have the ability and freedom to discuss all relevant subject matter topics that could aid in student learning. A standardized [course syllabus template](#) also helps ensure consistency and provides the structure for an environment that is conducive to learning.

After qualified faculty are hired, a [student and faculty evaluation process](#) is used by division deans to inform faculty of expectations and key performance measures. Areas of evaluation include teaching proficiency, professional development, institutional involvement, institutional service, community service, instructional effectiveness, scholarly activities, creative endeavors and projects, demonstration of rigor, and student evaluations. Faculty are scored by their deans on their performance and the results are shared with the faculty member. Once the evaluation is complete, the evaluation is stored in that faculty member's file. Student evaluations are conducted via Blackboard using [EvaluationKit](#). Results are sent to faculty, division deans, and the VPAA.

A [plan of improvement](#) is used with a faculty member who is not meeting performance expectations. The plan of improvement is designed to assist the struggling faculty member in areas where he or she was not meeting institutional standards. The faculty plan of improvement is another tool Eastern uses to ensure academic rigor and quality.

In addition to providing faculty perspectives, outside speakers are brought in to expand a student's worldview on current issues of the day. For example, the [Rothbaum Lectureship Series](#) has included diverse topics from local water rights and policy to global terrorism. These lectures and others help to

broaden student vision and allow for freedom of expression outside the classroom setting.

Sources

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2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2.E.1 Eastern is a two-year community college that does not focus on research. However, individual faculty members do participate in some fields of academic research. More information is provided in Criterion 3.B.5. Eastern's primary role in the community is to provide educational opportunities. This education can be used as a starting point to further higher education or as an avenue to enter the job market after graduation. Eastern prides itself on being the hub of education and knowledge in southeast Oklahoma.

Communication and critical thinking skills are specific areas of focus in teaching and assessment. This is evidenced by the commitment to assessment campus-wide. Each division participates in [oral, written, and critical thinking assessments](#). The findings are evaluated by the entire faculty during professional development sessions. In order to ensure consistency when evaluating these assessments, [campus-wide rubrics](#) have been designed to cohesively advance and evaluate these skills across disciplines. More information on assessment can be found in Criterion 4B.

Faculty and staff are encouraged to share expertise across disciplines in order to foster an environment of learning between faculty for the benefit of the students. Eastern provides both in-house workshops with leaders from the educational services industry and periodic professional development days to encourage and provide learning opportunities for employees campus-wide. Faculty members are encouraged to participate in continuing education training such as "[Lunch and Learns](#)" and other [professional development](#) workshops. These activities ensure Eastern's faculty are providing quality instruction as measured by uniform standards. In the classroom, faculty members provide expertise while adhering to an [academic freedom policy](#) outlined in the faculty handbook. For more information about scholarly practice conducted by faculty, see Criterion 4A.

Full-time faculty members are employed under annual contracts specifying salary and conditions of employment. [Faculty contracts](#) are for a teaching load of 15 credit hours per semester. The contract may specify other assignments with an appropriate adjustment of teaching load. The typical faculty contract is for the academic year beginning approximately one week before fall semester classes begin and ending approximately three working days after the last day of spring semester finals.

In order to retain key faculty and ensure the quality of faculty integrity is maintained, Eastern has designed and implemented a [tenure plan](#) for qualified faculty. All faculty hires are considered probationary for four years. All faculty hires must fulfill the requirements for hiring according to the faculty qualification requirements. All persons who have completed the probationary period are eligible for tenure upon the recommendation of their division dean. In January of the year of recommendation for tenure, the division dean will work with eligible faculty members to prepare

application for tenure review. The application will be submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs by March 1. The tenure committee will complete its review and recommendation by April 1.

In order to be tenured, the faculty member must meet all of the following criteria:

- i. hold a minimum of a master's degree
- ii. demonstrate professional excellence in classroom instruction
- iii. be fully qualified in discipline(s) taught
- iv. demonstrate a record of institutional and community service. Application of professional skills to service to the community is not required but may be considered
- v. endeavor to maintain professional excellence
- vi. implement the stated mission of Eastern Oklahoma State College. Each division is responsible for developing any additional criteria against which the faculty member is to be evaluated. The division dean will submit the additional criteria to the vice president for Academic Affairs for review

2.E.2/2.E.3 Plagiarism is becoming more and more prevalent with the reduced barriers to information via the Internet. Eastern fully recognizes its responsibility to provide students with up-to-date information about plagiarism, copyright infringement, and academic dishonesty. [LibGuides](#), created by Library media staff, provide all Eastern students with best practices regarding information literacy. These LibGuides are linked to all Blackboard courses.

The college is also committed to providing accurate checks and balances to ensure Eastern's policies about academic dishonesty are followed and reinforced. Serious instances of plagiarism are reported to the VPAA's office and handled on a case-by-case basis.

The Faculty Council recently updated and approved Eastern's [academic dishonesty policy](#). This policy's purpose is to outline ethical behavior in an academic setting. Definitions were clarified and enforcement and punishment were codified in Eastern's policies. All instructors are required to include the complete academic dishonesty statement in their syllabi. The policy is also displayed in the [student handbook](#) and on Eastern's website.

Eastern also understands that sometimes academic dishonesty occurs out of ignorance rather than malice. Eastern's faculty members attempt to take a preventative approach that begins with educating students about plagiarism in [Orientation and Library Science \(OLS\) course](#) and reinforces those standards in classrooms across disciplines and learning platforms. Students are again taught the established methods for identifying valid research and citing sources in English composition courses. Faculty assess student knowledge in these areas using the Information Literacy Rubric. The [results](#) of this survey show that students across disciplines at Eastern understand issues such as plagiarism, research processes, and identifying scholarly journals.

With the increase in [enrollment in online courses](#) and the development of five fully-online degree programs, Eastern has been adjusting accordingly. Online assignments have been designed to reinforce academic honesty through graded assignments. The [Online Getting Started Module](#) has information designed to reinforce the academic dishonesty policy. This helps to address problems before they start and helps to promote academic integrity in an online setting. The library offers a service to ensure academic honesty with online testing procedures. Online students take exams at

specified testing centers at four different locations across the state or at faculty-approved testing sites. Students also have the opportunity to use [ProctorU](#) as an alternative to on-site testing in some courses.

Blackboard is the online platform for Eastern. Students are assigned unique passwords and user names to prevent confusion. Online instructors follow copyright regulations regarding posted materials unless an educational exemption applies. SafeAssign is used in addition to other academic integrity tools to discourage plagiarism when submitting assignments.

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

Eastern has many policies and procedures in place to protect the integrity of its operations. All personnel and operations are scrutinized to ensure they meet the highest standards of ethics and integrity. In the financial arena, the external audit team gives an opinion of internal control, and processes are adjusted accordingly. There are many academic policies in the catalogs and student handbook that ensure the integrity of course activities. These documents provide students with guidance on the ethical use of information and outline the enforcement of academic honesty and integrity policies. The faculty and staff handbooks detail many policies that are implemented to promote the integrity of all faculty and staff. Updating policies and procedures is an ongoing challenge. In the future, Eastern will utilize the federal compliance committee to review policies and procedures and make sure all documents are up-to-date.

Eastern strives to present itself plainly and thoroughly to all stakeholders including students and the public with regard to academic programs, policies and requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, and accreditation relationships. As is evidenced during the Department of Education program review and the subsequent placement of the institution on Heightened Cash Monitoring status, Eastern works to correct issues while making all constituents aware that problems exist.

Eastern's governing board is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the college and to ensure integrity. The board delegates the day-to-day management of the college to the president and administrative team. Faculty provide oversight in the area of academics and are thus committed to the pursuit of truth and academic freedom.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

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

Argument

3.A.1 Ensuring quality, relevancy, and currency of college programs and courses is an ongoing pursuit at Eastern Oklahoma State College. Associate of applied science (AAS) programs receive frequent feedback from formal and informal employer [advisory groups](#). These boards provide input regarding the competencies required for graduates to be successful in the workplace.

Each year, prior to publication of the [academic catalog](#), departments review programs and courses for currency and relevancy. The [course/program modification form](#) documents changes that are often prompted by a need to update curriculum and programming. This form is submitted to the [Council on Curriculum and Academic Policy](#) (C-CAP) to review and make recommendations on the proposed changes.

Eastern's nursing program is [fully accredited](#) by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. The nursing program provides annual reports to ACEN and the Oklahoma Board of Nursing. The last on-site accreditation visit was in spring of 2016. As a result of the visit, the nursing program received an eight year re-accreditation through 2024. Eastern has also been accredited by the Society of American Foresters for its forestry program housed on the Wilburton campus, which requires a self-study report, on-site visit, and a review by the committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation. This committee determines if a degree-program option meets standards for objectives, curriculum, faculty, students, program, parent-institution support, and physical resources and facilities. Eastern first received this accreditation in 2009. Because of low enrollment, this accreditation will no longer be possible to maintain.

Eastern offered a medical laboratory technician (MLT) degree at the teaching site in Idabel. It was accredited by the [National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Science](#) (NAACLS), but due to low enrollment and changing economic trends, this program is no longer offered.

Eastern has faculty with advanced certifications. For example, the meat processing and food safety instructor was recently certified as a lead [HACCP](#) (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point)

instructor by the International HACCP Alliance and instructors in the criminal justice program hold certifications from the Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training (CLEET).

Furthermore, Eastern has more than 175 courses approved by formal agreement to [transfer](#) to four-year institutions within the state higher education system for general education and major-related credit. Eastern has in place [articulation agreements](#) with area institutions including Oklahoma State University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Northeastern State University and East Central University, to assure students matriculate smoothly into the four-year institutions. The articulation agreements and courses are re-examined by faculty members from all institutions to validate content, determine whether they remain compatible, and remain responsive to industry changes. During the fall 2016 semester, Eastern signed a [memorandum of understanding](#) with the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith to transfer credits from Eastern's criminal justice associates degree to the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith's bachelor's degree. More information about transfer of courses is available in Criterion 4.A.

A [program review](#) process is also used to examine current program status and document suggested changes to maintain the relevancy of each program. Each degree program meets specific general education requirements while providing specific coursework related to the individual discipline. In addition, each academic program completes a five-year program review in accordance with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The [program review template](#) requires the following major components:

1. description of the program's connection to the institutional mission and goals
2. centrality of the program to the institution's mission
3. vitality of the program
4. institutional program recommendations

Subcategories of the program review include a quantitative and qualitative analysis and assessment that note key findings since the last review, quality and minimum productivity indicators, faculty member credentials, and use of resources, among others. Each program adheres to a [program review schedule](#) that is set by the Office of Academic Affairs. Results and recommendations are reviewed by division deans and the VPAA and filed with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

As a result of faculty assessment forums held each semester, standardized rubrics were developed to track general education learning goals. The results of utilizing the rubrics in a sample number of classes are available in the [Eastern Fact Book](#). More information will be provided in Criterion 4.B.

3.A.2 Eastern Oklahoma State College offers undergraduate education at the associate degree level. The College awards certificates of achievement, associate of applied science, associate of arts, and associate of science degrees. The specific requirements for completion of each degree and certificate are clearly outlined on the individual program pages within the [2016-2017 college catalog](#). The catalog is reviewed annually and is available online and in print. This document informs students of the requirements of the individual degree or certificate, both in terms of general descriptions and specific credit hour requirements. Each degree-granting program has developed and stated learning outcomes for the program. These outcomes are an integral part of the aforementioned program review process.

In accordance with the [policies](#) of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) and the accreditation standards of the Higher Learning Commission, all of the degree programs of Eastern Oklahoma State College contain a significant general education component. The faculty assessment forums held each semester have been instrumental in developing the [general education learning](#)

[outcomes](#) that apply to all programs and guide course design and delivery. For AA and AS degrees at Eastern, at least 40 semester credit hours must be in general education courses. For AAS and certificates, the general education portion is reduced, but it remains an important part of the collegiate academic experience. As stated in the academic catalog, "general education in the college curriculum emphasizes the learning of facts, values, understandings, skills, attitudes, and appreciations believed to be meaningful concerns that are common to all students by virtue of their involvement as human beings living in the twenty-first century."

Faculty members at Eastern have participated in [curriculum-mapping](#). This has aligned each course to the general education learning goal for communication. Mapping the courses to the other learning goals is an on-going process. The Academic Affairs office will continue to work with faculty to ensure that all the general education learning goals are introduced, reinforced, and mastered in courses to ensure student understanding of those goals.

The general education learning outcomes are listed in the [academic catalog](#) that is available in print and on the college's website. Course-specific learning outcomes are identified in the course syllabus.

3.A.3 The college has several practices in place that ensure program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modalities and locations. The college, through full-time faculty, delivers courses face-to-face, through interactive television (ITV), and online. The college utilizes a [standardized syllabus template](#) to ensure consistency in stating learning goals, methodology, assessment, and communication of important college and course information. Regardless of how the course is delivered, learning objectives for courses are the same. Instructors may choose to include more than the minimum information and to tailor statements to their subject matter and students' needs.

Online instructors meet additional requirements to demonstrate their ability to deliver a course using our learning management system. Eastern's online and hybrid courses are approved, designed, and delivered according to [Quality Matters](#) standards, a faculty-centered, peer review process that is designed to certify the quality of online courses and online components with both national and international recognition. This document sets forth minimum responsibilities for delivery of online and hybrid classes. Faculty who teach online courses must successfully complete the Quality Matters training before they can offer an online course. The faculty who have participated in the QM program have expanded the same [rubric](#) and standards to their face-to-face courses, thus improving both instructional design and professional development at Eastern. More details can be found in Criterion 4.A.

Courses offered as concurrent enrollment for area high schools are required to utilize the same course syllabus and are taught by the same faculty that teach regular courses.

Textbooks are consistent across all modalities and locations. Textbooks can be purchased from the Texas Book Company at all locations and online. Common exams are used in all developmental courses regardless of location. The [data](#) are used to analyze learning outcomes across all course sections.

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Argument

3.B.1 The delivery and design of general education at Eastern are in accordance with [Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education \(OSRHE\) guidelines](#). Eastern's general education program focuses on core competencies for personal and post-educational success. Aligned with Eastern's [mission statement](#), the general education coursework provided by Eastern's curricula emphasizes the learning of facts, values, and skills that effectively prepares graduates to complete baccalaureate degrees, obtain productive employment, and lead enriched lives.

A [student intent survey](#) shows that a number of students enroll in classes at Eastern with no intention of completing an associate degree. They simply want to obtain the general education requirements necessary to transfer to another institution. In addition, several students do not start at Eastern or are not full time when taking classes. This has had a significant impact on reported retention and graduation rates. In order to accurately track these students, Eastern has changed its enrollment [application](#) to reflect a "student's intention" for enrolling and taking classes here.

Eastern updates general educational offerings by conducting annual program reviews, employer surveys, [analyzing economic trends](#), and soliciting feedback from various [advisory boards](#). Using the feedback and input from these multiple sources, Eastern decided to join the HLC Assessment Academy in 2012 in order to strengthen assessment of [general education learning outcomes](#). The following five general education goals were developed and are embedded across the curricular offerings of the college:

1. Communication
2. Critical Thinking
3. Information and Technology Literacy
4. Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning
5. Culture, Global Awareness, and Social Responsibility

These general education goals incorporate the spirit and intent of [Eastern's mission](#) and are measured by student learning outcomes. These goals are measured as part of the program assessment process and provide support for measuring student success in transfer and terminal degree programs.

The associate in arts (AA) degree and the associate in science (AS) degree require at least 40 [semester hours of coursework](#) in general education. For an associate in applied science (AAS) degree and certificate programs, the general education requirements are reduced but remain an important part of the collegiate academic experience. General education courses completed in accordance with the [OSRHE transfer matrix](#) transfer to other institutions in Oklahoma.

Eastern graduates often find employment in nursing, meat processing, food safety, ranch operations, early childhood education, and oilfield services. The OSRHE and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce provide [employment and wage statistics](#) for graduates of Oklahoma institutions. For example, 96% of Eastern nursing graduates are gainfully employed in the healthcare industry. Similar data are available for other disciplines.

When the economy has experienced downturns, Eastern has seen an increase in the number of [non-traditional students](#) enrolling in classes. These students seek to gain a new skill set in order to access new employment opportunities. In these situations, the college is providing flexible, affordable degree programs for working adults who want to finish their college degree.

3.B.2 The Eastern general education program is based on [Eastern's core values](#) and [general education learning goals](#), which complies with [OSRHE guidelines](#) and the accreditation standards for the Higher Learning Commission. The [Eastern academic catalog](#) articulates the purpose and requirements of general education by specifying five student outcomes to be the foundation of liberal learning and to impart knowledge and concepts that every college-educated person should possess.

All students are required to complete the [general education component](#) of their degree plan. This provides students with exposure to concepts outside their field of study, which broadens a student's knowledge base.

The general education component of all degrees awarded at Eastern is outlined in the [Eastern academic catalog](#). Because Eastern offers both associate of arts degrees and associate of applied science degrees, the general education requirements for various programs differ. These requirements range from 13 hours for most certificate seekers, to 18 hours for associate of applied science seekers, to 40 hours for those seeking an associate of arts or science degrees. The general education competencies are taught throughout the general education courses and they are [assessed](#) across the curriculum in all courses.

At the beginning of each [semester](#), Eastern involves the faculty in measuring the learning outcomes for each of the five general education goals. Multiple programs from [each division](#) are tasked in collecting data on how well students meet general education goals. The purpose of these assessment reviews is to determine if students are achieving the five general education competencies in their selected program of study.

Working with faculty, department heads, and division chairs, the assessment coordinator facilitates the process of identifying learning weaknesses and taking corrective action. Actions for improvement are then articulated through the academic chain of command with emphasis on engaging students in active learning and improving general education learning outcomes.

3.B.3 Eastern Oklahoma State College provides students with a foundation of general education competencies including communication, critical thinking, information literacy, quantitative and scientific reasoning, and culture, global awareness, and social responsibility. All major programs at Eastern share the same [general education curriculum](#) structure designed to engage students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information, in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work, and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments. The ultimate goal is to lay the foundation of all five general education learning goals. This allows students to develop a commitment to lifelong learning and inquiry.

Inquiry is an important component in all of the sciences, specifically laboratory-based classes. In these hands-on environments, Eastern's science classes allow students to explore physical and biological sciences in a safe and methodical manner. Many other courses in mathematics, humanities, and the social sciences provide opportunities for students to develop skills and knowledge in inquiry, critical thinking, and communication.

Faculty assess a student's ability to collect, analyze, and communicate his or her findings through [oral](#) and [written](#) presentations. Many courses also prepare students to analyze and critically process information. Faculty use the [critical thinking rubric](#) to assess students in this area. Online course offerings incorporate discussion forums, short essay questions and journals, which allow students to use creativity and different modes of inquiry as they learn to adapt, internalize and discover new concepts and notions. Engaging students using these teaching methods fosters discovery and critical thinking in a variety of situations and scenarios.

Faculty are actively engaged in assessing student learning in the general education areas. An [assessment schedule rotation](#) has been developed to ensure assessments are being completed and that the data are being used to improve student learning and in creating a setting that allows students to develop skills in adapting to changing environments.

3.B.4 Eastern's belief in the importance of recognizing and understanding diversity is addressed in the [academic catalog's diversity statement](#).

As an institution, Eastern has asserted a commitment to providing educational opportunities for all its constituents regardless of race, ethnic background, or economic circumstance. Education at Eastern promotes cultural diversity by assisting students to develop a global perspective allowing them to recognize and learn about different beliefs, behavior, and values of diverse cultures. This commitment is addressed in the [fifth general education learning goal](#). Eastern provides opportunities to explore other beliefs and cultures through [many avenues](#) that celebrate different cultures and help to broaden student understanding of those different cultures.

The recently formed soccer program at Eastern has greatly increased the [diversity of the student population](#) to include many international students from several different countries around the world. Increasing racial and international diversity of the student body creates awareness about other cultures simply by exposure to fellow students in the classroom and during extracurricular activities.

Eastern has an effective and enduring [partnership with](#) the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma that has yielded positive results for the student population including the recognition of the rich Native American heritage that exists in southeast Oklahoma. Students who are members of the Choctaw Nation have the opportunity to participate in the Native American Student Association that celebrates their cultural heritage as well as promoting an understanding of tribal history for non-tribal students.

In addition to programs designed to meet the needs of a diverse student population, the [TRIO](#)

[Program](#) hosts a variety of events and workshops related to successful college completion, career planning, and relationship skills. TRIO was established by Congress as a program to help low-income Americans enter college, graduate, and move on to participate more fully in America's economic and social life. TRIO programs help students overcome class, social and cultural barriers to higher education. Over 1,000 colleges, universities, community colleges, and agencies now offer TRIO Programs in America. TRIO funds are distributed to institutions through competitive grants.

3.B.5 As a community college with a mission focused on transferring students to four-year institutions and preparing them for gainful employment, research is not a faculty requirement. However, some faculty and students are involved in scientific inquiry and scholarly work.

Students have an opportunity to participate in many [faculty-led clubs and services](#) that allow them to experience scholarship, creative work, and discovery of knowledge. Faculty members at Eastern contribute to scholarship, creative work, and discovery of knowledge by presenting at conferences, participating in professional development, and publishing professional documents related to their field of expertise. For example, in the science division there are several faculty working with students on research projects. A professor from the Idabel campus recently submitted a paper for publication on [Fish from Arkansas and Oklahoma](#). Another professor on the Wilburton campus is working with the agriculture division to do fecal testing on the stocker cattle in the new ranch management program. Specific science faculty are also conducting radioactive testing of sand and soil. An economics instructor is working with the agriculture division to provide opportunities for students to [study aquaponics](#).

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Argument

3.C.1 Eastern has [highly qualified faculty](#), several of whom have served for many years. Qualified adjunct instructors are not readily available in this geographic area, so many full-time faculty members teach [overload](#) to ensure high-quality instruction. [IPEDS data](#) shows that in comparison to similar colleges, Eastern employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to carry out both classroom and non-classroom roles. In spring 2016, the college employed 46 full-time faculty with approximately 84% of coursework delivered by full-time faculty. This allows for consistency and rigor across all modalities and locations.

Faculty have oversight of the curriculum, and they control academically-related matters through program coordination, instruction, and leadership in college committees, including assessment, curriculum, and instruction. [Faculty committees](#) are responsible for monitoring the academic programs including course and degree program development and approval, academic standards, and learning outcomes. All degree programs are reviewed every five years. These reviews are performed by program faculty to ensure curriculum, program content, delivery, and equipment remain relevant and current. Division deans and other academic staff participate in regular [Academic Leadership Team meetings](#) to advise and assist the VPAA in academic matters. These meetings also allow for information sharing among the divisions and between the faculty and the administration. The [Faculty Council](#), consisting of members elected by their peers, provides another avenue for faculty involvement in governance. The chair of the Faculty Council attends Administrative Leadership Team meetings as well as Board of Regents meetings.

The institution's [syllabus template](#) articulates the expectations and pertinent information for students regardless of course delivery format. Along with course descriptions, learner outcomes, and assessment goals, the template requires faculty to clearly explain grading policies for the course.

As a result of Eastern's participation in the [HLC Assessment Academy](#), all faculty members

participate in [assessment forums](#) at the beginning of each semester. These sessions have fostered a commitment to the assessment of student learning across the curriculum. The goal of the Assessment Academy project was to create assessment for general education courses. To support continuous improvement for assessment of student learning, the assessment committee, comprised of a faculty member from each division of the college, maintain [online assessment resources](#) on our website.

3.C.2 Open faculty positions are advertised nationally and all position descriptions clearly state the required credentials for each position. A detailed [faculty credential](#) policy is described in the faculty handbook. The Human Resources office collects and retains faculty and staff resumes and transcripts.

Eastern is currently revising the institutional hiring policy used to determine appropriate faculty qualifications. The new policy will apply to both full-time and adjunct instructors. Instructors are required to have a master's degree or higher as well as a minimum of 18 graduate hours in the discipline or sub-field taught. Faculty who deliver occupational instruction must also meet the above standards or have the equivalent in work experience.

If the minimum requirements are not met, Eastern relies on a totality of the circumstances test when determining appropriate faculty qualifications. Education, work experience, nationally recognized certification, course relevant certification by an accrediting agency, as well as work experience that leads to course specific skills and qualifications are all factors weighed when determining appropriate instructor qualifications for hiring and retention purposes. Faculty qualifications are [reviewed and documented](#) by the VPAA.

Online instructors are not exempt from the minimum requirements. In fact, online instructors are required to meet additional online specific standards. This additional requirement helps ensure instructors are proficient in the delivery of education via an online platform. Eastern has also formed a partnership with Quality Matters (QM). [QM](#) provides assistance and training for online course development. QM also acts as an accrediting body that certifies [individual instructor courses](#). A course that has received QM approval is deemed to meet acceptable content and delivery standards. More information on Quality Matters is in Criterion 4.A.

High school students taking Eastern classes enroll in courses taught by regular faculty. Eastern does **not** follow the model of dual enrollment where courses are taught in the high school setting by high school faculty. By having students enrolled in regular college classes, the high school students are expected to perform at the level of rigor expected of regular college students. Eastern has followed [OSRHE policy](#) regarding concurrently enrolled students. Eastern does not currently have consortial or contractual academic agreements in place.

3.C.3 Every position at Eastern has a specific job description that lists the duties, expectations, and qualifications for the position. For each hire, a search committee is formed with representatives from a cross section of the campus that is charged with reviewing applications, selecting finalists, conducting interviews, and making hiring recommendations as outlined in the [hiring manual](#).

The faculty handbook outlines expectations, policies, and procedures for both full-time and adjunct faculty. Revised during the 2015-2016 academic year, the handbook reflects current policies and procedures. The faculty handbook was readopted with no changes for the 2016-17 school year. The college's [guidelines for tenure](#) establish high standards to retain high quality faculty.

The college utilizes a variety of measures to evaluate general education and occupational-specific program faculty using various criteria. A combination of tools, specifically [annual performance](#)

[evaluations](#), [student evaluations](#) of instruction, and [classroom observations](#) are employed to support accountability and professional development and to provide constructive feedback for continuous improvement. See Criterion 2 for more information about the faculty evaluation and tenure process.

3.C.4 Acknowledging that [professional development](#) is crucial to long-term institutional success, Eastern faculty is provided clear channels to obtain support for such activities. Each department may request specific allocations for travel, association dues, and professional memberships. The requests are reviewed annually through the college's [zero-base budgeting process](#) to determine allocation of appropriate funds. More on the budgeting process can be found in Criterion 5.

Faculty participate in numerous professional development opportunities from on-campus "[Lunch and Learns](#)" to statewide professional development to regional and national conferences. The opportunities, organizations, and [participation](#) vary by academic division. For example, faculty in the criminal justice division participate in numerous conferences hosted by the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP). Faculty in the nursing division attend the Oklahoma Student Nursing Association conference. Faculty in the agriculture division and science division attend regional conferences specific to their discipline.

Faculty in various divisions participate in Quality Matters (QM) [training sessions and conferences](#), Blackboard training sessions and conferences, and statewide Distance Education conferences. A number of faculty annually attend the Oklahoma Association for Community Colleges (OACC) conference. Several faculty have attended the annual Higher Learning Commission (HLC) conference in Chicago.

With a focus on improving student learning, Eastern hosts two [assessment academy workshops](#) per year that focus on general education, student learning goals and learning outcomes.

Before the start of each fall semester, the Academic Affairs office conducts a [new faculty orientation](#) that includes a review of the faculty handbook, policies and procedures, and available campus resources. New faculty are also oriented within their academic division for discipline specific instruction.

Recognizing that faculty has expertise in a variety of areas and are willing to share their expertise, the Academic Affairs office recently began a "Lunch and Learn" series. These [workshops and seminars](#) are held on campus on a regular basis to provide training on Blackboard, Quality Matters, assessment, e-advising, and fostering student success. All workshops and seminars are documented and records are kept in the Academic Affairs office. Additionally, outside expertise is brought in as needed to provide additional professional development opportunities.

3.C.5 Instructors are available to students in a variety of ways. Each instructor is required to hold 10 hours of [office hours](#) each week. Furthermore, students have access to instructors through e-mail and Blackboard to allow interaction outside of regular office hours. Faculty members serve as advisers to [student clubs and organizations](#) and interact with students by attending athletic events and other student activities on campus.

Full-time faculty members provide academic advising for most students within their discipline. Incoming students are advised by seasoned advisers who are well versed in degree requirements. On-line e-advising is available to students as well. Students also utilize tools such as Remind.com, Skype, and the Blackboard Chat feature to communicate with their instructors.

3.C.6 Eastern understands the importance of having qualified and well-trained support staff to meet

student needs. The college hires qualified staff for financial aid assistance, admissions, tutoring, and veterans services. The [job descriptions](#) of all student support positions clearly detail the duties and responsibilities, minimum qualifications, skills and abilities, and related experience required to fulfill the position. The college ensures all staff members providing student support services are appropriately qualified upon hiring and recognizes the importance of maintaining a well-trained staff.

The [Hiring Manual](#) procedures are followed to ensure qualified candidates are hired. Upon identifying a qualified candidate pool, an interview committee is developed from relevant departments across the institution to identify the best candidate for the position. All position descriptions are located in the Human Resources office.

Institutional resources are budgeted to provide professional development in academic advising, financial aid advising, veterans services, and general customer relations. Each department can request funds in its budget to support professional development. Staff also qualify to receive tuition waivers in order to take courses at Eastern. [In-house training and webinars](#) are provided regularly for student support staff. Those training opportunities are coordinated through the Human Resources office.

Training for financial aid and academic enrollment/advising employees will center on a cross training effort. Another community college in Oklahoma has cross trained employees in these two areas to improve student retention. Eastern will be traveling to that college and examining this practice. With budget concerns, Eastern has not been able to hire more employees in these areas and the administration feels that cross training will allow for increased efficiency. This training will take place during the spring 2017 semester.

Staff in the areas of Veterans Affairs, Student Services, Business office, Financial Aid office, and Student Disabilities Services receive training as needed and as appropriate for their area. A list of some of those [training sessions](#) demonstrates the variety and frequency of professional development training for both faculty and staff.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

Argument

3.D.1 Led by the [strategic plan](#) and [mission statement](#), Eastern provides many [varied student support services](#) to the student population. The Enrollment Management Center provides many services including placement testing, financial aid counseling, enrollment assistance, student disability services, Native American services, and veterans services. The Student Services Office coordinates student housing, medical and behavioral health services through an [agreement with Stigler Health and Wellness](#), and suicide prevention services through a [Choctaw Nation Tomorrow's Hope grant](#). This office also coordinates services and other resources to raise awareness and prevent sexual assault, and dating and domestic violence through the [Choctaw Nation's Project SAFE](#). Some of those services include counseling, speakers, self-defense, and bystander intervention training.

Other departments coordinate additional support services, such as orientation courses, career services, Blackboard Help, and IT services. Support services have expanded to address the diverse needs of the student population. Students on the McAlester and Idabel campuses have access to similar student support services, including TRIO, financial aid counseling, academic advising, tutoring, enrollment assistance, and placement testing. McAlester students will also have access to medical and dental services through a partnership with [Caring Hands](#). Students on the Antlers campus have access to tutoring, enrollment assistance, and at scheduled times, access to financial aid assistance.

During a remodel of the library administration building in 2012, an Enrollment Center welcome desk was added to provide a "one-stop shop" for students. The Student Services representative is able to assist students and direct them to appropriate offices around campus. The addition of this position and area has been a benefit to students.

[Student satisfaction surveys](#) are administered to evaluate student needs.

Tutoring is available through many different areas on campus and online. The federally-funded [TRIO](#) grant assists under-prepared high school students to make the transition to college successfully. Campus tutors, through this program or selected by divisions, can be found in various subjects. Tutor.com, an online 24/7 tutoring service, provides online tutoring for students in a wide variety of subjects. Pathway to Success provides [success coaches](#) for developmental students and has plans to

expand its Mountaineer Achievement Center (MAC) to provide tutoring services for all students.

Faculty and Academic Affairs staff consistently monitor progress of students and aid them in completion of their degree. The [Blackboard retention program](#) alerts professors and administration early if students are struggling academically. Also, [Tutor.com retention feedback](#) is used to help alert students struggling to succeed. Student success is monitored with seven- and eleven- week grade checks. Information about students that are struggling when grades are turned in is shared with athletic coaches, academic coaches, academic advisers, and faculty so supports can be put in place to increase retention.

Throughout the students' course of study, faculty support students by monitoring attendance. Absenteeism is discouraged and faculty have [written policies in their course syllabi](#) that outline course expectations. Students who accumulate several consecutive absences can be [administratively withdrawn](#) from a course. Faculty monitor and record last date of attendance for students that receive a failing/not passing grade.

3.D.2 Eastern is located in one of the poorest regions of the country as evidenced by this region being chosen as one of the first [Promise Zone regions](#). Many students in this area come from high school needing remediation. In fact, several high schools in the region have [more than 50%](#) of students entering college that test in need of remedial courses. Eastern is working to provide appropriate placement for students in order to ensure student persistence and completion.

Eastern made the change from Compass Placement Test to the Accuplacer Placement Test during the fall 2016 semester. During this change, faculty also evaluated and determined some placement methods based on multiple measures. Students testing during the spring 2017 semester will be the first placed using this new methodology. Data are being collected and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of this type of placement. Eastern also provides the [Residual ACT](#) on the Wilburton and McAlester campuses in order to place students into appropriate academic coursework. Students who score high enough are placed in college-level coursework.

Eastern has recently reorganized the curriculum and resources of its developmental math and English classes. Student placement is determined using ACT scores, Accuplacer scores, written departmental exams, high school GPA, and other factors. Pre- and post-testing are now being used in these math and English courses in order to appropriately measure student success. Co-requisite courses are being developed for fall 2017. These co-requisite courses will help accelerate students through the developmental courses and provide opportunities for students to progress to college level courses more quickly.

Students entering Eastern's nursing program have different and more stringent [entry requirements](#) including an interview process. The standards for admission are intended to provide a reasonable assurance of student success in the program. These requirements are outlined on the website and documented in the academic catalog. The Accrediting Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) reviews the admission standards. Eastern's nursing program was recently [re-accredited](#) by ACEN through 2024.

3.D.3 Eastern provides academic advising to students at all four locations. Two full-time academic advisers and several faculty advisers are available for new and current students on the Wilburton campus. Academic advisers are also available at each of our branch locations. Students have access to [e-advising](#) through WebAdvisor. E-advising and other student planning tools allow students unlimited access to their academic advising information.

Eastern developed a [course rotation matrix](#) that provides students, advisers, and faculty a guideline to use when selecting the student's course schedule. The course rotation indicates when courses are offered and which modality will be used to teach the course. The course rotation matrix should assist students in more effective course selection in pursuing their degree.

In addition to the academic advising, these advisers also help with [transfer decisions and career counseling](#). Transfer applications as well as changes of majors are evaluated by advisers. The e-advising tool assists students with academic planning and the OK Career Guide allows them to work through career interests online. In addition, the [TRIO](#) grant program assists students with transfer decisions (including college visits) and career counseling.

Faculty members are required to have 10 face-to-face office hours and to be available to students in an online environment. A schedule is [published](#) each semester and listed in the professor's syllabus.

3.D.4 Eastern provides access to many different resources for effective learning and teaching:

Technological Infrastructure- Computer labs, for student and faculty use, are available at all sites with direct Internet access. Wireless connections are available across each campus and in common and living areas. Printers, ADA-accessible stations, and interactive capabilities (i.e. Skype) are available. Students utilize personal laptops and hand-helds with wireless connections. Promethean Boards have been installed in most instructional classrooms. These interactive boards allow for more versatile and real-life instruction. Instruction can be saved and shared with the students and other instructors. With multiple sites, interactive television (ITV) is also widely used across campuses. Several classes include alternate sites that utilize the PolyCom/ITV units. [Technology](#) is periodically evaluated and updated as needed.

Scientific Laboratories- Science labs are located in Wilburton, McAlester, and Idabel. Lab classes include hands-on activities in chemistry, physiology, botany, biology, anatomy, microbiology, and zoology. Many labs also include interactive whiteboard technologies. Upgrades to two chemistry labs on the Wilburton campus will take place within the next year through funding from a Title III grant.

Museum Collections - The Wilburton campus houses biological specimen collections, specifically insects, plants, mammals, and birds. In addition, there is a collection of Native American art, renderings by local artists, and soil samples. The Eastern Library houses an archive room which preserves the history of Eastern and the surrounding community.

Experiential Learning Labs- The Wilburton campus has several agricultural labs: a meat processing lab, a greenhouse, and a 3,500-acre property that includes forest and pasture lands. The campus grounds on the Wilburton campus serve as a learning lab for the study of local plants and animals. On the McAlester campus, a two-acre pond provides a living lab for science courses. Students taking astronomy on the McAlester campus utilize the McAlester Public School Observatory. Dr. McAllister, from our Idabel campus, is investigating the protozoan and helminth parasites of vertebrates in freshwater fish, amphibians, reptiles, and select small mammals of Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Students on the Idabel campus have the opportunity to explore the area for scientific purposes. These sites are used across several disciplines to promote hands-on learning activities.

Library Media Services- Eastern's [libraries](#) house over 60,000 titles (books, periodicals, videos, etc.) and subscribe to well over 200 academic journals (including print and electronic versions). The electronic catalog can be viewed by individuals at any time. Access is available to an unlimited number of databases through EbscoHost and specific indexes like CINAHL full-text and Infotrak

Opposing Viewpoints. The Media Center also participates in inter-library loans with academic and public libraries to ensure that all academic resource needs are met. The OK-Share program, which allows any university student in Oklahoma to use materials from all Oklahoma libraries, is also utilized. The Media Center includes special collections (i.e. Career Center, Nursing, etc.) and ADA-accessibilities on-site and online.

Performance Facilities- Mitchell Auditorium seats over 450 patrons and is used as a multi-purpose venue. This facility includes a green room, lobby, backstage/makeup room, a costume shop, and a lobby. There is also a newly-renovated smaller theater, the Johnnie Wray Theater, in Pratt Hall. The Johnnie Wray Theater seats approximately 90 people and is used by the theater, music, and other departments on campus. The Eastern Music Department has band, choir and rehearsal rooms available for practice use. These include pianos, a music library, and multiple storage areas. Performances generally take place in the two campus theaters. The McAlester and Idabel locations have large, theater-style conference rooms used for educational and community purposes.

Nursing Instructional Facilities – Eastern’s nursing division has many clinical practicum agreements with area health care facilities where students are subject to many new, on-site training opportunities. Each location that provides nursing instruction houses skills labs that are equipped with lung, infant, heart, IV, airway, and many other simulations for nursing students’ success. Computer labs at each facility also include up-to-date, instructional/tutorial software.

3.D.5 Eastern effectively introduces students to research and information resources with an [Orientation of Library Services](#) class that students typically take during their first semester on campus. The class instructs on the basics of using appropriate research and information. Discipline instructors also give guidance and instruction on the effective use of subject-specific resources for essays, experiments, and projects. English composition instructors help students master these skills with appropriate class assignments. Then, students are given subject-specific research instruction in various ways. Two library media specialists and an evening librarian teach instruction-specific classes in each discipline as well as offer individual tutoring/instructing to students and faculty. Guidance is provided across all modalities and to all locations. Students are assessed on their information and technology literacy skills as part of the general education assessments that are addressed further in Criterion 4. Lastly, [LibGuides](#) have been developed by the library staff to help students in effective use of information resources.

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3.E - Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Argument

3.E.1 Eastern Oklahoma State College provides a rich educational environment by providing students with a vast array of co-curricular [opportunities](#) that support the mission and provide options for students to gain experiences outside of class. These co-curricular opportunities include participation and leadership in departmental activities, honors seminars, an award-winning theatre program, music program, agricultural judging teams, and student-driven clubs and organizations. Every academic division sponsors at least one [student club](#) related to its degree programs. These organizations give students the opportunity to develop leadership skills, gain a better understanding of their chosen field, and apply classroom learning to real-world situations.

The [Eastern Student Government Association](#) (ESGA), the [Agricultural Ambassador](#) program, and [Residence Hall Assistant \(RA\)](#) programs provide extended opportunities for students to develop leadership skills, gain experience, and serve as ambassadors both on and off campus.

Students on Eastern's [agriculture judging teams](#) travel all over the U.S. to compete in livestock, crops, meats judging, and agronomy judging contests.

Students and community members also have the opportunity to explore [aquaponic agriculture](#), an innovative method of growing all-natural produce and fish using a circulating water system. This method uses water from the fish habitat to provide the necessary nutrients for growing a variety of plants including fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers. The fish provide the plants with nutrients, and the plants act as a water filtration system for the fish. Participants in various one-day events engage in classroom discussions and hands-on experience in Eastern's greenhouse.

All students are afforded the opportunity to gain hands-on experience through work with the award-winning [Eastern Statesman](#) newspaper and the Mountaineer Yearbook. Students also have the opportunity to work as interns on [Eastern's radio station](#). In addition, Eastern's mass communication students also produce [The Mountaineer Minute](#), a weekly video segment featuring news, events and student activities at Eastern Oklahoma State College.

Since 2013, the college has hosted a group of Danish students from Silkeborg Business College each year and pairs them with an Eastern "Den-pal" who begins communicating with them before they arrive and serves as their host while they are on campus. In many cases, these relationships continue long after the students have returned to Denmark. In the spring of 2016, the College began offering a course in global humanities that includes a [trip](#) to Denmark and other European countries during the spring semester. These activities and events provide Eastern Oklahoma State College students with the opportunity to understand diversity and obtain a global perspective.

3.E.2 Eastern demonstrates any claim it makes about contributions to our students' educational experiences by providing culturally diverse opportunities to students, demonstrating a commitment to [community engagement](#), and to promoting regional economic and community development.

Eastern is committed to enriching students' lives through programs and activities that broaden their views. Cultural opportunities and lectures are typically related to issues of public concern at the national, state, or local level. Some examples are:

- programs and activities for [Black History Month](#)
- programs and activities for [Women's History Month](#)
- [International Book Club](#)
- [Rothbaum Lectureship Series](#)
- additional lectures and presentations

Eastern Oklahoma State College has a strong commitment to its local community. The College is located within the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and maintains several partnerships with the Tribe. Eastern maintains a Native American Engagement Center on campus, sponsors the Native American Student Association, offers preferential housing assignments to students who belong to the Tribe, and hosts a [success coach](#) provided by the Tribe. The Choctaw Nation has also provided funding for [several projects](#) on campus.

Many activities on campus are open to the local community, such as athletic events, plays, concerts, lectures, etc. The College also sponsors a variety of programs specifically intended to benefit the local community including [canned food drives](#), [toy drives](#), [sports camps](#), [children's theater](#), and an annual [Halloween Carnival](#) for children in the area. Some courses are designed specifically for local residents including aqua aerobics, [deer processing](#), [sausage-making](#), and [aquaponics](#) training sessions. Our greenhouse offers plants for sale to local residents and the Mountaineer Meats program provides fundraising opportunities for groups. The [GEAR UP program](#) provides training and assistance to local area schools to help prepare students to pursue higher education and hosts a series of residential camps for area students each summer. GEAR UP also provides professional development and training opportunities to area public school teachers.

Intercollegiate athletic programs (men's and women's basketball, men's and women's soccer, baseball, and softball) compete at the Division I level in the NJCAA. Teams regularly compete for regional championships and several student-athletes receive academic recognition from the NJCAA each year. Eastern student groups compete with other colleges around the country and have received numerous [team and individual awards](#). With the establishment of a soccer program, the number of [international students](#) on campus has increased significantly.

Eastern fulfills its mission to promote [regional economic and community development](#) in a variety of ways. College personnel are engaged with the community through participation on local, regional, and state level boards and professional organizations. Personnel from Eastern serve on the local school board, local city council, the regional economic development board, state leadership organization board, and the state small business development board. Eastern Oklahoma State College is represented through participation in groups including Wilburton Lions Club, Wilburton Kiwanis Club, McAlester Rotary Club, Wilburton and McAlester Main Street organizations, Wilburton and McAlester Chambers of Commerce, and Pride in McAlester. Many Eastern employees are members of professional organizations, such as Leadership Oklahoma, Association for Institutional Researchers, American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, Southern Regional Colleague Users Group, and various academic organizations.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

Eastern has controls in place to ensure academic courses and programs are at an appropriate academic level and are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations. While the College delivers courses online and has three locations in addition to the main campus, there are assurances of common outcomes through a standardized syllabus and careful faculty selection and training. In many areas of the curriculum, students are assessed with common exams, and data from various courses are compared to ensure consistency of student success. The process of curriculum development includes input from employers and other higher education institutions, as well as subject matter experts. All curriculum changes are initiated by Eastern faculty and vetted by the appropriate curriculum committee.

Eastern has highly qualified faculty and staff, many of whom have served for many years. Eastern recognizes that professional development is important for employee growth and therefore encourages participation in both local and statewide training sessions and seminars. For faculty teaching in the occupational areas, Eastern relies on a totality of circumstance test when determining appropriate qualifications: education, work experience, nationally recognized certification, and course relevant certification by an accrediting agency.

Learning goals and course objectives are clearly articulated in each course syllabus. The importance of a broad general education that makes students aware of cultural and global differences and provides an enriched educational environment is important to the faculty, staff, and administration at Eastern. Faculty are committed to student success and are active participants in curriculum development and the assessment of student learning. Faculty members are accessible to students and encourage student inquiry and the exchange of ideas.

Assessment processes compare learning outcomes across all modes of delivery. All programs have an active assessment plan that is updated regularly. Assessment of general education learning goals are formalized and conducted on a rotating basis. Eastern's participation in the Higher Learning Commission's Assessment Academy has helped develop and formalize the procedures and processes for general education assessment. The faculty understand the importance of assessing student learning and are committed to using assessment data to help "close the loop" for student achievement.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Argument

4.A.1 Eastern is proud of the quality of courses that are taught at the institution. Academic programs are established by the [Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education \(OSRHE\) policy](#). At Eastern, all new courses and all course changes are evaluated by the [Council on Curriculum and Academic Policy \(CCAP\)](#), a committee comprised of faculty representation from each division and the VPAA. All courses, number of classes, books, and programs are reviewed within each division to ensure academic rigor and quality by the division deans. Instructors are required to complete regular course assessments, and close the loop as a part of continuous improvement by using learning outcomes to evaluate student performance, make improvements in learning techniques, and re-assess regularly. More information can be found in Criterion 4B. Course credit, descriptions, and prerequisites are available for student use in the [academic catalog](#). All newly developed, newly designed [online courses](#) are required to meet the best practice standard in course design, and these courses are reviewed in brief at the beginning of each semester. Eastern is a [Quality Matters institution](#) and therefore all online courses are designed using the Quality Matters [national standard](#); [several courses](#) have been certified as QM courses.

Programs are reviewed on a [regular schedule](#) per [OSRHE procedure](#). [Program reviews](#) include the programs objectives and goals to examine the effective use of resources and the vitality of the program. Quantitative measures such as the number of courses in the program, the number of student credit hours generated, the cost, the number of students receiving a degree from the program, and the number of students majoring in the program are used to evaluate program success. These program reviews are analyzed by the division deans and the VPAA and decisions are made based on the information provided.

4.A.2 Eastern is a two-year institution, and as such, part of its mission is to prepare students for [transfer](#) to a university. Eastern works closely with area universities to ensure that students may transfer smoothly and efficiently. Eastern is represented on the [Course Equivalency Project \(CEP\)](#) managed by the OSRHE, and therefore aligns its courses for [transfer with other Oklahoma institutions](#). Prerequisites and rigor of all courses meet the same requirements for equivalent courses across the state and for separately accredited programs within the College.

Eastern also awards up to 30 credit hours via prior learning or experience from [several sources](#). Credits can be earned by a minimum score on the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) subject examinations and minimum scores for successful completion of Advanced Placement (AP) exams.

4.A.3 Eastern uses the same transfer matrix to evaluate credit that is being transferred into the College for those students coming from other Oklahoma colleges and universities. Out-of-state and foreign college and university [transfer credit](#) is evaluated by the registrar or assistant registrar on a [student-by-student basis](#).

Eastern transcripts experiential learning from military training and courses for veteran students using the [Prior Learning Assessment Matrix](#) developed by the OSRHE. The American Council on Education (ACE) provides recommendations about transfer credits. The OSRHE reviewed those recommendations to help set the Prior Learning Matrix. To earn an associate degree from Eastern, a student must have met the residence requirement in one of two ways: (a) completed 30 semester hours at Eastern, or (b) completed the last 15 semester hours at Eastern.

4.A.4 Through Eastern's representation on the [Course Equivalency Project](#) courses are aligned for transfer with other Oklahoma institutions. Prerequisites and rigor of all courses meet the same requirements for equivalent courses across the state and for separately accredited programs within the College. WebAdvisor Program Evaluation allows [students](#) to see all course prerequisites and prevents students from enrolling in a class unless they have met all prerequisites. Both [advisers](#) and students have the ability to evaluate courses within a specific degree.

Course rigor is evaluated by the individual instructors, division deans, and vice president of Academic Affairs, and is in alignment with the requirements of OSRHE policies. Eastern [students that transfer](#) to larger four-year Oklahoma institutions do as well or better than students that started at those institutions. [National certification exam](#) results also reveal that Eastern students perform well.

Faculty and students have access to traditional sources of information and learning resources through the [Eastern library](#), professional tutors, [Student Support Services](#), counselors, up-to-date textbooks and curriculum (which includes significant online adaptive learning programming), academic counseling, peer tutoring, [ProctorU.com](#), and [Tutor.com](#).

The Blackboard Learning Management System has been used by Eastern online and hybrid classes for several years and is available to all faculty for use in campus classes. [Blackboard LMS](#), designed for

education, provides a secure class area in which to post materials such as handouts, class notes, PowerPoints, links, and videos. Blackboard facilitates online activities such as quizzes, discussions, and drop box assignment submissions. Blackboard includes convenient grading tools that can connect to and display grades in the Blackboard online grade book. Students are automatically enrolled in the Blackboard courses based on the official class roster. Most classrooms are equipped with [multimedia technology](#); furthermore, computer labs and wireless Internet are available throughout all Eastern campus locations. Different degree programs have subject-specific lab equipment and software programs for students and faculty to use to enhance instruction and facilitate the learning process. See Criterion 3D for more information.

To create consistency in the academic approach and expectations for student academic achievement, Eastern developed and implemented a [course syllabus template](#) that guides faculty during the planning and development phase of course content. The course syllabus template is sent each academic year from the VPAA's office to all faculty teaching both online and traditional courses. The completed syllabus is then reviewed and approved by the division deans and uploaded to the appropriate Blackboard course shell. The syllabus provides students with information about the course, including number of credits earned, assignments, grading policy, expectations for meeting course and unit learning outcomes, policies on classroom conduct, required course materials, and College policies such as disability access and student support services. In addition, the [Student Handbook](#) describes expectations for students.

Faculty qualifications are described in the [Faculty Handbook](#), which states that all faculty must have an earned master's degree and at least 18 graduate credit hours in the subject that they teach or have equivalent documented work experience. Eastern currently has 46 full-time faculty and 38 adjunct; of these, 70 hold at least a master's degree as described in the [Fact Book](#). Faculty complete their own evaluation and are also evaluated by their division deans. Faculty attend biannual [assessment forums](#) and multiple "[lunch-and-learn](#)" training sessions throughout the year. The faculty have access to a Faculty Resource room on campus in Room 119 Mitchell Hall, which is stocked with technology such as interactive boards and scanners. In order to meet the newly revised Higher Learning Commission's faculty qualification standards, Eastern's administration and faculty are currently working on an evaluation rubric of relevant work experience. This rubric will guide hiring and retention practices after September 2017.

Eastern's online and hybrid courses are approved, designed, and delivered according to [Quality Matters standards](#), a faculty-centered, peer review process that is designed to certify the quality of online courses and online components with both national and international recognition. This document sets forth minimum responsibilities for delivery of online and hybrid classes. Delivery responsibilities include frequency of interaction with students, posting of feedback and grades, using the master course content, and working with lead faculty and technical support persons. Students are prompted to complete the [Getting Started learning module](#) as their first assignment in an online class. Faculty that teach online courses must successfully complete the [Quality Matters training](#) before they can offer an online course. The faculty who have participated in the QM program have expanded the same rubric and standards to their face-to-face courses, thus improving both instructional design and professional development at Eastern.

An [increasing number](#) of students take courses through Eastern while still in high school. This represents around 10% of total enrollment in fall 2011 and 2012. That percentage grew to 17.6% in fall 2015 and has shown continued growth in fall 2016. Concurrent students must meet academic standards set by the Oklahoma Department of Education and the [Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education](#) to be eligible for concurrent enrollment in a higher education institution. They are also required to meet the same prerequisites for admission and for individual courses as all students. At

Eastern, concurrent students are enrolled in regular college courses alongside traditional college students and are taught by the same credentialed faculty, using the same syllabus, textbook, and learning outcomes. Thus, Eastern does not maintain different faculty who only teach dual credit or early college classes. All students, both [concurrent](#) and regular college enrollment, are expected to achieve the same learning objectives across all course sections.

4.A.5 The quality of many of Eastern's courses meets the requirements of several outside accreditation bodies. Eastern's nursing program is fully accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. The nursing program provides annual reports to ACEN and the Oklahoma Board of Nursing. The last on-site [accreditation visit](#) was in spring of 2016. As a result of the visit the Nursing program received an eight year re-accreditation through 2024. Eastern has also been accredited by the Society of American Foresters for its forestry program housed on the Wilburton campus, which requires a self-study report, on-site visit, and a review by the committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation. This committee determines if a degree-program option meets their standards for objectives, curriculum, faculty, students, program, parent-institution support, and physical resources and facilities. Eastern first received this accreditation in 2009. Because of low enrollment, this accreditation will no longer be possible to maintain.

Eastern offered a medical laboratory technician (MLT) degree, housed at the Idabel location. It was accredited by the [National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Science \(NAACLS\)](#), but due to [low enrollment](#) and changing economic trends, this program is no longer offered.

Eastern has faculty with advanced certifications. For example, the meat processing and food safety instructor was recently [certified](#) as a lead HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) instructor by the International HACCP Alliance and instructors in the criminal justice program hold [certifications](#) from the Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training (CLEET).

4.A.6 Eastern evaluates the success of its graduates in several ways. Eastern monitors the regional and state employment environment to determine career trends and works with its [industry partners](#) in order to offer programs that will provide the best employment opportunities for students. In terms of transfer graduates, Eastern uses the [National Student Clearinghouse](#) as a useful tool for tracking transfer students. Eastern's AAS programs each have an [advisory committee](#) that includes members of the industry that would employ those students. [Changes](#) in programming are made as these committees make recommendations.

Several programs directly survey their graduates. For example, the nursing program sends a [graduate survey](#) out to the graduates six months after they leave Eastern. The surveys cover employment, mentoring, and asks the students to rate how well Eastern prepared them in meeting student learning outcomes. About 90% of students respond to the survey. The nursing program also conducts an employer survey that is sent out to the graduate employers to assess how well Eastern prepared the students. The Nursing program conducted a [self-study](#) in the spring of 2016 and, as a result of the re-accreditation visit, were accredited through 2024.

Eastern's Nursing Division reports annual passing rates of their graduates for the NCLEX exam, used nationally for licensure of RNs. In 2016, 97% of Eastern graduates passed the [NCLEX exam](#), which exceeds the state average of 83%. In addition, 96% of 2015 graduates of the nursing program were employed within six months of graduation.

In the [collegiate officer program \(COP\)](#), not all students decide to enter law enforcement after graduation. Some use their degrees and enter other fields or seek other employment inside the criminal justice system. Others still will continue on to a university. As of fall 2016, there are 32

students enrolled in the C.O.P. option. In the last four years, out of the graduates of the C.O.P., 37 students have tested for state certification. Of those 37, 34 have passed the test to be certified law enforcement officers in the state of Oklahoma.

Eastern has [articulation agreements](#) in place with area institutions such as Oklahoma State University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Northeastern State University, and East Central University, to assure students matriculate smoothly into the four-year institutions. The articulation agreements and courses are re-examined by faculty members from all institutions to validate content, determine whether they remain compatible, and remain responsive to industry changes. During the fall 2016 semester, Eastern signed a [Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith](#) to transfer credits from Eastern's criminal justice associate degree to Arkansas's bachelor's degree.

Eastern was recently awarded a Title III grant, [Pathways to Success](#). This grant has allowed for the creation of two new programs that are responsive to the employment needs for this region. The ranch management program will prepare graduates to succeed in one of Oklahoma's primary industries. The second program will be respiratory therapy, partnering with McAlester Regional Health Center and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, again, in response to the region's need for quality graduates. For more information, see Criterion 1.A.2.

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Argument

4.B.1-4 Eastern has established a strong culture of assessment among the faculty and instructional staff members. In the past, Eastern Oklahoma State College had used the [Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency \(CAAP\)](#) test to assess its five general education learning goals. The CAAP was given near the end of the fall and spring semesters; graduating students are encouraged, but not required to test. Because students were not required to complete the test, faculty and administration believe that the results were of little value for improving student learning and an examination of student self-reported level of effort reinforced this belief. As a result, Eastern no longer uses the CAAP test. An assessment team was subsequently created, composed of the vice president for Academic Affairs and one faculty representative from each of the divisions.

Eastern joined the HLC Assessment Academy in June 2012. With a one-year extension, Eastern will complete the Academy in summer 2017. At that time, the faculty and instructional staff began twice-annual [assessment forums](#)-all-day meetings held the week before the semester (fall and spring) begins. The College's five [general education learning goals](#) were developed by the faculty at the fall 2012 forum. Each learning goal was addressed one or two at a time over the next several years during the forums, with faculty/instructional staff committees created to determine, first of all, how best to assess student learning and then how to close the loop on any deficits found. [Faculty assessment forums](#) have taken place since 2012 to focus faculty attention on using assessments. The entire institution has changed as all programs are involved with active, on-going assessment and adaptation in an effort to facilitate an environment of continuous improvement.

Faculty and the VPAA decided to assign [specific courses](#) to each of the five learning goals, which includes courses from most of the academic divisions. In all cases, assessment tools were first piloted for a semester and then refined as necessary. Depending upon the learning goal, student learning is assessed using a [rubric](#) for specific assignments with questions embedded into existing assignments, surveys to directly assess learning information, or new assignments added that specifically capture student performance. In some cases (e.g., written communication), the committee reviews papers submitted from the courses. In others (e.g., oral communication), instructors of those courses provide the results of student assessment back to the committee overseeing that learning goal. Results are then shared at subsequent assessment faculty forums with faculty-wide discussion. This is when assessment tools are evaluated, kept in place, or changed based upon the results and subsequent discussion by the entire faculty.

A new webpage was established on Eastern's website entitled [Assessment Academy Resources](#). This page includes the rubrics, assessment timeline, agendas from the faculty forums, and ongoing results of student assessment. A [regular schedule of assessment](#) has now been created for the assessment of the general education learning goals, with faculty reminded at the beginning of each semester which courses are being assessed in what area. Rubrics and instructions are included on the College's website for faculty. Assessments are underway in each division, with results reported biannually to the faculty and instructional staff.

The first general education goal (Goal 1) that was assessed, "Students will employ effective written and oral communication skills in order to convey clear and organized information to target audiences," has been measured in both writing and oral presentations. The faculty developed and piloted [a writing rubric](#), collecting data on at least 50% of students by selecting 100 essays at random in the spring and 50 essays in the fall. The grading rubrics were applied so that at least two faculty members grade the same student's work to decrease inter-grading errors; an [analysis found](#) that 89% of the graders differed by no more than 3 points, with 75% differing by no more than 2 points; the faculty concluded that this rubric produced reliable results. Based on findings, it was decided that Freshman Composition II would be assessed in the spring of even years and the fall of odd years to meet the goal of 50% of students assessed; students who had to take developmental English might otherwise be missed. Upon including the scores from those students who needed remedial English courses, it was found that these students did not score as well on the assessed essays compared to the rest of the student body (mean score 9.9 points out of 12 for students not requiring developmental English and 9.03 points for those who did, t-test significant 2.13). As a consequence, the developmental instructors increased the amount of writing done in the remedial English courses. Assessment continues each semester in the Freshman Composition and Developmental courses. Modifications to curriculum occur are considered based on the data.

Students have access to online writing tutoring through [Tutor.com](#). In addition to assessing writing ability in the Freshman Composition courses, papers from one course in each Division are assessed using the same rubric in the spring of odd years. In those courses, 76% of students scored as proficient or greater using the same rubric in the spring semester of 2015.

The second portion of Goal 1 is oral communication. A [rubric](#) was piloted, changed, piloted again, and is now in use in Fundamentals of Speech in the spring of odd years and in one course per division in the spring of even years. The instructors serve as the graders in the division courses using the college rubric. Given that all students in these courses are already required to give a presentation, the faculty are consistently using the college rubric every semester, or have the components of that rubric embedded into the rubric they use routinely. In the spring semester 2016, 141 students were [assessed](#) using the rubric. On a [24-point scale](#), the students earned 18.82 points on average, with volume and diction earning the highest points (mean 3.52 out of 4 points) and the lowest in two areas, physicality (mean 2.79) and professional appearance (mean 3.21). As a consequence, the Business Club hosted a [professional dress workshops](#). Eastern does have a collection of professional attire for students to use for presentations or job interviews, and the Business Club did a recent clothing drive to restock that closet. To help students better understand professionalism, a learning module on professionalism has been developed for the freshman success course.

Goal 2 involves critical thinking, "Students will practice analytical and evaluative thinking with a view toward continuous improvement." In the fall 2015 assessment forum, faculty provided examples of assignments already in their courses that required [critical thinking skills](#), which demonstrated a breadth and variety of critical thinking activities. Three members of the assessment team attended a [train the trainer workshop](#) on the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT), and a pilot of the CAT rubric was used in several [spring 2015](#) courses. However, the rubric did not fit all assignments across

the courses evaluated, so a new rubric was developed and piloted in spring 2016. Pilot results were vastly different, ranging from 10 to 32 points depending on the course evaluated. Graders, who were not the faculty members teaching those courses, found the rubric difficult to use for non-written assignments (such as those using formulas), and lacking the subject matter knowledge, difficult to apply. The faculty in the fall 2016 assessment forum made many suggestions to tailor the rubric, and faculty in each division will be piloting the [new rubric](#) in their courses with the faculty (subject matter experts) as the graders of the rubric.

Goal 3 involves information and technology literacy, "Students will legally and ethically retrieve and utilize information competently using critical evaluation and discipline-appropriate technology to meet a variety of professional and personal needs." This goal was broken into two portions, information literacy and technology literacy. The technology literacy portion is evaluated in the Computer Applications course and the Freshmen Orientation course. In fall 2015, the computer information systems faculty did [pre- and post-tests](#), and found that students did not take the survey seriously in the post-test, skewing the results. Students earned 50.7 to 98.6% of the possible points on the post-test, with many of these scores lower than they were on the pre-test. It was decided that linking the survey to assignments at the beginning and at the end of the survey would make the survey more important to students and the results more accurate as to their ability. The survey will also be incorporated into two agriculture courses each fall semester to include students who are not technology majors.

Goal 3 information literacy was initially evaluated with an in-class check sheet, completed by both the students and the faculty member in spring 2014; during the fall 2014 faculty forum, the results were discussed. It was decided that the checklist did not include all that faculty wanted to assess, and that additional components such as digital literacy needed to be included. A new survey was constructed, and this goal is now evaluated in the spring of odd years using a [survey](#) embedded into the courses, one course per division. [Results](#) from spring 2015 showed that of the 69 students evaluated in five courses, 42 students or 61% scored 70 or better. Weaknesses in information literacy were addressed by the addition of [LibGuides](#), developed by the library staff. These LibGuides include how to access material, how to cite resources correctly, and how to properly format papers; it also defines plagiarism and how to avoid it. Links to the LibGuide have been placed into Blackboard for all courses.

Goal 4 involves quantitative and scientific reasoning, "Students will apply appropriate mathematical and scientific concepts and processes in order to interpret data and solve problems based on verifiable evidence," is being assessed by the science faculty of the Science and Math Division. In the fall of 2015, General Chemistry (a physical science) and Environmental Sciences (a course to represent online instruction) [evaluated the five components](#) of this goal. They used assignments and test questions to evaluate student competency. They found that at least 78% of students were competent in the five components, with the weakest areas being the use of mathematics to solve problems and interpreting graphs and tables. As a consequence, the chemistry and environmental science instructors increased in-class problem solving and graph construction and interpretation in their courses. General Biology (a natural science) is assessing the five components over the fall 2016 semester.

Goal 5 culture, global awareness, and social responsibility expects that "students will recognize the beliefs, behaviors, and values of diverse cultures from a global perspective, and students will recognize the value of meaningful civic and scholarly activities." [Initial assessment](#) was done by a survey over a wide range of topics in spring 2016, with 96 students in three courses completing the survey. At least 80% of students declare themselves to be globally and culturally aware and sensitive, although only about 30% have participated in volunteer or community service activities. Discussions included tracking their opinions over the two years they are at Eastern, but concerns about anonymity

would not make that possible. It was determined that this survey would be conducted with graduating sophomores, with the survey linked to their application for graduation; results would be analyzed to determine if any changes need to be made. This survey is currently still in the pilot stage with the intention of putting it in the regular rotation in spring 2018.

In addition to assessment of student achievement of the general education goals, the divisions are also evaluating their own programs. For example, students declaring a life science major (A.S. degree) are being assessed both directly and indirectly (student survey) against a faculty-developed list of learning outcomes. Results from the [program-level assessments](#) are used to make decisions and to determine ways to improve student learning.

The nursing program regularly evaluates its students during their tenure in the program and afterwards, in the form of passing rates for the NCLEX exam, used nationally for licensure of RNs. In 2015, 88.7% of Eastern graduates (average of all three locations) passed the [NCLEX exam](#), which exceeds the state average of 85.70%. In addition, [91% of 2014 graduates](#) of the nursing program were employed within six months of graduation. In the past, the Idabel location had the lowest pass rate, but additional measures instituted by the nursing faculty have resulted in 88.2% of the students [passing in 2015](#). While the McAlester location had the lowest passing rate of 85.71%, this was within the Oklahoma Board of Nursing requirement that each location must be within 10% of the national average.

Eastern has dramatically increased the [number of online courses](#) offered to its students, including five completely online degree programs ([academic catalog](#)). To ensure optimal standards, Eastern adopted the nationally recognized set of standards called Quality Matters (QM). Quality Matters is primarily utilized for online course design reviews. Some online faculty teaching online courses are certified at the Applying the [QM Rubric](#) level. Even if specific faculty are not fully trained on QM standards, the best practice standards from the rubric are included also in the Blackboard training, which is required of all online instructors. The first step in Eastern's process to design quality online courses that could receive top ratings during an online course review was to create an [Eastern Online Course Review form](#) based on best practice standards of the QM Rubric. To ensure quality control for online courses that would continually be delivered, the [course verification check](#) is used at the beginning of each semester by the instructional designer. The online courses are included in the general education learning outcome goals, with several of the courses included in the assessment process as described above.

Incoming students' readiness for college is being assessed by evaluating their ACT scores. Students who do not earn at least a 19 in each area of the ACT are required to attend [developmental courses](#) to prepare them for success in college courses. Student [success rates](#) in developmental programs are monitored to ensure curriculum improvement is made to promote student learning and success. Results of remediation courses show that in fall 2014 at least 69% of students successfully completed Fundamentals of English; that number decreased in fall 2015, so the developmental coordinator for English is working with the faculty to determine the reason for the decline. In the fall 2015 semester, 79% completed Intermediate Algebra, and 79% passed Basic Algebra; both were an increase over prior years.

The mathematics and English departments have appointed a developmental course coordinator that is working with faculty to examine the success rates of students in remedial courses and their subsequent success in gateway courses. This should enhance our efforts to study the effect of different assessments on student success. In addition, the remedial mathematics coordinator has begun enhancing the curriculum using manipulatives and the remedial English coordinator has introduced interventions to increase the writing skills of students in the Developmental English course. Faculty

from both departments are also working with the new [student success](#) coordinator hired through the [Pathways to Success Title III grant](#). Multiple course placement rubrics and models for co-requisite-to-scale courses are being developed.

The majority of the faculty, both full-time and adjunct, and the instructional staff participate in student learning assessment. In addition to attendance at the biannual faculty assessment forums, [surveys of faculty](#) were completed in 2013 and 2014. The surveys asked faculty to indicate how well they agree with the importance of assessment, how clear assessment methods are, if assessment supports the transformation of student learning, if faculty have the skills, time, interest, and other resources to conduct assessment activities. In a single year, there was a significant increase in faculty who agreed with the survey statements as the chart below demonstrates. The assessment committee plans to conduct this survey again at the fall 2017 faculty assessment forum.

Comparison of responses to faculty survey regarding assessment, 2013 to 2014.		
Survey statement	Strongly Agree 2013 (%)	Strongly Agree 2014 (%)
Across our campus, there is a clear understanding of how assessment processes yield evidence of our institution's effectiveness	12%	44%
Our institution has a clear understanding of what assessment is	37%	56%
Senior administrators place a priority on recommendations for change that are supported by assessments results	37%	59%
Assessment is vital to teaching at this institution	49%	67%
Our faculty gather on a regular basis to discuss assessment findings	29%	69%
Assessment supports the transformation of student learning	39%	64%
Our institution has a clear understanding of why assessment is done	34%	64%
Faculty have the knowledge to accurately assess student learning	24%	49%
Faculty have sufficient resources and time to adequately conduct academic assessment activities	12%	33%

Faculty have a clear understanding of how to do assessment	18%	28%
Faculty at our institution are eager to participate in assessment activities	12%	28%

A [recent survey](#) of faculty and staff was conducted in spring 2015, three years after the onset of rigorous efforts to assess student learning. The survey contained direct quotes from Criterion 4B, and faculty/staff were asked to use a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree). The following includes the statements being evaluated and the weighted average out of 87 responses.

- EOSC processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members. Avg 1.63
- EOSC has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals. Avg. 1.66.
- EOSC assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs Avg 1.64
- EOSC uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning Avg 1.77.

These results indicate that the faculty and staff are well aware of Eastern's assessment of student learning and appear to believe the learning goals are clearly stated, the methods of assessment are effective, and the findings are used to improve student learning.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

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

Argument

4.C.1 The newly revised [strategic plan 2017-2022](#) has a goal to increase the percentage of students who progress toward and achieve their academic and career goals. Several key performance indicators are listed in the plan and will have measurable goals associated with student retention and persistence. In the [last strategic plan](#), persistence and retention rates were measured against benchmarks. While the IPEDS retention and persistence data was disappointing because the rates have stayed consistent, other measures do indicate that progress is being made in this area. [IPEDS feedback reports](#) show that overall graduation rates from 2013 to 2015 increased from 18% to 20% which is comparable to other institutions. Eastern's graduation rates exceed the [target](#) set by the OSRHE of 16.6% by 2018. In 2015, the graduation rate as a percentage of total students entering was 39%. Transfer rates have also increased from 20% to 26%. While these increases are only slight, they reflect only the full-time, first-time students that are measured by IPEDS. The institution has set goals to increase these percentages in the [new strategic plan](#).

Another measure that Eastern reviews annually is student success measured against student intent. The [application for admission](#) was changed in fall 2015 to include a question about student intent. Data will be collected in the spring and will be used to determine student success based on each student's intent in attending Eastern.

The OSRHE announced a Complete College America initiative that reflects clear goals for graduation, retention, and persistence. Eastern completes a [Degree Completion and Academic Plan](#) annually that addresses how the goals are being met. Eastern conducted college readiness workshops for students and teachers, particularly through GEARUP, which focus on student readiness. Eastern is working on transforming remediation, building bridges to certificates and degrees, and increasing adult completion. Eastern [exceeded the Complete College America goals](#) for degrees or certificates awarded every year since the benchmark was set in 2010.

Goals have been set to improve success in developmental courses and are reflected in the [current strategic plan](#). Multiple course placement rubrics and models for co-requisite to scale courses are

being developed. Student success rates in developmental programs are monitored to ensure curriculum improvement is made to promote student learning and success. Results of [remediation course data analysis](#) show that in fall 2014 at least 69% of students successfully completed Fundamentals of English. That number decreased in fall 2015, so the developmental coordinator for English is working with the faculty to determine the reason for the decline. In the fall 2015 semester, 79% completed Intermediate Algebra, and 79% passed Basic Algebra. Both were an increase over prior years. More information is provided in 4.B.2.

The College has measures in place to ensure that data are collected on a regular basis, such as the [fact book](#), [program reviews](#), [OSRHE reports](#), and the annual review of the measures in the [strategic plan](#). The Leadership Team meets quarterly and has a retreat in June each year to review this data. Data on student success is also presented at the Academic Leadership Team (ALT) meetings.

Eastern is participating in the nationwide [Community College Completion Initiative](#), called C4, which is helping all community college students understand the benefits of completing a credential and/or degree and the consequences of non-completion. Phi Theta Kappa developed C4 in response to the need for America to double the number of citizens with a post-secondary credential or degree by 2020. See 4.C.3, below, for more information.

4.C.2 [The Advisory Council for Eastern Student Success](#) (ACCESS) committee was formed during the fall 2014 to gather and analyze data related to student retention, persistence, and completion. The committee includes faculty and staff members of Academic Affairs, Financial Aid, and student services. Some progress was made; however, due to reduced staff this committee was not active in the 2015-2016 academic year. Meetings were scheduled in the fall of 2016, however reduction in personnel has made it difficult to meet. Data is being collected and analyzed by the VPAA. Hopefully this will again become a functioning committee.

Most (68%) of Eastern's students are [first-generation college students](#). Eastern has an admirable rate of success in taking students with below-average test scores and turning them into successful college graduates. In addition, students who pass Eastern's college developmental math classes or developmental English/reading classes go on to pass regular college math and English classes at a rate that is comparable with other similar institutions. The rates are respectable particularly when one realizes that the community college system in Oklahoma has a 58% rate of [students who graduate from high school](#) and who are subsequently found to need remediation.

[Retention rates](#) for first-time, full-time students range around 54%, and first-time, part-time students around 32%. [Graduation rates](#) have fallen over the past several years based on IPEDS data. However, this does not take into account the number of students who take courses at a community college not to complete an associate's degree but rather to acquire specific skills (e.g., computer competency), to improve their success at their job, or simply to improve themselves through education. These students might take only a few courses for one or two semesters, and would thus inaccurately skew the retention/graduation data. A new [admission form](#) was created during the fall 2015 semester that will include questions to gather information about students educational intent. This will provide more accurate data to better analyze our persistence, graduation, and completion rates. As of fall 2015, 19.6% were either [concurrent or non-degree seeking](#) students.

Having determined that it is vital for successful academic programs to receive useful feedback from the students, Eastern adopted [EvaluationKIT](#), a simple yet robust course evaluation system that plugs directly into Eastern's Learning Management System (LMS) *Blackboard Learn 9.1*. *EvaluationKIT* has turn-key solutions that made the course evaluation project setup very easy, and allowed seamless access for students and instructors. In addition to the Likert-type item feedback provided through

EvaluationKIT, qualitative, or write-in text comments are automatically analyzed via *EvaluationKIT Text Analytics* to provide summary reporting to faculty and administration. *EvaluationKIT*'s built-in reporting features allow Eastern faculty and administrators to view results in reports, bar charts, and even download the raw data files.

The feedback is collected at the institutional level, the division level, and by individual faculty. The results are tabulated and reviewed by the appropriate personnel and synopsis of the review is incorporated into [program assessment reports](#) as evidence to facilitate curriculum and program revisions.

4.C.3 Improving retention, persistence, and completion rates have been a weak area for Eastern in the past, and are an on-going challenge. Eastern would like to participate in the HLC Persistence and Completion Academy to increase student success. However, enrollment is contingent on budget availability. Budget struggles continue to limit staff and resources that can be allocated to analysis of retention, persistence, and completion data. At the same time, multiple new strategies have been instituted to address student success and more are planned in the coming years.

All students at Eastern are required to complete a course entitled [Orientation and Library Science](#), preferably in their first semester. This assists with student persistence. This course has been modified extensively and is now uniformly delivered in all divisions and online. Course content includes how to use Eastern's email system, learning management system (Blackboard), WebAdvisor to manage classes, five-year goals, career options, and financial management.

For the nursing program, retention and persistence policies begin with student acceptance into a program. The program accepts a limited number of students who must meet [established criteria](#) before they are accepted into the nursing program. Students who are accepted are motivated to succeed as evidenced by increased pass rates. Because of changes made by the nursing division in 2012 to increase admission standards, which would be reflected in the 2015 [data collected](#), retention rates in the program have increased from 54.7% in 2013 to 70.3% in 2015.

Eastern faculty piloted the [Blackboard Early Alert](#) system to improve student retention within their courses, and now several online faculty are using it every semester. This system alerts the instructors when students are not logging into the course, not completing assignments, or those whose grade has dropped below a set value. In addition to contacting the identified students, instructors can also refer them to the enrollment counselors for further assistance. When the program was piloted in spring 2015, there was an increase of 7 to 21% in student retention in those courses as evidenced in the [Complete College Plan](#). Faculty were subsequently trained in its use.

Eastern has several programs in place to assist students academically. The Choctaw Nation has established their own [success coach](#) to assist with Native American student retention. [TRiO](#) assists first-generation, low-income students in meeting their academic goals. Finally, a new Title III grant entitled [Pathway to Success](#) was obtained to assist the remainder of the student body. In order to identify and intervene early in the semester, both 7-week and 11-week grades are collected and reported by the faculty.

- The Choctaw Nation has an established College and Career Resources program to empower students to make informed decisions and develop academic and life skills in their professional and educational plans. This program includes the placement of success coaches on several southeast Oklahoma college campuses, including at Eastern. The success coach started off the fall 2016 semester with [Camp Chahta](#), a program that provided orientation for first-time students in advance of the rest of the campus.

- [TRiO](#) is a program funded by the U.S. Department of Education, and is one of the more than 800 similar programs nationwide whose purpose is to assist undergraduate students toward graduation from college. It is targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline. Services include group and individual tutoring, academic advising and counseling, financial aid, financial literacy workshops, transfer assistance with tours to area universities, and cultural trips and events.
- The new Title III grant [Pathways to Success](#) is providing additional resources for students including success coaches and the Mountaineer Academic Center, to offer tutoring and study sessions. These success coaches intervene when students are having difficulty with the remedial courses in English, reading, and math. This grant also provided the means to start new AAS programs to increase student employment after graduation by meeting regional need and trends; addition of respiratory therapy (McAlester campus) in fall 2018 and ranch management-stocker operations (Wilburton) programs (AAS) that started in fall 2016.

Eastern adopted [EvaluationKIT](#), a course evaluation system that works with Eastern's Learning Management System Blackboard Learn 9.1. Both face-to-face and online courses can then be evaluated anonymously by students. [Student evaluations](#) are used by the instructors and by division deans to make course improvements.

[Tutor.com](#) was adopted by Eastern as a free source of online tutoring for student use. Students are able to access Tutor.com directly from Blackboard, and can reach tutors 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by phone or by chat, and can get help in a great number of subjects. [Usage data](#) verifies that students are utilizing this tool. From August 2015 to August 2016, peak usage occurred in October 2015, February 2016, and April 2016. During October 2015, students used 169 sessions and close to 72 hours were spent on Tutor.com.

A five-year [Native American-Serving Non-Tribal Institution](#) grant provided many positive impacts toward helping students to succeed. As a result of the resources provided by these monies, Eastern is now able to offer five degrees completely online. This increases the availability of options for students (average age 27.8 years) to complete a college degree despite family and work obligations. Eastern now offers courses online, and the number of students [enrolled in online courses](#) has increased from 280 in 2008 to 529 in 2014. A Native American Engagement Center was developed as a consequence of this grant to address the unique needs of Eastern's [Native American students](#). The Engagement Center coordinator developed a system to connect students with Choctaw Nation resources, including vocational rehabilitation services and community outreach programs. Roughly 27% of Eastern students identify as Native American, and 81% of those students enrolled in the online courses earned a C or better in those courses ([NASNTI Summary](#)).

C4 is a nationwide [community college completion initiative](#) helping all community college students understand the benefits of completing a credential and/or degree and the consequences of non-completion. Phi Theta Kappa developed C4 in response to the need for America to double the number of citizens with a post-secondary credential or degree by 2020. Eastern conducted several on-campus events during October 2015, with [multiple faculty and staff](#) assisting in the program and pledging to assist students in their degree completion. A total of [91 students](#) participated in this week-long event. The event was repeated in fall 2016.

4.C.4 In 2013, Eastern hired an associate vice president for Academic Affairs (AVPAA) in an effort to provide improved data acquisition and analysis. Prior to assuming the role, the AVPAA enrolled in the [Data and Decisions Academy](#) from the Association for Institutional Research and completed training in three key areas: Foundations of Data Management, Foundational Statistics for Decision

Support, and Longitudinal Tracking for Institutional Research.

The AVPAA was responsible for collecting data from a variety of established and recognized sources and developing a process for the dissemination of data. Eastern uses Ellucian (Colleague) for the student information system. In order to prepare, the AVPAA participated in numerous [training webinars](#) through Ellucian. The AVPAA was able to query the student information system for data in order to fulfill ad hoc data requests.

In 2015, the AVPAA was hired as the vice president for Academic Affairs (VPAA). Due to continuing state-wide budget cuts, the AVPAA position was absorbed by the VPAA. In an effort to continue with the progress that had been made in the area of data collection and dissemination, the VPAA continues to fill the role of institutional research for the institution. Eastern realizes that this limits the College's effectiveness in collecting and analyzing retention, persistence, and completion data.

Other offices, such as the Business office, the Human Resources office, the Financial Aid office, and the Registrar's office, have also been [trained](#) on the use of Ellucian/Colleague and can pull data directly from the system and run reports. However, due to budget cuts and employee turnover, Eastern's ability to collect and analyze the data has been limited. There are discussions to establish oversight committees in Institutional Research and cross-training opportunities of appropriate staff. The institution is also planning to implement a [dashboard](#) to allow a wider range of constituents to access data that will enable informed decisions.

Eastern uses sound methodology to ensure the measures of student retention, persistence, and success are commonly defined and can be easily compared to data from other institutions. Core methodologies and definitions are derived from the IPEDS and used to report graduation, transfer, retention, and persistence rates. Student risk and success is defined in accordance with prevailing literature and common practice.

Each semester, Eastern submits data to the OSRHE via their Unitized Data System (UDS). Once data is submitted to the state, OSRHE staff review the results and then submit summary-type data to IPEDS. The OSRHE publish data for all institutions on the [Oklahoma Education Information System \(OEIS\) website](#). This site allows Eastern to obtain data and reports on enrollment, retention, remediation, graduation, etc. and compare itself to other institutions in Oklahoma.

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

Eastern demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs. In addition to annual assessment plans and reports, the College undertakes regular in-depth program reviews according to a rotating schedule to ensure that programs are current and useful to students. Applied programs have advisory committees that meet annually to review the program and curriculum. The College has continued to refine the assessment process and has strengthened its programs through the use of assessment data. Faculty began meeting twice a year to review assessment data when Eastern joined the HLC Assessment Academy and the faculty continue to be committed to evaluating student learning and using the data to make improvements or modifications as needed.

The institution maintains and exercises authority over the faculty qualifications for all its programs. Faculty candidates go through multiple levels of review, culminating with review by the academic leaders who determine what the faculty member is eligible to teach based on their academic and experiential qualifications. Full-time faculty teach the majority of courses at Eastern, therefore maintaining academic rigor and consistency is easier.

The College takes great care to demonstrate commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree programs. Eastern continues to investigate and implement strategies to improve retention and completion rates. Faculty evaluate the success of graduates to ensure that the curriculum prepares students for employment or to transfer to a four-year institution.

The registrar evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for prior learning. Eastern has policies in place that are guided by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education regarding transfer credits and prior learning assessments.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Argument

5.A.1 Eastern Oklahoma State College is dedicated to maintaining and strengthening the quality of its educational programs and building institutional capacity in order to support effective student learning. Eastern maintains [highly qualified faculty and staff](#), provides physical resources as needed, and continues to build a [technological infrastructure](#) to support its operations. The [Leadership Council](#) strives to be fiscally responsible and carefully considers the [budget decisions](#) and allocations it makes in order to ensure that the long and short term effects of its decisions are balanced and strategic. Faculty and staff are involved in the budgeting process. The [budget process and timetable document](#) is in place to ensure allocation of resources is fair, equitable, and meets the college's mission.

The overall fiscal picture of Eastern Oklahoma State College is summarized in the [Annual Financial Audit](#), which indicates that the college continues to maintain a fundamentally sound financial base. Other than [financial aid](#), the institution has four main [sources of revenue](#): state aid, tuition and fees, auxiliary enterprises, and state and federal grants.

The flat or [declining level of state aid](#), coupled with a trend of lower enrollment, has shifted a higher financial burden onto the students with [tuition and fee increases](#). Eastern has been reluctant to increase tuition and fees; however, given the inflationary nature of [mandatory expenses](#) and a decline in State support, additional revenue is needed. From FY09 to FY17, tuition and fee revenues have increased each year, resulting in students funding a greater percentage of the total operating budget, from 12.5% to 16.9%. In FY09, the cost per credit hour at Eastern was \$94.50 compared to FY17 where the cost per credit hour was \$140.78. State aid has stagnated and its relative share of revenue to Eastern has declined.

In the last 10 years, the college experienced a [decline in full-time enrollment and head count](#) numbers. Eastern is working with local school counselors and the community to increase enrollment of [concurrent](#), traditional, and nontraditional students. Recently, Eastern received a \$2.25M Title III grant to start two new academic programs: respiratory therapy (RT) and ranch management-stocker operations. Local healthcare officials and ranchers and farmers communicated the need for these two programs. Eastern has also launched five fully-[online degree programs](#). Eastern hopes to see steady enrollment growth as a result of these new program initiatives.

State appropriations are determined annually by the Legislature and Governor during the legislative session which typically concludes in late May. A challenge that Eastern faces is the uncertainty of State appropriation funds. The [allocation of state appropriated funds](#) has declined from \$7,129,512 in 2008-2009 to \$5,308,722 in 2016-2017. As a source of revenue, the [state appropriated general funds](#) have decreased from 25% in 2012 to 19% in 2017. While at the same time, resident tuition has increased from 9.7% of revenue sources to 13.2%. With a resident tuition and fee rate of \$140.78 per credit hour, Eastern is [ranked third](#) among 14 community colleges in Oklahoma for tuition and fees, while Eastern is currently funded below six peer institutions.

To deal with declining state appropriations and lower enrollment, Eastern implemented a new budgeting approach. Prior to FY16, Eastern used a [cooperative budget approach](#) with all divisions and departments at the college. This approach allowed for departments in the college to submit changes or variances in their budgets and request the same amount of dollars each year. However, after budget cuts were necessary, the administration responded by implementing a [zero-based budgeting approach](#). This type of budgeting starts with zero dollars and requires departments to determine the items needed to meet their needs. Departments also justify and/or explain the budget amount requested.

Some [academic divisions and departments](#) have seen a 20-30% reduction in their annual budgets while others have seen increases. The average reduction for the academic divisions from 2009 to 2016 was 17%. Other functional areas across the institutions have seen similar reductions in their annual budget requests. The faculty and staff continue to strive to maintain high quality educational programming and academic services that do not adversely impact student learning. Instruction and academic support services are Eastern's fiscal priority. For the current fiscal year, 48% of the institution's total budget is allocated to educational programs (instruction, academic support).

The fourth component of revenue at Eastern comes from its [auxiliary enterprises](#), which operate under the Auxiliary fund (700 fund). The revenue from these enterprises helps to offset expenses and shortfalls in the Education and General Fund (E&G 290 fund). These enterprises include the Eastern Farm, Mountaineer Radio 93.1 FM, Print and Design Shop, student housing, and Mountaineer Meats.

The Eastern FY17 institutional budget is approximately \$10.8 million dollars, an 8% [decrease from the preceding year](#). The budget, with supplemental funding through grants and donations, has allowed for maintaining and strengthening many of the goals in the [strategic plan](#).

The last major component of revenue is grants. State and Federal grant funding (430 Fund) has increased from \$2,210,977 in FY12 to \$5,361,238 in FY17. Eastern receives additional revenue through indirect costs from some grants. Grant funding has allowed for some [capital improvements](#). The increase in the amount and number of grants Eastern has received has allowed for the growth in academic programs, student support services, and technology support.

Additional support for the institution is provided through the Office of Institutional Advancement (IA). This office is responsible for grants, capital campaigns, and the Alumni Association. Monies

raised through IA are then deposited in accounts in the Eastern Foundation. The [Eastern Foundation](#) is a separate, non-profit entity that communicates regularly with the Office of Institutional Advancement. The Foundation's [primary purpose](#) is to raise and manage private resources supporting the mission and priorities of Eastern. The Foundation assists the college in securing outside funding for teaching and learning needs. In return, Eastern provides office space, computers, supplies, and other necessary items.

The Eastern Foundation [holdings](#) exceeded \$4.1 million as of June 30, 2016. Permanently restricted endowments are protected through savings accounts, CDs, and other investments. [Operational funds](#) are maintained in checking accounts and the remaining funds are invested with Communities Foundation of Oklahoma and the Bank of Oklahoma. These investment accounts have been recently optimized from corpus-building portfolios to scholarship-generating portfolios, so that the number of scholarships awarded can be increased to support the students at Eastern.

In recent years, \$167,000-\$200,000 has been awarded in [Foundation scholarships](#) each fall and spring semester representing approximately 150 scholarships. The goal is to grow both the number of scholarships awarded and the dollar amount of the awards. In fall 2016, over \$133,000 representing 158 awards was given.

Development and capital campaign work, in addition to grant writing, provide significant funding for building and capital improvement projects. Some initiatives include departmental projects, faculty/staff development, and student scholarships. While the Office of Institutional Advancement is charged with providing leadership for the generation of revenue in these areas, individuals and departments throughout the College write grants, solicit funding, and build support relationships with potential donors. In April 2016, Eastern Oklahoma State College announced a [\\$1 million gift](#) from Pete Tourtellotte and his family in honor of their father, former president E.E. Tourtellotte. The gift will create the largest endowed scholarship in Eastern's history and fund the college's first endowed faculty chair.

In FY17, the institution assumed the responsibility of submitting all Human Resource reports to the state and federal government after a separation from the state. The college assumed a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) and ensured Eastern was in compliance with all requirements of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). A number of [additional duties](#) have been assumed by personnel in the Human Resource office. The HR staff received sporadic [support from state](#) officials during the implementation phase and had to rely on webinars for training.

Eastern [employed](#) 253 people in fall 2016, including 180 full-time and 21 part-time employees. Of the teaching staff, 44 are full time. The college employs 52 adjunct (part-time) instructors. Staff turnover in some positions during the semester are reflected in this number. It is clear that Eastern has experienced a reduction in the number of people employed over the last five years. Total jobs lost by each community college were reported to the Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges in order to show the cumulative effect of the budget reductions on state colleges. At that time, Eastern showed a [reduction](#) of 12 employees in 2016. The decline in state allocations and lower enrollment numbers have forced the administration to [cut some positions and to not refill others](#). While necessary, this reduction in staff is an area of concern. The administration is aware that the work across the institution has increased while the number of staff has decreased. Eastern has highly qualified and dedicated faculty and staff. A discussion in regards to faculty and staff training and education/professional development is in Criterion 5.A.4.

The college's physical plant is managed by a director of facilities and a facilities management staff that includes skilled technicians and craftsmen, grounds keepers, and custodians. The facilities

director reports to the president and collaborates closely with the administration and Board of Regents in annual and long-range planning. The college's Board of Regents has approved a [strategic plan](#) using a planning process and has endorsed a goal to develop guidelines and an implementation plan for creating engaging, state-of-the-art learning spaces with any future construction or remodeling.

In 2014, a committee was established to design a long-term plan for the growth and evolution of the main campus of the institution. This planning took place to determine the potential for raising funds through a capital campaign. A consultant met with the committee to prioritize the replacement or renovation of buildings and other aspects of the infrastructure. The final resulting [feasibility plan](#) provides a very useful road map to future leadership as the institution changes with time. The committee planning work done during the capital campaign helped to provide some [campus priorities](#) for the institution.

Twelve state institutions receive [Section 13 Offset funds](#) (295 fund) as a line item allocation from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. These funds are used to further maintain and upgrade existing facilities. Eastern receives an average of around \$400,000 annually in Section 13 Offset funds. However, the Section 13 Offset allocation has declined 18.9% in the last four years. The average amount of Section 13 monies spent on debt services is \$380,000 with the remaining being split between land and building improvements, equipment, and maintenance and repairs. The College strives to maintain a minimum carry-over of \$100,000 each fiscal year in order to meet any unexpected maintenance or capital improvement needs.

[Master lease monies](#) have been used to provide renovations to several buildings including the Student Center, Baker Hall, Gunning Hall, Pratt Hall, the first floor of the Library Administration building. These bonds have also provided funds to build our newest student housing, Regents Court. As a result of these facility improvements, Eastern will be able to expand its services and provide additional space for faculty and support services.

The chief technical officer (CTO) at Eastern reviews the [technology](#) needs of all campus sites on an annual basis. Eastern incorporates technology in all areas from instruction to facilities maintenance. Information technology (IT) is one of the core values identified for student success. Eastern provides students with access to open computer labs, online courses, and ITV courses. Advancements in technology are embraced by the institution. Funds are budgeted for the implementation of new technology. The IT department at the institution is well-equipped to take leadership in applying new technologies.

Eastern campuses are linked by a large number of [ITV-equipped classrooms](#) and meeting rooms; almost all group and departmental meetings are shared by ITV between the campuses. There are a large number of [online classes](#), and more are being added each year. Eastern has seen an increase in the number of sections of ITV and online classes versus traditional (live instructor) classes in the last five years.

Information technology has also planned for and implemented other emerging technologies, including electronic [financial aid disbursement](#), [online scholarship application](#), and a [student ID](#) system on all campuses. Faculty and administration stay abreast of emerging instructional technology through the use of websites and email listservs. They also attend [statewide meetings](#) and conferences regarding topics such as Quality Matters, developmental math and English, and online course development.

Student computer labs, ITV classroom hardware, smart classroom presentation computers, and many employee computers have been [updated](#). Additional wireless access throughout the campus was deployed. Furthermore, IT has provided leadership with organizing and leading administrative system

training for employees and has planned several major projects, including campus fiber upgrade, network upgrades, and data center upgrades. The department's key unit processes include:

- train faculty to use the new Blackboard Learn
- support faculty in the design and development of online courses
- support faculty and students with technical issues related to instructional technology
- schedule online courses/sections to be offered each semester
- update server/software to provide stakeholders with state-of-the-art technology

Eastern is aware of the importance of adapting to technological advances and changes in student preferences for how their education is delivered. The college has upgraded its technology infrastructure to facilitate improved learning and working environments. Eastern is fortunate to have received several [technology grants](#) to upgrade equipment on the four main campuses and six local high school interactive television (ITV) sites. The major [technology upgrades](#) and improvements completed during 2013-2016 include:

- Promethian SmartBoards (43)
- Interactive television studios (30)
- Mobile ITV carts installed in area high schools (4)
- Network trunks upgraded to 10GB between buildings on the Wilburton campus
- Access points for wireless network (167)
- Public address (PA) systems in gymnasium and baseball field

The fundamental information system in use at Eastern is Ellucian's Colleague Enterprise Resource Planning for the transactional functions of student services, financial aid, and finance and human resources. To better track and manage scholarships, Eastern recently purchased [Award Spring](#) software which will assist both the college and students. Award Spring is a program that will house all of the scholarships awarded by Eastern. This software is designed to be accessed by students, faculty, and staff. Students will be able to apply for all scholarships they might be eligible for with one application. The program is managed by the Office of Institutional Advancement. Financial Aid, the Office of Institutional Advancement, and the Marketing department work together to ensure all students know how to access the software and how to use the program. In addition, this program will provide the Leadership Council information as to which students on campus are truly in financial need.

The institution uses [Blackboard Learn](#) for its online instructional learning platform for all students. The associated hardware and software platforms are supported and hosted by the institution and administrated by Computer Services. All students access and use Blackboard Learn in some capacity. This has enhanced learning opportunities, whether enrolled in online, hybrid, or face-to-face classes. All class, student, and faculty data are tightly integrated with our ERP system (Ellucian Colleague) and automatically update changes to keep both systems synchronized. Another IT initiative at Eastern is a [business objects](#) module from Colleague. This platform provides internal stakeholders the ability to develop specific reports. The initial set of reports will support deeper, ongoing analysis of recruitment and retention strategies, academic program effectiveness, and student services.

The institution has a [four-year computer replacement plan](#) and a plan for replacing mission critical hardware. Compliance, regulatory and security issues are requiring more human and financial resources and will continually compete for a higher percentage of the technology budget.

Eastern launched a redesigned website in December 2012. It is updated on an ongoing basis. The

redesigned website contains a more user-friendly interface, more in-depth information about academic programs, a robust event/deadline calendar, and links to the most popular items on every page to help students find what they are looking for. More information on the website can be found in Criterion 2.

Additionally, Eastern used a Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions Grant ([NASNTI](#)) to build a technology backbone to increase our online capabilities, develop five new online programs, and provide resources to assist the College in developing online Student Services to assist students. The online programs allowed Eastern to build capacity, improve the students' learning experiences, and increase opportunities for learning in alternative formats. These online programs have been [approved](#) by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE), the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), and the United States Department of Education (DOE).

5.A.2 Eastern's resource allocation process places an emphasis on instruction and academic support. As the [IPEDS Institutional Profile](#) illustrates, Eastern spent 43% of its core expenses on instruction in 2014. The OSRHE budget analysis provides a look at Eastern in comparison to other institutions in the state. For example, [Eastern allocates](#) 19.8% of the budget to academic support and 36.1% on instruction as compared to the [average of all institutions](#) of 12% and 43.7% respectively. A description of [instruction](#) and [academic support](#) can be found in the OSRHE Budget Summary and Analysis. Despite budget reductions, that trend has continued. Transparency in resource allocation and budgeting are something Eastern is working diligently to achieve. In the fall of 2015, faculty and staff were given a [survey](#) and budgeting was an area of concern for some. The Leadership Team has made some difficult decisions in the past few years, but continues to strive to make decisions with student programs and services in mind.

The budgeting process at Eastern is on a [timeline](#) and requires participation from each department. In the process of developing the annual operating budget, departments develop detailed budget requests utilizing the zero-based budgeting process described previously. Faculty and department heads submit budget request worksheets to their functional area vice president (VP) for review and discussion. The VPs review the budgets based on departmental goals, the strategic plan and the college's mission. Reviewed plans are submitted to the VPBA in late March. Compiled budget proposals are presented to the Leadership Council for group review and discussion. Near the end of May, state appropriations are finalized and mandatory tuition and fee changes are discussed and decided upon based on budget need. At this point, the VPBA prepares the final budget for submission to the Eastern Board of Regents for approval. Typically, during the first week of June, the Board votes and approves the next fiscal year budget. As of July 1 of any given year, departments are provided the first half of their budget allotment into Eastern's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. Then they are provided the second half in two parts, in January and March. This budget allocation process assists departments in managing allocations and allows the VPBA to review budget needs and make revisions if necessary.

5.A.3 The mission of Eastern Oklahoma State College is supported by the [strategic plan](#). The key performance indicators from the strategic plan closely align with the mission of the college and are used to inform the budgeting process. The process of resource allocation as outlined above ensures that funds are directed to goals incorporated into the mission and vision statement. The mission statement of the college is realistic and speaks to student access, student success, and utilizing resources and partnerships. Eastern has the resources to support and sustain the goals outlined in the mission and strategic plan.

Numerous opportunities have been created from state and federal [grants](#) received by the institution. New programs such as the ranch management-stocker operations and the respiratory therapy programs are being created as a result of a Title III grant. The development of five fully-online degree

programs that are a result of a Title III NASNTI grant has allowed the opportunity for students to gain greater access to institutional courses and programs.

Eastern will continue to look at additional grant opportunities and expand its partnerships in order to achieve its mission. More information about Eastern's mission can be found in Criterion 1.

5.A.4 Eastern staff must meet the minimum qualifications as set forth in the [job descriptions](#) for each position. The Human Resource Office verifies staff qualifications. A [hiring manual](#) outlines the procedures that are followed to ensure a highly qualified workforce.

Staff in the Registrar's office and the Enrollment Management office meet the qualifications for their positions. These staff attend [training and professional development](#) opportunities as needed to ensure they maintain the necessary skills in their respective areas.

Full-time advisers hold graduate degrees. The vice president of Academic Affairs (VPAA) supervises two full-time [advisers](#) at the Wilburton site and an adviser/campus administrator at each of the three locations. These advisers assist first-time students and [concurrent students](#) in the enrollment process. The focus is to ensure that all general education requirements are met by each student enrolled at Eastern. After a student declares a major, he or she is then assigned a faculty adviser to assist him or her in completion of his or her designated degree program. Students work with both their faculty adviser and the full-time advisers. This collaboration helps to ensure the students complete their degree in a timely manner.

[Faculty](#) teaching transfer courses must hold an approved graduate degree from an institution which has been accredited by an agency approved by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Faculty must hold a master's degree with at least 18 semester hours in their respective academic discipline. The college expects all employees to model and help advance the institution's vision and mission, which are listed on the website and included in each employee's performance review.

The college has an [employee evaluation](#) process for all non-faculty that emphasizes professional/personal development to continuously improve job performance and the integration of the mission and vision into daily work. In addition, the college has implemented a [faculty performance appraisal](#) process that evaluates the faculty on the basis of teaching, professional development, and service to the college, profession and community.

In FY17, Eastern developed an agreement with [Campus Answers](#) (www.campusanswers.com). Campus Answers is an online program that covers all required and mandatory training needed by staff. This agreement will ensure staff maintain requirements for all mandatory training that the college is required to provide. The topics covered are campus safety, harassment and discrimination, violence prevention, legal issues in management, diversity, data privacy and ethics. In addition to the required training, [mandatory training](#) is provided throughout the year to specific staff to assist in meeting all of their continued learning objectives. Some staff attend training off campus, through webinars, or self-study. All staff are encouraged to enroll in Eastern's courses tuition free to either further their knowledge base with their position or for personal development.

The [Staff Handbook](#) was recently updated to provide specific information and clear guidelines to staff across campus. The previous handbook had not been updated in 10 years, although addendums and updated policies were added over the years. In order to provide a more precise document, the Staff Council, working with the Human Resources director, began the update in 2016.

Leadership Council has chosen to employ a large portion of faculty as full-time instructors, knowing

that Eastern cannot achieve its vision without them. In southeast Oklahoma, it is very difficult to recruit and maintain highly qualified adjunct faculty. Recruiting adjunct faculty with a master's degree with 18 graduate hours in a specialized field proves to be a significant barrier. As a result, Eastern's full-time faculty carry an [average load](#) of 19 credit hours each fall and spring semester. With flat or declining budgets in recent years, Eastern has not been able to raise the pay for full-time, adjunct, and overload instruction. [Adjunct and overload pay](#) is currently at \$400 per credit hour and has not changed for over 12 years.

5.A.5 Budgeting is an ongoing process at Eastern. Monitoring budgets occurs on a daily basis within the process. [Purchasing](#) and [credit card](#) procedures require every item purchased to be approved by at least two administrators who oversee the budget to which the item is charged, and subsequently is reviewed by Business Office personnel. See the [budget timeline](#).

Eastern participates in three formal audits on an annual basis: [external audit](#), [internal audit](#), and a [claim audit](#) by the State of Oklahoma. Both the external and internal audits are performed by an outside CPA firm in good standing. The external audit is required by law and is conducted for an entire fiscal year. The external audit is formally provided to the Audit Committee (subset of the Board of Regents), the Board of Regents, and all other interested parties upon request. The external audit contains all the required financial statements and provides a picture of how the College is performing financially for any given year. The internal audit, also required by law, provides the Business office useful information. That information includes how well policies, procedures, and internal controls are working at the College. The comptroller also conducts periodic reviews during the year to discuss revenues and expenditures and address questions. The VPBA conducts an institutional overview of [cash flow](#) and presents it to the Board of Regents at every board meeting. This report monitors overall revenues with a focus on cash flow and maintenance of the [reserve fund](#) measured against projections.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Argument

Eastern Oklahoma State College's governance and administrative structure mirrors that of similar two-year public institutions and follows the guidelines established by the Oklahoma State Legislature and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. As such, the institution is able to fulfill its mission to its constituents by providing oversight for its budgeting and planning responsibilities, setting academic and assessment standards, and planning for the future.

5.B.1. The Eastern Board of Regents is charged with ensuring the institution follows ethical and legal policies as defined by the Oklahoma State Legislature, the [Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education](#), and Eastern Oklahoma State College [Institutional Policies and Procedures](#). The [seven board members](#) are appointed by the governor for seven-year staggered terms. The regents are residents of the college's primary service area. The Eastern Board of Regents set broad policy, adopt the budget, and select the president, who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the institution. This board operates within the parameters of state statute and [policies of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education](#) (OSRHE), which is the state's coordinating board for all public colleges and universities. The institution has in place clear guidelines regarding the board's responsibility to the institution.

[Regular meetings](#) provide the board with opportunities to review and provide input into the budget, receive updates in academic areas, approve changes to the [organizational chart](#), and take note of updates regarding other institutional areas. Reports are given on various aspects of the institution, including personnel. The Board of Regents does not participate in day-to-day operations. Instead, much of the day-to-day decision making falls within the purview of the president of the college. This assignment of power ensures the smooth operation of the college. According to [Board of Regents rules and regulations](#), the board delegates powers to the administrative branch of the college to ensure the day-to-day operations are handled accordingly.

At each Board meeting, the vice president for Business Affairs (VPBA) reports to the board the current financial state of the college, including detailed reports concerning revenue and expenditures. Additionally, three board members along with the VPBA and the president meet as the finance sub-committee periodically. Finally, a representative from the internal and the external audit firms present the results of [yearly audits](#) to the Finance Sub-Committee and the seven-member Board of Regents. Members of the Board of Regents also approve budget, tuition and fee increases, expenditures,

contracts, and out-of-state travel.

Members of the [Leadership Council](#) provide board members an update from their respective areas. Updates include, but are not limited to, enrollment, student activities, out-of-state travel, capital improvements, and new personnel.

Board members are required to attend initial [training](#) provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) to ensure they are knowledgeable about their legal and ethical responsibilities. Incoming board members attend on-site orientation providing them with the opportunity to become familiar with the function of the institution and its employees. Board members participation in campus-related activities include attendance at athletic events, Sapphire Ball, Hall of Fame dinner, and graduation ceremonies.

5.B.2 The Board of Regents for Eastern Oklahoma State College, faculty, staff, and students are [governed](#) by clearly defined policies and procedures which mirror sister institutions. These policies and procedures identify the responsibilities and rights regarding governance of the institution. Furthermore, the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) have [policies and procedures](#) that provide guidance for various aspects of institutional governance.

The Eastern Board of Regents assumes oversight of governing processes, policy-making, and budgeting of the institution. As part of its charge, the board engages its internal constituencies via regular [board meetings](#). Dialogue with administration regarding faculty, staff, and students is maintained through these meetings. The president is charged with overseeing the day-to-day operations of the College, including general academic policy, hiring, and purchasing.

The president meets regularly with the [Leadership Council and Leadership Team](#) to exchange ideas and get input regarding issues affecting the institution and its constituents. The president gives a bi-annual "state-of-the-college" [address](#) to faculty and staff, as well as provides [periodic emails](#) to communicate needed information. These efforts help to enhance the engagement of Eastern's internal constituencies.

The [Academic Leadership Team \(ALT\)](#), composed of all academic deans, registrar, director of Library Services, Faculty Council chair, director of Student Life, and representatives from all branch locations, meet monthly to discuss academic issues and share successes and concerns from each area. Minutes from ALT meetings are posted on the college website. Additionally, the vice president for Academic Affairs (VPAA) issues a [monthly newsletter](#) to provide communication and academic updates to all faculty and staff. This newsletter is also posted on the college website.

There is a clearly defined structure in place in which professional and classified staff and faculty members are allowed opportunities to provide input. Each member of the respective council(s) has the opportunity to bring forth questions or concerns and submit them to the council chair. Additionally, the institution has a committee structure that allows for input in college decision-making. Policies and procedures are also in place in the event of an employee grievance, including sexual harassment or job termination.

[Standing committees](#) have representation from both faculty and staff. Some committees, such as the Textbook Committee, the Distance Learning Committee, the Academic Scholarship Committee, and Assessment Committee, are heavily weighted with faculty as a result of committee responsibilities. Committee involvement is a component in the Faculty Evaluation Rubric. Participation is strongly encouraged in many of the committees regardless of elected position.

Students have opportunities to impact the institution's governance through clubs and organizations, including the [Eastern Student Government Association](#). In addition, grievance and grade appeal policies are in place in the event any academic concerns arise. The president also hosts periodic luncheons with student leaders to receive input and feedback on issues such as tuition and fee increases, housing, student life and activities, and overall satisfaction with their experience at Eastern.

5.B.3. Eastern has in place a [committee structure](#) that is conducive to input from faculty, staff, and students. All committees at Eastern participate in decision-making and submit their reports to the administration and to the state as necessary. In continuing its mission to make as much of Eastern's operations as transparent as possible, all college-related standing and ad hoc committees are required to keep agendas and minutes. Many committees [post agendas and/or minutes](#) on the college website. Input from assessment, technology, and academic committees is taken into consideration during the decision-making process. Frequently, surveys are conducted by the VPAA to generate data based upon input from all employees. Surveys range from evaluations of professional development activities to distance learning.

Students act as representatives on several campus committees. Many committees on campus are required to have representatives from professional staff, classified staff, and faculty. To promote effective communication and regular input, the president has regular meetings with the [Leadership Council and the Leadership Team](#). Regular meetings maintain a clear communication network and ensure the employees have opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions. Eastern Oklahoma State College has created an institutional culture grounded in the principles of stakeholder involvement and shared governance. Students, faculty and staff, and members of the public have many opportunities to participate in defining the college's strategic direction and in shaping decisions. Communication is one of [Eastern's core values](#). The administration understands the importance of communication and strives to make communication a priority.

Eastern has established a well-defined [organizational structure](#) that establishes clear lines of authority as well as reporting and formal relationships between individual employees and across functional lines. This structure also encourages less formal communication to occur across organizational lines, especially through the college's practice of engaging in collaborative planning and decision-making through cross-functional teams. Cross training and more formal meetings across different areas of the college have recently become and will remain a focus of the college.

The [faculty handbook](#) lists the major, ongoing committees and teams, but other teams are formed to address specific policy matters and then disbanded when their work is finished. The recent need for a [federal compliance and policy review committee](#) has led to the decision to create a committee based on position within the institution. This committee will meet twice annually to review federal compliance and policy issues. The recently updated [staff handbook](#) provides guidelines and a structure for staff input.

Employees from across the college are engaged in formal [in-service opportunities](#) every year. At the start of each semester, full-time faculty and adjunct instructors are brought together for a [Faculty Assessment Forum](#). These forums include time to engage faculty in discussions about major events such as the Higher Learning Commission comprehensive visit and in ongoing work to advance assessment efforts in all functional areas. The current focus of the assessment training is to foster a culture of continuous improvement across the institution as faculty deploy classroom strategies to increase student engagement and retention.

Faculty are joined by staff to participate in a day-long institutional development, [in-service day](#), which is designed to engage all faculty and staff in work that promotes the continuous improvement

of the college. This day-long, in-service training is designed to provide opportunities to review new policies, receive training, conduct departmental meetings and to otherwise prepare for the start of the semester. At the spring in-service day training session, the session was dedicated to employee discussion of the HLC Criteria for Accreditation and an assessment of the college's performance in each area so that everyone could be prepared for the forthcoming comprehensive visit, a review of State and institutional budget issues, and an update on the state of the college.

In addition to these formal approaches to internal communication and involvement, the president periodically circulates [email updates](#) on current events from across the college. These messages provide updates on such matters as the institution's progress toward enrollment updates or specific work being done in areas that might be of interest to the college community.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Argument

Eastern has comprehensive and inter-related organizational structures governed by policies and procedures. Decisions regarding the allocation of resources are a result of careful dialogue with internal and external constituents. All planning, strategic or operational, involves the use of best practices, key performance indicators, and institutional effectiveness data. Eastern uses demographic data to gauge future fiscal and infrastructural needs and resources. A [strategic plan](#) and [capital campaign plan](#) have been developed to deal with the changing financial landscape of delivering high quality educational programming.

5.C.1 Eastern employs an integrated planning and resource allocation model as the basis for long-term strategic planning and continuous improvement. A strategic planning consultant helped facilitate the development and implementation of the [2011-2016 strategic plan](#). The plan was reviewed annually at a [Leadership Team retreat](#). The consultant came back in the fifth year of the plan to facilitate a [review with new initiatives](#) and revisions to the plan. The intent of the review was to ensure that Eastern continues to align with and to support its updated mission and goals. These initiatives include organizational changes, development and revision of the strategic plan, and re-staffing of essential positions within the College's [organizational structure](#). This planning model allows Eastern to stay focused on its mission, remain true to its [core values](#), and to achieve the intended outcomes of its objectives and stated improvement goals in an intentional and sustained way.

In recent years, Eastern has made significant investments in capital assets. As of June 30, 2016, Eastern had a [book value of fixed assets](#) of \$46,236,168 compared to \$45,630,751 at the previous year end. This is an increase of \$605,417. Investments in the FY16 budget included major [repair of buildings and infrastructure](#), and the purchase of equipment, livestock, and instructional materials. Due to grant funds received, Eastern has also made significant [investments in technology](#). These technology investments have been made with student learning and faculty teaching in mind and have tied directly into [key objectives](#) from the strategic plan.

In an effort to better manage the trend of [lower revenues](#) and [lower enrollment](#), Eastern decided to take a strong, introspective look at the fiscal state of the College and determine exactly how the College was allocating its resources in order to achieve its mission. Rather than incremental budgeting, in FY16 Eastern adopted zero-base budgeting. A [zero-base budget](#) approach requires

faculty and staff to justify all of their budgeted expenditures. All functional areas of the College are theoretically assumed to have an expenditure base line of zero. The intent of the process is to continually refocus funding on key mission objectives and terminate or scale back any activities no longer related to those objectives. All departments are required to tie budget requests to data. All monies allocated must be tied back to the goals and objectives of the individual department. Eastern was able to absorb these cuts by decreasing departmental budgets and not filling vacant staff positions. The last quarter of FY16 also called for another 5% cut to the budget. Eastern decided to pull [reserve funds](#) to assist the College in absorbing this final cut of the fiscal year. The financial forecast for FY17 continues to be challenging. Eastern continues to explore potential cost-saving measures that will not compromise its mission.

Being placed on [Heightened Cash Monitoring 2](#) (HCM2) status by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) has caused many challenges and limitations for the College. Eastern has had to manage cash flow closely in order to be as efficient and as effective with finances as possible. Each type of payment (financial aid, payroll, and vendor) has been timed based on the timing of the reimbursements received from the DOE. HCM2 status and restricted access to the Common Originations and Disbursements (COD) that is used to activate payments for student Pell Grants and Direct Loans and the grants payment system (G5) which is used to draw down funds has limited how efficient staff could be in carrying out their jobs in the Business office and Financial Aid office. It also limited how [quickly](#) students received refunds as well as some of the other initiatives that the College had planned, wanted, or needed to do on campus. The [settlement with DOE](#) and the pending removal from HCM2 will allow the departments to more efficiently serve students. The return of advance pay for Financial Aid will allow Eastern to quickly restore efficiencies with the aid of additional procedures and [software](#) that has been put into place. It is expected that cash flow will improve because Eastern will no longer be funding Financial Aid to students for a substantial amount of time through reserves prior to the reimbursements from DOE. Eastern has remained committed to students throughout this process. The administration understands that current students have been frustrated with the slower process to distribute financial aid and is working hard to correct this issue. More information about Eastern's HCM2 status can be found in Criterion 2.A.

Planning and budget requests are tied to the program and institutional mission, program outcomes, and to the strategic plan. Requests for increases in departmental budgets must be justified and linked to strategies and objectives outlined in the strategic plan. Approved requests are prioritized and considered for additional funding contingent upon available resources. The administration encourages faculty and staff to submit funding requests for special circumstances to the VPBA for consideration. The VPBA and the Leadership Council discuss and approve these non-routine requests when funds are available.

5.C.2 Eastern has a process for allocating resources based on the College's strategic plan. Four goals encompass the strategic plan and are used to develop departmental budgets and ensure that resources are used in alignment with the overarching goal of student learning. The goals are:

1. provide high quality educational programs and services to increase educational opportunities for individuals and organizations
2. increase the percentage of students who progress toward and achieve their academic and career goals
3. enhance and efficiently use the College's human, financial, facility and technological resources
4. engage the College's wider community with educational and cultural programs and economic development

Each goal has several [key performance indicators and targets](#) that are associated with the goals. The

goals are also closely linked to Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Criteria. Eastern will end the current strategic plan in FY16. A [new strategic plan](#) has been developed by a planning committee. The plan was reviewed by internal and external stakeholders with modifications made. The final version of the strategic plan (FY17-22) was presented to the Board of Regents in November 2016. Through the strategic planning process, the Leadership Team, with input from their respective departments, monitors and updates the plan as needed. Needs or problems are identified during this planning process and the Leadership Team members work together to come up with solutions.

[Assessment activities](#) are also linked with planning and budgeting processes. Academic leaders and the assessment committee are interfaced into the budget process through the VPAA. The VPAA finalizes academic goals, including assessment, and requests appropriate supportive funding. A disturbing trend has been the decline of [resources allocated](#) to instruction as a percentage of the Education and General (E & G) budget. In FY04, instruction received 40.6% of the E & G budget; whereas, in FY16, that percentage has gradually decreased to 35.5%. The state average is 40.6%. Despite the declining funding from the state, faculty and staff have maintained high quality academic programming as can be evidenced by the high number of courses that are [Quality Matters-certified](#) and the high success rates in [NCLEX](#) and [CLEET](#) testing.

Through an evaluation of staffing in academic programs, faculty and staff have identified concerns and issues related to hiring more faculty in areas such as English, math, and history. Currently, the faculty are carrying a high number of [overload hours](#) to cover those courses. Eastern continues to struggle in hiring adjunct faculty due to a low pay scale for teaching those courses and lack of qualified applicants.

Each functional area has been responsive to evaluating its [operational area](#) and making changes. For example, the Registrar's office used to order diplomas printed from an outside company, but after evaluating the cost and timeline decided to save money and time by moving the printing in-house. This reduced the amount paid from \$2.75 per diploma to only \$0.08 per diploma. This change resulted in increased product quality and significant savings over time. Another example of evaluating operations in light of budget constraints is the reduction in personnel, specifically administrative positions. The decision to absorb duties from [vacated administrative positions](#) has helped to ensure that the educational purpose of the College is not adversely affected. The Leadership Team continues to strive to link decisions with budget planning while keeping in mind the mission of the College.

5.C.3 Eastern has in place a [strategic plan](#) which is developed with input from both internal and external constituents. Operational plans are designed with the College mission as a guide. Both academic and non-academic departments are encouraged to provide input into the strategic planning process through assemblies, [committees](#), and [surveys](#). All academic and non-academic divisions are required to identify clear goals and outcomes as a means of providing data for the decision-making process. This collaborative process ensures opportunities for continuous improvement, student learning and success, and fulfillment of the College mission. In anticipation of further reduction in state allocations, the president created a [survey](#) which allowed faculty and staff to assist in prioritizing potential budget cuts.

The Eastern Oklahoma State College [Foundation](#) works with the College, alumni, and the community at-large in the strategic planning processes of the institution. The Foundation plays a key role in generating funding for scholarships, grants, and other financial resources. The funds raised through the Foundation have provided significant financial support for the work of the College. The Eastern Foundation [awards](#) approximately \$190,000 annually in student scholarships and is currently in the process of expanding the scholarship program. Short-term, no interest emergency loans are available to students through the Foundation (typically \$500 or less). Recently, the Foundation [provided a](#)

[loan](#) of \$148,000 to support the college in the DOE re-payment of liabilities process. The Eastern Foundation also provides revenue to support the College in efforts to better serve students and the community. The [Sapphire Ball](#), one of Eastern's most successful fundraising events, is held each year during the spring semester. This event added more than \$12,000 to the Foundation in FY15. The Sapphire Ball is in its eighth year and gets more popular each year. It is important to note that since its inception, the event has raised over \$70,000 for scholarships.

Community needs are taken into consideration during the development of the strategic plan to ensure the institutional goal of community enhancement is met. In an effort to ensure input from its constituency, advisory committees and other [stakeholders](#) are consulted to determine how well Eastern is fulfilling its stated mission. Eastern also meets with the [District 18 group of local school superintendents](#) to gather insight and perspective of what is needed by local high schools to better prepare their students for post secondary education. Eastern hosts an annual [Counselor Fair](#) to provide an avenue for local high school counselors to provide input in such areas as enrollment, scholarship process, and program offerings.

5.C.4/ 5.C.5 The institution has solid and well-developed methods for anticipating financial fluctuations. These methods are the result of careful budgeting practices for the past several years. Per State Regents guidelines, the [institution's reserves](#) are maintained at a minimum of 1/12 (8.3%) of the working budget. The basic planning unit is the fiscal year. When preparing the yearly operating budget, the VPBA reviews data and information from both internal and external sources. Internally, the information is gathered through [budget needs surveys](#) prepared by individual departments, enrollment reports, reviews of upcoming capital expenditures, revenue and expense reports, human resources reports, grant allocations, and projections based on past enrollment trends. Externally, information is gathered through discussions with fellow business officers [statewide](#), service area employment reports, [business and industry trends](#), leading economic indicators, and [demographic](#) trends.

In an effort to better manage the trend of [lower revenues](#) and [lower enrollment](#), Eastern decided to take a strong, introspective look at the fiscal state of the college and determine exactly how the college was allocating its resources in order to achieve its mission. Budget decisions are made with the understanding that there will be fluctuations in funding. The process of allocating half of the budget in July, with the remaining half broken into allocations in January and March, has helped the VPBA and other administrators to make mid-year adjustments when needed.

The institution consistently plans for larger cuts in state support than often materialize. During fiscal downturns, the institution opts not to fill vacated positions rather than [reduce staff](#). Major expenditures must be reviewed by the president's Leadership Council and then be approved through the Board. The [capital campaign priorities](#) identify long-term growth opportunities.

The institution is experiencing a myriad of challenges to meet its stated strategic goals. [Concurrent enrollment](#) of high school juniors and seniors rose approximately 30% during the 2016 fall semester. Also in the fall of 2016, Eastern launched five [online degree programs](#), began a [ranch management-stocker operations program](#), and began the process of receiving certification for a respiratory therapy program. These changes will require additional qualified faculty, state-of-the art technology, and dedicated student support services, such as expanding test proctoring at all locations. Planning for these exciting changes will require a more systematic and deliberate interaction and conversation with internal and external constituencies. Involving different perspectives and expectations will better inform Eastern in its integrated planning and budgeting decision-making. By incorporating and articulating an annual review of the vision statement, the administration can better educate and inform budget managers for fluctuations in funding, enrollment, and other key factors. Adjustments to the

strategic plan and its key performance indicators will ultimately keep Eastern well positioned to meet strategic goals. Institutional planning and budgeting managers are cognizant of how changes in technology and student learning drive our mission to deliver high quality educational programming. Eastern is well established among peer institutions with a state-of-the-art technology infrastructure.

The institution regularly reviews [economic](#) and demographic data to add or discontinue programs and courses to meet the needs of its constituents. Occasionally, a program or course is removed when it no longer fulfills the needs of the students. For example, the [administrative office technology](#) program was recently suspended due to low enrollment. This program has had low enrollments for a number of years. This led to an evaluation of the program and the local workforce needs. The [medical laboratory technology](#) program at the Idabel location was recently eliminated due to low enrollment. This program did not meet the enrollment numbers expected and the economic trends showed it was not a viable program for that area. Driven by the mission statement and emerging globalization factors, Eastern has increased its [articulation agreements](#) with four-year institutions.

Eastern [student demographics](#) reflect the diversity within the population of its 10.5 county constituency. The institution offers classes at a variety of times and days to accommodate the non-traditional students enrolled at the institution and at several off-campus sites. The [student demographics](#) also indicate the diverse ethnicity of the Eastern constituency. By race and ethnicity, 5% were Hispanic or Latino, 6.5% were black or African American, 25.4% were American Indian or Alaskan Native, 58.9% were white, 1.6% were multiple races, and 1.5% did not respond. The [international population](#) continues to increase which will create some additional instructional needs, including additional student support in non-academic areas to address future student needs.

The institution also responds to the diversity within the population by offering a full range of developmental courses, giving students who are not prepared academically the opportunity to acquire skills necessary for college success. Eastern offers scholarships and encourages [international student enrollment](#). Athletics actively recruits non-resident students. With the addition of competitive soccer at Eastern, athletes from countries such as Scotland, Brazil, Great Britain, Paraguay, the Bahamas, and the Czech Republic have introduced their language and culture to our student body. Eastern expects the new and exciting international presence on campus will enhance the intellectual and cultural environment for Eastern students who interact with them. The [Multicultural and International Club \(MIC\)](#) periodically hosts events to highlight the country of origin for one of our international students. Getting students to expand and broaden their worldview will benefit the students as they become more engaged in how globalization affects their daily lives. Eastern has partnered with a business school in [Silkeborg, Denmark](#) to have student exchanges every spring. A larger number of visiting international students on campus provides more opportunities for Eastern students to interact across cultures and expand their existing belief and value systems.

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5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Argument

Eastern strives diligently to fulfill its mission. To this end, the institution is constantly seeking ways to improve its performance. Decision-making from the institutional level to the classroom level is data driven. Budgetary decisions are made based upon needs as documented in Ellucian software management system to ensure alignment with the [College mission](#) and [strategic plan](#). Regular and ongoing assessment and accountability practices are in place to ensure the institution is working toward continued improvement. The institution evaluates the success of its performance efforts by measuring accomplishments related to the [strategic plan](#). Accomplishments are identified and measured in relation to strategic plan key performance indicators (KPIs) and shared during each [all-employee meeting](#) conducted in August and January of each school year.

5.D.1 Eastern is required to submit documentation of its operations and performance to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education as well as various [state](#) and [federal](#) agencies. Eastern regularly submits an [Institutional Update](#) to the Higher Learning Commission. Board meetings are held as required to ensure oversight of the institution's operations. Within those [board meetings](#), financial reports are provided in the open meeting while additional review is provided during the finance sub-committee meetings. Board books and minutes are archived in hard copy for public access in the Eastern library.

Eastern measures institutional effectiveness through the use of [key performance indicators](#) (KPIs). These KPIs provide insight into the effectiveness of the priorities in the strategic plan. All instructional and non-academic areas at Eastern are required to have measurable goals and objectives identified, i.e. [course syllabus](#). During the annual [Leadership Team retreat](#), each area administrator presents goals for the upcoming year and reviews the previous year's goals.

Budgetary decisions are tied directly to data-supported needs through the [zero-base budgeting](#) process. When the Leadership Council and president are discussing budgets, they evaluate based on the mission and strategic plan. Eastern has regular [internal](#), [state](#), and [external](#) audits. A primary purpose is to show whether the College is better or worse off as a result of the year's activities. The audits are presented to the Board of Regents and reviewed by administration.

In the recently completed [2016 audit](#) by Finley and Cook, highlighted the financial position of the College. The College's net position increased \$914,062. Operating revenue increased by \$1.1 million. Operating expenses decreased mainly in the areas of compensation, communication, utilities, and scholarships. Expenses increased in the areas of contractual services, supplies and materials, depreciation and other operating expenses. The non-operating revenues did see a large decrease as a result of decreased state appropriations. As is stated in the [2016 audit](#), "The College continues to develop scenarios to hold down cost while preserving the ability to deliver quality instructional programs to its students...However, the College is continuing to look for ways to effectively allocate

resources and support the excellent programs offered at the College, while at the same time looking for areas that expenses can be reduced with a minimal impact on student programs and services."

In the specific area of assessment of student performance, Eastern posts all relevant summary data on the [College website](#). Hard copies of all assessment instruments and data collected are available in the office of the vice president for Academic Affairs (VPAA). Eastern runs a 7-week and 11-week grade report for all students. Results are entered into WebAdvisor so students can see their progress report. Academic advisers, coaches, and GEARUP coaches all receive progress checks on their students. The VPAA reviews all data associated with student assessment and makes recommendations for program and course improvement as warranted. The [general education learning goals](#) and student assessment are addressed in criterion 4.B

Data is collected in various offices, but most institutional effectiveness data are collected in the Academic Affairs office. Knowing that data-driven decision-making is an important factor in continued growth, the institution created the associate vice president for Academic Affairs position to provide more focused research and data reporting. Unfortunately, due to retirement and continued budget cuts, that full-time position does not exist now. The vice president for Academic Affairs, who previously held the associate position, is now responsible for institutional effectiveness data. This is an area of potential improvement for the institution. While data is still being generated, the addition of a full-time institutional effectiveness position would enhance the analysis and dissemination of that data.

[Faculty evaluations](#) are conducted annually and [student satisfaction surveys](#) are conducted periodically in accordance with Eastern's policies and procedures. The Faculty Evaluation System was redesigned to more accurately identify requirements for faculty success. Eastern uses the [Course Evaluation Kit](#) as a way for students to provide feedback on faculty performance, course content and delivery, and overall satisfaction with their courses. Division and department heads review these evaluations with faculty in order to make course improvements. Faculty members value and welcome feedback from students. Using feedback from students and faculty, a faculty evaluation committee re-designed an in-house, online student course evaluation form which more accurately provides usable data for institutional and classroom improvement.

All [committees](#) at Eastern participate in some form of decision-making and submit their reports with recommendations to the administration and to the State Regents when necessary. For example, Eastern's budget goes through a process of board approval and capital expenditures have regular benchmarks as described more in Criterion 5A.

Eastern conducts [program advisory committee](#) meetings annually that allow the College to stay abreast of contemporary trends and needs in the labor market and bolster support for the institutional programs and graduates. After analyzing [trends in the local economy](#) and workplace needs, Eastern applied for and was granted a \$2.25M Title III grant to start a respiratory therapy (RT) program and a ranch management-stocker operations program. These new programs will meet the demands of local healthcare organizations and the needs of cattle ranchers in the area. Furthermore, the grant will assist faculty and staff in retention and persistence rates for incoming students.

The Physical Plant documents and tracks all work it performs. When a facilities work order is submitted, the staff at the Physical Plant will track and document all maintenance-related time and resources used to resolve all work orders.

5.D.2 Eastern Oklahoma State College, in an effort to develop and maintain an environment of institutional effectiveness, consistently works to monitor and improve its performance utilizing

significant quantifiable documentation. Quantifiable data includes fiscal operational budget and fiscal sub-sets, institutional research, federal, state, and institutional budgetary guidelines.

Eastern utilizes data generated from institutional research to develop and modify budgetary allocations. Eastern is in a [good financial position](#) despite the current trend in declining educational funding. Stringent budgetary practices and a highly dedicated faculty and staff have allowed Eastern to continue to fulfill its vision and mission without compromising program quality. Ellucian software allows budget directors to see real-time spending data which allows them to more effectively allocate resources as the budget year progresses.

Student feedback consistently validates the quality and dedication of our full-time and adjunct faculty. One lingering concern is that the faculty have taken on an increased number of [overload hours](#). Faculty pay is another area that the institution clearly needs to address. There have been few cost-of-living adjustments for faculty and staff pay over the last 10 years. The [current compensation schedule](#) makes it difficult to recruit and retain quality faculty and staff. The administration is very cognizant of this problem and strives to make improvements when the budget allows.

Instructional decisions and changes are made through review of assessment data. An institutional assessment committee was formed in 2011. The membership consists of a representative from each academic division and the vice president for Academic Affairs. Eastern joined the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Assessment Academy in 2011. As a result of joining the Assessment Academy, Eastern has developed [general education learning goals](#) and now has in place an [assessment rotation](#) to evaluate each goal. The faculty and academic administrators meet twice a year to review the results. More information can be found in Criterion 4.

To address concerns expressed by students through institutionally-generated [satisfaction surveys](#), Eastern is in the process of updating and improving student housing. To fund these improvements, Eastern uses monies from the State of Oklahoma [Master Lease Program](#). The State System Master Lease Purchase Program offers a method of financing the acquisition of major personal and real property that will provide cost efficiency in finance and administration. Authorized institutions must enter into lease agreements for values of \$50,000 to \$10 million. The lease terms will vary by the useful life of the equipment purchased, but the useful life must not exceed 20 years. Eastern has [used](#) the Master Lease Program for upgrades to student housing, classroom building upgrades, and overall appearance of campus landscape. To save money, Eastern recently re-financed some Master Lease obligations, thus saving \$20,000 per year in interest charges.

To increase Eastern's Internet broadband capabilities for faculty and students, Eastern updated its bandwidth in 2016. This new capability has allowed for quality connections for interactive television (ITV) classes and remote conferencing for faculty and staff professional development. In addition, recent [technology grants](#) have allowed Eastern to equip local high schools and remote sites with state-of-the-art ITV equipment.

Eastern regularly updates its website to reflect institutional changes and to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information to all constituents. Eastern strives to provide numerous avenues for communication and is committed to continuous improvement.

Other concerns identified in employee surveys has led to streamlining the [hiring process](#). Standardized job descriptions have been established and adjunct and new faculty orientation processes have been established or streamlined.

As was mentioned previously, [several positions](#) have been eliminated or changed as a result of budget

cuts and strategic decisions. The vice president for Student Affairs position was cut in 2015. The duties assigned to that position were split between the president and the vice presidents for Business and Academic Affairs. The decision to reduce administration was a direct attempt to keep money in student services and academics. The dean of students resigned in April 2016, and rather than refilling the position, the current associate vice president agreed to fill in. A title change to director of Student Services resulted, but the position is still held by the person that was associate vice president. When this change was made, the decision to have this person report to the vice president for Academic Affairs has resulted in a more holistic approach to student success. The administration at Eastern is committed to minimizing the budget reduction impact on student programs and services.

By gathering information through assessment reviews, institutional reports, planning activities, and surveys, Eastern Oklahoma State College is firmly committed to improving the quality of its degree and certificate programs, student life and student support services, and community outreach efforts. To this end, Eastern continues to strive to be more systematic in its approach to gathering and analyzing data and feedback of its performance and operations. A strong priority is given to articulating the overall performance and fiscal health of the college to internal and external constituencies.

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

Eastern is intentional about planning, evaluating, and allocating resources. The strategic plan is reviewed annually and this plan drives the College's actions and the budget process. The Leadership Team meets each summer to actively review the strategic plan and measure progress on key performance indicators. A document that started as 10 pages has grown to almost 30, and includes annual data measured against a benchmark. This annual review helps to focus the planning of the institution and strengthen its future.

Resource allocation is conducted with the mission, vision, and strategic plan in mind. While the availability of resources has been a challenge in recent years, Eastern continues to meet its core mission. Strategic decisions about personnel and programs have helped to ensure that the educational purpose is not adversely affected. Eastern has a process in place for budgeting and monitoring expenses. The process involves faculty, staff, and administrators. Information is presented to the governing board at each meeting so they are knowledgeable and can provide oversight on financial and academic policies and practices.

Eastern continues to produce new initiatives and fulfill its mission despite continued cuts in state funding. Planning helps to anticipate emerging technologies, shifts in demographics, and globalization. Eastern applies what it learns from operational experiences to help improve institutional effectiveness and sustainability.

Infrastructure upgraded, added or renovated since 2011:

- ITV Classrooms: five rooms in McAlester, three rooms in Wilburton
- Faculty and Staff training center (Mitchell 119)
- Upgraded network trunks to 10GB in seven areas
- Enrollment Center completed in the Library Administration building
- Regents Court Apartments constructed
- Renovation to Johnnie Wray Theatre in Pratt Hall
- Two aquaponics greenhouses completed
- Upgrade to flooring in various rooms and common areas in McAlester
- Demo of the old student union to make room for veterans memorial and outdoor space for students
- Renovation to Choctaw Hall to use upper floors for residence halls
- Cleaning and painting of Miller Hall during summer 2016

Eastern continues to work toward being more systematic in its approach to gathering and analyzing data along with feedback of its performance and operations. A strong priority is given to articulating the overall performance and fiscal health of the College to internal and external constituencies. The effort has been to focus on a more holistic approach to student success. The administration at Eastern is committed to minimizing the budget reduction impact on student programs and services.

Sources

There are no sources.