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 mission statement has been developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of Fort Lewis College (FLC). The college owes its beginnings to the federal government, which in 1891 converted an army post, Fort Lewis, in nearby Hesperus, Colorado, to an Indian boarding school, which operated until 1911. A U.S. Congressional statute then transferred the land to the State of Colorado for use as an educational institution where “Indian pupils shall at all times be admitted to such school free of charge for tuition and on terms of equality with white pupils.” This led to the college becoming a state agricultural high school and junior college with a particular focus on serving Native American students. Today, the U.S. Department of Education classifies FLC as a Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution, based on the college’s long record of awarding degrees to Native Americans.

Authorized by the Colorado Department of Higher Education as a public liberal arts college that includes professional and graduate programs, FLC is comprehensive for its size. The language in Colorado House Bill 1419, passed in 2002, formed the basis of FLC’s current mission statement. The current mission was approved by the Fort Lewis College Board of Trustees (BOT) in 2005 and adopted in the 2006-2011 Strategic Plan (p. 4). This mission statement, which was reaffirmed in the 2012-2016 Strategic Plan (p. 1), is as follows:

Fort Lewis College offers accessible, high-quality, baccalaureate liberal arts education to a diverse student population, preparing citizens for the common good in an increasingly complex world.

The mission is grounded in legislation ratified by the General Assembly, as underscored in Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) 23-52-101, and instituted by the BOT. In February 2015, the BOT approved a new Mission Statement Policy, which formalizes the college’s long-time practice of reviewing the mission statement every five years during its strategic planning process. This strategic planning
process is detailed, thorough, and developed collaboratively by a diverse committee representing faculty, staff, administration, students, and community members from across the campus and community-at-large. For example, the college’s last strategic planning process in 2011 included numerous listening sessions followed by a two-day retreat. The retreat consisted of a 50-person Strategic Planning Committee, facilitated by an outside consultant.

Likewise, mission-related documents and statements are developed methodically, with the input and direction of diverse stakeholders from across the campus community, in accordance with policies and procedures adopted by the BOT, president, cabinet, and the college’s practice of shared-governance.

1.A.2.

FLC’s many academic programs, modes of course delivery, college-wide learning outcomes, and lower-division general education philosophy and requirements are consistent with the institution’s Mission, Vision, and Core Values statements. These statements guide academic programs, student support services, and enrollment.

The mission embodies five primary aims: accessibility, high-quality education, the liberal arts, student diversity, and preparing students for the common good in an increasingly complex world.

Accessibility

FLC’s commitment to accessibility has led to a variety of instructional formats. In addition to traditional face-to-face courses, the college also offers online courses and hybrid courses (combining online and face-to-face formats). The college offers courses over the summer and abroad. The college also offers a varied menu of academic programs leading to the Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts degree, an undergraduate minor, undergraduate and graduate-level certificates, state-approved teacher licensure, and the Master of Arts in Education. Students may choose from over 30 distinct disciplines, representing the arts, humanities, social sciences, physical and life sciences, and many professional areas of study. In addition to the variety of delivery modes and programs, we continue to control tuition costs both for in-state and out-of-state students.

High-Quality Education

Several academic programs added in the past decade are consistent with the college’s mission to provide a high-quality education, while also serving regional needs and taking advantage of the college’s unique location in the Four Corners. For example, the graduate degree and certificate programs in Teacher Leadership, B.S. in Engineering, and B.A. degrees in Public Health and Art-Graphic Design serve regional needs and were developed with the input of the local and campus community. In addition, B.A. programs in Environment Studies, Adventure Education, and Athletic Training were developed to take advantage of both the college’s location and its active student body. The B.A. and Minor in Native American and Indigenous Studies are consistent with the region’s Southwestern heritage. Other programs added in the last decade, including the Minor in Peace and Conflict Studies and a certificate in Geographical Information Systems also align with the quality and regional-service aspects of the college’s mission and core values.

As additional markers of quality, six academic programs (Chemistry, Engineering, Engineering Physics, Music, Athletic Training, and Teacher Education) and the School of Business have attained external accreditation. This dedication to high-quality education is also exemplified in the college’s faculty. Since 1990, five FLC professors have been named Colorado Professors of the Year, a number eclipsed by just one other Colorado institution, the U.S. Air Force Academy.
Liberal Arts Education

Along with the college’s many programs of study, other academic statements and curriculum consistent with the Mission, Vision, and Core Values statements include the College-wide Liberal Education Outcomes, Learning Outcomes for the Liberal Arts Core (LAC or lower-division general education requirements), and curricular requirements for the LAC.

The four college-wide liberal education outcomes—learning as inquiry, critical thinking as problem solving, communication as intellectual contribution, and action as responsible application of academic learning—are specific yet broad enough for all faculty, regardless of discipline, to address and help students realize across the curriculum. At the same time, the college’s lower-division general education program (the LAC) exposes every undergraduate to a broad knowledge base, especially in their first two years and before pursuing in-depth study in a major. Finally, both the college-wide outcomes and the general education program parallel the “essential learning outcomes” of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), a central feature of their liberal education initiative.

Furthermore, campus departments are committed to continuous quality improvement. Each department and program, within both academic and student affairs, has established learning outcomes that are assessed annually and grounded in the institution’s mission.

Student Diversity

FLC’s diverse enrollment profile is drawn from the entire state of Colorado, the Four Corners region, nearly all 50 states, over 140 American Indian tribes and Native Alaskan communities, and 17 countries.

Over a third of FLC’s student body in 2014 identified as non-white, predominantly Native American and Hispanic. The institution’s Native American Tuition Waiver provides a tuition-free college education for students who provide documentation indicating at least one of the following: tribal membership; that they are 50 percent Native American; or that they are a direct descendant of a tribal member who, on June 1, 1934, resided within the present boundaries of any Native American reservation. During the 2013-14 academic year, Native American and Alaskan Native students comprised 27 percent of the student body, and represented 146 federally recognized tribes. Additionally, in the previous year, more Native American and Alaskan Native students graduated from FLC than any other baccalaureate institution in the country. Hispanic student enrollment for the same academic year was 10 percent of the total student population.

Student support services are offered for students of color and other traditionally underrepresented students. Specifically, the Native American Center and El Centro de Muchos Colores primarily serve Native American and Hispanic students respectively. Students with disabilities are served by the Disability Services office, which works collaboratively with faculty to meet the needs of their clients. First-generation and Pell-grant recipients with demonstrated financial need are served by four federally-funded TRIO Programs (the TRIO Student Success Center, Talent Search, Upward Bound, and STEM-3). The college’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning population is served by the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, created in 2010.

Equally important, FLC also offers additional support services and co-curricular opportunities. Some of these, within the Division of Student Affairs, include Recreational Services, Student Housing, and the Leadership Center. Clinical service centers such as the Health and Counseling Centers help meet the various physical and mental health needs of students. Also, a non-denominational chapel is
located on campus and available for religious, spiritual, and cultural purposes. The college also offers many academic support services, under the Division of Academic Affairs, such as the Writing Center, International Programs Office, Career Services, Testing Center, and John F. Reed Honors Program. Also critical to student success and support on campus is the Division of Enrollment Management, which includes the Office of Student Success. All of these programs are integral to the college’s support of diversity efforts across campus and therefore will be presented with more detail in Section 1.C below.

Preparing Students for the Common Good in an Increasingly Complex World

One of the college’s core values is to develop “capacities for living together in a democracy” (Core Values, paragraph 3), which speaks to the institution’s mission to prepare students for an increasingly complex world. This is evident in undergraduate scholarship, which takes the form of senior research and other creative capstone projects. The annual Undergraduate Research Symposium provides opportunities for academic programs to showcase exemplary student projects through oral and poster presentations. Buttressing classroom teaching and other on-campus learning, the college also encourages students to participate in field experiences that take advantage of the Four Corners region, numerous study abroad opportunities, and participation in community-based learning and research.

The Division of Student Affairs also helps address this component of the mission. For example, students are served by the Office of Diversity Programming which helps coordinate a variety of diversity education programs that promote cross-cultural dialogue, bias awareness, prejudice elimination, and social justice activism for students, faculty, and staff.

Finally, as part of the accreditation self-study process in 2014, a campus-wide survey administered to faculty, staff, students, and community members on the college’s mission, suggested the college is fulfilling the five ideals referenced above. For instance, 30 percent of respondents strongly agree that FLC is affordable; 62 percent agree that the student body is diverse; 66 percent agree that FLC provides a high-quality education; and 63 percent agree that students learn about a variety of topics.

1.A.3.

The college’s Mission Statement and 2012-2016 Strategic Plan drive operations, decisions, and priorities pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting. Resource allocation is guided by the annual budgeting process and other policies and procedures. The college’s Budget Committee also prioritizes requests for new funding based on action items emphasized in the strategic plan.

These practices ensure the institution’s planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. For more information on the specific ways in which the college’s budgeting process aligns with the mission, see Sections 5.A and 5.C below.

Sources

- 1A1_BoT Minutes_120605_approving current mission statement
- 1A1_C.R.S. 23-52-101 (from 69th Gen Assembly)
- 1A1_CO_H.B._02-1419
• 1A1_CODHE_FLC_role_mission
• 1A1_Mission Statement Policy
• 1A1_Mission_Stmnt_(in 06-11 SP, p. 4)
• 1A1_Mission_Stmnt_(in 12-16 SP_p. 1)
• 1A1_NASNTI_Grantees_2011_TitleIII_PartF
• 1A1_SP_Committee
• 1A2_AACU/LEAP_Essential_Lrng_Outcomes
• 1A2_Academic_programs_(majors, minors, certs)
• 1A2_Accreditations
• 1A2_AIAN_graduates_from_IPEDS_(2013)
• 1A2_Career_Services
• 1A2_College-Wide_Liberal_Education_Outcomes
• 1A2_Colorado_Professors_of_the_Year_from_FLC
• 1A2_Core_Values
• 1A2_Disability_Services
• 1A2_El_Centro_de_Muchos_Colores
• 1A2_Ethnic_Origin_Fall_2014_(FLC_Fact_Sheet)
• 1A2_FLC-Certificate-Indian-Blood
• 1A2_Gender_&_Sexuality_Resource_Center
• 1A2_International_Programs_Office
• 1A2_John_F._Reed_Honors_Program
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• 1A2_Mission, Vision & Core Values (at FLC website)
• 1A2_NAC
• 1A2_Native_Amer_Demographic_Data_2014
• 1A2_Native_American_Tuition_Waiver
• 1A2_Office_of_Diversity_Programming
• 1A2_Office_of_Student_Success
• 1A2_STEM-3
• 1A2_Student_Affairs
• 1A2_Study_abroad_opportunities_through_FLC
• 1A2_Survey_invitation_&_results_(quant_data_only)
• 1A2_Teacher_Leadership_Graduate_Program
• 1A2_Testing_Center
• 1A2_TRIO_Student_Success_Center
• 1A2_TRIO_Talent_Search
• 1A2_Undergraduate_Research_Symposium
• 1A2_Upward_Bound
• 1A2_USDoEd_TRIO_Home_Page
• 1A2_Writing_Center
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 mission is listed in the FLC Catalog, while the mission, vision, and core values are hyperlinked in the footer of every page of the college’s website, both of which provide easy visibility. The college’s YouTube channel, Facebook page, and Twitter feed also discuss the institution’s mission or provide links to the mission statement on the college’s website.

As part of the accreditation self-study process, a campus-wide survey was conducted in spring 2014 to gauge familiarity with the college’s mission. Findings suggest most faculty and staff (76 percent) are familiar with the mission. More specifically, 36 percent are familiar “to some extent” while 41 percent are familiar “to a very great extent.” Only 4 percent indicated no familiarity at all.

1.B.2.

Fort Lewis College’s mission related documents are current. For example, the mission statement was reaffirmed during the two most recent strategic planning processes—first, in the “Plan for Action 2006-2011” (FLC Strategic Plan 2006, p. 4), and again, in the 2012-16 strategic plan (FLC Strategic Plan 2012, p. 1). In fact, the college’s new Mission Statement Policy requires that the mission statement be reviewed during every strategic planning process (approximately every 5 years) so that it remains current.

Current documents also speak to the five mission components: accessibility, high-quality education, the liberal arts, student diversity, and preparing students for the common good in an increasingly complex world. The 2012-16 Strategic Plan also emphasizes the five components of the mission, accessibility being one, which is addressed in three specific action items: 1.a, 2.d, and 3.a. For example, 1.a.3, which led to curriculum maps to speed up graduation, is designed to improve retention, persistence and graduation rates.

High-quality education is addressed in Action Items 1.b, 1.c, 3.a/b, and 5.d. Action Item 1.b.1 speaks to the college’s goal to “enhance support for excellence in teaching.” As a part of this, the college has been exploring the creation of a Teaching and Learning Center. The emphasis on assessment and continuous improvement in Action Item 5.d—which is focused on creating a college-wide evaluation process—also underscores the college’s commitment to a high-quality education.
The college’s commitment to the liberal arts is also embodied in the strategic plan, particularly in Action Item 4.c. This goal attempts to improve the college’s identity as a public liberal arts college. Underscoring this are current efforts to better publicize the college’s public liberal arts emphasis. For example, new signage on roads leading to campus advertise, “Fort Lewis College: Colorado’s Liberal Arts College.” In addition, monthly dinners between the president, provost, and faculty, held over academic year 2014-15, focused on discussing and re-imagining the college’s commitment to the liberal arts.

Student diversity is addressed in Action Item 4.a, which speaks to current recruitment initiatives to increase Hispanic and Native American students on campus. In addition, Action Item 1.a.v. aims to increase international student enrollment.

Current efforts to educate students “for the common good in an increasingly complex world” are addressed in Action Items 1.a.4 and 1.a.5, which emphasize the value of study abroad and co-curricular activities.

1.B.3.

The college’s Mission, Vision and Core Values statements, and strategic plan clearly identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the institution. Again, the Mission Statement alludes to the college’s focus on baccalaureate education in a liberal arts framework. The scope of the institution, which is evolving, is discussed in the strategic plan. For example, Action Item 2 addresses the scope of the institution, particularly how to “develop selected programs in areas of strength.” Also central to the college’s nature and scope is its primary focus on teaching, which is reflected in the core values statement and strategic plan.

This institution’s constituents are specified in the mission and core values documents. In fact, the introduction to the core values document states that “student success is at the center of all college endeavors,” epitomizing the institution’s primary constituency. The college’s second core value—"diversity is a source of renewal and vitality”—illustrates the importance of diversity to the institution. The most important intended constituents of this value are Native Americans, a result of the institution’s historical mission, to which the core values document also refers. The service area is also clearly defined in the core values document as “Southwest Colorado and the Four Corners area.”

Sources

- 1B1_Faculty and staff responses to Q1
- 1B1_FLC Facebook page (About section)
- 1B1_FLC Twitter page (@FLCDurango)
- 1B1_FLC YouTube channel
- 1B1_Mission statement - FLC Catalog
- 1B1_Mission, vision, core values footer
- 1B2_Action Item 1.a.v. (12-16 Strat Plan)
- 1B2_Action Item 4.a (12-16 Strat Plan)
- 1B2_Action Item 4.c (12-16 Strat Plan)
- 1B2_Maps to Graduation - freshman & transfer)
- 1B2_Mission Statement Policy
- 1B2_Strategic Plan 2006-11
- 1B2_Strategic Plan 2006-11 (page number 4)
- 1B2_Strategic Plan 2012-16
- 1B2_Strategic Plan 2012-16 (page number 1)
- 1B2_TLC Director position announcement
- 1B3_Constituents mentioned in mission & core values documents
- 1B3_Emphasizing bacc educ in Mission Statement
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.I.

Fort Lewis College addresses its role in a multicultural society. Given the college’s commitment to accessibility and diversity, the student body is fairly diverse. In fall 2014, 24 percent of the student body identified as Native American, and 10 percent identified as Hispanic. Among the 3,814 student enrolled, all 50 states and 17 foreign countries were represented. Additionally, 23 percent were first generation, 32 percent were Pell eligible and 48 percent were female. Approximately 10 percent of the student body also reported having a documented disability.

Despite this diverse enrollment profile, recent data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) suggests too few students are engaging meaningfully across differences. As a result, conversations to address this issue have been initiated among faculty and staff members. After all, diversity remains an important strategic goal (as alluded to in responses to 1.a and 1.b).

The college’s Native American tuition waiver and long track record of awarding degrees to Native American students has led the U.S. Department of Education to designate FLC as a Native American Serving Non-Tribal institution. Nevertheless, the burden of financing the tuition waiver has long been a source of contention, especially in the last decade as state financial support for higher education has dwindled. Given this, college administrators have collaborated with U.S. Congressional representatives and senators from Colorado to introduce legislation that would require the federal government to cover the costs for out-of-state Native American students.

The college is also dedicated to providing students with a global education. Several academic departments, for example, encourage students to study abroad and travel internationally as part of their studies. The International Programs Office is a member of the International Student Exchange Program, a worldwide network of more than 300 higher education institutions in 50 countries cooperating to provide affordable access to international education for a diverse student population. Both programs attract international exchange students to FLC, further enriching the diversity of the college’s student body.

The institution also addresses its role in a multicultural society by offering faculty-led study abroad programs. These provide students with cultural immersion experiences, come with academic credit and are often held abroad for four to six weeks. Recent examples include a Cuba and Dominican Republic experience for students in modern languages, an art and philosophy course in France, and courses in Africa and Asia.

Numerous registered student organizations also emphasize multiculturalism and support underrepresented students. Engineers without Borders, for instance, also known on campus as the
Village Aid Project, conducts service projects annually in a number of developing countries including Laos, Tanzania and Ecuador. Other examples include Club del Centro, Wanbli Ota, All People’s Lodge, Dance Co-Motion, American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), Ballet Folklorico de Durango, Buffalo Council, Diné Club, East Africa Service Project, Feminist Voice, International Club, Native American Outdoor Club, Native InterVarsity, Pejuta Tipi Society, Society for the Advancing Chicanos and Native Americans in Sciences (SACNAS), Pueblo Alliance, and Women in Science.

1.C.2.

Fort Lewis College’s administrative and finance, academic, and student affairs divisions actively uphold the college’s commitment to diversity. Examples of administrative processes include the college’s Equal Opportunity (EO) statement. This statement, which was amended in October 2014 by the BOT to include gender identity and expression, reads as follows:

Fort Lewis College does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, political beliefs, or veteran status. Accordingly, equal opportunity for employment, admission, and education shall be extended to all persons. The college shall promote equal opportunity, equal treatment, and affirmative action efforts to increase the diversity of students, faculty, and staff.

Various grievance policies and procedures provide mechanisms for students, faculty, and staff to anonymously report discrimination and harassment of any kind. A reporting system on the college’s website called “Tell Someone” also addresses new Title IX requirements to better report and track sexual and gender harassment incidents on campus.

Other examples of the way in which the college emphasizes diversity are evident in various student and academic affairs programs:

- The Common Ground program was originally introduced as an Anti-Defamation League “A Campus of Difference Institute” diversity education program in 2007, called Code Red. Now unaffiliated with the ADL, the program was institutionalized when a part-time position was approved in 2012. The coordinator organizes campus-wide workshops and the annual diversity trainings during which a group of students, faculty and staff members attend intensive workshops enabling them to incorporate diversity education in their respective departments, organizations, classes, clubs, and so forth. Approximately 100 people have become trained Common Ground facilitators, who reach an annual average of 750 people. Common Ground also created the campus-wide values statement called “Striving for Common Ground,” which was adopted and officially endorsed by the Associated Students of Fort Lewis College and the President’s Cabinet in 2011. This statement strongly supports the college’s mission, specifically in these two stated values:
  
  o “We strive to … inspire each other to take pride and show dignity to ourselves and our diverse cultures.”

  o “We strive to … honor the historic mission of our College and the opportunities and enrichment it provides for us.”

- Regarding gender identity, FLC offers programs and began providing a physical space on campus in 2010 for the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center. In 2014, an interim part-time position was approved to assist with the center’s stated goal to “promote advocacy,
collaboration, celebration, and education around issues related to gender and sexual identity.” As a result of this position, regular campus programs, such as Thursday afternoon “Teas at the G” are occurring for campus and community members. In addition, the college has participated in the national Safe Zone program since 2011. Safe Zone provides training and support to Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender (LGBT) faculty, staff, administrators and students. A localized map of Safe Zone allies across campus is distributed via e-mail and posted on the website.

- The Native American Center (NAC) and El Centro de Muchos Colores (El Centro) are two distinct organizations within the Division of Student Affairs that consistently affirm the college’s mission, vision and values of this institution. As early as the 1960s, FLC has provided resources and physical spaces to support the academic and personal development of its Native American, Hispanic and multi-cultural students. Initially called the Intercultural Center, the two centers have evolved, and since 2010 have shared cultural space on the ground floor of the student union building that includes a full commercial kitchen for student use. With both grant and institutional funding, the centers foster educational programs about the wider concept of diversity at Fort Lewis College, in the local community, and within the Four Corners area. The NAC staff has grown significantly to include five staff members—a director, administrative assistant, program coordinator, student success advisor, and an academic advisor. Similarly, El Centro now serves its constituencies with a full-time coordinator and a part-time folkloric dance instructor during the academic year.

- In terms of the processes that reflect the institution’s attention to human diversity, the Division of Student Affairs and the college president worked together to create a document entitled “Focus on Respect,” which was officially distributed across campus via e-mail on February 26, 2013. This clearly outlines procedures for how the campus will respond to hate messages discovered on campus. These practices include one or more of the following: timely notification of staff/faculty when an incident occurs; an increased police presence; educational programs, such as the “Respect Starts Here” campaign; and increased distribution of the “Striving for Common Ground” statement. The campus-wide e-mails sent by the college president or vice president for student affairs contain standard information as recommended by the US Department of Justice, such as how to confidentially file a report of any suspicious behavior. The messages use strong language to discourage this type of behavior as demonstrated by this statement written by President Thomas in an official campus-wide e-mail address: “Hate speech, threats or intimidation toward any Fort Lewis College students, faculty or staff because of race, age, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, political beliefs, or veteran status is not acceptable. It is the goal of Fort Lewis College to provide everyone with a safe environment in which to learn, to teach and to work.”

- A collaborative event that emphasizes the college’s commitment to reflect attention to human diversity and its constituencies is the November 2010 Peace Rally. This event—organized by the President’s Office, Prism student organization, and Common Ground—attracted more than 1,000 faculty, staff, students, and community members. It was a direct response to reports of Westboro Baptist Church planning a visit to FLC to protest the screening of the film “Anatomy of Hate.”

In Academic Affairs, examples of campus-wide programs/processes that emphasize the college’s attention to diversity include:

- **TRIO Programs** for first-generation and Pell-eligible students in two specific centers on campus—one for STEM majors called STEM-3, created in 2011, and another long-standing program, created in 2001, called the TRIO Student Success Center (formerly known as the Program for Academic Advancement). Both programs offer personalized tutoring and financial and
academic counseling as well as skill-building workshops and field trips to enhance student graduation and retention rates of participants. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of the 75 students served by the TRIO Student Success Center in 2007 had graduated within six years or less.

- Several academic departments have developed their own policies to promote equal opportunity. For example, the **Adventure Education Professional Conduct Code** explicitly prohibits discriminatory behavior, as does the Psychology Department in its **Classroom Policy**.
- The college provides a **disability services center** offering students with disabilities confidential assistance and advocacy to ensure accommodations meet the students’ disability-related needs. In 2011, the college approved a new part-time student service specialist to meet the growing needs of these students. The office staff now includes a full-time director, two specialists, and a testing center coordinator.
- To satisfy the LAC, students are required to participate in a curriculum with courses in topics outside their field. As a direct result of this HLC self-study, the college’s **Liberal Arts Core (LAC) Learning Outcomes** in the 2014-15 course catalog now refer to the diversity component of the college’s mission statement. For example, one of the outcomes now states that “Students [will] demonstrate knowledge of the (a) diversity of past and present human cultures and (b) physical and natural world.”
- Between 2010-15, the **Maximizing Access to Research Careers Program (MARC)**, funded by an NIH training grant, served underrepresented students in STEM majors. Over its history, 12 students participated, eight graduated, and five went on to pursue graduate degrees.

**Sources**

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- 1C1_Membership in ISEP
- 1C1_Native American Tuition Waiver
- 1C2_Adventure Education Prof Conduct Code
- 1C2_Code Red (pre-Common Ground)
- 1C2_Common Ground - Get Involved
- 1C2_Common Ground website
- 1C2_Disability Services
- 1C2_Diversity component of LAC Learning Outcomes
- 1C2_El Centro de Muchos Colores
- 1C2_Focus On Respect
- 1C2_Grievance & Anti-Discrimination Policies & Procedures
- 1C2_History of GSRC
- 1C2_MARC-UStar Program
- 1C2_NAC
- 1C2_Psych Dept classroom_policy
- 1C2_Ralliers counter hate (Durango Herald)
- 1C2_Reporting Sexual Misconduct
- 1C2_Safe Zone Map
- 1C2_Safe Zone Program
- 1C2_STEM-3
- 1C2_Striving for Common Ground values statement
- 1C2_Tell Someone
- 1C2_TRIO Student Success Center
- 1C2_USDoEd_TRIO Home Page
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.

The college’s $151 million impact on the Four Corners, in fiscal year 2012-13, highlights its service to the public. Moreover, the college is actively involved in national organizations, like COPLAC and AAC&U, which further its educational mission and capacity to contribute meaningfully to the public good. In fact, the college hosted the annual COPLAC Conference in 2014. Fort Lewis is also one of the most affordable public colleges in the state. In addition, the college is responsive to the public’s changing educational needs. The relatively new M.A. and certificate programs in Teacher Leadership, for example, resulted from a concerted appraisal of local educators’ professional development and Colorado needs.


As a public college, FLC continually assesses ways to offer a high-quality educational experience within the constraints of state funding and an ever-changing student population. As a part of this, the college’s processes and performance metrics are compared against peer institutions and best practices specific to its various divisions, operations, and academic disciplines. Likewise, the college is committed to fiscal responsibility. In fact, the college’s resource allocation process follows the Strategic Plan and therefore ensures resources are used to support its educational goals. In addition, external accreditation, and ongoing evaluation of educational and student support services also helps hold the institution accountable to its mission.

The college is also working diligently to improve student retention and graduation rates, promote efficient degree completion, and enhance and evaluate teaching and learning outcomes (as outlined in its strategic plan). In response, the college has identified degree programs with significant market demand, streamlined curriculum, explored the development of a Teaching and Learning Center, and established many student services, policies, and procedures deliberately intended to encourage student success. As enrollment grows, faculty and staff will be added to target programs and services.

1.D.3.

Engagement with external constituencies and communities is a core value and included in the strategic plan. For instance, the Southwest Colorado Small Business Development Center (SBDC), housed in the School of Business Administration, helps new and existing businesses grow and
develop through a variety of free or discounted services, including individual consulting, workshops, and regional forums. Serving five counties in Southwest Colorado (Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, and San Juan) and two area Indian Tribes (the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute), the SBDC hosted the 23rd Annual Southwest Business Forum in January 2015. In 2013, the SBDC served 533 clients, created 102 jobs, and started 56 businesses, spawning $3.8 million in capital formation for the region. Also contained within the School of Business Administration is the Office of Business and Economic Research (OBER), which provides economic information about the Four Corners and the Region 9 Economic District for a wide variety of area constituencies.

Besides these, community engagement is also a priority of the Environmental Center, KDUR (FLC Community Radio), and the Center of Southwest Studies. A number of academic departments and programs, including Music, Theatre, Athletic Training, Physics and Engineering, and the Common Reading Experience, also provide outreach to the community. What’s more, several campus facilities, such as the Student Union, Dennison Memorial Field, and Community Concert Hall, regularly host events for external community members and groups.

Additionally, the college hosts numerous community-wide events every year, including the Hozhoni Days Pow-Wow, Real History of the Americas, Tri The Rim Triathlon, and Life-long Learning Lecture Series. Furthermore, FLC houses a handful of advisory boards, which link the needs of the external community to the mission of the college. These include the Professional Associates, the Environmental Center’s Board of Directors, and the Skyhawk Booster Club, among others.

FLC also responds to the needs of the City of Durango, partners with local public and private non-profits, and places students in internships and service-learning opportunities that benefit the community. In 2012, for example, the college joined the City of Durango, Durango Business Improvement District, and Durango Area Tourism Office, to create a new welcome center downtown. The college also collaborated with the City’s Parks and Recreation Department to create a community field that will serve a variety of campus and community needs.

**Sources**

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- 1D1_FLC Economic Impact
- 1D1_Teacher Ed HLC Substantive Change Application
- 1D1_Teacher Ed HLC Substantive Change Application (page number 3)
- 1D2_Accreditations
- 1D2_Office of Assessment
- 1D3_Center of Southwest Studies
- 1D3_Common Reading Experience
- 1D3_Community Concert Hall
- 1D3_Department of Theatre - Shows & Events
- 1D3_Durango Welcome Center
- 1D3_EC Board of Directors
- 1D3_Environmental Center Projects
- 1D3_High School Athletic Training Camp
- 1D3_Hozhoni Days
- 1D3_KDUR
- 1D3_Life Long Learning Lecture Series
● 1D3_Music Dept's Annual Music Events
● 1D3_Office of Business and Economic Research
● 1D3_Physics & Eng Dept outreach
● 1D3_Professional Associates
● 1D3_Skyhawk Booster Club
● 1D3_Southwest Colorado SBDC
● 1D3_SW Business Forum
● 1D3_The Real History of the Americas
● 1D3_Tri The Rim Triathlon
1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

The mission of Fort Lewis College (FLC) is clear and communicated publicly and steers the institution's operations. The mission statement has been developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of Fort Lewis College (FLC). The college owes its beginnings to the federal government, which in 1891 converted an army post, Fort Lewis, in nearby Hesperus, Colorado, to an Indian boarding school, which operated until 1911. Today, the U.S. Department of Education classifies FLC as a Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution, based on the college’s long record of awarding degrees to Native Americans.

Authorized by the Colorado Department of Higher Education as a public liberal arts college that includes professional and graduate programs, FLC is comprehensive for its size. The language in Colorado House Bill 1419, passed in 2002, formed the basis of FLC’s current mission statement. The current mission was approved by the Fort Lewis College Board of Trustees (BOT) in 2005 and adopted in the 2006-2011 Strategic Plan (p. 4). This mission statement, which was reaffirmed in the 2012-2016 Strategic Plan (p. 1), is as follows:

Fort Lewis College offers accessible, high-quality, baccalaureate liberal arts education to a diverse student population, preparing citizens for the common good in an increasingly complex world.

FLC’s many academic programs, modes of course delivery, college-wide learning outcomes, and lower-division general education philosophy and requirements are consistent with the institution’s Mission, Vision, and Core Values statements. These statements guide academic programs, student support services, and enrollment.

The mission consists of five components or aims, as an institution: accessibility, high-quality education, the liberal arts, student diversity, and preparing students for the common good in an increasingly complex world.

The college’s Mission Statement and 2012-2016 Strategic Plan drive operations, decisions, and priorities pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting. Resource allocation is guided by the annual budgeting process and other policies and procedures. The college’s Budget Committee also prioritizes requests for new funding based on action items emphasized in the strategic plan. These practices ensure the institution’s planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

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.

Fort Lewis College (FLC) has policies and procedures in place to insure that all members of its community act with integrity. FLC promotes a culture of ethical practices and expectations. The existence of policies which promote ethical practices allow the college to be involved in important federal and state programs which provide a foundation for its funding. The college must also demonstrate integrity to participate in important national programs and efforts. FLC must also have responsible and appropriate policies to receive federal financial aid for its students. The ethical conduct of FLC community members is required to participate in federal research programs supporting student and faculty efforts.

FLC employees are required to act ethically and responsibly by at least two behavioral codes. The ethical conduct of FLC employees is outlined in the State of Colorado Employee handbook. All employees of the State of Colorado are required to comply with the State of Colorado Independent Ethics Commission (IEC) handbook. “The IEC endeavors to make public employees and officials more aware of potential ethics issues, and to advance an ethical culture throughout Colorado state and local government.” The BOT, faculty, exempt staff, and students are all required to follow the codes of ethics and descriptions of conflicts of interest which are found in each of their respective handbooks (BOT, faculty, exempt, students). Faculty members also have adopted the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) statement of professional ethics. Ethical behavior and conduct by college employees in auxiliary activities is further insured by statements of outside employment for State of Colorado employees, exempt staff, and faculty. In addition, FLC faculty members conduct ethical research that is in federal compliance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Institutional Review board (IRB), and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

Academic programs at FLC may pursue further professional ethical requirements particular to individual programs, such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the American Chemical Society, Colorado’s Programs of Excellence by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education, the Engineering Accreditation Commission, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education as well as the State of Colorado Board of Education, and the National Association for Music Education. Furthermore, each academic program incorporates field specific issues and ethical practices into their method courses. Faculty views may
be assessed by Faculty Senate surveys. The BOT may perform internal audits or regular program reviews to confirm that programs are necessary and appropriate. If concern arises from an internal audit, the BOT will direct the issue to the appropriate managerial administrator for correction.

“Fort Lewis College students are subject to the provisions of the Student Conduct Code while on college premises and when involved with off-campus Fort Lewis College-related activities.” The Constitution of The Associated Students of Fort Lewis College (ASFLC) requires that students “acting with exemplary character, originality and in harmony with the values of the college Community, will respectfully advocate for a student-centered agenda promoting general well-being, effective communication, informed leadership and efficient use of student resources.” Policies and procedures are in place for students accused of academic dishonesty. Students in auxiliary roles, such as athletes, are expected to comply with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) code of conduct and follow professional policies. Students who participate with club sports must promote and uphold the image of FLC and the Club Sports Program and act in a positive and courteous manner on campus and when visiting other institutions. Students who engage in campus research also are expected to follow the ethical practices detailed by the IRB and the Animal Use Committee. Students are also required to follow the AAUP statement on plagiarism as detailed in the FLC Faculty Handbook. FLC has a policy in place should concerns regarding scientific misconduct occur.

Most FLC community members have ethical practices which are specific to their area of expertise which they comply with to insure that integrity is promoted throughout the institution. Integrity in the financial operation of FLC is supported by extensive Finance and Administration policies. Business practices at FLC have policies which dictate fair and ethical practice and define conflicts of interest. FLC is required to meet the standards of the state controller which mandate that only ethical, fair and responsible practices will be tolerated. As part of the State of Colorado, the college uses Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures (GAAP) and Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) standards and undergoes an annual financial statement audit. Purchasing and procurement are regulated by appropriate policies which also address conflict of interest. Ethical practices and policies also exist with regard to nepotism, receipt, and administration of gift funds, investments, etc. Administrative representatives in the financial aid and admission offices follow the appropriate code of conduct and good practices for their expertise. The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) abides by the Association for Institutional Research Code of Ethics. OIR endeavors to collect, assemble, and provision reliable information in a timely fashion.

Use of institutional resources is regulated by appropriate business policies such as those which define the acceptable use of digital and computer resources and privacy. Ownership, legal protection, development, and disposition of intellectual property has been clearly defined and approved by the BOT. Copyright and patent policy further defines the ethical relationship between the institution and community members. Special considerations and policies related to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act are under development and we have policy for Challenged Material. Investigation of specific programs through the public FLC website or policy library readily will locate additional policies.

The FLC community is in compliance with federal positions regarding the American’s with Disability Act (ADA) and Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOAA). FLC is currently updating its campus-wide digital access to better be in accordance with ADA expectations. The Office of Disability Services serves all students to insure that no student is excluded due to a documented visual, auditory, injury, learning, attention, physical or psychiatric difficulty. Students who receive federal aid can expect that the FLC financial aid officers are in compliance with federal regulations. Admission officers have adopted the National Association for College Admission and
Counseling (NACAC) Principles of Good Practice. All students who live in FLC housing will encounter practices that are ADA and EOAA compliant. Military veterans are included by our admission policy. FLC pursues the goals of promoting cultural awareness and preventing discrimination further by promoting Common Ground and Safe Zone training across academic, residential and club programs. The Sexual Misconduct Policy defines how all employees, faculty, and students are to interact with integrity.

To insure that FLC is in compliance with its policies, employees of FLC are offered regular training on topics such as prevention of sexual harassment and campus emergencies and violence, as well as compliance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Title IX. All employees are encouraged to participate in these trainings. The college has a future goal to implement a system to document individual trainings and refresher training for all employees. Employees are further encouraged to register for Skyhawk alerts, a real-time community emergency communication service that supplements email notifications. Skyhawk alerts promote communication and safety of FLC community members. Campus policies implement appropriate Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards. FLC provides safety policies in many diverse areas such as “Lock Out Tag Out” procedures, hazardous material management, HIV and AIDS, wheeled devices, weapons, exposure control of blood borne pathogens, and distracted driving to mention a few.

FLC’s campus culture expects all citizens to act with integrity and honesty. FLC promotes and values practices and policies which insure ethical responsibility. Disciplinary action is taken when exempt, classified employees, students or faculty do not comply with ethical expectations. The President and Provost are also reviewed by the BOT with regard to ethical practice. When differences occur, there are established grievance policies for students and faculty. The BOT handbook provides further policy for faculty grievances and other employees may use the grievance policy in the exempt staff handbook or the State of Colorado grievance procedures.

Sources

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- 2A ABET FLC
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- 2A Acceptable use of instructional technology
- 2A ACS professional guidelines
- 2A ADA law
- 2A Animal Use Form
- 2A Animal Use Review Committee(2)
- 2A Anti-discrimination policy
- 2A ASFLC statement of purpose
- 2A Attention_Deficit-Hyperactive_Disorder
- 2A Blind-Low_Vision
- 2A Blood borne pathogen
- 2A BOT Code of ethics & conflicts of interest
- 2A BOT Grievance procedure
- 2A BOT Internal audit
- 2A Budget Policy - Internal Cost Allocation Methodology
- 2A Budget Policy - Operating budgets
- 2A CaAte ethics statement
- 2A CAEP & AACTE
- 2A CAEP bylaws
- 2A Campus Copyright Policy - Rev 1 2
- 2A CCHE Code of ethics
- 2A Challenged Material Policy
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- 2A Documentation_Guidelines disability
- 2A Emergency-Response-Plan-0912
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- 2A Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy
- 2A Ethics for Institutional Research
- 2A Exempt Staff Code of ethics
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- 2A Exempt staff outside employeement
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- 2A Fac handbook PART-III-Academic-Dishonesty
- 2A Faculty Handbook Grievance
- 2A Faculty responsibilities in handbook
- 2A Faculty Survey Results - Quantitative
- 2A Faculty Survey Results_ Qualitative
- 2A FERPA for Faculty and Staff
- 2A Finan Aid Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct (2)
- 2A FLC Club Sports handbook
- 2A FLC policy library
- 2A FLC website
- 2A FLC_SexualHarassPolicy Proposed Appendix A
- 2A FLCFiscalRulesSectionIII-Accounting policy
- 2A FLCFiscalRulesSectionIX-Reporting-08-28-14
- 2A FLCFiscalRules-SectionV-Contracts-01-17-12
- 2A FortLewisCollegeFiscalRules
- 2A Gift policy
- 2A Graves and Repatriation Act
- 2A Hazardous Materials Management
- 2A Head_Injury-Traumatic_Brain_Injury
- 2A HIV and AIDS
- 2A Indirect-Cost-Rate-Agreement-2015
- 2A Information technology security
- 2A Investment Policy draft March 24 2015
- 2A IRB training notice
- 2A IRB website(2)
- 2A Lock out Tag out
- 2A Method class sample
- 2A NACAC Principles
- 2A NAfME
- 2A NCAA codeofconduct
- 2A Nepotism policy
- 2A Non Violent campus
- 2A Office of Institutional Research
- 2A Office of Sponsored Research & Federal Relations(2)
- 2A OSHA_Em_Response_Training
- 2A Physical_Disabilities_and_Systemic_Illnesses
- 2A Presidential evaluation
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- 2A Provost evaluation
- 2A Psychiatric-Psychological_Disabilities
- 2A Purchasing policy
- 2A Reimbursement policy
- 2A Resources for Victims of Sexual Misconduct
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- 2A Specific_LD_Documentation_Guidelines
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- 2A State Col handbook behavior code
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- 2A stateboardofeducationcodeofethics12.16.10
- 2A Student Conduct Code
- 2A Student Grievance procedure
- 2A Substance Abuse athletes POLICY 09-10
- 2A Veteran admissions
- 2A Weapons policy
- 2A Wheeled devices
- 2A_Public_safety_announcement_example
- 2AIntellectual Policy Final June 2015
- 4.A.1Academic Program Review Policy
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.

Readily available on the FLC website are tuition and housing costs, fees, information about accreditation, scholarships, tuition waivers, and academic programs, the academic catalog; and the annual security report. The Office of Marketing and Communication and the Office of Institutional Research work closely to ensure that statistics and information about the college are current and accurate on the website and in print pieces. These two offices also communicate with other departments on campus (e.g., Admission, Alumni) to ensure that staff speaking on behalf of the college are provided with current and accurate information.

The public is informed of programs, requirements, costs, policies, other practices which promote integrity at FLC through its website. Areas of public information do not require a login for access. All policies are vetted to the campus community by following the process for Policy Development Procedure and the Policy Review Procedures. The Policy Statement provides a framework for the development, review and approval of academic and administrative polices. The FLC Policy Library organizes and provides public access to many ethical and responsible conduct policies. Further investigation of individual groups or programs through the public FLC website readily locates more specific policies, such as those mentioned previously. The Office of Marketing and Communications promotes the institution to external audiences such as prospective students and families by supervising and organizing the advertising, social media sites, news releases, and the website for FLC.

Sources

- 2B Academic programs
- 2B Accreditation
- 2B Admission
- 2B Annual Security report
- 2B Catalog, programs, courses
- 2B Development, approval, and review of academic and administrative policies
- 2B External data reporting
- 2B FLCFiscalRulesSectionIX-Reporting-08-28-14
- 2B Institutional policy development, approval, review
- 2B Investment Policy draft March 24 2015
- 2B Itemized Student Fees 2014
- 2B Native American Tuition Waiver
- 2B Office of Marketing and Communications
- 2B OIRPA data
- 2B Policy library
- 2B Public information disclosure
- 2B Public safety announcement example
- 2B Responding to media inquiries
- 2B Scholarships
- 2B statistical-marketing-claims
- 2B Tuition and costs
- 2B Undergraduate-Tuition-Fees-14-15
- Intellectual Policy Final June 2015
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.

Board members are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate. Appointments are based upon party splits and areas of residence—only two local members are allowed on the board at the same time. The governing board of Fort Lewis College follows Title 24, Article 18 of the Colorado Revised Statutes—the Colorado State Code of Ethics—which mandates fair and ethical behavior on the part of government officials and employees of the State of Colorado. Additionally, the code of ethics in the Board of Trustees Manual of Policies and Procedures for Fort Lewis College mandates that the governing body demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, and honesty, and through personal conduct inspire public confidence and trust in the college. The BOT follows provisions set forth in CRS 24-6-401, which require publically posting the minutes of the BOT meetings on the website and inviting the public to meetings to insure that their ethical and responsible work is available for review.

The BOT manual requires that all decisions of the board, board-designated officers, and college officers be made solely on the basis of a desire to promote the best interests of the college. Appointment to the Board constitutes a public trust, and any effort to realize personal gain through official conduct, advancement of competing interest, or interests that appear to be in conflict with the interests of the board and the college is a violation of that trust. Board policy recommends that its members follow procedures set forth in CRS 24-18-110 for making disclosure to the Secretary of State of actions proposed by them that may result in conflicts of interest.

The BOT appoints the president and conducts an annual evaluation to ensure that sound institutional goals are being pursued and achieved. While the BOT delegates the day-to-day management of Fort Lewis College to the president and administration, the administration, BOT, and faculty members work together to promote collaborative decision making.

Sources

- 2C1 CO Code of Ethics
- 2C2 Code of Ethics for Public Employees
- 2C3 BOT Ethics and Conflict of Interest
- 2C4 BOT Minutes April 4, 2014
- 2C5 BOT Public Meetings
- 2C6 BOT President Evaluation
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.

Academic freedom lays the groundwork for learning and scholarship. The 2012–2016 strategic plan promotes these core values and ideals with the following statement: “Academic freedom is the foundation for learning and advancement of knowledge.” Fort Lewis College vigorously protects freedom of inquiry and expression while expecting civility and mutual respect to be practiced in all interactions, and because of its importance to the college, the following policies and procedures are in place to ensure freedom of expression. Evidence is provided by nine readily accessible, core documents. All of these documents are housed in the FLC Policy Library Home:

- The FLC Faculty Handbook: Academic Freedom.
- The FLC Faculty Handbook: Part III: Student Academic Grievance Policy.
- The AAUP Academic Freedom Statement, adopted by FLC.
- The Student Conduct Code.
- The Public Speech and Peaceful Assembly Policy.
- The Campus Posting Policy.
- The Campus Solicitation and Vending Policy.
- The College Academic Policy: Course Syllabus.
- An intellectual disagreement policy that explicitly states that students have the right to engage in intellectual disagreement with their instructors and associates without fear of recrimination or punishment.

Here are a few examples that provide affirmation of FLC’s commitment to freedom of expression:

- The BOT has approved the Faculty Handbook and thereby endorses the principle of academic freedom.
- Faculty create syllabi and choose textbooks for the courses they teach.
- Faculty are allowed to select their own teaching method(s).
- Faculty can pursue their own research and research method(s).
- Students have access to all information pertinent to coursework via the Learning Management System.
- Students and Faculty may organize, convene, and host forums on topics of their choosing.
- As of March 2015, the college has received no academic freedom grievances, which further attests to the college’s commitment to academic freedom.
- New faculty are apprised of campus services, business policies, and personnel handbooks, which include information related to academic freedom. They also sign an acknowledgment form that they have been so apprised.
- FLC offers recourse for faculty concerned about academic freedom via a hearing of faculty peers available through the standing Faculty Senate Grievance Committee.
- A student-managed and produced bi-weekly print newspaper, The Independent (the Indy), is freely distributed across campus and provides a venue for student freedom of expression. An
online version of the Indy provides coverage for breaking news and events.

Faculty members concerned that academic freedom has been compromised by administrative action may request a hearing by faculty peers through the Faculty Senate.

**Sources**

- 2D AAUP Academic Freedom Statement
- 2D Academic Grievance OCR
- 2D Academic Policy Course Syllabus OCR
- 2D Campus Posting Policy OCR
- 2D Campus Solicitation Vending Policy OCR
- 2D Faculty Handbook Part II academic freedom OCR
- 2D HR Matthews email OCR
- 2D HR New Employees OCR
- 2D HR Welcome to FLC OCR
- 2D Public Speech Policy OCR
- 2D Student Conduct Code OCR
- 2D14 FLC policy library OCR pdf
- 2E Learning Management System OCR
- Fort-Lewis-College-Strategic-Plan-2012-2016
- Student Rights and Responsibilities
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

FLC expects faculty to demonstrate professional growth through research and scholarly activity. FLC provides oversight, guidance and support services to ensure research integrity and academic honesty (detailed in the following subsections). Privileges for active, eligible staff include the opportunity to take up to eight semester hours per calendar year of tuition-free college courses as part of the FLC education assistance plan. The Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOAA) policy states that faculty and staff training will be provided for new hires; the EOAA coordinator is responsible for providing education and training to faculty and staff on the issues covered in the college’s EOAA Plan. FLC is committed to “recruit, hire, train, transfer and promote persons in all job classifications” as detailed in EOAA Policy, Section 1. Students are provided guidance via specific courses that focus on ethics. However, these courses are not required of all students. All students are required to complete composition courses which provide instruction on the proper use of sources. The college enforces existing academic honesty policies.

2.E.1.

The Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) and federal relations policies exist to assist faculty via multiple mechanisms, including identifying external resources, writing proposals, applying and processing applications, budgeting, and college policy and federal compliance; the OSR is responsible for policies governing integrity of research and scholarly practice pertaining to external grant submissions. Many granting agencies have strict ethical policies; financial consequences will result from non-compliance. FLC has also adopted the AAUP policy entitled “Policy for Responding to Allegations of Scientific Misconduct.” Section III of the Faculty Handbook specifically addresses procedures for academic policies related to academic dishonesty. Additionally, the college OSR director travels regularly to attend resource meetings applicable for FLC expenditures and to inform faculty of research opportunities. The OSR subscribes to the following listservs run by the following agencies:

- The American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Grants Resource Center (monthly alerts provided to faculty).
- The National Institutes of Health.
- The Council on Undergraduate Research (monthly alerts provided to faculty).
- The Colorado Department of Higher Education (for policy initiatives).
- The Colorado STEM Network (teleconference meetings hosted by Colorado Education Initiative and Department of Higher Education).
- The National Indian Education Association (monthly email alerts about federal higher education policies and programs affecting Native Serving Institutions).
• The U.S. Department of Education Minority Serving Institution stakeholder emails (federal funding opportunities for minority serving institutions).
• The National Council of University Research Administrators (information related to regulations and compliance; some research opportunities; administrators of the Controller’s Office and the OSR regularly attend national and regional meetings).
• The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (higher education government relations pertaining to public policy; annual meeting attended by administrators of the OSR).

The following committees, offices, and review boards also provide support related to internal integrity of research and scholarly activities and the ethical rights and use animal subjects in accordance with federal guidelines:

• Institutional Review Board
• Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
• Student Publications Committee

2.E.2

Students are offered instruction and guidance in the ethical use of information resources, as indicated below.

• An online policy addressing academic honesty issues at FLC is available on the John F. Reed library website.
• The Writing Center provides guidance to students ranging from writing skills, to proper citation methods, to avoiding plagiarism. Freshmen are required to complete the online library tutorial and one hour of in-class instruction offered by a librarian in the Composition 126 and 150 courses. These required competency courses help students achieve critical thinking skills, library awareness, rhetorical analysis, and ethical use of information resources.
• FLC Library Internet Policy addresses appropriate conduct and intended use issues pertaining to the internet and serves as a guideline for proper and ethical use of computers in public areas. Specific guidelines for student conduct and the acceptable use of Information technology are detailed in Policy 6-10: Acceptable use of Information Technology.
• FLC maintains a copyright information website that details the differences between plagiarism and copyright infringement. The website also provides information and tools for faculty, students, and staff to learn, and promote compliance with, copyright law, and privacy policies as established by the American Library Association of Code of Ethics. The college hired a copyright librarian and has committed resources toward educating faculty and students about copyright policies.

2.E.3.

The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity, as detailed below:

• All faculty are required to post syllabi on the Learning Management System. In accordance with the Syllabus Policy, faculty are required to include FLC’s statement on Academic Dishonesty for students. As such, the Learning Management System provides ready documentation of FLC’s commitment to deter academic dishonesty.
• Instructors, in the most relevant disciplines, are urged to provide examples of plagiarism in their syllabi.
• Individual instructors monitor their own classes and assignments, and faculty bear primary responsibility for detecting and penalizing academic dishonesty.
- The number of students charged with academic dishonesty (fall 2007 through spring 2013) is available for review.
- When violations of ethical practice occur, they may be considered adequate cause for disciplinary action under Part II, Section 17 of the Faculty Handbook (2E pdf, Faculty Handbook Part II, Section 17).
- The Office of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, tracks and addresses student academic integrity violations:
  - Student Academic Integrity Violations Report Form
  - Student Academic Dishonesty Template 1st Charge
  - Student Academic Dishonesty Template 2nd Charge
  - Measures of enforcing policies relate to the severity of the problem.
- The college Institutional Review Board embraces a stringent enforcement policy.
- The level of academic dishonesty by students is determined by the instructor; penalty may range from a simple reprimand, through a lowered or failing grade on the assignment, up to, and including, failing the course, as the instructor deems appropriate.

Sources

- 2D Academic Policy Course Syllabus OCR
- 2E 19OCR pdf Numbr Students Charged with Acad Dishon F07 - Sp13
- 2E 20 OCR pdf Report Form Acad Dishonesty
- 2E 21 OCR pdf Template Acad Dishonesty 1st charge
- 2E 22 OCR pdf Template Acad Dishonesty 2nd charge
- 2E Learning Management System OCR
- 2E OCR Animal Subjects Approval Form
- 2E OCR EOAA Policy and Section VIII
- 2E OCR EOAA Training policy
- 2E OCR FLC Educational Assistance Plan
- 2E OCR FLC Library Code of Ethics
- 2E OCR FLC Library On Line Academic Policy
- 2E OCR FLC Writing Center Online Resources
- 2E OCR IRB
- 2E OCR Library Copyright Brochure
- 2E OCR Library Internet Policies
- 2E OCR OSR Assistance Page
- 2E OCR OSR Budgeting
- 2E OCR OSR Finding Funding
- 2E OCR OSR Forms Resources
- 2E OCR OSR Grant Submission
- 2E OCR OSR Policy Compliance
- 2E OCR OSR Policy Compliance(2)
- 2E OCR OSR Proposal Writing
- 2E OCR Research Misconduct Policy
- 2E OCR Staff Study Privileges
• 2E Student Publications Cmt OCR
• FAC handbk Section 17
• img125 FLC OCR EOAA Sct 1
• Policy 6 10
2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

Fort Lewis College (FLC) has policies and procedures in place to assure that all members of its community act with integrity. FLC promotes a culture of ethical practices and expectations. The existences of policies which promote ethical practices allow the college to be involved in important federal and state programs which provide a foundation for its funding.

FLC employees are required to act ethically and responsibly by at least two behavioral codes. The ethical conduct of FLC employees is outlined in the State of Colorado Employee handbook. All employees of the State of Colorado are required to comply with the State of Colorado Independent Ethics Commission (IEC) handbook. FLC also has specific ethics policies for all community members including students, faculty, exempt staff, classified staff and the Board of Trustees (BOT).

To assure that FLC is in compliance with its policies, employees of FLC are offered regular training on topics such as prevention of sexual harassment and campus violence, as well as compliance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Title IX. All employees are encouraged to participate in these trainings. The college has a future goal to implement a system to document individual trainings and refresher training for all employees. Employees are further encouraged to register for Skyhawk alerts, a real-time community emergency communication service. Skyhawk alerts promote communication and safety of FLC community members. Campus policies implement appropriate Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards. FLC provides safety policies in many diverse areas such as “Lock Out Tag Out” procedures, hazardous material management, HIV and AIDS, wheeled devices, weapons, exposure control of blood borne pathogens, and distracted driving.

FLC’s campus culture expects all citizens to act with integrity and honesty. FLC promotes and values practices and policies which insure ethical responsibility. Disciplinary action is taken when exempt, classified employees, students or faculty do not comply with ethical expectations. When differences occur, there are established grievance policies for students and faculty. The Board of Trustees’ handbook outlines the ethical expectations of the BOT, and provides further policy for faculty grievances. Other employees may use the grievance policy in the exempt staff handbook or the State of Colorado grievance procedures.

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

Assuring the quality, relevancy, and currency of programs and courses is a central pursuit at Fort Lewis College. All academic programs are reviewed in cycles according to the program review process, which includes reflection on program course content and a peer review process to ensure currency and relevancy. In addition, all academic programs review content in the Catalog of Courses each year. Certificates, majors and minors are approved according to strict curricular standards adhered to by the Curriculum Committee and the curricular process. In academic year 2014-2015, the college underwent curricular redesign for all majors and minors in order to update its programs of study including general education. In addition, a rigorous assessment program for each major ensures that the campus engages in continuous improvement of course content via student learning. Students are held to academic policies on grades and timely completion of core general education courses including mathematics and composition. The college also adheres to rigorous standards which guides course requirements and student performance appropriate for each course level.

Several academic programs are accredited by external, professional accrediting bodies (AACSB, ABET, CAEP, NASM, ACS, COATE). Many academic programs also collect information from relevant industries, employers, and community stakeholders regarding the quality and currency of their academic programs.

FLC also has an extensive set of articulation agreements with other Colorado institutions of higher learning, orchestrated by the CDHE. In addition, over 120 courses are approved for direct transfer as general education courses to CDHE institutions. These agreements and course equivalencies are indicators of program currency.

3.A.2
Fort Lewis College offers degree programs at the baccalaureate level and a Master’s Degree in Teacher Leadership. All major programs have current assessment plans and distinct learning outcomes. Differentiation between undergraduate course content is articulated in the institution’s statement on **rigor**. In addition, the college offers one certificate program in **Geographic Information Systems**.

### 3.A.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).

FLC coursework is delivered through various modes and locations. College-wide and program learning outcomes must drive curriculum regardless of delivery mode or instructional location. FLC primarily delivers course and program content in the traditional classroom formats of lecture and laboratory courses. The college also offers credit-bearing internships and field instruction. In addition, the college offers and supports various distance education delivery models at the course level and offers off-campus courses for credit in **Faculty-led study-abroad** programs. **Student teaching**, practicums, internships, and field school modules of instruction also must adhere to all curricular standards and guidelines. All coursework must adhere to established curricular standards regardless of delivery mode. Accordingly, all courses must meet **CCHE equivalency requirements** and the FLC **Academic Credit Hour** requirements for all modes of delivery. In addition, all courses within degree programs must be mapped to program learning outcomes.

At the course level, FLC adheres to a strict syllabus policy, which stipulates standards for all course syllabi. This ensures consistency in stating learning goals, student grading, assessment, and communication of important college and course information. In fall 2014 the college adopted Canvas from Instructure as its learning management system. The **learning management system policy** requires faculty to post syllabi and grades. Like the syllabus policy, this also helps ensure consistency across all modes of delivery both on and off campus.

### Sources

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- 3A1e ABET 14-15 EAC Criteria 3-13-14(2)
- 3A1e CAEP standards
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- 3A1e NASM_HANDBOOK_2013-14
- 3A1f 2013 11-16 Assessment Policy - Final
- 3A1g Curriculum Oversight
- 3A1h Notes from the Alliance Stakeholders
- 3A2a College-wide ILearning Goals
- 3A2a POL-DevelopmentofanUndergraduateCertificateProgram-170715-1328-290
- 3A2e GIS Certificate
- 3A3a 2013 10-09 Instructions for Designating Distance Education Courses REV003
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- 3A3c POL-CourseSyllabusPolicy-170715-1358-294
- 3A3d Study Abroad Course Worksheet
- 3A3g Student_Teacher_Handbook_FALL_2013 ct revisions
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- 3A3l CCHE Credit Hour

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 learning outcomes for general education program link lower level (100 and 200 numbered) distribution courses to the college mission and the Colorado Department of Higher Education general education content and competency criteria. The distribution requirements are spread across general categories: Composition, Mathematics, Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, History, and the Sciences. These categories are compatible with most general education programs at liberal arts colleges. Moreover, courses in these content areas are guaranteed to transfer to other public colleges and universities in the state through the CCHE GTPathways program.

3.B.2

FLC’s general education program is grounded, foremost, in the college’s mission. The general education learning outcomes were dovetailed with the AAC&U’s LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes and content and competency criteria from the CDHE. These outcomes emphasize diversity, citizenship, and critical thinking. The five learning outcomes are assessed across the spectrum of general education courses and major program capstone courses. They are designed to ensure that all degree-seeking students learn the same general competencies. The majority of the courses in the college’s general education program are a part of the CDHE GTPathways guaranteed transfer system, including courses in composition, mathematics, the arts and humanities, history, social science, and the sciences. In 2014, the college embarked on an ambitious plan to further entrench the general education program into the overall educational experience at the college by anchoring general education as the keystone academic program which supports and informs the majors, minors, and the certificates.

3.B.3
Every FLC academic program includes the collection, analysis, and effective communication of materials germane to their respective discipline or interdisciplinary subject. The policy on rigor serves as a guidepost for introduction, reinforcement, and mastery of skills and content. For example, Inquiry, Critical Thinking, Communication, and Responsible Application of Learning are part of the college-wide learning outcomes which inform academic programs. These outcomes are evident in the annual Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Research Symposium, a program of research experiences that includes student presentations, recitals, and performances. Undergraduate Research Grants also support upper-division research work by students within their major. In addition, student work is often exhibited in the college’s art gallery. Students also assist with gathering, displaying and exhibiting work in the gallery, library and archival collections at the Center of Southwest Studies. The capstone experience in the teacher education program also exemplifies the importance of analysis, communication, and skills. Teacher education also provides pedagogical skills for use of technology in the classroom. The skills students acquire by participating in these activities—and through coursework in the general education program—provide evidence that students will be prepared for graduate school, the work environment, and citizenship.

3.B.4

An FLC education includes an extensive academic and co-curricular focus on diversity. Fort Lewis College is one of two institutions of higher education in the United States that is required to offer tuition-free education to enrolled Native American Tribal members. When coupled with the college’s role as the State of Colorado’s liberal arts college, this provides a unique opportunity to enrich the student experience through curricular and co-curricular offerings. According to a survey of FLC alumni, roughly 85 percent say that FLC provided at least some skills with intercultural literacy. This should be expected given the college’s student body makeup and historic mission.

However, NSSE data indicates that the college needs to focus on delivering diversity in its curriculum with broader institutional purpose and intent. Diversity and equality based coursework exists in two primary locations in the curriculum: general education and in the majors. The college general education program directly addresses diversity through its learning outcomes and courses in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. The college has academic programs in Anthropology, Gender and Women’s Studies, Sociology, Modern Languages and Native American and Indigenous Studies, whose material directly relates to the importance of cultural diversity, human identity, and equality. Significant course offerings and major requirements that address the diversity of the human experience also exist in history and other programs such as teacher education, psychology, and the School of Business Administration core.

Exceptional co-curricular programming exists at the Native American Center, El Centro, and the Center of Southwest Studies, as does diverse programming at the Community Concert Hall. Student support programming in the college’s student success centers such as TRIO assists under-represented groups and first-generation students. Human diversity has also been a central theme of the Common Reading Experience. The college’s 2012-2016 Strategic Plan has targeted the promotion of Study Abroad and Foreign exchange as a way to enhance student’s exposure to the diversity of the world on and off campus. The college has an extensive study abroad program and including FLC faculty-led study abroad programs, both of which enrich the student educational experience and provide students with diverse course programming and exposure to the diversity of the human experience.

3.B.5

FLC faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge.
The review of tenure-track faculty and the requirements for promotion and tenure include contribution to scholarship in the faculty member’s discipline. In addition, program reviews include summaries of each program including faculty scholarship and creative work. Every year, the college recognizes a featured scholar and features all faculty scholarly work in the Reed Library. In addition, faculty work directly with individual students and student teams in undergraduate research projects in most major programs and in capstone courses. FLC students often contribute to Metamorphosis, a journal of undergraduate research through COPLAC. Student and faculty research is also archived every year on Fort Works. Students also exhibit their research, creative and scholarly work in the Undergraduate Research Symposium which showcases research from the arts, humanities, and sciences in the spring term. Every year, student writers also compete for the college Writing Board’s Essay awards. In addition, many programs feature exhibitions of capstone level scholarship and creative work including the Departments of Art and Design, Music and Theatre.

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- 3A1e Liberal Arts Core--Requirements and Courses
- 3A2a College-wide ILearning Goals
- 3B1a Liberal Arts Core Learning Outcomes
- 3B1b GT Pathways Competencies and Content
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- 3B5h Essay contest
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- 4.B.1.5-year Prgm Assessment Plan Template
- 4.B.2GE Assessment Plan 2014
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

Fort Lewis College currently employs 222 faculty members including 120 tenured or tenure-track faculty and 50 permanent lecturers, in addition to adjunct faculty. The faculty to student ratio is 19:1. The number of faculty has dipped slightly over the past seven years reflecting fiscal challenges at the State of Colorado level and shifts in the college’s enrollment. The number of faculty in tenure/tenure-track positions and in full-time positions has dropped slightly, as faculty salaries have been pulled up to or above-peer averages. The faculty teach in all modes of delivery: lecture, laboratory, field instruction, abroad, and in various modes of on-line learning. In addition to their research and creative activities, tenured and tenure-track faculty also perform service to the college, their respective schools, and their home programs or departments. Tenured and tenure-track faculty have traditionally served as the primary advisors of students in their academic majors. They are assisted by student success coaches in the advising program. The faculty are primarily in charge of curriculum, as outlined in the curriculum policy and the curriculum committee policies. As they are responsible for grading, faculty also oversee evaluation of student performance. Faculty also led the creation of the college’s policy on rigor. Lastly, faculty in individual major programs and departments are in charge of the assessment process at the program, course, and assignment level.

3.C.2

All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

3.C.3

Fort Lewis College has a uniform evaluation for all tenure-track faculty. Teaching faculty—both
tenured or tenure-track—are evaluated according to policies in the Faculty Handbook part 2.10. Tenure-track professors are evaluated on a yearly basis according to teaching, service, and research. Tenured faculty undergo post-tenure review every five years. The expectations of tenure and tenure-track faculty are articulated in the handbook and in individual program/department expectation statements. According to the Faculty Handbook, Lecturers and Instructors (full-time non-tenure-track faculty) are evaluated on a yearly basis by program coordinators and department chairs. The review process for tenure-track faculty includes input from program directors, department chairs and/or program coordinators, program and departmental personnel committees, the college-wide personnel committee, the appropriate dean, and the provost. Faculty are also evaluated by their students in online course evaluations at the end of each term.

3.C.4

Fort Lewis College faculty are supported in their teaching and research endeavors by a broad array of institutional support in the form of grants, start-up funds, support for teaching, and sabbaticals. Fort Lewis College awards Faculty Development Grants for teaching and research every year. These grants can be used for teaching innovation or for travel to conferences or institutes, laboratory research support, and field work support. Faculty must apply for these research and teaching support monies. Over the past seven years, an average of $50,000 was awarded per year for faculty research and roughly $20,000 per year for teaching development. In addition, all junior faculty are awarded the $1500 Byron Dare start-up money, which span the first two years that junior faculty are employed. These funds are to be used for research, scholarly activity, and teaching development. Lastly, the Fort Lewis College Foundation awards money to faculty on an annual basis for research, travel, and teaching innovation. Over the past seven years, the Foundation has awarded, on average, $30,000 to faculty per year. The college also supports innovation in the classroom through $1,500 Teaching Empowerment Team grants, which are awarded to faculty who work together over a semester towards innovation in particular curricula or courses. The college also promotes brown bag symposiums for teaching and learning during the academic year (Let’s Talk Teaching).

The Fort Lewis College Office of Sponsored Research and Federal Relations provides support for faculty and staff who are applying for local, national, federal, and international grant support. In the past eight years over $24 million in grants for academic support, student support, and capital improvement have been awarded to the college.

Finally, the college supports faculty innovation in research through sabbaticals. Upon tenure, faculty can take year- or semester-long sabbaticals after their applications have been approved. Over the past seven years, 52 sabbaticals have been awarded.

3.C.5

Fort Lewis College prides itself on the accessibility of its faculty and the mentorship faculty provide to students. NSSE data indicates that FLC students interact more with their instructors than do students at the college’s Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) peers. The college’s faculty to student ratio (19 to 1) is very low, as is its average class sizes (23). In addition, the standard syllabus policy requires all faculty list office hours (both in their physical offices on campus and online in discussion boards, course announcements, and grading, if applicable). More importantly the learning management system policy requires communicating key information to students including the syllabus and grades via the online learning platform: Canvas from Instructure.

Fort Lewis College academic support staff, including tutors, financial aid advisors, academic advisors, and others who work in co-curricular portions of the institution are qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development. Every job description and job announcement includes minimum degree qualifications as well as levels of experience pertinent to the particular job.

The college provides a comprehensive student advising program. Two goals of the most recent Strategic Plan were to streamline the advising process and the implementation and effective utilization of appropriate technology for advising students. New faculty are trained during new faculty orientation on how to advise their students. As mentioned above, the college is piloting an advising model that uses Student Success Coaches who are trained to advise students, including training on technology used to support advising, including the CollegeSource u.achieve Degree Audit System, WebCAPP, Map-Works, and the EAB Student Success Collaborative platform. All advising professionals, including faculty, use these platforms and this technology to track degree completion status, the number of hours completed; most important, they use it to help students make key choices, such as the selection of majors and minors. Faculty advisors and student success coaches also advise students on whether they should seek assistance through various tutoring programs or enroll in supplemental instruction courses.

The college has several centers that provide tutoring to students, including the Writing Center, programs that support STEM disciplines, the Tutoring Center, the Native American Center, and TRIO/Program for Academic Advancement. The office of Career Services assists students in resume writing, professionalism, internship placement, and job placement. The staff who work in these units must meet minimum job qualifications and are supported by in-house and off-campus training and development opportunities.

Fort Lewis College’s Office of Financial Aid is staffed by professionals who provide basic information and guidance for students applying for and receiving financial aid in the form of grants, scholarships, and loans. Financial aid professionals have met minimum job qualifications and adhere to college-wide and federal standards of practice in financial aid. They are also supported by development and in-service training opportunities.

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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 academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Argument

3.D.1

FLC provides services for student learning and effective teaching in the form of supplemental instruction, tutoring, and counseling. Programs work with students to ensure that they are knowledgeable about programs, services, and college resources. Several long-standing programs provide tutoring to students, including assistance with entry-level math courses, with composition courses, and for degree programs: the Algebra Alcove, the Math Assistance Center, the Writing Center, the Program for Academic Advancement and the Tutoring Center. In addition, STEM3 provides assistance for students in the sciences. Two long-standing campus student centers, El Centro and the Native American Center, provide tutoring and degree assistance for students of diverse backgrounds, including Native America and Hispanic students. A number of these programs have developed assessment plans to evaluate their effectiveness. The college has an extensive Disability Services offices that provides technological, pedagogical, and test-taking assistance for students with learning needs.

In addition, the campus has a very large student affairs division, which provides a broad spectrum of co-curricular activities and support systems ranging from the Leadership Center and Diversity Programming, to the Counseling and Student Life centers.

The campus provides adequate learning support services in the college libraries with librarians who help students navigate collections and databases for assignments and research projects. The Offices of Career Services offers assistance with internship placement, professional development, and career placement for students in the School of Arts and Sciences, Teacher Education, and the School of Business.

3.D.2

Fort Lewis College provides adequate direction in course placement and also provides supplementary tutoring and instruction to ensure student success. The college uses standardized tests such as the ACT and SAT to place students in composition and mathematics courses. The college also uses
Accuplacer to assist in placement in composition and mathematics courses. Students who need remedial coursework in mathematics and composition have historically been placed in transitional courses. In 2014-2015 the college implemented one-credit hour supplemental academic instruction courses, which are partnered with introductory mathematics and composition instruction.

As noted above, the Algebra Alcove, the Math Assistance Center, the Writing Center, and the Tutoring Center provide support for students in introductory mathematics and composition courses. Tutoring is provided through the Tutoring Center and individual departments to support students early on in their majors. Opportunities exist for streamlining student tutoring efforts on campus to increase efficiency and eliminate program overlaps.

3.D.3

Fort Lewis College has targeted more effective, streamlined advising as a campus-wide priority. This includes systematic navigation tools and information resources which assist students in degree completion. While student advising has been considered part of the faculty teaching role, the college is embarking on a new advising strategy for academic year 2015-2016 to address shortcomings in effective advising. Several programs will pilot Student Success Centers, with professional advising staff assigned to academic majors. These professionals will meet with students on a wide array of issues from course selection to financial aid. Academic units not taking part in the pilot will maintain the traditional faculty role in advising. In both models, faculty are expected to develop strong mentor/mentee relationships with students. Students are assigned an academic advisor once enrolled and are placed with an advisor in their major department once they have declared. Traditionally, faculty advisors meet with their advisees during two-week advising sessions in the fall and spring terms to select courses for the following terms and to track degree completion. Faculty are available to their advisees out of the advising and registration weeks to discuss grades, course progress, future degree planning, and post-graduation possibilities. In addition, the college has relied on professional academic advisors for recently admitted students.

Supplemental advising is offered through various student support office including the Program for Academic Advancement and STEM3 (both of which are TRiO programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education). These programs help students overcome cultural, social, and economic barriers to higher education. In addition, advising services are provided by professional advisors at the Native American Center.

In addition, many individual academic programs and departments provide group advising during the advising period including the departments of sociology, biology and the Program in Environmental Studies. Finally, student athletes are advised by the Department of Athletics to ensure compliance with NCAA grade and registration requirements.

The college publishes both four-year and transfer (two-year) maps to graduation for every academic major to assist advisors and students in degree planning. In addition, in 2014, the college implemented UAchieve, a platform that displays student progress towards their degree including major requirements, general education requirements, and electives.

3.D.4

The college provides a sufficient infrastructure for effective teaching and learning. The college has invested greatly in expanding its building infrastructure over the past 15 years, including additions to, and renovations of, the Student Union Facility and a new Biology wing of Berndt Hall. The college’s buildings include roughly 140,000 square feet of instructional space. This includes over 52,000 square
feet in traditional classroom/lecture hall space, nearly 76,000 square feet for traditional laboratory instruction, and 12,000 square feet in special class and individual laboratory instruction and research. In 2014, ground was broken for the new Geosciences, Physics, and Engineering Building which will provide 60,000 square feet which include two lecture halls, six geoscience labs, 13 Physics and Engineering labs and an observatory.

There are two libraries on campus; the main library, Reed Library, and a research library at the Center of Southwest Studies, Delaney Library. Reed Library includes over 170,000 volumes, two interlibrary loan databases, and 60 other databases, which provide access to 170 information sources for students. Delaney Library includes over 25,000 volumes dedicated to the study of the American Southwest. This library also contains 7,000 feet of archival space with over 37,000 objects, from lithics to art, and textiles; over 300,000 photographic images; and over 1,000 oral histories. A gallery in the Art and Design Building and performance spaces, including a recital hall housed in the Department of Music and the Community Concert Hall on campus, provide additional infrastructure that support students and instructors in the areas of art and design and music. The Student Union has a large foyer, several large meeting rooms, and a ballroom often used for the demonstration of student work. The Department of Theatre has two theatres, a prop room, and a set-building faculty. The college also has an orchard, a campus garden, and a greenhouse used by faculty and students in the Department of Biology and Environmental Studies and student organizations. Facilities in the Campbell Child and Family Center provide on-site learning opportunities for students in teacher education.

The college has a sufficient technological infrastructure to service student, faculty, and staff needs. All technology is supported and maintained by the Office of Information Technology and the Office of Digital Innovation and eLearning. The budgeting and staff platform is Banner. Information for faculty, staff, and students is housed in WebOPUS. The student degree tracking platform is the CollegeSource u.achieve Degree Audit System. Faculty and students also utilize Canvas from Instructure for distance education and to supplement face to face instruction. In addition, there are over 60 classrooms that are equipped with information and visual technology and numerous student computer labs on campus. All faculty are provided computers, which are upgraded every five years.

3.D.5

The college provides sufficient guidance in the effective use of research and information sources. The foundations of research and information literacy are part of the coursework in first-and second-year freshman composition courses. Professional librarians assist student research inquiry in both Reed Library and the Center for Southwest Studies Delaney Research Library, where students are introduced to the holdings of the library, inter-library loan programs, and search databases. Various tutoring centers and the Writing Center direct students to important sources or resources for their papers and research projects, and the STEP FOCCUS program provides research training and mentoring in labs.

Students develop and refine their research skills in writing-intensive coursework in the general education program and in their academic major. Senior capstone courses and research methods courses in numerous programs help students select the most appropriate sources of data for their work. Students are also required to fill out mandatory Institutional Review Board applications for research that involves human subjects, exposing them to the ethical and legal dimensions of data selection and collection. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee provides review for non-human research. Perhaps the best example of effective guidance and use of research methods and data collection is the School of Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Research Symposium.
Sources

- 3B3a Undergraduate Research Symposium
- 3C6g Career Services Annual Report 2012_2013_updated(1)
- 3C6k FLC Overview Introduction to SSC
- 3D1 Student Affairs Assessment
- 3D1b 2013-2014 Tutoring Center final report
- 3D1c Welcome to the Writing Center
- 3D1d STEM SSC at Fort Lewis College
- 3D1e Welcome to PAA
- 3D1f Welcome to the Native American Center
- 3D1g Welcome to El Centro
- 3D1h Mathematics Help Centers and Learning Support
- 3D2a Supplemental Academic Instruction(1)
- 3D2a TRS 82 92 Syllabus
- 3D2a Use the Library
- 3D2b Placement Rulesupdated2014v1
- 3D2f SAT ACT Placement Guidelines
- 3D2h Disability Services Mission
- 3D3f Maps to Graduation
- 3D4a Biology Department Facility
- 3D4b GPE Building
- 3D4c Center for Southwest Studies Data
- 3D4e Welcome to the Department of Theatre
- 3D4f Welcome to the Campbell Child and Family Center
- 3D4h Smart Classrooms and Computer Labs
- 3D4j FLC Instructional Space Utilization Study SUBMITTED 8_May_2014
- 3D5 FOCUSS National Science Foundation STEP
- 3D5d Comp Syllabus
- 3D5f Animal Use Review Committee (2)
- 3D5f Institutional Review Board
- 3E1a SA.Cocurricular(2)
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

According to the Fort Lewis College 2012-2016 Strategic Plan, co-curricular activities are essential to student success and growth. These programs provide an integrative function for the entire college experience. Students are provided with many opportunities to engage intellectually, athletically, and culturally on and off campus, with programs housed primarily in the Division of Student Affairs. There are 15 units within the division that work within an assessment structure that includes four learning domains: Balanced Life Choices, Critical Life Skills, Cultural Competence, and Social Responsibility. These programs, which serve thousands of students each year and employ over 250 student employees, align with the college’s mission and core values. The college’s commitment to its mission of serving a diverse student population is exemplified by programs in student affairs including the Native American Center, El Centro and the Office of Diversity Programming. The Leadership Center promotes civic responsibility and engaged citizenship. The Leadership Center also provides a non-credit certificate for student leadership development. Extensive programming and student services are provided by Recreational Services, Housing Services, and Wellness Services. Lastly, over 70 registered student organizations on campus provide opportunities for student involvement, including leadership development, programming, and student government experience. Learning outcomes have been developed for many co-curricular activities, which will inform future programming. Opportunities exist to integrate many co-curricular activities and organizations with academic programs.

Recreational programs and organized sports are an integral part of the Fort Lewis College experience. Beyond varsity athletics, there are 17 Club Sports and 26 Intramural Sports on campus. In addition, Outdoor Pursuits provides outdoor programs which promote environmental awareness, outdoor education, and personal development. The college also has a campus radio station, KDUR, and a student newspaper, The Independent, which provide co-curricular professional development opportunities for students while also promoting community engagement.

Educating informed and engaged citizens is a core value of the college as is service to Southwest Colorado and the Four Corners region. In addition to the programs housed in the Division of Student Affairs, Fort Lewis students are provided with many opportunities to enhance their learning outside the classroom in the form of internships and field experiences. Toward this end, Career Services provides guidance for pre-professional and professional internships for students across campus, especially in the programs in public health, sociology, anthropology, and environmental studies. This office operates under an MOU with federal agencies for paid internships primarily during the summer months.
3.E.2

Fort Lewis College is the State of Colorado’s public liberal arts college. It is also a Native American-serving non-tribal institution. According to alumni survey data, approximately 85 percent of alumni feel the college contributed at least some knowledge and skills with intercultural literacy. The college’s commitment to a liberal arts education is evidenced in its breadth of traditional liberal arts and sciences degree programs. The general education program, with learning outcomes linked directly to the mission, exemplifies the importance of breadth in each student’s education. The college’s Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Research Symposium highlights capstone student research and creative work across the liberal arts and sciences. The student journal of undergraduate research and scholarship, Metamorphosis, illustrates the breadth of student work. In addition, the college’s commitment to a diverse student population is evident in the tutoring, advising and the cultural events hosted by the Native American Center and El Centro and the assistance provided to students in the Program for Academic Advancement.

The college prides itself in high levels of student-professor interaction, as evidenced in its low student/teacher ratios and the average sizes of the classes. Students are directly involved in research and creative activity with their peers and their major professors. Ninety percent of FLC alumni believe that their FLC education provided them with skills in team work and problem solving. The college has developed and enhanced its relationships with regional organizations in order to enhance the student experience. FLC students are directly engaged in community-based learning, largely in the form of credit- and non-credit-bearing internships, leadership development, and co-curricular activities in the local and regional communities sponsored through units in the Division of Student Affairs. Students are also engaged in courses that utilize our unique location for field studies, internships, and other experiential education opportunities. According to survey data, 77 percent of alumni believe that the college provided them at least some knowledge and skills required for civic engagement. The college also takes advantage of its strategic location in planning its curriculum and co-curricular activities. This includes a broad array of internships and service-learning opportunities, field work and field schools, and co-curricular activities in programs such as Outdoor Pursuits.

As part of its strategic plan and core values, the college contributes to the economic and cultural health and vitality of the region. The college provides service to the region through cultural, artistic, and intellectual events. The college is home to the Center of Southwest Studies, which includes archives, research collections, a library, and a gallery where local and national installations are featured. In addition, the Community Concert Hall, located adjacent to the Center of Southwest Studies on the north side of campus, features dozens of musical events and lectures every year, including concerts by the San Juan Symphony and the Music in the Mountains Festival Orchestra. The Department of Theatre produces several student productions each year and the Department of Music also holds several concerts each year. The Common Reading Experience (CRE) engages students, faculty, staff, and the local community in a common book each year. The CRE experience includes lectures, seminars, and presentations on-campus engaging both students and local community members in contemporary, cultural, political, and environmental issues surrounding the texts.

The impact of the college on the local economy through college, employee and student expenditures is estimated to be $151,000,000. The college provides nearly 700 job opportunities to the local economy, including college faculty, staff, and administrators and student jobs. In addition, the Office of Business and Economic Research provides economic data to the Southwest Colorado community. The Small Business Development Center provides consulting and training for small businesses in regional counties and for the Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Tribes.
Sources

- 1A1_Mission_Stmnt_(in 12-16 SP_p. 1)
- 3B1a Liberal Arts Core Learning Outcomes
- 3B3a Undergraduate Research Symposium
- 3B3d Center of Southwest Studies
- 3B4m Fort-Lewis-College-Strategic-Plan-2012-2016
- 3B4d community.concert.hall
- 3B4k Copy of marts lundy alumni survey
- 3C6g Career Services Annual Report 2012_2013_updated(1)
- 3D4e Welcome to the Department of Theatre
- 3E1a SA.Cocurricular(2)
- 3E1a SA.Learning.Domains.Final
- 3E1b 12-13 Native American Center
- 3E1c ANNUAL REPORT FORMAT 2013-14 El Centro
- 3E1d Year End Report 13-14
- 3E1e 13-14 Recreational Services
- 3E1f 13-14 Student Housing
- 3E1g 13-14 Leadership Center
- 3E1j KDUR Durango Community Radio 91.9 & 93
- 3E1k Outdoor Pursuits
- 3E1l 13-14 Student Wellness
- 3E1l The Independent
- 3E2b Metamorphosis
- 3E2c Common Reading Experience
- 3E2c Upcoming Concerts
- 3E2d Office of Business and Economic Research
- 3E2d SBDC
- Economic Impact Report - Final 12-8-14
3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

Assuring the quality, relevancy, and currency of programs and courses is a central pursuit at Fort Lewis College. All academic programs are reviewed in cycles according to the program review process, which includes reflection on program course content and a peer review process to ensure currency and relevancy. In addition, all academic programs review content in the Catalog of Courses each year. Certificates, majors and minors are approved according to strict curricular standards adhered to by the Curriculum Committee and the curricular process. In addition, a rigorous assessment program for each major ensures that the campus engages in continuous improvement of course content via student learning. Students are held to academic policies on grades and timely completion of core general education courses including mathematics and composition. The college also adheres to rigorous standards which guides course requirements and student performance appropriate for each course level.

FLC’s general education program is grounded, foremost, in the college’s mission. The general education learning outcomes were dovetailed with the AAC&U’s LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes and content and competency criteria from the CDHE. These outcomes emphasize diversity, citizenship, and critical thinking. The five learning outcomes are assessed across the spectrum of general education courses and major program capstone courses. They are designed to ensure that all degree-seeking students learn the same general competencies. The majority of the courses in the college’s general education program are a part of the CDHE GTPathways guaranteed transfer system, including courses in composition, mathematics, the arts and humanities, history, social science, and the sciences. In 2014, the college embarked on an ambitious plan to further entrench the general education program into the overall educational experience at the college by anchoring general education as the keystone academic program which supports and informs the majors, minors, and the certificates.

Fort Lewis College currently employs 222 faculty members including 120 tenured or tenure-track faculty and 50 permanent lecturers, in addition to adjunct faculty. The faculty to student ratio is 19:1. Fort Lewis College has a uniform evaluation for all tenure-track faculty. Teaching faculty—both tenured or tenure-track—are evaluated according to policies in the Faculty Handbook part 2.10. Tenure-track professors are evaluated on a yearly basis according to teaching, service, and research. Tenured faculty undergo post-tenure review every five years. The expectations of tenure and tenure-track faculty are articulated in the handbook and in individual program/department expectation statements. According to the Faculty Handbook, Lecturers and Instructors (full-time non-tenure-track faculty) are evaluated on a yearly basis by program coordinators and department chairs. The review process for tenure-track faculty includes input from program directors, department chairs and/or program coordinators, program and departmental personnel committees, the college-wide personnel committee, the appropriate dean, and the provost. Faculty are also evaluated by their students in online course evaluations at the end of each term.

The college prides itself in high levels of student-professor interaction, as evidenced in its low student/teacher ratios and the average sizes of the classes. Students are directly involved in research
and creative activity with their peers and their major professors. Ninety percent of FLC alumni believe that their FLC education provided them with skills in team work and problem solving. The college has developed and enhanced its relationships with regional organizations in order to enhance the student experience. FLC students are directly engaged in community-based learning, largely in the form of credit- and non-credit-bearing internships, leadership development, and co-curricular activities in the local and regional communities sponsored through units in the Division of Student Affairs. Students are also engaged in courses designated as Community-Based Learning and Research (CBLR) courses. The college also takes advantage of its strategic location in planning its curriculum and co-curricular activities. This includes a broad array of internships and service-learning opportunities, field work and field schools, and co-curricular activities.

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

All degree and certificate-granting programs are required to engage in program review every seven years. Non-degree or certificate-granting programs may go through program review at the request of the dean or provost. Externally accredited programs are required to address specific Fort Lewis College program review questions. The Academic Program Review Policy, has been updated and was first used in the review of the Teacher Education program during the 2014-2015 school year. As specified by this new policy, there are four stages to a program review: planning, a self-study, an on-site review, and a report to the BOT. Evidence demonstrating the quality of educational programs is provided in the self-study. The review team includes a reviewer internal to the college from a different program and an external reviewer from within the same discipline. The review team is selected by the appropriate dean or associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA) in consultation with the faculty within the program. During their two-day site visit, the review team evaluates the quality of the program, determines whether critical inquiry was completed, and verifies that the self-study is consistent with the evidence found. The review team submits a report to the dean,
who shares the report with the department chair, provost, and director of academic effectiveness and assessment. The dean and provost then work together to prepare a summary report that is shared with the department and the BOT. The dean and provost also meet with the program faculty during the following fall term to discuss the report and to set the program agenda for the next several years (goals, problems to address, improvements and advancements desired, and timelines for each).

The self-study includes information about program goals, degree requirements, faculty qualifications, student learning, and assessment. Departments provide information about program learning outcomes and degree requirements; they also investigate not only alignment between course offerings and prerequisites, but also alignment of course learning outcomes with program learning outcomes, college-wide learning outcomes, and national standard within the discipline. Syllabi are examined to see that courses are still consistent with the fundamental identity of the original course approved by the Curriculum Committee. Although many of the elements of program review were unchanged by the revised policy, the new standards are more evidence based with greater emphasis on assessment of student learning. Programs are now required to provide assessment data, evidence of student learning, alumni employment data, evidence of curricular changes that occurred in response to assessment, and future plans and goals of the department.

4.A.2,3

The Academic Credit Hour Policy ensures that all courses offered for credit by Fort Lewis College faculty meet standards for class contact hours and expected student work outside of class. This policy applies to all modes of instruction. Procedures for independent study, internship, and practicum courses require documentation that specifies student workload, learning outcomes, and assessment measures as specified by the Academic Credit Hour Policy. The instructor and the student involved in these courses complete the documentation in collaboration, and an associate dean must approve all independent studies. Documentation is submitted to the appropriate dean or AVPAA and the instructor of record retains a copy of these forms so that they can use them to determine the grades. Institutional credit is earned by AP, CLEP, IB, or DSST examinations, as specified by the Credit by Examination Policy. Prior learning credit is only granted for military service and independent study, as specified by the Credit for Prior Learning Policy. The institution grants transfer credit for college-level courses completed with a C- or better, within the last 10 years, at an accredited institution of higher education. Transfer credits at both the graduate and undergraduate levels are evaluated as specified by the associated policies.

4.A.4

The enforcement of prerequisites is coded into the online software that students use to register for courses (WebOpus). Department chairs submit changes to prerequisites, and these changes are reviewed by the Curriculum Committee and approved by the appropriate dean or AVPAA and the provost as specified by the curricular review procedures. All prerequisites listed in the official course catalog are enforced—students who do not have the prerequisite may not register for a course unless the course instructor grants an override. However, faculty prerequisite overrides are not consistently monitored. The development of a system to ensure that overrides are only granted in appropriate situations would provide an opportunity for institutional improvement.

The Fort Lewis College Rigor Policy was created and agreed upon by the FLC faculty and accepted by the administration via a policy approval process. Courses are developed and vetted for rigor at the department level. In the course of Curricular Review Procedures, department chairs and the curriculum committee share the primary responsibility for evaluating the rigor of a new course put forth; the Faculty Senate and deans are responsible for oversight, and the provost gives courses final
Approval. Regular evaluation regarding rigor of existing courses is required within the new program review mechanisms and is monitored within the department through annual assessment processes. Because no one entity carries the entire burden of ensuring rigor, this review process requires diligence from chairs, members of the Curriculum Committee, and administrators. For both new and existing courses evidence of rigor includes examples of learning objectives, course assignments, exams, and/or descriptions of student activities. Academic programs are also reviewed through regular program review and modified based on assessment data. Expectations for student learning are articulated by the measurable learning outcomes each program identifies in its assessment plan. Program learning outcomes are aligned with college-wide learning outcomes.

The college has a broad extensive network for learning resources and student support services. The Division of Enrollment Management oversees the Student Success Collaborative, the general campus TRIO program for Academic Advancement, and one-on-one student tutoring services. The vice president for finance and administration oversees the bookstore, all labs, and software supported by IT. Within the Division of Student Affairs the Native American Center promotes academic success for all Native American students through academic, cultural, and social support. Also El Centro de Muchos Colores provides a place for anyone interested in Hispanic culture and to assist with the retention of Hispano and multicultural students. The associate VPAA oversees the Library, TRIO Talent Search and Upward Bound, as well as Disability Related Services. Deans oversee departmental tutoring services such as the Algebra Alcove, the Math Assistance Center, the Writing Center, and the STEM-specific TRIO Student Success program. Institutional commitment to support services is demonstrated through dedicated employee lines and permanent operating budgets. All employees are subject to personnel evaluation, and programs are required to provide usage data to the appropriate overseer. Assessment and evaluation of these student services varies. Programs in the Division of Student Affairs are subject to outcomes assessment (see 4.B.2), while grant-funded programs collect evidence required by the appropriate grant, and drop-in centers keep usage data.

Faculty qualifications are vetted in the hiring processes, and faculty performance is regularly assessed by personnel procedures for reappointment and promotion. The application procedures for part-time faculty or short-term visiting full-time faculty require a resumé, an application form, original undergraduate and graduate transcripts, and three letters of recommendation. Files are kept in the appropriate dean’s or the associate VPAA’s office, and available to administrators to review. Evaluation of visiting and part-time faculty focuses primarily on teaching effectiveness and organization of course material. At a minimum, the appropriate chair or dean shall review a visiting faculty member, and the provost may evaluate visiting faculty at her discretion.

The appointment procedures for tenure-track, renewable full-time visiting faculty are designed to maximize the probability of appointing the most qualified individuals. Committees of at least three people perform searches, and positions are advertised nationally for a minimum of 30 days. The initial screening of applicants is based on written application files and phone interviews. A short list of candidates is submitted to the EEO officer for review and approval and finalists’ application materials are reviewed by the appropriate dean or associate VPAA for discussion, and the provost before campus visits. Upon selection of a candidate, the appropriate dean or associate VPAA, with the approval of the provost, is authorized to extend a verbal offer and negotiate terms of contract. Only the president is empowered to make formal offers or recommend faculty appointments to the BOT. The BOT does not approve regular faculty hires, but their approval is required for some administrative hires, such as the provost. Procedures for reappointment and promotion require an annual personnel review for pre-tenure faculty; tenured faculty are reviewed every five years at a minimum. The institution explicitly articulates expectations for tenure and tenure-track faculty at each rank, and faculty members address these expectations in personnel review dossiers.
4.A.5

Three academic programs, Athletic Training, Engineering, and Teacher Education, maintain specialized accreditations for purposes of professional licensure. The Athletic Training Program was initially accredited in 2002 by CAAHEP and is currently accredited by Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education; the Engineering Program is accredited by ABET; and the Teacher Education Program is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. The School of Business Administration maintains a voluntary accreditation through the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International. Other voluntary certifications are held by the music department, a member of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), and the chemistry department, a member of the American Chemical Society.

4.A.6

The college has always had methods for evaluating the success of its graduates, but these efforts have been hampered by the reliance on multiple databases that were sometimes maintained independently of each other. This practice resulted in inefficiencies and poor communication among various campus entities. To eliminate these problems, efforts are now under way to improve the procedures used to evaluate the success of the graduates. All campus entities are now directed to rely on the Banner database as the official warehouse of alumni information; the Division of Institutional Advancement is designated as the coordinating office.

In the past six months, the college has added staffing to support the data base and to improve procedures. Campus entities are now directed to stop maintaining duplicate or shadow databases, and efforts are being made to improve communications between various campus entities by using standardized queries, reports, and dashboards for information updates and to develop communication points. The records of the core base of alumni that reside in Banner have been much improved, and continued progress is expected. The result is increased capacity to search and research, as well as respond to campus reports and other needs. The Division of Institutional Advancement also intends to improve information sharing through necessary customized reporting and publicize its efforts to other campus entities through an information campaign, continuing small group meetings, and possibly a Wiki.

External initiatives include the following: third-party vendor services to identify lost alumni; staff and third party projects designed to address the depth of available information including employment (title, company, promotions, etc.); a sustained effort to collect information through personal contact, social media, and consistent updating of alumni information throughout campus.

In 2014, the Office of Alumni Engagement conducted a new alumni survey. Included in this survey were additional questions specific to student learning; another alumni survey is planned for 2016. Response data collected from the alumni survey are shared with the Office of Institutional Research, which then makes curricular recommendations related to the survey and communicates them to the provost or department chairs. The Office of Institutional Research also regularly queries the National Student Clearinghouse, looking at which graduates from the previous five years are re-enrolled in degree programs. The clearinghouse only shows enrollment; specific data as to what types of programs are being pursued must be gathered from the survey and other sources. Departments and programs are responsible for evaluating the success of their graduates within the course of program review. Some departments have very good systems in place for tracking graduates, and others do not. Both the Alumni Office and faculty in programs would benefit from a system for sharing alumni data across various entities on campus.
Sources

- 3A3a Academic Credit Hour Policy Appendix A v3
- 3C3a Faculty Handbook, Personnel Policies
- 4.A.1 Academic Program Review Policy
- 4.A.2 Credit by Examination Policy
- 4.A.2 Independent Study Form
- 4.A.3 Transfer Credit Policies - Undergraduate
- 4.A.3 Transfer Credit Policies Graduate
- 4.A.4 Curricular Review Procedures
- 4.A.4 External Accreditations
- 4.A.4 Faculty Expectation
- 4.A.4 Policy on Rigor
- 4.A.4 Visiting Faculty Search
- 4.A.4 Faculty and Exempt Staff Search
- 4.A.6 Alumni Information Survey
- 4.A.6 Alumni Information Survey (page number 12)
- 4.A.6 IR Curricular Recommendations

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

Fort Lewis College has articulated student learning outcomes at the institution, program, and course levels. The college-wide Liberal Education Outcomes are featured prominently on the webpage of the Office of Academic Affairs and are meant to highlight the entirety of a Fort Lewis College graduate’s experience. In 2013, these institutional outcomes formed the basis for several large-scale, campus-wide assessment initiatives. Recognizing the need for a more intentional, systematic and ongoing approach to assessment, Fort Lewis College hired its first director of academic effectiveness and assessment in spring, 2013, who began her tenure by implementing several assessment initiatives that were directly in line with the college’s Strategic Plan. The first of these initiatives included the creation of the college’s Assessment Policy. Approved by Faculty Senate, this policy articulated the expectation that all curricular and co-curricular programs across campus have clearly articulated student learning outcomes, conduct yearly assessments of student learning, and document how the assessment results are being used to improve student learning.

The second assessment initiative, entitled Assessment of the Major, focused primarily on program assessment. Faculty and staff in individual programs created or refined the student learning outcomes for their programs and drafted five-year assessment plans. These assessment plans include measurable program learning outcomes, a curriculum map, a detailed assessment timeline and implementation process, and ideas for using assessment data to improve student learning. All learning outcomes are featured prominently on departmental websites. The Office of Assessment worked in collaboration with department chairs, faculty, and staff to create measurable student learning outcomes that are aligned to the college’s Liberal Education Outcomes as well as a detailed plan for sampling and scoring student work, disseminating results, and making use of assessment data. As part of the assessment process, on October 1 of each academic year, assessment liaisons submit both the Assessment of Student Learning Report for the previous year and the Program Assessment Plan for the upcoming academic year. The Office of Assessment reviews all reports in detail and then meets with departments to help them revise and refine their assessment plans. To ensure that student learning outcomes are identified and communicated to students on a consistent basis, the Faculty Senate passed the Course Syllabus Policy, which states that all syllabi will include both the course learning objectives and the program learning outcomes that will be addressed in the course. By including the program learning outcomes on the syllabi, faculty members can be certain their courses
are in alignment with the learning outcomes of the program. Due to the process of creating the curriculum maps and five-year assessment plans, both the administration and the faculty can feel more confident about the alignment between courses, programs, and college-wide Liberal Education Outcomes.

A key piece to the creation and ongoing implementation of the college-wide assessment process continues to be the organization of assessment data. In collaboration with the college’s IT department, the Fort Lewis College Office of Assessment Wiki was created for all programs and departments to store their assessment plans and reports. A task force of faculty and staff has been formed and is looking into various assessment software products with the understanding that the college may quickly outgrow the capacity of the current system.

4.B.2

The assessment policy requires all curricular and co-curricular programs on campus to engage in the ongoing assessment of student learning. More specifically, all programs are required to engage in a full cycle of assessment every academic year. This cycle includes identifying a minimum of one programmatic learning outcome to assess, sampling and scoring student work, analyzing results, and implementing concrete plans on how to use the assessment data to improve student learning. The 2013-2014 academic year was the first year that systematic and documented assessment activities were required by the new policy.

Prior to 2013, assessment activities occurred at varying degrees within the individual departments. In particular, programs with external accreditation, such as the engineering program and those in the School of Business Administration, maintained regular assessment practices and worked to serve as a model for the rest of the academic departments. Furthermore, the writing program’s assessment of critical thinking in a set of interdisciplinary courses known as EGCs, was completed in 2011. Working in conjunction with the Office of Institutional Research, a group of faculty scored a sample of student work, seeking to identify whether students in these courses were meeting the college-wide learning outcomes. A report was completed in May 2011.

Even though the institutional assessment policy and procedures were new, the college was encouraged to see 100 percent of all curricular and co-curricular programs complete the assessment process and submit yearly reports. Through ongoing faculty development and support for the assessment process, as well as an active faculty-led Assessment Committee, the college expects the faculty to increase their ownership of the assessment process. In addition to assessing direct evidence of student work, Fort Lewis College’s Office of Institutional Research administers several national assessment tools. These include the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE); the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE); the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement; the ETS Proficiency Profile; and the ETS Field Exam. Results of these are disseminated to the provost, deans, and department chairs.

Another large-scale assessment initiative focused on co-curricular learning. The Division of Student Affairs, working closely with the Office of Assessment, developed and implemented a robust plan for the ongoing assessment of student learning. Members of the division attended several National Association for Student Affairs Professionals (NASPA) conferences to learn more about the assessment process. These members then formed the Student Affairs Assessment Committee, led the staff in the development of division-wide and programmatic student learning outcomes, and served as liaisons to the various programs within the division as each implemented their individual assessment plans. Co-curricular programs followed the same assessment framework used by academic programs; all co-curricular programs aligned their learning outcomes to those of the institution and created five-
year plans. Each program submitted end-of-year Assessment of Student Learning reports. The institutional Assessment Policy requires the programs within the Division of Student Affairs to engage in a full assessment cycle each academic year, including closing the loop by implementing changes based on the assessment date.

The largest assessment initiative focused on the Liberal Arts Core (LAC), which makes up the courses in the college’s general education program. In spring, 2013, the faculty initiated the conversation of general education reform in the General Education Council (now known as the LAC Council) meetings. A trans-disciplinary group made up of both faculty and staff was tasked with designing and implementing an ongoing assessment process, along with leading an initiative to redesign the FLC general education program.

The goal of this redesign was to create a mission-driven, purposeful, and coherent curriculum with clearly defined student learning outcomes. The intent of this approach is to move faculty away from thinking of general education in terms of individual classes that reside in different majors and towards the skills and knowledge students need to be successful in the 21st century. The first step to creating coherence in the college’s general education curriculum, and designing and implementing an assessment plan, was to create LAC student learning outcomes that align with FLC’s mission and core values. These learning outcomes, which were adapted from the Essential Learning Outcomes of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) were passed by Faculty Senate in spring, 2014 and serve as the foundation for the new LAC general education program.

Members of the administration and the LAC Council knew this was an ambitious approach to curricular reform and assessment. Therefore, in June, 2013, the same trans-disciplinary group attended AAC&U’s Institute on General Education Reform and Assessment (IGEA) in Burlington, Vermont, to obtain guidance from experts in the field. As a result, the college formulated an action plan for the reform of FLC’s general education program (now called the Liberal Arts Core or LAC), and an assessment plan with accompanying procedures.

The structure of the college’s first two years of LAC assessment is based on the consultation provided at AAC&U’s IGEA. At the end of both the fall 2014 and spring 2015 semesters, a scoring committee made up of faculty members of the LAC Council, the Assessment Committee, and faculty volunteers collected course samples across disciplines of students’ written work in their senior seminar / capstone courses to assess critical thinking and problem solving. This process established a baseline, using nationally-normed rubrics, of where students were after four years of college.

The Office of Institutional Research collaborated with the sub-committee to create a random sample, de-identifying the papers, and providing them to the scoring committee via Canvas, the college’s learning management system. The committee scored the samples using the AAC&U’s Critical Thinking and Problem Solving rubrics. Rubric data was given back to Institutional Research to evaluate. The aggregate results will be disseminated to the LAC Council, the Council of Chairs, Deans’ Council, Faculty Senate, and provost.

4.B.3

Prior to the implementation of this systematic approach, assessment resided within departments. This earlier model did not require programs to submit plans for improving student learning based on assessment data. As a result of the newly designed assessment plan, the college now recognizes the importance of closing the loop and has implemented several procedures for this important component of the assessment cycle. In the five-year and the individual academic year assessment plan reports, faculty are asked to identify specifically how they will utilize the data to improve student learning. In
the assessment of student learning report that departments are required to submit on October 1 for the
previous academic year, faculty are asked to reflect on the changes they implemented based on their
assessment findings. In addition, all departments now dedicate a portion of their departmental retreat,
which occurs at the beginning of every academic year, to the topic of assessment. One of the biggest
changes the college has made in terms of utilizing assessment is its revised Program Review Policy,
which includes sections specifically dedicated to assessment of student learning and program
assessment procedures and results and requires the inclusion of assessment data.

The Division of Student Affairs has made numerous program modifications based on the results of
their yearly assessment activities. Both the Student Wellness Center and El Centro de Muchos
Colores are implementing modifications to their training programs for work-study students and peer
educators. Through the assessment process, the director of the Native American Center was able to
identify and implement key changes that needed to be made to their advising process. The director of
recreational services gained important insights into peer-to-peer evaluation practices that have led to a
new system of training and support. Ongoing assessment practices will show the results of these
modifications.

4.B.4

The assessment policy and procedures that were implemented in 2013 were benchmarked to
exemplars provided by both the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) and
the Association for American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). In the case of the LAC, new
learning outcomes passed in 2014 align with the Essential Learning Outcomes of Liberal Education
and America’s Promise (LEAP), as well as the state of Colorado. As described in 4.B.2, the LAC
Assessment Plan was created in consultation with AAC&U consultants at the Institute for General
Education Reform and Assessment. In addition to benchmarking, the Office of Assessment relied
upon Regional Accreditation and Student Learning: Principles for Good Practices (2003) as a guide
to ensure that best practices in the field of student learning assessment were being adhered to.
Following this document, the college is focusing on the following key areas: documentation of
student learning, compilation of evidence, stakeholder involvement, and capacity building.

The documentation of student learning at FLC places emphasis on all phases of the assessment cycle.
As described in 4.B.1 and 4.B.2, all curricular and co-curricular programs refined and strengthened
their learning outcomes and designed five-year plans to assess at least one outcome per year. As part
of the course-redesign effort that took place during the 2014-2015 academic year, departments
(especially those going from four to three credits) reviewed all the course learning objectives found
on the syllabi and aligned those courses to program and college-wide learning outcomes.

Assessment teams made up of faculty and/or staff from each department and program work to
evaluate student work, analyze results, and share those results with the departments. Decisions are
then made regarding actions to be taken based on these results. All of this information is collected
yearly and submitted to the Office of Assessment and used to inform program review.

Curricular and co-curricular programs decide which assessment tools will be best suited to assess the
chosen outcome. Curricular programs make use of a wide variety of evidence including written work,
oral presentations, embedded questions, and responses from exit surveys. Co-curricular programs
have used interviews, focus groups, and surveys. These methods are in addition to the institutional
surveys identified in 4.B.2. One area for improvement is to consider assessment data campus-wide. In
the future, the college should be looking at the experiences of the student across the entire institution.

Stakeholder involvement has been and continues to be a cornerstone of the college’s revised
assessment process. The college has both a faculty-led Assessment Committee and a staff-led Student Affairs Assessment Committee. The Student Affairs Assessment Committee has successfully implemented a liaison-model where members of the committee work directly with the directors from all the student affair’s programs to ensure alignment with the College-Wide Liberal Education Outcomes and a solid understanding of the assessment process. Students are often brought into these conversations, especially in the review of the assessment findings. Evidence of this can be seen in the most recent campaign put forth by the Division of Student Affairs, “We’ve Heard Your Voice!” Posters are displayed in various locations around campus that clearly identifies what students said and the changes that have been implemented. On the academic side, the college could do a better job of including students in the assessment process.

To address the critical importance of all faculty being involved with assessment of the LAC, a proposal is being made to change the departmental expectation statements to include this assessment responsibility. In addition, a rotating schedule is being developed so that all faculty will share equal responsibility for assessing student work.

One of the director of academic effectiveness and assessment’s primary goals has been to create a culture of assessment at FLC. Through ongoing faculty development and other incentives, faculty and staff have come to understand the need for continuous improvement based on student learning data. Admittedly, changing the culture of a higher education institution can be a slow process. Based on the Assessment of Student Learning reports, faculty are discovering the value of well-designed rubrics that represent a shared understanding of student expectations. Many changes have been made to assessment planning and processes. The college continues to discover more efficient ways to assess student employees and the experience of freshmen in the residence halls. The campus culture is moving toward making data-driven decisions by keeping the conversations focused on continuous improvement of student learning.

Sources

- 3B1a Liberal Arts Core Learning Outcomes
- 4.A.1 Academic Program Review Policy
- 4.B.1.5-year Prgm Assessment Plan Template
- 4.B.1. Annual Prgm Assessment Plan Template
- 4.B.1. Assessment Student Learning Annual Report Template
- 4.B.1. College-Wide Liberal Education Outcomes
- 4.B.1. Assessment Policy and Procedures
- 4.B.1. Assessment wiki
- 4.B.1 Course Syllabus Policy
- 4.B.2 ETS Proficiency Profile
- 4.B.2 FSSE14 Administration Summary
- 4.B.2 GE Assessment Plan 2014
- 4.B.2 GenEd Action Plan Final
- 4.B.2 NSSE14 Snapshot
- 4.B.2 Student Affairs Assessment 2015_15
- 4.B.2 Student Voting Rates National Study
- 4.B.2 WP EGC Assessment memo final
- 4C1.2.flc_strategic_plan2006
- LAC Assessment Report 5-2015_HS (3)
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**

Goals and initiatives designed to address student retention and completion rates have been included in both the current Strategic Plan as well as the 2006-2011 Strategic Plan. Prior to these initiatives, historical data show that for the three freshman cohorts that began in the fall terms of 2003 –2005, the average of the first year retention rates was 58 percent. In response to this, the 2006-2011 strategic plan stated first year retention goals of 62 percent for fall 2008 and 64 percent for fall 2011. For the four freshman cohorts that began from 2008-2011, the average of the first year retention rates increased to 62.5 percent, and for the 2012 cohort the first year retention rate had increased to 65 percent. Many of these gains in student retention may be attributed to higher selectivity standards for admission.

As appears in the Graduation Rate Overview the college’s stated institutional goal for retention is that 70 percent of first-time, full-time freshmen matriculating in a fall semester will return for second fall semester. In fall 2012, freshmen had an average composite ACT score of 22.4. This score falls in the middle of the ACT score range for the “traditional” institutions. The predicted freshman retention rate for “traditional” institutions is 70 percent, so the college considers that goal attainable and appropriate for the student body. It is ambitious because the highest freshman retention rate to date (for the fall 2012 cohort) was 65 percent.

The six-year completion rate as reported by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is 37 percent. The most recent Graduation Rate Survey (GRS) submitted to the government’s “College Navigator” shows a six-year rate of 38 percent. This difference is because the NCAA employs a four-cohort average, while the GRS looks at annual rates. It is also worth noting that the college has a large transfer-out rate of 37 percent. The stated goal for completion rates is 50-55 percent, which is attainable by meeting the following goals: a 70 percent for retention of freshman, 80 percent for sophomore to junior persistence, and 90 percent for junior to senior persistence. These goals are aligned with the goals and metrics stated in FLC Performance Contract.
4.C.2,

The Registrar’s Office is the custodian of enrollment data. Student enrollment records maintained in the Banner Student Information System provide the raw data for calculation of retention, persistence, and completion. Following the guidelines from the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), the Registrar’s Office has a number of procedures in place to ensure the integrity of post-census date enrollment data. The Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment (IR) analyses Banner data. IR provides scheduled reports on retention, persistence, and completion to senior administrators, academic administrators, and the enrollment managers. IR follows IPEDS definitions and AIR best practices in its analyses and reporting. A full description of practices is publicly available on the IR webpage. Enrollment data is also uploaded via a secure data transfer protocol to Noel-Levitz Higher Education Consulting, a company which analyses various metrics (demographic variables such as gender, residency, index scores, etc.) to determine which are most strongly correlated to retention rates. Noel-Levitz also provides scheduled internal reports.

To gain further understanding of the dynamics of freshman retention, and identify those students at risk of leaving the institution, the Division of Enrollment Management has been administering the MAP-Works survey to new freshmen each fall and spring semester. The Interim Coordinator of Academic Success Resources is in charge of the MAP-Works data set. Planning on how to analyze and apply the MAP-Works survey data is underway now that the division has a system to get robust response rates.

4.C.3

The college’s approach to improved retention and completion has been three-fold: removing institutional obstacles, encouraging and creating a student culture of finishing in four years, and putting academic policies in place that will flag and penalize students who are not making progress toward graduation. Section 1.a. of the current Strategic Plan focuses on improving student retention and graduation rates. The strategic plan initiatives and related activities are being implemented through the Quality Initiative (QI), and details can be found in the 2013 QI Report. In the first year of implementation of the QI, nine objectives related to six activities were pursued. Of those nine objectives, six were met, one was partially met, and two were not met. Further strategic plan initiatives explicitly aimed at improved retention and persistence include more closely aligning curricular and co-curricular experiences, promoting study abroad experiences, and improving the freshman experience.

Within the QI, initiatives to minimize institutional obstacles include the development of four-year instructional plans, formal curricular maps to graduation that ensure program requirements are offered in a timely manner, and improved academic advising. The current advising model requires that all students should have a faculty advisor. However, the Faculty Advising Committee determined that faculty advisors are best suited to advise declared majors who are not in academic difficulty. In an attempt to better advise undeclared students and students that are in poor academic standing, FLC has recently joined the Student Success Collaborative and has hired six new full-time student success coaches. To ease advising and tracking of degree completion, the college has also recently adopted the CollegeSource u.achieve Degree Audit System.

In order to build a “finish-in-four” student culture, activities include the following: scholarship incentives for students who develop plans and sign contracts to finish in four years, numerous communications that demonstrate the college’s commitment to four-year degree programs to
incoming freshman and their parents, and new programs to develop cohort identity that is tied to the year of graduation (e.g., “Class of 2018”).

Retention and completion data reveal a disparity between traditional students and those that are low-income, first generation, or Native American. A number of grant-funded initiatives have worked to address this disparity, including the Program for Academic Advancement, STEM³, Title III grants for Mathematics, and “Honoring the Sacred Trust, Parts I and II,” NSF grants for Minority Participation, an NSF STEP grant, and an Ottens Foundation grant.

The Faculty Academic Standards Committee has also recently adopted a number of new policies geared toward student completion. These policies require students to complete math and composition requirements, and also select a major earlier in their academic careers. New policies also include a campus-wide deadline for withdrawal from courses, limits on the number of withdrawals a student can have, and elimination of grade replacement.

Sources

- 4B.C1.1.Strategic-Plan-2012-2016
- 4C1.2.flc_strategic_plan2006
- 4C1.3.graduation rate overview 2014
- 4C1.4.NCAInstitutionReport
- 4C1.5.FLC_Performance_Contract_Goals
- 4C2.6.IRpractices
- 4C3.10a.Pace for Comp and Math-2
- 4C3.10b.Pace for Remedials
- 4C3.11.Declaration of Major
- 4C3.12.Grades, Quality Points, and Grade Point Averages
- 4C3.7.fQITF Year 1 report
- 4C3.8.FinishIn4
- 4C3.9a.NCEScompletiondemographics
- 4C3.9b.IPEDS_Graduation_Rates_Data Transfer Rates page
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

All degree and certificate-granting programs are required to engage in program review every seven years. Non-degree or certificate-granting programs may go through program review at the request of the dean or provost. The self-study includes information about program goals, degree requirements, faculty qualifications, student learning, and assessment. Departments provide information about program learning outcomes and degree requirements; they also investigate not only alignment between course offerings and prerequisites, but also alignment of course learning outcomes with program learning outcomes, college-wide learning outcomes, and national standards within the discipline. Syllabi are examined to see that courses are still consistent with the fundamental identity of the original course approved by the Curriculum Committee.

The Fort Lewis College Rigor Policy was created and agreed upon by the FLC faculty and accepted by the administration via a policy approval process. Courses are developed and vetted for rigor at the department level. Within the Curricular Review process, department chairs and the curriculum committee share the primary responsibility for evaluating the rigor of a new course put forth; the Faculty Senate and deans are responsible for oversight, and the provost gives courses final approval. Regular evaluation regarding rigor of existing courses is required within the new program review mechanisms and is monitored within the department through annual assessment processes. Because no one entity carries the entire burden of ensuring rigor, this review process requires diligence from chairs, members of the Curriculum Committee, and administrators. For both new and existing courses evidence of rigor includes examples of learning objectives, course assignments, exams, and/or descriptions of student activities. Academic programs are also reviewed through regular program review and modified based on assessment data. Expectations for student learning are articulated by the measureable learning outcomes each program identifies in its assessment plan. Program learning outcomes are aligned with college-wide learning outcomes.

The assessment policy requires all curricular and co-curricular programs on campus to engage in the ongoing assessment of student learning. More specifically, all programs are required to engage in a full cycle of assessment every academic year. This cycle includes identifying a minimum of one programmatic learning outcome to assess, sampling and scoring student work, analyzing results, and implementing concrete plans on how to use the assessment data to improve student learning.

The assessment policy and procedures that were implemented in 2013 were benchmarked to exemplars provided by both the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) and the Association for American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). In the case of the Liberal Arts Core (LAC), new learning outcomes passed in 2014 align with the Essential Learning Outcomes of Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP), as well as the state of Colorado. As described in 4.B.2, the LAC Assessment Plan was created in consultation with AAC&U consultants at the Institute for General Education Reform and Assessment. In addition to benchmarking, the Office of Assessment relied upon Regional Accreditation and Student Learning: Principles for Good Practices
(2003) as a guide to ensure adherence to best practices in the field of student learning assessment. Following this document, the college is focusing on the following key areas: documentation of student learning, compilation of evidence, stakeholder involvement, and capacity building.

The college’s approach to improved retention and completion has been three-fold: removing institutional obstacles, encouraging and creating a student culture of finishing in four years, and putting academic policies in place that will flag and penalize students who are not making progress toward graduation. Section 1.a. of the current Strategic Plan focuses on improving student retention and graduation rates. The strategic plan initiatives and related activities are being implemented through the Quality Initiative (QI), and details can be found in the 2013 QI Report. In the first year of implementation of the QI, nine objectives related to six activities were pursued. Of those nine objectives, six were met, one was partially met, and two were not met. Further strategic plan initiatives explicitly aimed at improved retention and persistence include more closely aligning curricular and co-curricular experiences, promoting study abroad experiences, and improving the freshman experience.

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

Fiscal Resources

The college funds its operations through tuition and fees, state support, and auxiliary (housing, conference services, food service, and bookstore) activities. Revenue in the education and general fund comes from three main sources: state funding (20 percent), tuition from non-Native American students (46 percent), and tuition from Native American students (29 percent). Tuition for Native American students is paid by the State of Colorado in the year after the tuition has been waived. When state funding and Native American tuition are considered together, the college receives 49 percent of the general fund budget from the state.

A 2011 report by the University of Denver’s Center for Colorado’s Economic Future suggests that due to economic conditions and Colorado constitutional limits on taxation, state funding for higher education will disappear by 2024. This study was updated in 2013 by the Colorado Futures Center at Colorado State University. The updated study extended the projection for loss of state funding for higher education to 2030. Although this reduction in state funding will not impact the state funding of the Native American Tuition Waiver, it represents a potential significant decline in the college’s revenue. In anticipation of future economic changes, the college developed a multi-year budget model, which increases resident tuition rates to the full extent allowed by the state coupled with modest increases to non-resident tuition rates. As state support decreases, the goal is to bring resident and non-resident tuition rates closer together, more in line with quasi-private financial model.
In addition to maximizing tuition rates and revenue, the college will offset state revenue losses with increased fundraising efforts. In the FY 2014-15 budget process, the college funded three new positions, including a vice president for advancement, to support its fundraising efforts. The Division of Institutional Advancement, which includes development, alumni and marketing/communications staff, is working to engage alumni, parents, and friends in supporting the efforts of the college.

Human Resources

Tenured/tenure-track faculty represent approximately 70 percent of faculty FTE; 84 percent of full-time faculty have terminal degrees, as highlighted in the FY 2014-15, Common Data Set information. The student-faculty ratio in FY 2013-14 was 19 to 1. In order to ensure that the college’s course offerings are appropriately matched to its resources, all academic programs are undergoing redesign. Once this redesign is complete, the college will have a better understanding of actual faculty needs and will focus on the proper allocation of tenured/tenure-track faculty lines to match course offerings. The college set aside funds in the FY 14-15 permanent budget to address potential human resources needs arising from the redesign and other academic initiatives. Over that last five years, the college has focused on bringing faculty and exempt staff salaries equal to peer average. Recent Faculty and Exempt Staff Salary Studies show the college has accomplished this goal.

Physical Infrastructure

The college is operating under the Facilities Master Plan approved in 2006. The plan is scheduled for update in 2016. Capital projects are accomplished through state funding, debt service related to auxiliary income, debt service related to student fees, and private/foundation gifts. Annually, the board approves the Five-Year Capital Construction Plan for submittal to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. Funding is provided in the annual budget process for small projects directed towards program improvements and deferred maintenance concerns.

In FY 2014-15, the State of Colorado allocated $22.8 million to the college to construct a 60,000-square-foot building to house its Geosciences, Physics, and Engineering Programs. The estimated cost of this project is $35.3 million, with the remaining funds coming from a combination of future state funding ($8.3 million) and college fundraising ($4.2 million). The project will be completed in fall 2016 and will address the physical needs of some of the college’s fastest growing programs.

In an effort to use the current infrastructure more effectively, the college has undergone a classroom utilization study. The study results will be used as the basis for changes to scheduling policy and better resource allocation. Based upon the study recommendations, design changes were made to the Geoscience, Physics and Engineering building currently under construction. The main adjustment involved changing two large tiered lecture-style classrooms into flat flexible classroom spaces with moveable furniture.

Technological Infrastructure

The centralized technological infrastructure supports administrative computing, networking and telecommunications, computer labs, desktop computing, the help desk, the learning management system, email, collaboration systems, data analytics, cyber security, e-commerce, web and social media, digital signage, video surveillance, and interfaces to multiple cloud-based systems. A strong middleware group provides automated identity management and single sign-on (SSO), which allows for rapid and secure implementation of Software as a Service (SaaS) and cloud-based systems. The college is a member of the Internet2 computer networking consortium and utilizes redundant and diverse paths to the Internet, providing stable and reliable network connectivity. Students and staff
have access to the high-speed wired campus network, and wireless access is ubiquitous across campus including all student housing and open spaces.

The college has provided for a sustainable funding source for technological needs through monthly user fees for IT services. The IT operation has the ability to scale with enrollment growth and increases in faculty and staff lines. Computers across campus are replaced every four years through monthly fees to the workstation-refresh program. IT control of the program allows for standardization of the computer systems, lower purchase costs, and higher reliability of systems. The college has allocated funds in the permanent budget to support hardware and software license increases. Recent technology investments include the learning management system Canvas, TouchNet, network routers and firewalls, network storage, the Cayuse grant management system, and VoIP phone system upgrades.

The Academic Instructional Technology fee provides open labs for student use, a Microsoft Enterprise license, and software for student and personal use.

5.A.2

The Strategic Plan demonstrates the college’s commitment to rigorous academic offerings and long-term student success. The college’s resource allocation process follows the Strategic Plan and therefore ensures that the college’s resources are used to support its educational goals. Grants and outside funding support the college’s research activities and its auxiliaries are self-supporting.

The college maintains its fund balance and does not disburse revenue to a superordinate entity (e.g., the State of Colorado), following Colorado Revised Statute 23-52-103.

5.A.3

The college’s mission, vision, and core values guide its daily operations, strategic planning, resource allocation, and approach to educating students. Central to these statements is the college’s goal of prioritizing student success for its diverse student body by focusing on accessible, high-quality education.

The Strategic Plan represents the college’s action plan for achieving its mission. The Strategic Plan provides challenging, but realistic, goals that are scalable in response to changes in economic circumstances. As discussed in the Strategic Plan Update, the college has already achieved several of the strategic plan goals and has immediate plans to make progress on others. The section below discusses several specific examples of how the college is following the Strategic Plan to pursue its mission.

High-Quality Education

In order to ensure that the college is producing a high-quality education that prepares students for their future, the first strategic goal is to increase student success by improving retention and graduation rates, providing support for excellence in teaching, and developing additional outcomes for student success in academic programs. The college has modified its approach to student advising with new staff and software solutions, provided clear curriculum maps to students, and formalized its assessment structure and measures. Since many of these efforts are recent, the college is only beginning to assess the outcomes of these efforts. The college has invested significant resources in improving the student experience and student success.
Accessibility of Education

The college has the second-lowest tuition and fees in the State of Colorado. While cost is certainly one dimension of accessibility, the college is also examining other pedagogically appropriate delivery methods such as online and hybrid classes, as directed by Strategic Plan Goal Three. The college has hired a director of digital innovation and eLearning and implemented a new learning management system to assist with the development of its portfolio of eLearning tools.

Diversity Efforts

Diversity is at the core of Fort Lewis College and its mission. Demonstrating the high priority it places on educating students about diversity in society, the college modified its general education learning outcomes to directly address diversity in the curriculum. These learning outcomes will guide the college’s general education reform efforts. Additionally, Goal Four of the Strategic Plan highlights the importance of a diverse student body and is designed to increase campus diversity through recruitment efforts.

The college takes pride in its diverse student body. In the fall 2015 semester, approximately 45 percent of the students are ethnic minorities or international students. In the same semester, 29.8 percent of the student body qualified for the Native American Tuition Waiver, which allows qualified Native American students to attend Fort Lewis College tuition free.

5.A.4

The college follows a fair and thorough hiring process, which ensures that all employees are able to perform the duties of their position. Each open position lists detailed minimum qualifications, and the hiring process ensures the selected candidate meets those requirements.

The college has three classes of employees: faculty, classified (employees within the State of Colorado Personnel System) and exempt. The State of Colorado’s hiring process sets the minimum qualifications and hiring procedures for classified positions. In conjunction with human resources, the hiring manager sets the minimum qualifications for exempt positions and follows detailed search procedures that govern exempt and faculty hiring. The Faculty Qualifications Policy sets the minimum qualifications for faculty positions. For all classes of employees, multi-member search committees screen and score applicants to ensure that the most qualified applicants are selected. In addition, the college promotes diversity in the workplace through procedures related to Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action requirements.

All employees undergo performance evaluations that aid in professional development. Classified staff undergo semi-annual performance reviews governed by the college’s Classified Performance Plan and State of Colorado statute. Exempt staff undergo annual reviews as specified in the Exempt Handbook. The Faculty Handbook specifies that faculty reviews will examine performance in the areas of teaching, scholarly activity, and service and occur annually prior to tenure and every five years after tenure.

In addition to these regular reviews of employee performance, the college invests in employee development. The Faculty Handbook specifies that each member of the faculty is expected to be continually active in professional development and scholarship. The college supports this development through special funding such as Faculty Development Grants and New Employee Start-Up Funds. In addition, vice presidents and department chairs often provide opportunities for staff training and development for both faculty and other college employees. The college also waives
course tuition for employees and provides a variety of in-house trainings. The college does not currently track employee training at an institutional level, but is considering technological solutions to address this need.

5.A.5

The college’s budget process is directed by the Board of Trustees Manual of Policies and Procedures. The budget process begins in late summer/early fall when the board discusses its priorities. The President’s Budget Committee (Budget Committee) is then charged with advising and making recommendations to the president on matters related to the formulation of college’s annual budget. The Budget Committee includes the vice presidents, associate vice presidents, deans, two faculty members, one student, one exempt staff member, and one classified staff member. A detailed overview of the budget process can be found in Budget Policy 3-1.

The committee reviews enrollment information, as well as revenue and expenditure projections provided by the Budget Office and deliberates on tuition and fee increases. The college uses an incremental budget approach, allocating only the difference in revenue from the prior year, with the provost and deans re-allocating faculty positions based on need. After considering changes to revenue and non-discretionary spending, the committee prioritizes proposals for new funding based on the priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan. The committee’s recommendations are presented to the president who then submits the total proposed budget to BOT. Each trustee receives the Budget Parameters Book, which provides an overview of all of the budget recommendations from the Budget Committee and president. The BOT discusses budget parameters at a special Business Affairs Committee meeting called for the sole purpose of budget review. Following the Business Affairs Committee’s review and endorsement, the full Board votes approval.

The Budget Office creates specialized management level reports for senior administration review (OCE Summary) and for departments (e.g., Athletics) with complicated budgets. Financial reports are prepared and disseminated to the BOT on a quarterly basis showing budget to actual activity at the fund level, with explanations of variances. Furthermore, the Finance Staff Group (comprised of the vice president for finance and administration, budget director, controller, director of auxiliary services, and the foundation financial manager) reviews fund-level information on a quarterly basis and makes adjustments as necessary. The Capital Construction, Controlled Maintenance, And Projects Report is one such example of this review.

Once funding is allocated, the authority for day-to-day spending and monitoring is decentralized. The vice presidents have ultimate authority over the allocation of resources within their divisions. The vice presidents delegate spending authority and monitoring responsibility to the dean/director level. In the Division of Academic Affairs, authority is delegated to the appropriate department chair.

The Budget Office offers individualized training to those individuals with budgetary responsibilities, utilizing the Budget Training Manual, which is also available online. Departmental cost-center managers are trained in budget monitoring and have the ability to generate their own reports to monitor expenses.

Sources

- 5A_CO Futures Study
- 5A1_Capital Construction 5-29-15 approved
- 5A1_Classroom Utilization Recommendations
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

5.B.1,2,3

The BOT is the governing authority for the college. Following state statute, the board consists of nine members, with seven voting members appointed by the governor and two advisory members, one from the faculty and one from the student body. The board meets at least six times annually to discuss college matters and review college operations. These meetings cover a wide variety of topics, including operational review and future strategic planning, which ensure that the board is actively engaged in the governance of the college. At each meeting, the board reviews dashboard metrics and standing reports from the faculty and student representatives and the Fort Lewis College Foundation.

The BOT has three standing committees: the Business Affairs Committee, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, and the Investment Advisory Committee. The administration presents in-depth information at committee meetings with a focus on the institution’s financial and academic policies. This information is then summarized for the board as a whole. Additionally, the board ensures fulfillment of its legal and fiduciary responsibilities through a close working relationship with its legal counsel. The agenda and minutes record each meeting of the trustees.

All new trustees participate in an orientation that includes presentations from the president and vice presidents. The orientation includes information on academic programs, finances, and board policies. Each new trustee receives a copy of the Board of Trustees Manual of Policies and Procedures, a detailed budget parameters book and copies of sample reports.

Including faculty and student representation on the board ensures that the campus’ various constituencies are represented in the college’s governance. In addition to this formal representation, other members of administration regularly attend the board meetings and serve as advisory members on board committees. Board meetings are open to the public and include opportunities for public comment.

The President’s Cabinet also includes diverse campus members including faculty, staff, students, and administration. The president’s Budget Committee is similarly structured. To ensure that all internal constituencies are represented in college governance, the college includes pertinent representative stakeholders in decision-making committees.
The college provides a variety of forums for discussion and debate that allow representation of the diversity of opinion on campus in setting academic requirements, policies, and processes. Fort Lewis College promotes a shared-governance structure which assigns primary responsibility for academic matters to the faculty. The college’s administration, faculty and staff strive to work together to provide students with a high-quality educational experience.

Ideas for changes to academic requirements can originate in any part of the college. When the college makes significant changes to academic programs, requirements, policies, or processes, it involves stakeholders by representation on the decision-making committees. In addition to diverse representation on standing committees, special committees or task forces, which include representatives from staff, faculty, and students, may be formed to explore significant changes to academic requirements.

Academic policy creation and review is governed by the college’s [Policy on Policies](#). After the initial drafting of a policy, the policy is reviewed and modified by the Deans’ Council, the Council of Chairs, Faculty Senate, affected administrative departments, and the Associated Students of Fort Lewis College, as appropriate. After this review and consultation with stakeholders, both the provost and president review and provide final approval of the policies, with the exception of personnel policies, which require board approval. Any necessary changes to the Faculty Handbook are coordinated through the Faculty Handbook Committee. Collectively, the processes for setting academic requirements and policies ensure that all stakeholders are involved in significant academic decisions and have an opportunity to voice their opinions. The BOT also has the authority to review and revise academic policies as it deems necessary after appropriate input from campus stakeholders.

Although the college prefers that faculty retain primary responsibility for the setting of academic requirements, in December 2013, the BOT voted unanimously, against the recommendation of the Faculty Senate, to return the college to a three-credit hour model from its mixed three/four credit model. A Faculty Senate task force examined the college’s credit model and recommended retaining the mixed model. The college’s administration felt, however, that the mixed model was not appropriate or in the best interest of the students and recommended the college return to a three-credit course model. In the period leading up to the board’s decisions, the college provided several opportunities for debate and discussion on campus that included faculty, students, staff, administration, and the community. This issue was contentious due to differences of opinion in the campus community, and some faculty and students strongly disagreed with the board’s final decision. Although not all stakeholders were satisfied with the final decision, this example demonstrates that the college provides forums for all opinions to be heard. Since the board voted to return to a three-credit hour model, faculty have been moving forward to implement the change.

Since the board’s decision, the college has attempted to formalize its policies and procedures related to decision-making. Additionally, the provost and president are conducting regular small group discussion sessions with faculty to discuss other potentially contentious issues on campus, such as the definition of liberal arts and the college’s mission. These regular meetings ensure that, despite differences in opinion, all voices on campus can be heard and that the college is engaged in active discussions about the student’s learning experience.

**Sources**

- [5A5_Budget Parameters 13-14](#)
- [5B_Presidents Cabinet](#)
• 5B1_Agenda
• 5B1_Board-Manual-amended-10-17-14
• 5B1_Dashboard Metrics
• 5B2_BOT Committees
• 5B2_Meeting Dates
• 5B2_Minutes April-10-2015
• 5B3_Policy on Policies
• 5C3_Budget Committee
• 5D1_BOT Quarterly Financial Report 033105
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

5.C.1

The college allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and the Strategic Plan via the annual budgeting process. As explained in Criterion 5.A.5., the Budget Committee uses an incremental budget approach, allocating only the change in revenue from the prior year. After considering changes to revenue and non-discretionary spending, the committee recommends the level of faculty and exempt staff salary increases consistent with Strategic Plan Goal 1.c.ii, which calls for “Improving Faculty Compensation.” The Budget Committee reviews the salary comparison data and recommends an equity adjustment to bring faculty to 100 percent of peer averages and exempt staff to a minimum of 90 percent of peer averages.

The committee then prioritizes requests for new funding based on the priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan. Funding requests are submitted to the Budget Committee through the appropriate vice president’s office using a budget request form. The form requires the requestor to identify the strategic plan action item(s) that the request will help address. After the committee has deliberated, approved recommendations are passed on to the president and the BOT. The trustees receive a summary of the recommendations by strategic goal in the budget parameters book.

In FY 2013-14, 66 percent of the general fund budget is committed to salaries and benefits, 21 percent to non-discretionary items, 7 percent to departmental operating funds, and 6 percent to reserves. The Budget Committee considers the incremental funds available (approximately 5 percent annually). The amounts allotted to salaries and departmental operating funds are available for reallocation at the discretion of the provost and vice presidents.

One example of this discretionary reallocation is in faculty lines. Faculty salaries represent 33 percent of the general fund budget. When a faculty member leaves, a program is not guaranteed a replacement. The provost and Deans’ Council consider all requests for faculty lines and review those requests against performance data, approving lines in those programs that show strength, growth, or future demand. This reallocation is in line with Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan: “Develop selected programs in areas of strength . . . with significant market demand.”
The budget process has been established for a number of years and is well understood by the Budget Committee members. As a result of criticism received regarding a lack of transparency, the administration has increased communication to the campus regarding the budget process. Strategies to communicate the budget process include update emails from the president, posting of Budget Committee minutes on the college’s website, and campus-wide information sessions regarding the budget process.

5.C.2

The college is currently working to create a culture of assessment. To that end, the college hired a director of academic effectiveness and assessment in the spring of 2013. Some of the immediate assessment projects undertaken included the following:

- All academic programs completed the development of assessment plans in spring 2014.
- Working with the Liberal Arts Council, the director of academic effectiveness and assessment helped faculty develop new learning outcomes for the Liberal Arts Core which were approved by the Faculty Senate in spring 2014.
- The LAC was accepted to AAC&U’s Institute for General Education Reform and Assessment during the summer of 2014.
- The Assessment Office added a staff member in summer 2014 to assist faculty with the implementation of assessment plans and evaluation.
- The Division of Student Affairs developed learning outcomes and assessment plans for co-curricular programs.

In fall 2014, the Faculty Senate approved the Program Review Policy. This policy requires the use of assessment data in the completion of the academic program review. Academic departments are currently undergoing a curricular redesign. As part of this process, allocation of faculty resources will be reviewed and reallocated where necessary to deliver the agreed-upon curriculum. Future allocations will rely heavily on program review information, tying assessment of student learning to program evaluation.

Future college-wide efforts will focus on merging curricular and co-curricular initiatives. These initiatives could include incorporating survey data such as the FSSE, the NSSE, and alumni surveys to improve both curricular and co-curricular efforts around such issues as diversity and civic engagement. Once these assessment systems are in place, the data derived from the processes will be used to guide future planning efforts and the allocation of financial resources.

5.C.3

The college includes appropriate internal and external constituencies in its planning processes. Examples of significant aspects of the college’s planning processes are detailed below.

In 2011, the college revisited its Strategic Plan. The Strategic Planning Committee consisted of fifty people and included members from administration, faculty, staff, students, and the external community. Early in the planning process, committee members conducted public listening sessions to solicit feedback from the college’s stakeholders on its strengths and weaknesses. The strategic planning process culminated in a multi-day Strategic Planning Retreat with the full committee and an external strategic planning consultant, where the collective views of the campus community were considered and incorporated into a list of strategic goals and future action items. The college will begin planning for the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan in the 2016 academic year.
The annual budget process is another significant aspect of the college’s planning. The **Budget Committee**, which includes representation from administration, faculty, staff, and students, considers budget requests for new money and changes to institutional fees from campus members and allocates financial resources in accordance with the college’s strategic plan. The budget is ultimately approved by the BOT.

Additionally, the Facilities Master Plan is updated every ten years and includes representation from the BOT, faculty, staff, administration, students, and the external community.

### 5.C.4

The college’s strategic plan and annual budgeting process consider existing capacity and anticipate potential fluctuations in the college’s sources of revenue. The **Strategic Plan** (see Section 5.C.3 above) includes a focus on enhancing the college’s enrollment management plan and adjusting academic offerings in response to student demand. A recent report by the **Colorado Futures Center** suggests that state funding for higher education will disappear by 2030. The strategic plan discusses the college’s reliance on state support and sets objectives to create long-term budgeting models that are responsive to potential future reductions in state support. Accordingly, the college now annually prepares a multi-year budget that incorporates the following significant revenue and expense drivers:

- As state funding declines, the college will be more similar to a private institution and as such, the budget model increases both resident and nonresident tuition rates, bringing them to the same level by the end of the model.
- The college has the second lowest tuition and fees in the state and maintains a generous merit scholarship program. The college closely monitors and adjusts its discount and tuition rates, which are balanced against the mission of providing a high-quality, accessible education.
- The college’s budget is conservative so that it can respond to enrollment fluctuations.
- The college is required by statute and contract to educate qualified Native American students tuition-free on a like basis with non-native students. The State of Colorado reimburses the college for the waived tuition, approximately $15 million annually. The non-resident, Native American enrollment has increased significantly leading to state pressure to contain this growth. The budget model includes assumptions limiting the growth in the tuition waiver reimbursement. The college retains the non-budgeted reimbursements in reserves used to address one-time needs.
- The college has committed to bringing all faculty and professional staff salaries to market levels; these salary increases are incorporated in the budget model. Salaries and benefits make up 66 percent of the general fund budget and represent the college’s most significant expense.

### 5.C.5

A detailed **environmental scan** was developed to inform the college during the creation of the Strategic Plan. The scan considered demographic forecasts from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and the Colorado census report. The college is responding to the identified trends through a comprehensive undergraduate enrollment plan (Direction 4 of the Strategic Plan). Specific initiatives include a managed discount rate, improvement in retention, an emphasis on identity-based marketing, and a refined marketing plan.

The environmental scan acknowledges the institution’s “relatively strong technology infrastructure.” The college utilizes the infrastructure to implement cloud services including Microsoft Office 365, Canvas from Instructure, the Student Success Collaborative from the Education Advisory Board (EAB), online catalog, curriculum catalog management, Career Services, Residence Life
Management, and mobile applications. To track emerging technology the college is a member of several computer networking consortiums. The college participates in regional and national higher education technology organizations including Colorado Higher Education Computing Organization (CHECO), Educause, the System Administration, Networking, and Security Institute (the SANS Institute), the Education Advisory Board (EAB), and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).

The Strategic Plan calls for the college to leverage technology to “implement pedagogically appropriate technologies for the curriculum and the population that the courses are currently serving.” The college has recently appointed its first director of digital innovation and eLearning who is key to facilitating the adaptation of a new Learning Management System (LMS) and examining the college’s offering of on-line and hybrid courses. Additionally, an electronic degree-audit system, an online “student success system,” and a data analytics warehouse have been implemented.

In an effort to increase opportunities for students to be exposed to other cultures, funding for the International Programs Office (IPO) was increased in FY 2014-15. The funding added two staff positions to enable the IPO to increase participation in the Study Abroad Program by 100 percent by the end of the decade. Another goal of the funding increase is increase the number of degree-seeking international students.

Sources

- 5A_CO Futures Study
- 5C1_Budget Parameters 13-14 Strategic Plan Excerpt
- 5C1_Budget Update 2-17-15
- 5C1_Sample Budget Request form
- 5C1_Spring Welcome Budget Education January 2015
- 5C3_Budget Committee
- 5C3_Strategic Plan
- 5C3_Strategic Planning Committee
- 5C3_Strategic Planning Retreat
- 5C5_environmental scan 2011
- 5D1_Program Review Policy and Schedule
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

5.D.1.2

The BOT, administrators, and academic departments receive many reports to aid in the monitoring of operations. The knowledge gained from periodic reports allows for corrective action. When an issue is noted in the data, the issue is investigated, a response is prepared and/or implemented; finally, the solution is further evaluated by review of the metrics. The investigation is conducted by the appropriate department or program.

The BOT and senior administration regularly review dashboard metrics documenting how the institution is performing in key areas, such as enrollment, retention and graduation. The BOT and senior administration also review quarterly financial information documenting how the college is performing compared to what has been budgeted. The college also tracks the metrics included in the Performance Contract with the State of Colorado. These metrics help to focus the college’s attention on student persistence and retention while reducing the disparity in achievement gaps that exist for under-served students.

Annually, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning prepares reports on program-level data including enrollment, degrees awarded, average section size, and student-faculty ratios, which enable administrators and department chairs to understand student and faculty data by department, school and college.

The President’s Cabinet and the BOT review progress toward the Strategic Plan. The 2014 review included an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Including the status of each sub-goal of the plan.

Vice presidents, deans, and department chairs receive monthly reports to track actual spending compared to the budget.

Weekly admission reports are used to monitor enrollment information compared to information from the prior year during the same week in the cycle. With the information garnered from these reports, the Office of Admission can adjust recruiting strategies, and the Budget Committee can adjust revenue projections. The college contracts with Noel-Levitz Higher Education Consulting to provide enrollment and revenue management services. After the enrollment cycle, the data generated by Noel-Levitz are reviewed, and adjustments to the scholarship program are reviewed.

Prior data obtained from the NSSE, provided evidence that students at Fort Lewis College are less satisfied with academic advising services than are students at peer institutions. Using this data, the college has become a member of the Student Success Collaborative sponsored by the EAB. The
purpose of the collaborative is to provide feedback to advisors regarding students’ progress towards their degree.

Every seven years, academic departments prepare program reviews that document the historical performance of the program and identify future goals. As part of the process, the department receives written feedback from internal and external reviewers. These performance reviews are shared with senior administration and the BOT. After approval by the BOT, the dean and provost meet with the department to discuss the review.

The college has taken on a number of specialized projects over the last three years:

Curriculum reform

In the 2012-13 academic year, all academic programs developed maps to graduation, showing the courses to be taken in each major. A number of operational issues surfaced:

- The prior general education program exceeded the number of credits allowed by the State of Colorado. These excess credits put pressure on the ability of students to graduate in four years. As a result, the faculty agreed to remove the upper-level general-education requirement.
- Several of the programs required credits in excess of the maximum of 120 credit hours established by the State of Colorado. Additionally, some programs had so many curricular offerings, the department could not offer all of the necessary courses on a regular basis.
- Review of the differences in credit-hour standards highlighted the difficulties for students in transferring credits, to and from Fort Lewis College, and the impact on course scheduling. These factors further exacerbated a student’s inability to graduate in four years.

As a result of these findings, several curricular changes have been made or are in process.

- The BOT approved the administration’s proposal to revert to a primarily three-credit hour model. This substantive change was approved by the Higher Learning Commission in June 2014.
- All programs are currently undergoing a curricular re-design in part to accommodate the change to the three-credit-hour model and in part to streamline the curriculum. Both efforts are intended to help students graduate in four years.

Redesign of the general education program is also under way. The main purpose is to adopt a general education program that explicitly supports the college’s mission. The college is also partnering with the State of Colorado to develop a Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) program with hopes that this program will position the college to participate in the WICHE Passport Initiative. This initiative focuses on forging general education core transfer agreements between 28 institutions in the five partner states.

Classroom Utilization Study

During the 13-14 academic year, the college contracted with Rikkes Associates to conduct a classroom utilization study. One of the conclusions of the study showed that large, lecture style, tiered, classrooms were not needed. In place of this style of classroom, large, flexible spaces will be needed in the future. Using this information, the college was able to make design changes to the new Geosciences, Physics and Engineering Hall. The original plans for the building included two tiered seating classrooms. These classrooms will now be constructed with flat floors and flexible seating.
Energy Performance Contract

During 2011, the college contracted with McKinstry Construction to complete an energy performance audit and recommend energy savings measures. The cost of the improvements was approximately $9.5 million with annual utilities savings in the first year of approximately $350,000. The anticipated savings financed approximately two-thirds of the work.

In 2007 the college signed on to the President’s Climate Commitment that endeavors to achieve climate neutrality. As part of the measurement of the progress towards the climate commitment, a greenhouse gas inventory was conducted in 2008, setting the baseline of the emissions by the college. As part of the energy performance work, McKinstry Construction is conducting a greenhouse gas inventory. To establish its ongoing commitment to sustainability effort, the college hired a sustainability coordinator in FY 2014-15, who is working to build a bridge between academic and student affairs around sustainability.

Sources

- 5A3_Strategic Plan Update 2014
- 5B1_Dashboard Metrics
- 5D_OIR Enrollment
- 5D_Program Review Schedule
- 5D1_Admission report sample W30 2015
- 5D1_Average Class Size by School Dept
- 5D1_BOT Quarterly Financial Report 033105
- 5D1_Budget Committee Minutes 04-18-2014
- 5D1_Classroom Utilization Study
- 5D1_Energy Performance Audit
- 5D1_Faculty Student Ratio
- 5D1_FLC Degrees School Dept
- 5D1_Ft Lewis ERMS Historical Nov 2014 Exit Briefing
- 5D1_GHG_Inventory_Presentation_2010
- 5D1_Map to Graduation - Accounting
- 5D1_OCE June 2015
- 5D1_Performance Contract Tracking Fall 2014
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

The college funds its operations through tuition and fees, state support, and auxiliary (housing, conference services, food service, and bookstore) activities. Grants and outside funding support the college’s research activities and its auxiliaries are self-supporting. Revenue in the education and general fund comes from three main sources: state funding (20 percent), tuition from non-Native American students (46 percent), and tuition from Native American students (29 percent). Tuition for Native American students is paid by the State of Colorado in the year after the tuition has been waived. When state funding and Native American tuition are considered together, the college receives 49 percent of the general fund budget from the state.

A 2013 report by the Colorado Futures Center at Colorado State University suggests that due to economic conditions and Colorado constitutional limits on taxation, state funding for higher education will disappear by 2030. Although this reduction in state funding will not impact the state funding of the Native American Tuition Waiver, it represents a potential significant decline in the college’s revenue. In anticipation of future economic changes, the college developed a multi-year budget model, which increases resident tuition rates to the full extent allowed by the state coupled with modest increases to non-resident tuition rates. As state support decreases, the goal is to bring resident and non-resident tuition rates closer together, more in line with quasi-private financial model.

The student-faculty ratio in FY2013-14 was 19 to 1. All academic programs are undergoing curricular redesign to ensure academic offerings are aligned with college resources. Once the redesign is complete, the college will adjust faculty lines as necessary so that faculty resources are appropriately matched to course offerings.

The college is operating under the Facilities Master Plan approved in 2006. The plan is scheduled for update in 2016. Capital projects are accomplished through state funding, debt service related to auxiliary income, debt service related to student fees, and private/foundation gifts. Annually, the board approves the Five-Year Capital Construction Plan for submittal to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. Funding is provided in the annual budget process for small projects directed towards program improvements and deferred maintenance concerns. The college recently completed a classroom utilization study to examine whether it is using its facilities in an efficient manner.

The college’s mission, vision, and core values guide its daily operations, strategic planning, resource allocation, and approach to educating students. Central to these statements is the college’s goal of prioritizing student success for its diverse student body by focusing on accessible, high-quality education. The Strategic Plan contains challenging, but realistic, goals and is the college’s action plan for achieving its mission. The Strategic Plan demonstrates the college’s commitment to rigorous academic offerings and long-term student success. The college’s resource allocation process follows the Strategic Plan and therefore ensures that the college’s resources are used to support its educational goals. The College will begin planning for the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan in the 2016 academic year.
The BOT and senior administration regularly review dashboard metrics documenting how the institution is performing in key areas, such as enrollment, retention and graduation. The BOT and senior administration also review quarterly financial information documenting how the college is performing compared to what has been budgeted. Annually, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning prepares reports on program-level data including enrollment, degrees awarded, average section size, and student-faculty ratios, which enable administrators and department chairs to understand student and faculty data by department, school and college. The college also tracks the metrics included in the Performance Contract with the State of Colorado. These metrics help to focus the college’s attention on student persistence and retention while reducing the disparity in achievement gaps that exist for under-served students. When an issue is noted in the data, the issue is investigated, a response is prepared and/or implemented; finally, the solution is further evaluated by review of the metrics. The investigation is conducted by the appropriate department or program.

**Sources**

*There are no sources.*