



EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL
EFFECTIVENESS REPORT

Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness Report



Salt Lake Community College
Salt Lake City, UT

Submitted 13 August 2021

Prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Contents

Institutional Overview.....	1
Basic Institutional Data Form.....	2
Preface.....	3
Standard One: Student Success and Institutional Mission and Effectiveness.....	5
1.A Institutional Mission	6
Primer on the SLCC Approach to Mission Fulfillment	7
Core Themes.....	9
1.B Improving Institutional Effectiveness	18
1.B.1	18
1.B.2	24
1.B.3.....	28
1.B.4	29
1.C Student Learning.....	34
1.C.1	34
1.C.2	36
1.C.3.....	37
1.C.4.....	37
1.C.5	38
1.C.6.....	40
1.C.7	41
1.C.8	44
1.D Student Achievement.....	47
1.D.1.....	47
1.D.2.....	51
1.D.3.....	53
1.D.4.....	54
Conclusion.....	59
Appendix: Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review	60

Institutional Overview

Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) is a large, student-focused, comprehensive, urban and suburban college meeting the diverse of the Salt Lake County community. SLCC is one of 16 public colleges and universities in the state, operating under the auspices of the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE). As Utah's only comprehensive community college, SLCC is the largest supplier of transfer students to the state's four-year institutions. It is home to more than 50,000 students (credit and non-credit), with an annualized FTE enrollment of over 14,000.

SLCC is the most diverse institution of higher education in the state, with nearly one third of its student body identifying as a Person of Color. As Salt Lake County grows more diverse, the college has striven to adapt to the changing needs of the community it serves.

High quality instruction and support services for students are paramount at the college, which maintains an average class size of less than 20. An active faculty development office supports faculty in continuing to grow as instructors throughout their careers. Continuing education for faculty members includes robust offerings in the scholarship of teaching and learning such as civic literacy, faculty engagement, service learning, and assessment practices.

Students may select from over 260 programs of study to earn Associate degrees of Arts (AA), Science (AS), Applied Science (AAS), and Pre-Engineering (APE), in addition to certificates of completion (CC) and proficiency (CP). These programs are designed to give students the ability to 1) transfer to complete a four-year degree, 2) lead directly into the workforce, or 3) stack to provide students with additional skillsets.

The college is Utah's leading provider of workforce development programs and is the sole public provider of applied technology courses in the Salt Lake area. With access as a cornerstone of the college's mission, SLCC maintains ten campuses, another slated to open in 2023, an online campus and several smaller sites located throughout the county.

SLCC's vision is to be a model for inclusive and transformative education, strengthening the community it serves through the success of its students. It is committed to achieving this vision through reciprocal partnerships with community groups; business and industry; P-20 education providers; and government agencies. As the only open-access, comprehensive community college in the state, SLCC is vital to its community.

Basic Institutional Data Form

The Basic Institutional Data Form and each of its elements can be found in the [Box](#) folder provided to the college by NWCCU. The folder includes:

- [Basic Institutional Data Form](#)
- List of [off-campus sites](#)
- List of [distance education programs](#)
- [Financial information](#)

Preface

Salt Lake Community College has continued to learn and develop since our 2017 update to NWCCU. Along with the rest of the nation's community colleges we have been wrestling with the larger trends of declining enrollments, creating a more just and inclusive educational experience, implementing guided pathways and transfer reform, developing new models of advising and student support, and experimenting with the optimum role of new modalities like hybrid, competency-based education, and our pandemic-induced live streamed classes.

We also have experienced significant changes within our governance and system structures. Utah's higher education and technical college systems recently merged. Our former governing board (the Utah State Board of Regents) was retired, and a new Utah Board of Higher Education was created and appointed. This new board has been focused on revising its performance funding model and measuring institutional performance.

Alongside the changes to our state governing board, our local board of trustees has also expanded its role in monitoring the SLCC mission, approving programs, and guiding institutional priorities. As is described at length in this self-study, the SLCC Board of Trustees has embraced a critical role as the primary body to define and assess mission fulfillment.

SLCC does not have any outstanding recommendations from NWCCU. The 2014 review resulted in two recommendations regarding the development of indicators and systematic program review process which were subsequently addressed and satisfactorily resolved. The 2017 mid-cycle report articulated a framework for mission fulfillment that has continued to evolve. Some of the challenges presented in that 2017 report continue to exist, particularly finding a scalable and effective way to include measures of student learning within the mission fulfillment assessment process. While SLCC has a robust and effective system of learning assessment, we are still working on meaningfully integrating it into our mission fulfillment process. Our report describes our past, present, and future plans for how we will continue to learn about student learning.

SLCC conducted its self-study according to the new 2020 standards for accreditation. This report follows those standards. As this was the first time using these standards we made our best judgement as to what to include. We welcome reviewer questions and feedback. We discovered considerable overlap in several of the elements. Some of this may be due to SLCC's approach to strategic planning and mission fulfillment which aligns and uses similar or the same measures for institutional effectiveness (1.B.1), mission fulfillment (1.B.2), and student achievement (1D3). But to ensure coverage we have provided discrete responses to each element. SLCC remains proud of its efforts and outcomes while

acknowledging the importance of continuing to learn and improve. With that in mind, we present our 2021 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness self-study.

Standard One: Student Success and Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

The institution articulates its commitment to student success, primarily measured through student learning and achievement, for all students, with a focus on equity and closure of achievement gaps, and establishes a mission statement, acceptable thresholds, and benchmarks for effectiveness with meaningful indicators. The institution's programs are consistent with its mission and culminate in identified student outcomes leading to degrees, certificates, credentials, employment, or transfer to other higher education institutions or programs. Programs are systematically assessed using meaningful indicators to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and achieve stated student learning outcomes for all students, including underrepresented students and first-generation college students.

1.A Institutional Mission

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

Mission Statement

Salt Lake Community College is your community college. We engage and support students in educational pathways leading to successful transfer and meaningful employment.

Salt Lake Community College's [Mission Statement](#) defines its broad educational purpose and its commitment to student learning and achievement.

SLCC is a post-secondary college with the mission to engage and support students in educational pathways. SLCC is committed to ensuring all students receive the support, tools and learning needed to achieve the

critical educational milestones to successfully transfer or secure meaningful employment.

The SLCC mission statement is at the center of everything we do. It guides both our strategic planning (see 1.B.1) and our mission fulfillment assessment process (see 1.B.2). Because SLCC has differentiated between strategic planning and the assessment of mission fulfillment, we include a short primer below on the difference.

Primer on the SLCC Approach to Mission Fulfillment

Unlike many community colleges, SLCC has a strategic planning process *and* a mission fulfillment process. While both processes use similar data each has different audiences, targets, and focus. Mission fulfillment assessment is a backwards looking exercise. The primary question is one of historical performance. Strategic planning, however, looks forward towards future goals and targets. Anticipating this could be confusing for reviewers, we provide a brief overview to guide understanding throughout the report.

The 2020 NWCCU standards support the distinction between mission fulfillment and strategic planning. Element 1.B.1 asks for a continuous process to “assess institutional effectiveness.” SLCC does this through, among other things, its strategic planning process. The SLCC strategic plan lays out strategic goals and measurable targets. The full strategic planning process is laid out in response to 1.B.1.

Element 1.B.2 asks institutions to set objectives and indicators to “define mission fulfillment.” SLCC interprets this as a requirement to articulate the “acceptable thresholds” of mission fulfillment.¹ For SLCC this is different from a strategic goal. Rather, mission fulfillment looks at the past to determine success. It considers whether the institution has achieved the acceptable, minimum thresholds required for accomplishing its mission.

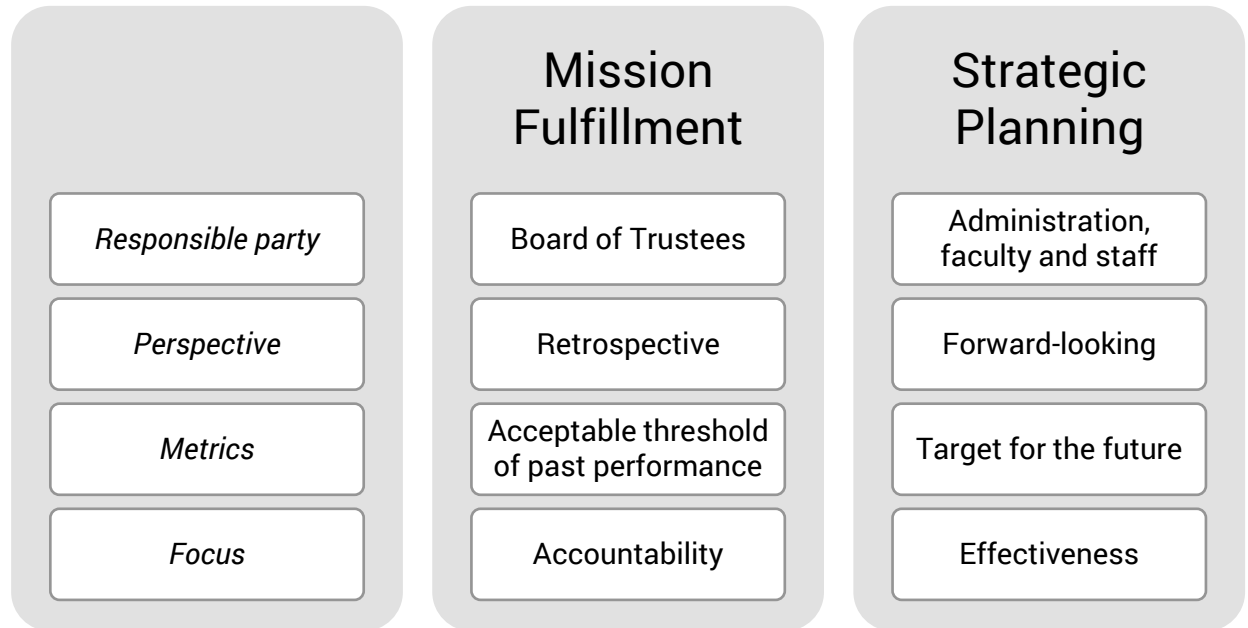
Mission fulfillment assessment also performs an important accountability function. As a public community college, the governing board considers the extent to which the institution achieves its mission. While the strategic plan guides the work of faculty and staff, mission fulfillment is how the institution makes itself accountable to the public through its Board of Trustees. The complete mission fulfillment process is described in our response to element 1.B.2.

Like many NWCCU institutions, SLCC has integrated core themes into our mission fulfillment process. They serve as a helpful framework when conducting assessment. The institution decided, however, that core themes were an unnecessary overlay when conducting internal strategic planning. The language was confusing, overly bureaucratic, and not well known. It was difficult to get people excited about “core themes.” It also didn’t lend itself to the prioritization of work. Therefore, core themes have been discarded for internal strategic planning. This means that the people on campus who are most familiar with core

¹ The language “acceptable thresholds” appears in the actual text of Standard One but is not referenced within the elements of the standard. The term is the evolution from the 2010 language of “minimum thresholds.” The SLCC mission fulfillment process originated under the 2010 standards and we have evolved it to fit within the new standards. Therefore we rely heavily on the language “acceptable thresholds” here.

themes are those who participate in the mission fulfillment process (i.e. the Board of Trustees, executive cabinet members, and a few other senior leaders). The rest of the college will be more familiar with terms like “strategic goals” and “college strategies.”

The following visualization presents the primary differences between the SLCC mission fulfillment process and its strategic planning process.






This primer is designed to help the reviewer become more acquainted with SLCC’s two-part approach. The two systems may seem duplicative when presented together but have worked well in practice. There is considerable overlap between the core theme indicators and the strategic goals metrics, but they are not identical. This is intentional and by design. Throughout the self-study there was considerable discussion regarding whether the best approach may be to combine the two processes or intentionally keep them separate. This conversation is still evolving, so SLCC may change its approach moving forward. However, what we present here is our current thinking and practice about how the institution meets the NWCCU standard.

Core Themes

The SLCC Board of Trustees has established three core themes, six objectives, and seven indicators used in the assessment of mission fulfillment. These are all discussed at length in the [2019 Mission Fulfillment Report](#). We provide a short summary below and encourage the reviewers to refer to the Mission Fulfillment Report for further detail. We also discuss this process at length in our response to 1.B.2.

This section will provide a title and brief description of each core theme, the objectives to be achieved via each core theme, indicators of achievement for each core theme objective, and the rationale for the selection of the respective indicators of achievement. The graphs are included as information items from our 2019 mission fulfillment report.

Table 1: SLCC Core Themes, Objectives, and Indicators

THEME	OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS
 Access and Success	A Provide accessible instructional programs and student services	1 Community Access Rate
	B Provide access to students underrepresented in higher education	2 Minority Student Participation Rate 3 Completion Gap
	C Support students to become successful and engaged learners	4 Six-year Completion Rate
 Transfer Education	D Prepare students with a foundation for success in continued studies	5 Transfer Degree Conversion Rate
 Workforce Education	E Prepare students with the knowledge and skills meeting current industry needs	6 Competitive Wage Rate
	F Provide specialized training for business and industry	7 Enrollment in Specialized Training

Core Theme: Access and Success

As the “community’s college,” we seek to be the primary point of access into higher education. As an open-access community college, we support and engage students from the time they enter SLCC and throughout each step of their journey toward completion of their program of study. This core theme has been organized around three objectives.

Objective A: Provide accessible instructional programs and student services

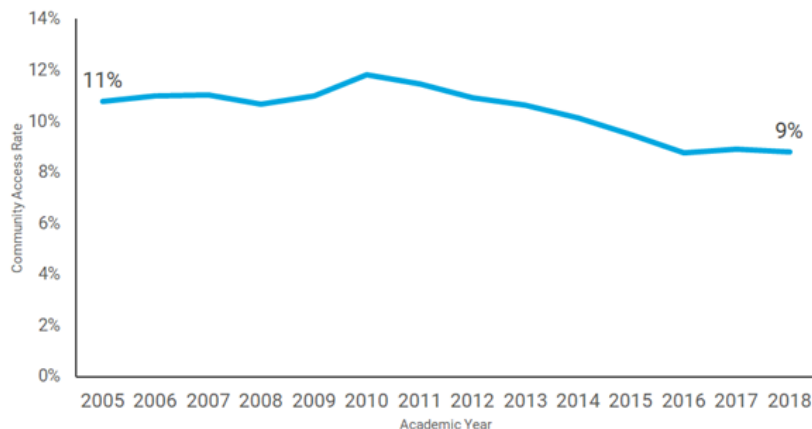
Indicator: Community Access Rate (see Figure 1)

The community access rate expresses total enrollment as a percentage of the Salt Lake County college-aged (15-44) population. It allows college leadership to determine if SLCC is providing access as the population expands. Ideally, SLCC would maintain the same or increase its rate of access over time by mirroring county population increases in our enrollment. However, labor market volatility complicates this relationship.

The counter-cyclical relationship between higher education and the economy is thought to be particularly strong for community colleges, which tend to attract older workers seeking to upskill during times of unemployment. At SLCC, we have found this largely to be the case, with enrollment in decline since the end of the Great Recession in the early 2010s. For this reason, the Community Access Rate takes a long-range look at enrollment, with the acknowledgment that labor market volatility impacts enrollment at least as much as population changes.

Figure 1: Community access rate

The SLCC annual headcount as a proportion of the Salt Lake County college-aged (15-44), 2005-2018



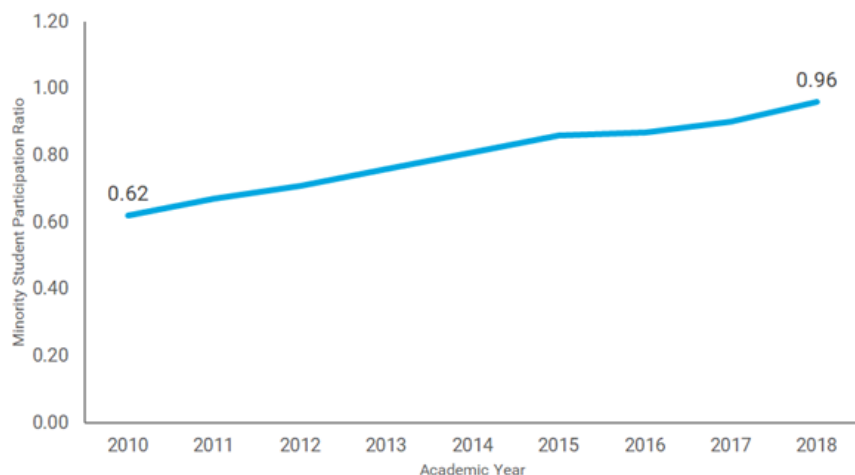
Objective B: Provide access to students underrepresented in higher education

Indicator: Student of Color Participation Ratio (see Figure 2)

SLCC measures enrollment equity using the Student of Color Participation Ratio (see Figure 2), which shows how closely SLCC's student body reflects the diversity of its surrounding community. As a ratio of the diversity of SLCC to that of its service area, when the value is equal to one, it indicates SLCC and Salt Lake County are equally diverse. If the student body is more diverse, the ratio rises above one; if it is less diverse, it falls below one.

Figure 2: Student of Color participation ratio

The ratio between the proportion of Students of Color compared to the college-aged (15-44) Salt Lake County Population of Color, 2010-2018

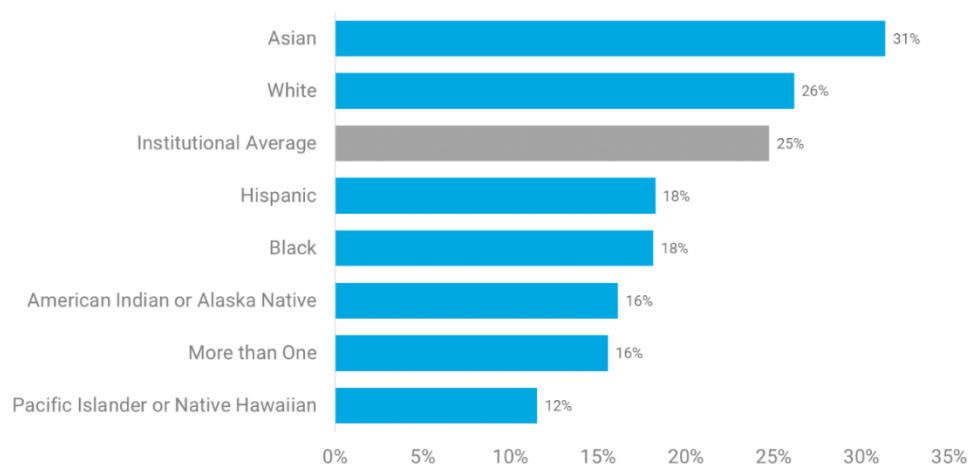


Indicator: Opportunity Gap in Completion (see Figure 3)

The Opportunity Gap in Completion (see Figure 3), represents an attempt to understand how students from different backgrounds experience SLCC once they are here, and how well we are meeting the needs of diverse populations. If Students of Color do not complete credentials at the same rate as their white counterparts, this is evidence of a gap in SLCC's services. We measure the opportunity gap in completion by examining the proportion of each group of new students in the fall that completes a degree or certificate within six years. By comparing this figure across racial and ethnic groups, we can observe if an opportunity gap exists.

Figure 3: Opportunity gap in completion

The proportion of Students of Color who complete a degree or certificate within six years of their first course at SLCC



Objective C: Support students to become successful and engaged learners

Indicator: Six-year Completion Rate (see Figure 4)

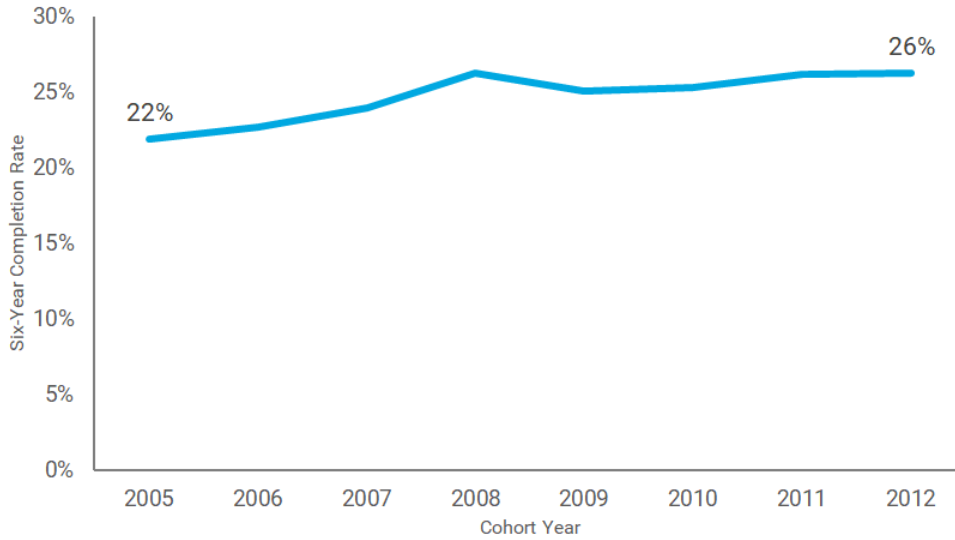
The Six-Year Completion Rate (see Figure 4) is measured by calculating the proportion of each fall cohort of new students that completes a degree or certificate within six years.² Though SLCC offers one- and two-year credentials, most SLCC students are part-time and have irregular enrollment patterns. With a median credit load between two and three courses per semester and occasional stop-outs to earn more money to pay for college, SLCC students need more time to complete.

We know that economic and financial trends impact completion, as students stop out when they attain a better job – often due to the coursework they have completed. As we work to support students with their completion goals, we consider the six-year completion rate within the context of the intent, characteristics, and expectations of our students.

² This measure follows the suggested metric from the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), of which SLCC is a member.

Figure 4: Six-year completion rate

The percent of students who complete a degree or certificate within six years of starting at SLCC



Core Theme: Transfer Education

Approximately two-thirds of SLCC students enroll with the intent to transfer to a four-year college. This means that, in order to support our students' continued success, our goals must include helping students complete, not just at SLCC, but at their future institutions as well. We demonstrate our success in transfer education through a single overarching objective and associated indicator.

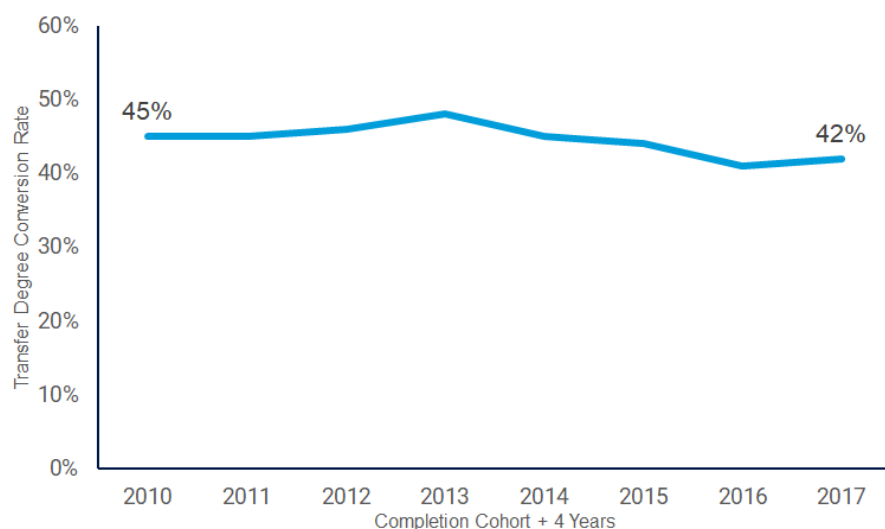
Objective D: Prepare students with the knowledge and skills meeting current industry needs

Indicator: Transfer Degree Conversion Rate (see Figure 5)

Ideally, we would measure articulation as the proportion of SLCC graduates who transfer with junior standing into a major. However, these data are not currently available. Instead, we measure the efficiency of our articulation to four-year colleges using the transfer degree conversion rate: the percentage of SLCC transfer degree (AA/AS/APE) graduates who earn a bachelor's degree within four years of leaving SLCC. While this indicator does not directly measure articulation, it allows us to gain a proxy understanding of it. If successful articulation reduces repeated course-taking and improves time to bachelor's degree completion, the rate of degree conversion provides a reasonable indicator of whether students are able to efficiently articulate their AA/AS/APE into BA/BS degrees.

Figure 5: Transfer degree conversion rate

The percent of SLCC transfer degree graduates who earn a bachelor's degree within four years of completing an AA/AS/APE at SLCC



Core Theme: Workforce Education

Community colleges are engines of economic and workforce development. We provide relevant and responsive education leading to meaningful employment. Workforce education programs include those that lead to certificates (both credit and competency-based), Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, and specialized non-credit trainings. The workforce education core theme has been organized around two overarching objectives.

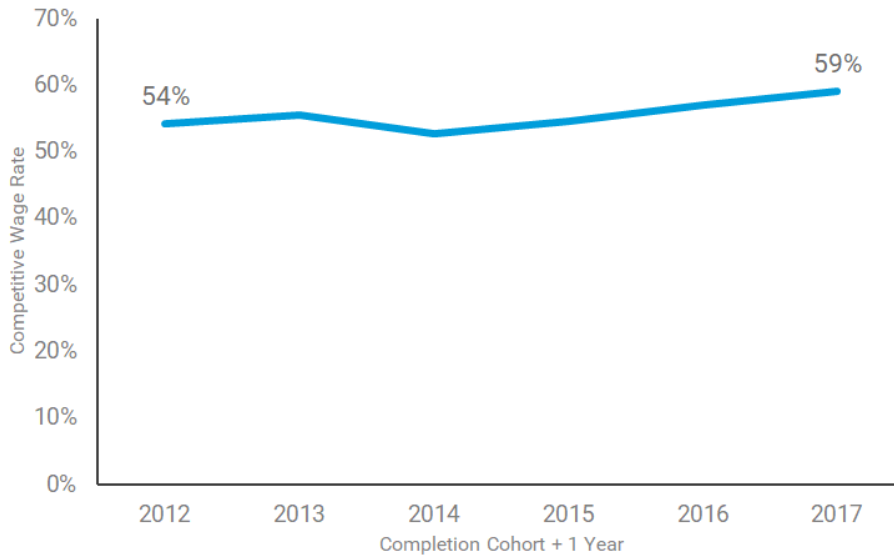
Objective E: Prepare students with the knowledge and skills meeting current industry needs

Indicator: Competitive Wage Rate (see Figure 6)

SLCC has defined the primary outcome of its workforce education mission as the competitive wage rate. The competitive wage rate is the proportion of SLCC career and technical education (CTE) graduates who earn above the median wage for occupations requiring some college or an associate's degree within one year of graduation.

SLCC must align workforce education programs with skills needed by industry. This is best for the student, the college, and the economy. If SLCC is successful in aligning its workforce programs, CTE graduates will be highly recruited and well compensated. The goal is to make SLCC workforce graduates highly competitive in the labor market and the preferred source of labor for Utah's employers. Any rate above 50% suggests that, on average, SLCC graduates are making more and are in higher demand than non-SLCC graduates.

Figure 6: CTE Graduate Competitive Wage Rate
Proportion of SLCC CTE graduates who earned a wage above the Salt Lake County median wage one year after graduation, 2012-17



Objective F: Provide specialized training for business and industry

Indicator: Enrollment in Specialized Training (see Table 2)

The purpose of non-credit specialized training is to provide training to local businesses to strengthen the economy. SLCC works directly with businesses and working professionals to develop and deliver non-credit specialized training. The programs are generally shorter than traditional college-level programs (some only a single class) and are designed to train students in a specific skill. We measure the success of these programs through non-credit enrollment.

The demand-driven characteristics of these programs make enrollment a meaningful indicator. Because the programs are self-supported, they must be responsive to the expectations of employers and students. If the customer (whether the student or the company) is not pleased with the training, enrollments will drop. See the Table 2 for specialized training enrollments.

Table 2: Specialized Training Enrollment, 2017-18

Type of Training	Enrollment
Continuing & Workforce Education	6,991
Custom Fit	2,816
Other Trainings	2,389
Small Business Assistance	883
GS 10KSB Module Training	886
Ford Training Center (Outreach)	620
Outreach	1,725
Program Events	886
GS 10KSB Information Sessions, etc.	839
Total	13,921

1.B Improving Institutional Effectiveness

1.B.1

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

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

The SLCC process has four components: 1) ongoing and dynamic strategic planning, 2) learning outcomes assessment systems, 3) a comprehensive program review process, and 4) a participatory and informed budget development process. Through these four components SLCC assesses its institutional effectiveness, including student learning and achievement and support services. All four components follow the basic assessment model: plan, act, assess, revise.³

Ongoing and Dynamic Strategic Planning

SLCC's strategic planning process is ongoing and dynamic.⁴ Unlike many institutions where strategic planning has a beginning (usually with a large forum hosted by the president) and an end (usually with a lengthy strategic plan), SLCC's approach is centered around planning, action, continuous assessment, and revision.

SLCC developed its long-term [strategic plan](#) in 2016 focusing on five goals (completion, transfer, workforce, equity, and sustainability). These goals, along with the college's mission statement, form the foundation for SLCC strategic planning and institutional effectiveness. The strategies and tactics to achieve these goals vary periodically as we assess and learn from our experiences.

SLCC's five strategic goals are:

1. Increase student completion
2. Improve transfer preparation and articulation
3. Align with and response to workforce needs
4. Achieve equity in student participation and completion

³ Variations on this cycle are prevalent. The American Society for Quality uses: Plan, Do, Check, Act. But the basic premise is the same: effectiveness is a process of planning, implementing, reviewing the results, and then acting on those results to form a new plan.

⁴ See the grey box labeled "Strategy Implementation" in the college's [Decision Making Structure](#).

5. Ensure institutional sustainability and capacity

To direct and oversee the effectiveness of the strategic plan, SLCC's President Huftalin created the College Planning Council (CPC) comprised of the Executive Cabinet (the President, Vice Presidents, and Chief Diversity Officer) and select senior leaders.⁵ This council continuously considers the latest data to direct strategic plan implementation.

In 2016, the college identified a metric and set a target for each strategic goal. The CPC tracks metric performance and communicates goal progress in an annual [report](#).⁶ Using the updated data, the council considers the effectiveness of the college strategies and revises where appropriate.

Table 3: Strategic Goals and Metrics

Goal	Metric
Increase Student Completion	Six Year Completion Rate <ul style="list-style-type: none">Percent of all new students who complete an award within six years
Improve Transfer Preparation and Articulation	Degree Conversion Rate <ul style="list-style-type: none">Percent of AA/AS graduates who earn a BA/BS within four years
Align with and Respond to Workforce Needs	Continuing and Technical Education (CTE) Competitive Wage Rate <ul style="list-style-type: none">Percent of CTE graduates who earn a wage above the median wage for occupations requiring some college or an associate degree
Achieve Equity in Student Participation and Completion	Participation Ratio <ul style="list-style-type: none">Percent of SLCC student diversity as a ratio of the county diversity Opportunity Gap in Completion <ul style="list-style-type: none">Percent difference between completion rates of students of color and their white peers
Ensure Institutional Sustainability and Capacity	Annualized Budget Related FTE Enrollment <ul style="list-style-type: none">Count of credits generating revenue for college operations

⁵ This [document](#) shows the original strategic planning structure in 2016. We have since discontinued the College Collaborating Council. We have also replaced the chair of the planning council with the president.

⁶ The [2018](#) and [2019](#) goal update reports are in the box folder. The [2021 report](#) was delivered via [zoom](#) and no handout was created due to the pandemic.

The strategic goal metrics are also the SLCC measures of student achievement described in section 1.D.2-1.D.3. Through this alignment, SLCC strategic planning considers the measures of student achievement in determining institutional effectiveness.

The college set the strategic goals in its original [2016 strategic plan](#), along with sixteen strategies aimed at their accomplishment. In 2019, after two years of work and continuous progress assessment, the planning council [updated the strategic plan](#), evolving some strategies, marking others completed, and adding a few new ones. The CPC is currently conducting its third formal update (2020-2023) to its strategic plan as it has continued to assess progress and make appropriate adjustments to priorities, direction, and resources.⁷

The CPC conducts annual strategy assessments to serve an important qualitative and real-time assessment of institutional effectiveness. It begins by issuing specific strategy charges to strategy leads. The council charges each strategy lead with specific tasks.⁸ The lead executes the charge and responds at the conclusion of the year with a strategy report detailing accomplishments and recommending next steps ([2020 reports](#); [2021 reports](#)). The council considers these annual strategy reports and responds with the following year's charge ([2020 responses](#); [2021 responses](#)). Through this cycle the council assesses progress in as near real-time as it can and adapts its strategies and tactics accordingly.

This self-study has highlighted some important insights to the SLCC strategic planning process. First, many of the defined metrics are lagging indicators. The delay from action to outcome is measured in years and makes a poor direct feedback loop. The measures were selected because they represent the college's ultimate aims (success in completion and post-completion outcomes) but they are difficult to meaningfully operationalize. To respond to this, our latest strategic plan update is considering a separate set of annual metrics to act as leading indicators. The coupling of annual leading indicators with the longer-term strategic goals may allow leadership to set and track annual goals for retention, credit accumulation, and awards earned. When reviewers convene in October, we hope to show the updated strategic plan and its leading indicators.

We have also learned that accomplishing our ambitious goals will require actions at a greater scale than prior strategic work. To this end the college began implementing [SLCC Pathways](#), the premier strategy of the plan and the largest

⁷ This is happening in real time with the self-study and site visit. For this reason, some strategies may be renumbered or dropped or added to the strategic plan in the Fall of 2021. A draft of the current list of strategies for our third phase is provided [here](#) as an information item.

⁸ In some cases, the strategy is considered important enough or sufficiently complex to merit a strategy committee. In that case the council appoints a "collaborative work team" (CWT) which serves for the year and follows the same cycle.

single initiative the college has undertaken. This strategy has been in development for more than four years and has the potential to fundamentally reshape the college.

Student Learning

SLCC employs a continuous process to assess institutional effectiveness, including student learning. As further described in 1.C.5 – 1.C.7, SLCC has two formal systems of learning assessment: [departmental](#) and [general education](#). Together these systems evaluate learning quality and effectiveness. Each system effectively uses the results of the assessment to inform academic and learning-support practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes.

Each academic department annually assesses a component of an instructional program. This assessment is documented in [reports](#) which are submitted to the learning outcomes assessment office.⁹ We ensure institutional effectiveness through a regular “assessment of assessment.” The faculty Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) committee sponsors a regular, formative peer evaluation of the assessment reports. The committee then aggregates findings in an institutional [report](#). This report measures the assessment process across six criteria including the level and types of assessments used, the use of assessment data to improve learning, and the collaboration occurring within and across departments. Through this process SLCC ensures institutional effectiveness of learning within departments.¹⁰

The college also utilizes a continuous process to assess the institutional effectiveness of student learning within and across its general education program. Each year a group of general education faculty review a random sample of ePortfolios of students who have completed the general education program. Using both [custom](#) and national ([AAC&U VALUE](#)) rubrics the faculty assess student learning on each of the general education learning outcomes. They aggregate and report their findings in an annual general education learning assessment [report](#). These faculty also recently released a [report](#) on learning outcomes disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, first-generation status, and Pell eligibility. The general education committee, academic administration, and Board of Trustees use this report to assess learning and improve outcomes across the general education program.

Through the departmental and general education systems of learning assessment, SLCC demonstrates a continuous process to assess the institutional effectiveness of student learning.

⁹ The historical archive of assessment plans and reports is available [here](#).

¹⁰ We are continuously learning and updating the departmental-based learning assessment system and these changes are more fully described in sections 1.C.5-1.C.7.

Program Review

SLCC also demonstrates a continuous process to assess institutional effectiveness, including student learning and achievement and support services, through its program review process. SLCC maintains two systems of program review: one for instructional and another for non-instructional programs.¹¹ The instructional and non-instructional program review systems demonstrate an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine institutional effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement.

Instructional Program Review

SLCC has a standardized instructional program review [process](#) to ensure student learning and achievement.¹² According to UBHE [Policy R411-5](#), all instructional programs undergo a thorough review three years after initial approval and every five years thereafter. The review process includes an internal [self-study](#) made up of qualified teaching faculty and the Associate Dean. This committee reviews both capacity and student achievement data while assessing program effectiveness. The study includes a discussion of learning assessment (see 1.C) to improve the program, the effectiveness at meeting workforce needs or transfer preparations, and a discussion of the student experience within the program. The three- and five-year program review [results](#) are reported through the Provost's Office to the Utah State Board of Higher Education.

The program self-study is reviewed by a qualified external review team which provides recommendations. The final report with recommendations is forwarded to the Provost for review and comment. The Provost works with the academic dean to develop a [response and action plan](#) which is then forwarded to the Executive Cabinet for review and approval.

Through the instructional program review, SLCC demonstrates an ongoing and systemic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine institutional effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement.

Non-Instructional Program Review

SLCC assesses the effectiveness of its support services through its non-instructional program review process, which is modeled after the NWCCU accreditation process. It consists of the department/program area preparing a self-study, which is shared with an external review team which conducts its own assessment and provides a set of findings. Rather than using standards of accreditation, department/program leads are provided with a self-study [guide](#)

¹¹ Instructional programs refer to certificate and degree programs; non-instructional refers to all other support services found across the college.

¹² The current instructional program review [calendar](#) is provided on Box.

[and template](#) that considers alignment with the strategic plan, review of resources, performance metrics, and other best practice peer comparisons.

After the external review, programs develop an [action plan](#), which is monitored by the department/program lead. Depending on the program or area, reports are made to the senior leadership team or other important stakeholders.

Recommendations from the self-study and external review are budgeted and implemented over the next four years, with the opportunity to reevaluate the changes at the next review.

SLCC recently [reviewed](#) the non-instructional program review implementation and discovered that many action plans are delayed or move away from the original recommendations. These may be the right decisions, but senior leaders felt such moves need to be documented and vetted to ensure alignment with the strategic plan and institutional effectiveness. As a result, the college implemented a three-year follow-up reporting process. All areas will provide follow up reports each year for three years.

With dozens of support services and operational programs, reviews are staggered across a five-year time period. The [cycle](#) starts at the most front-facing functions and progressively moves through the college organization. This again ensures alignment within and across divisions and the college. [Completed program reviews](#) in most divisions are archived in the college systems, while those under the Division of Student Affairs are available for public consumption on the [Student Affairs website](#).

Due to the important role of student-facing services in student achievement and the desire to develop a culture of assessment and effectiveness, the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management requires each student support function to undergo an [annual assessment](#) of a single element of its mission. In this way, a culture of assessment and continuous improvement have become firmly embedded.

Informed Budget Process

Each component of the SLCC system described above is designed to support the effective allocation of resources. SLCC utilizes an [Informed Budget Process \(IBP\)](#)¹³ to encourage college-wide participation in developing the annual operating budget.

Each strategy lead provides recommendations on what resources are needed to be successful. The learning outcomes assessment work informs both departmental and general education budget requests. Program reviews (both instructional and non-instructional) make specific recommendations regarding

¹³ IBP [overview](#) and [timeline](#) are provided on Box

personnel and resource needs. These all flow into a participatory and systematic budget process.

Through these mechanisms, as well as the daily experience of employees, each department identifies financial resources required to achieve institutional goals (e.g., personnel, technology, physical space, infrastructure). Departments review their existing budgets, realign resources where available, and then submit an [IBP request](#) to the [Budget Office](#) for any additional resources needed. The budget request form specifically asks that each request provide rationale and justification that it advances “the institutional goals and objectives.”

These requests are reviewed by supervisors and rolled up into combined budget requests made to the Executive Cabinet. The Cabinet reviews each request and makes allocations based on need and alignment with strategic goals. Resource requests emerging from strategies and program reviews are prioritized. When budget decisions are [announced](#), they are organized by strategic goal area as well as by organizational [division](#).

Conclusion

SLCC demonstrates institutional effectiveness by employing a four-part model consisting of 1) dynamic and ongoing strategic planning, 2) learning outcomes assessment, 3) a comprehensive program review process, and 4) a participatory budget development process. Together, these components constitute an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process which informs and refines SLCC’s effectiveness, assigns resources, and improves student learning and achievement.

1.B.2

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

SLCC sets and articulates meaningful objectives and indicators to define acceptable thresholds of mission fulfillment. The mission fulfillment analysis is conducted to improve effectiveness within the context of, and in comparison with, regional and national peer institutions.

Defining Mission Fulfillment

From 2014 through 2017, mission fulfillment analysis was conducted through a complex overlay of data and assessments presented to the college’s senior leadership. In 2017, shortly after submitting the NWCCU mid-cycle report, SLCC reconsidered the appropriateness of engaging senior leaders in the work of assessing mission fulfillment. After reflecting upon the [evaluator’s response](#) to the mid-cycle report and SLCC’s own internal analysis, senior leaders considered

if there may be a better way to provide an objective and accountable assessment of mission fulfillment. This is due in part to the lack of clear and objective standards upon which leadership could make an assessment. The leaders themselves reported difficulty with objectivity when their own work is the item being assessed. To live up to the standard's intent, they needed to find a different approach that was more objectively defensible from an external, public perspective. Ultimately, senior leaders determined this was an appropriate role for SLCC's Board of Trustees.

After extensive conversations, the trustees created a Mission Fulfillment Committee and charged it with reviewing data relating to institutional performance and recommending a mission fulfillment assessment process. The Committee quickly reaffirmed the existing core themes, objectives, and indicators. They also established an assessment [schedule](#) and process. This included the individual review of one objective and its indicator at each board meeting over eighteen months.¹⁴ This allowed the Committee and the Board to review the data multiple times and ask for supporting data. Once the Board reviewed all available data, each trustee was asked to [score](#) the extent to which SLCC achieved the stated objective. These data and scores were compiled and presented in the [2019 Mission Fulfillment Report](#).

The Board affirmed in its 2019 report that SLCC fulfills its mission. However, trustees identified three objectives where improvement was needed: accessibility of programs and services, service to underrepresented students, and improving transfer outcomes. The Board shared the report with the Utah Board of Higher Education and the Commissioner of Higher Education. It is also posted on the [SLCC website](#).¹⁵

At the conclusion of that assessment cycle in 2019, the mission fulfillment committee modified the process slightly to allow for more thorough analyses on the identified areas for improvement. Trustees felt it necessary for more time to pass before any meaningful change in data would occur and they desired to better understand the college's systems and processes. They asked for extended analysis related to student equity, student learning (not addressed directly in the report), and transfer outcomes.

The deep dive process (as the trustees came to call it), involved asking detailed research questions and consulting with college leaders on specific topics. To date, the Committee has reviewed the analysis of [equity](#) and [learning assessment](#). Transfer is next and will be analyzed over the fall and winter. Following these

¹⁴ Samples of the [presentations](#) at the board meetings are included on Box

¹⁵ The Trustees also [presented](#) and distributed the report at the 2019 ACCT conference alongside Mac Powell from NWCCU as a model process for assessing mission fulfillment

deep analyses, the Mission Fulfillment Committee plans to conduct another holistic mission fulfillment assessment.¹⁶

Mission Fulfillment in the Context of National and Regional Peers

Mission fulfillment analysis is conducted to improve effectiveness within the context of, and in comparison, with regional and national peer institutions. As the Mission Fulfillment Committee conducted its assessment, relevant benchmarking data was provided alongside for their consideration.

Unfortunately, data systems have not matured sufficiently, both nationally and within Utah, to get precise and useful benchmarking data for each core theme indicator. When trend data are lacking, supplemental data are considered as a proxy for a direct benchmark. Alternatively, internal trend data is used to examine the college's own performance over time. We provide below a short analysis of the benchmarking available for each core theme indicator used in the mission fulfillment assessment. For a more detailed analysis of the rationale for each indicator, please see the Core Themes section after 1.A.

Indicator #1: Community Access Rate.

The Community Access Rate measures whether access is increasing or decreasing as the service region population grows. As the only comprehensive urban community college within Utah, there are few peers to benchmark against. The trustees considered the fact that community college enrollment across the nation is declining. Thus, the decline in SLCC's access rate seems to parallel national peers. The demographics of Salt Lake County, however, are also unique. And just because national peers are declining doesn't necessarily mean SLCC can or should. When [considering](#) this for mission fulfillment, the committee benchmarked against the institution itself. Access has been in decline for a substantial period and therefore, the Board identified this as an area for improvement. In this way, the trend, rather than the raw rate itself, was the cause for concern.

Much is being done in response to the declining access rate. The college has formed both internal and external P-20 alliances and significantly increased its efforts in attracting enrollment. We include an extended discussion of these trends in 1.B.4.

Indicator #2: Participation Ratio

SLCC benchmarked this data off the [National Community College Benchmark Project \(NCCBP\)](#). According to NCCBP, most community colleges are more diverse

¹⁶ The last few months have been delayed due to the development of new USHE Performance Funding Metrics that needed to be vetted through the boards of trustees. President Huftalin assigned this task to the Mission Fulfillment Committee.

than the community they serve. This has not been the case at SLCC. While we have increased student diversity significantly over the last seven years, it is still below national benchmarks. As such, this was another area the board identified as needing improvement. To achieve a 1:1 ratio is also the target for SLCC [strategic goal](#) around equity.

Indicator #3: Opportunity Gap in Completion

This indicator is [benchmarked](#) both regionally and nationally. SLCC uses both six-year completion data from the American Association of Community Colleges' Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), as well as 150% completion rates from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The VFA data shows SLCC's gap as slightly larger than its peers, but IPEDS has it slightly lower. We provide more details in 1.D.4.

Indicator #4: Six Year Completion Rates

This is benchmarked nationally off peer institutions based on the [VFA](#). SLCC has been consistently slightly higher rates than the average of its peers.

Indicator #5: Transfer Degree Conversion Rate

There is no direct benchmark for this metric despite it being a measure promoted by the Aspen Institute. The [National Student Clearinghouse \(NSC\)](#), however, has produced transfer [benchmarks](#) to which SLCC subscribes.¹⁷ Indirect [benchmarking](#) was also explored, based on [studies](#) from the Community College Research Center (CCRC). SLCC, and Utah as a whole, underperforms on transfer success. Trustees identified this as an area of improvement by the Board.

Indicator #6: Competitive Wage Rate

The competitive wage rate is difficult to benchmark due to lack of data on regional differences in cost of living, wages, and job opportunities. However, the indicator provides an important student outcome measure. Thus, instead of benchmarking regionally or nationally, SLCC compares internally and through qualitative assessments with employers. The Mission Fulfillment Committee considered supplemental data regarding wage gains after completion and conducted employer surveys regarding SLCC graduates. The analysis came back positive. The full [analysis](#) can be found on the mission fulfillment website under Workforce core theme heading.

Indicator #7: Enrollment in Specialized Training

Each institution's non-credit and occupational training arms and their associated enrollment and outcome reporting practices are so different that benchmarking becomes difficult. There are some potential in benchmarks under development at NCCBP. For the [2019 assessment](#), trustees considered internal supplemental data

¹⁷ SLCC was the first institution to subscribe to the service provided by NSC

to determine mission fulfillment. It considered the alignment of programs with industry needs and enrollment in those programs/courses. The Board determined SLCC was fulfilling its mission in this area.

Conclusion

The indicators are sound, yet state and national data systems do not yet allow for effective and consistent benchmarking. This often leads SLCC to consider supplemental data in making a determination on mission fulfillment.

When the analysis results in potential deficiencies, the Board and senior leaders reflect on how to improve effectiveness in these areas and introduce new strategies to our strategic plan. For example, an opportunity gap in completion was found wherein Latinx students are not graduating at the same rate as Black and White students. As a result, Strategy #10 was updated to focus on better serving the Latinx population. Similarly, in reviewing transfer rates, it became clear SLCC is lagging national trends. As a result, two strategies for transfer (Strategy #4 and Strategy #5) were introduced to the strategic plan.

1.B.3

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

SLCC's planning process is inclusive, offers opportunities for comment, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvements of institutional effectiveness. The college undertakes formal strategic planning updates every few years. During these formal update periods, SLCC hosts college-wide events and online comment periods to receive feedback on proposed ideas and strategies. During the last formal update period in 2018-2019, the college hosted forums at its three largest campuses and gathered feedback on what was and was not working. The college also hosted online forums on proposed strategies that generated significant discussion.

SLCC also hosts an annual college-wide event called [SLCC 360](#), where leaders share progress made on strategic goals. The event includes a plenary session where the president provides an update on college strategic work and goals. There are then several interactive sessions with strategy leads where faculty, staff, and administration can learn about progress on each strategy and ask questions. Strategy leads incorporate feedback from these sessions into their strategic work.

In addition to the formal revision periods, the plan is dynamically updated as needed. For example, as [Strategy #11: Increase Diversity in Hiring](#) was being implemented, it was determined that its focus was overly narrow and left out important elements. The strategy focused on two specific programs: search

advocacy and diverse faculty fellowships. Feedback on these programs informed the strategy lead that, while the programs were important, the hiring process was deemed outdated, and there were issues with the concept of fellowships. Data showed that the problem wasn't just in hiring, but also retention, resulting in a higher turnover rate for Employees of Color. In response, the strategy was recrafted mid-cycle. The strategy lead presented a proposal to the College Planning Council asking for a revision to the strategy with a broader focus. The CPC agreed, and responded by broadening the charge and renaming the strategy¹⁸.

The strategic planning process also directly supports the allocation of resources. As the strategy leads complete their annual strategy update, they submit recommendations and integrate any resource requests into those [reports](#). These are then used as part of the budget request to ensure justification and alignment. Recently, the strategy lead for the two transfer strategies (Strategy #4 and Strategy #5) requested a new position to organize the new [University and Transfer Center](#). Realizing the urgency of the strategy, senior leaders made a mid-year reallocation and moved to support and hire immediately. The college also included a larger resource request for the University and Transfer Center into its operating request with the state legislature.

As described in 1.B.1. the strategic planning process informs and refines SLCC's institutional effectiveness. The process is dynamic and responsive to institutional needs, as annual strategy assessments serve as important real-time assessments for institutional effectiveness. Each year the strategy is adjusted in response to challenges and needs as they surface. This continuous improvement cycle leads to improvement over time. One example is the college's efforts to increase [diversity in hiring](#). Preliminary numbers for this past year saw a nearly 50% increase in diversity hiring among our faculty. This is a direct result of pivoting this strategy to focus on revamping the hiring process based on feedback and data from the earlier year.

Also described in 1.B.1 are the program review and informed budget processes. Both processes feed directly into our strategic planning process and allow opportunity for comment, the allocation of resources, and lead to improved institutional effectiveness. (see 1.B.1 for a full discussion of these processes).

1.B.4

The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it considers such findings to assess its strategic position, define its future direction,

¹⁸ Formerly "Scale the Use of Search Advocates and Increase Diversity Fellowships," Strategy #11 became "Increase Diversity in Hiring"

and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, planning, intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement of its goals.

SLCC monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. The strategic planning process is designed to identify these trends and patterns and funnel the information towards the continued assessment of SLCC's strategic position, crafting its future direction, and reviewing and revising the planning, outcomes, and indicators of achievement.

SLCC integrates this environmental scanning within existing processes. These scans are included within many processes already covered in this self-study: i.e., the program review, informed budget processes, and the mission fulfillment assessment processes described in 1.B.1-1.B.3. SLCC also has an [Internal Audit Office](#) that conducts an [annual review](#) of institutional risk to identify and classify emerging trends and patterns that may impact the sustainability and effectiveness of the college. The Internal Audit Office develops the list through external and internal scans and reports to the executive cabinet each year.

Additionally, college leadership is active in soliciting input from both internal and external stakeholders. Open forums and college-wide conversations engage internal constituent groups in discussions to consider larger trends in the community and emergent issues in higher education. The signature college-wide event is [SLCC 360](#). This strategic forum is held every spring and covers both internal and external themes and trends important to the college. At SLCC 360, college employees have engaged with [topics](#) of inclusivity and diversity and [intentional design](#) for student completion.

The college regularly engages external groups to assess its strategic position within the community. The president, cabinet members, and trustees seek input from local leaders, key business and philanthropic stakeholders, and public officials about roles and issues that the college should focus on to contribute to the larger community good. Community and business leaders continue to serve essential roles on [program advisory committees](#) and offer external perspectives to our faculty and administrators. The college regularly brings together representatives from business and industry as well as high school and postsecondary partners to discuss current industry needs and training pipelines to craft system-wide workforce preparation solutions.

SLCC uses these strategic findings to define its future direction. As issues emerge, they are integrated into departmental action plans, the strategic plan, or other appropriate areas. How and where particular topics are addressed is determined by to the college's [decision-making structure](#) described in 2.A.4. This structure assigns items according to area of expertise and governance responsibility. The [Senior Leadership Team](#) addresses operational and strategic needs, the Faculty

Senate¹⁹ addresses curricular and instructional themes, and the Discussion Team²⁰ addresses faculty compensation and workload items. Each item eventually flows through these areas to the [Executive Cabinet](#) where decisions are made and forwarded to the Board of Trustees and the Utah Board of Higher Education as appropriate.

Perhaps the best way to explain this process is to provide a few examples. The following list could be much longer, but these exemplify some of the critical patterns, trends, and expectations SLCC has identified:

- A chronic and persistent declining rate of college participation associated with rapidly shifting demographics and increasing student diversity that outpaces the increases in diversity among our faculty and staff
- A change in the state system of governance and structure to focus more on technical and non-credit education
- Trends in best practices for improving developmental education (required co-requisite, multiple measures placement, default math sequences based on major)

The first item is the chronic and persistent decline in the rate of college participation. This may be the single greatest trend and threat to SLCC. This trend was first noted six years ago, just as the Great Recession enrollment surge had depleted. Trend data around two of the core theme indicators (Participation Rate and Access Ratio) was alarming. While the participation rate was declining, the access ratio was increasing. This suggested that while the college was becoming more diverse, we were not growing proportionately with our community. Further analysis through the [Office of Data Science and Analytics](#) discovered deeper trends of a declining rate of college participation within SLCC's service area.

Considering this trend and assessing SLCC's strategic position, the strategic plan was reviewed and revised to redefine the future direction of the college. It became clear that the typical SLCC student was changing and SLCC needed to change with it. College leadership revised the college strategic plan with a focus on strategic enrollment management, the development and strengthening of community engagement, and a priority to accelerate the diversification of SLCC faculty and staff. SLCC opened a new site in [West Valley City](#), one of the most ethnically diverse communities in the state, and the focal area where participation was decreasing. SLCC President Huftalin created a P-20 alliance with the surrounding school districts to [design strategies](#) and responses to

¹⁹ SLCC maintains a robust [Faculty Senate](#) SharePoint site to provide resources and transparency. Reviewers can access this site using the provided login credentials.

²⁰ Description of the Discussion Team, and its membership can be found in the [Faculty Handbook](#), pg. 2

improve college participation. Leaders in People and Workplace Culture [redesigned](#) the hiring process and implemented new strategies to make SLCC more diverse and inclusive. These efforts seemed to be working as enrollments directly from high school began climbing, but COVID-19 pandemic undid many of these gains. Diverse populations were hit systemically harder, and this again accelerated the declining college participation rates. SLCC is currently leveraging the federal stimulus and recovery funds in an attempt to recover the lost participation caused by the pandemic.

A second example is the recent change in the state governance system. SLCC's strategic position since the early 2000s has been the only comprehensive community college within Utah. Unlike other counties in the state, Salt Lake County had an integrated comprehensive community college with both credit and technical non-credit education offered through SLCC. All other Utah service regions developed with regional universities separate from local applied technology colleges (the latter of which are not accredited by NWCCU). In 2020, the Utah Legislature combined the two systems. The system is currently unifying the two systems, and this places SLCC in a new strategic position. The college straddles both areas and as a result it must revise its strategic position within the new state system. SLCC will likely expand its technical/occupation trainings in response to this new trend.

A final example is the college's work in developmental education. SLCC often sends faculty and administration to conferences where they identify best practices and ideas for responding to long-standing challenges and trends. One such example is [the 2019 Center for the Analysis of Post-secondary Readiness \(CAPR\) Conference](#), where SLCC faculty and administration learned about "Reimagining Development Education." The ideas presented at the conference focused on several strategies for assisting students in developmental math. SLCC attendance took place against a backdrop of significant barriers in its developmental math and early college math success. For example, a [test item analysis](#) revealed that students did not retain or master math concepts as they entered the pre-calculus algebra course. The concern was significant since it came on the heels of a 2017 project to realign developmental math curriculum and restructure [course pathways](#). In addition, the Department of Mathematics was experimenting with supplemental [workshops](#) to enhance student success. Though the workshops were [effective](#), they did not attract widespread participation.

The CAPR conference gave the faculty and administration the opportunity to consider strategies emerging across a large spectrum of higher education institutions that included the idea of "just-in-time" remediation as well as the need for better placement in the math progression pipeline. Following the conference, the Department of Mathematics and other stakeholders launched an

effort to redesign the developmental math program to focus on an early, strong assessment of student abilities, placing them in a cohort of similar students, and integration of lessons learned in our workshops as a variation on the “just-in-time” model. The new program will launch in Fall 2021.

Since 2015, SLCC has focused its direction on becoming a model for inclusive and transformative education. The college’s strategic goals were established in 2016 and were reaffirmed in the most recent planning iteration. The President, Cabinet and Board of Trustees elected to maintain the strategic goals so that college employees would remain focused on the mission during a period of declining enrollment, a potential budget challenge, and the plethora of externally imposed accountability demands. Even as strategies changed, the college maintained a consistent focus on its strategic goals. As the current planning cycle concludes, culminating in the celebration of the college’s 75th anniversary in 2023, SLCC will begin a new strategic plan to revise our strategic position, indicators, and goals as well the associated programs and services.

1.C Student Learning

1.C.1

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

Salt Lake Community College offers programs with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission; culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes; and lead to collegiate-level degrees and certificates with designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

Content and Rigor

SLCC assures appropriate content and rigor in its programs through a rigorous program development and approval process, as well as through regular program reviews.

Program Development and Approval

The college adheres to the Utah Board of Higher Education (UBHE) [Policy R470-5](#) for content and rigor. SLCC offers foundational (numbered 1000 and 2000, also termed “lower-division”) courses. According to 5.2 of that policy: “lower-division courses offer breadth, foundation, general education, preparation for employment, or preparation for continued study and may serve as prerequisites for upper-division courses.”

Faculty are the primary shepherds of educational quality and ensure the appropriate content and rigor as designated by UBHE policy. SLCC ensures the content and rigor of its programs through a robust curriculum development and approval [process](#) that considers disciplinary content, faculty expertise, institutional stakeholders, input from local workforce and transfer partners, and specialized or programmatic external accreditation. The entire process is detailed in the [SLCC Curriculum Handbook](#).

When faculty develop a new program, it is vetted through the department faculty and school Curriculum Committees, the Dean’s Council, Faculty Senate, the Provost of Academic Affairs, Executive Cabinet, and depending on the nature of the proposal, peer review facilitated by the Commissioner’s Office in the Utah System of Higher Education, with ultimate approval by the SLCC Board of Trustees. Each step in this development and approval process reviews the content and validates the rigor. General education courses are additionally vetted through the General Education Committee to ensure appropriate content and

rigor of the general education program (see the [SLCC General Education Handbook](#) for more detail). The Provost's Office [assists](#) faculty with templates, processes, handbooks, and general support.²¹

Program Review

After an instructional program is approved, the college has a standardized review [process](#) to ensure that the approved content and rigor are achieved and maintained. Approved programs undergo a thorough review three years after approval and every five years thereafter (see USHE [Policy 411-5](#)). During program review, the department must demonstrate that the program continues to comply with institutional and state guidelines and that students are achieving the stated learning outcomes at the level specified in program documents. The three- and five-year program review [results](#) are reported to the State Board of Higher Education through the provost's office. The program review process is further described in 1.B.1.

The SLCC Pathways initiative has impacted the program review process. As SLCC looked holistically across its programs we discovered a need for a better review process. The provosts' office put the review process in abeyance as it redesigned a better process to ensure programs meet both internal and external expectations. Better data was needed to perform the necessary level of review. We recently completed the redesign. The schedule has been reset and we are actively moving forward with those which have been delayed.

Culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes

All SLCC degree and certificate programs culminate in the achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes. The learning outcomes for these programs are crafted by faculty and approved through a [system](#) of governance culminating with the Board of Trustees.

SLCC has eight [college-wide student learning outcomes \(CWSLO\)](#). All programs demonstrate through the program curriculum outline ([PCO](#))²² how program-level student learning outcomes relate to and fulfill the CWSLO. Program-level student learning outcomes are reviewed and approved by school and college curriculum committees (see pg.9 of the [Curriculum Handbook](#)). For more information on assessment of student learning outcomes, see 1.C.5-7.

²¹ SLCC maintains a robust [internal curriculum site](#) that is used to manage the process. Reviewers can access this site using the provided login credentials.

²² A PCO is a standardized template summarizing an academic program, submitted to the Provost's Office

Lead to collegiate-level degrees or certificates with designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study

SLCC is authorized by the Utah State Board of Higher Education, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, and the United States Department of Education to offer the following college-level degrees and certificates. Each of these awards are defined by [USHE Policy R401](#) and are consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

- Associate of Applied Science (UBHE Policy R401-3.1.3)
- Associate of Arts (UBHE Policy R401-3.1.4)
- Associate of Science (UBHE Policy R401-3.1.4)
- Associate of Pre-engineering (UBHE Policy R401-3.1.4.1)
- Certificate of Proficiency (UBHE Policy R401-3.1.1)
- Certificate of Completion (UBHE Policy R401-3.1.2)

The program review process described above also ensures that program content is systematically reviewed for relevance and applicability in line with currently recognized fields of study.

1.C.2

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

SLCC awards credit in degrees, certificates, and credentials based upon student learning. Faculty Senate Curriculum Committees (see 1.C.1) establish and review course learning outcomes. They sequence courses as part of degree and certificate programs to ensure the appropriate breadth and depth of learning. Faculty present the proposed course learning outcomes in course curriculum outlines ([CCO](#)) and program learning outcomes in a program curriculum outline ([PCO](#)). Faculty assess learning and attainment of learning outcomes through graded assignments and other learning experiences. Once students complete the course requirements they apply for graduation where the course completions are verified. Credentials are awarded upon verification.

SLCC is active in several initiatives to further align learning with the award of credit. While “Guided Pathways” is a nation-wide initiative involving hundreds of colleges, implementation at SLCC is unique. Styled [SLCC Pathways](#), it emphasizes both the structural (course sequencing and strategic use of defaults) as well as what we call program coherence. As Newmann and colleagues write, program coherence is achieved when the “set of interrelated programs for students, [faculty,] and staff are guided by a common framework for curriculum,

instruction, assessment, and learning climate.”²³ Under a program coherence model, all degree and certificate programs are designed based on an area of study framework that aligns the curriculum, pedagogy, learning climate, and assessment practices in a mutually reinforcing manner.²⁴ Area of study design teams are actively designing and implementing program redesign to achieve better program coherence. A redesigned [program review process](#) (described in 1.C.1) has put a renewed emphasis on learning as the basis for credential awarding. Programs must present the learning assessment work to illustrate how they know students are learning.

Additionally, SLCC has a mature [competency-based education](#) model that directly ties learning to course and program outcomes in certain areas. This is the most advanced in the [School of Applied Technology and Technical Specialties](#) but has also been deployed in general education and a few other select programs across the college. The Faculty Senate recently approved and began implementing [guidelines](#) for writing learning outcome statements. These guidelines provide college-wide standards for developing learning outcomes for courses and programs.

1.C.3

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

All program and degree learning outcomes are published in the [SLCC Catalog](#). Course learning outcomes are provided to enrolled students through course syllabi.

The primary method for distributing course syllabi at SLCC is our learning management system Canvas. In 2018, [Executive Cabinet approved Canvas](#) as the official learning management system of SLCC. Following Cabinet’s resolution, SLCC Discussion Team decided that all faculty would be required to use the Canvas messaging tool, use the gradebook, and post the course syllabus.

1.C.4

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

SLCC admissions and graduation requirements are clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible to students and the public. Admission

²³ Fred M. Newmann, BetsAnn Smith, Elaine Allensworth and Anthony S. Bryk. 2001. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. “Instructional Program Coherence: What It Is and Why It Should Guide School Improvement,” 23(4): 297-321.

²⁴ See the [Guide to Implementing SLCC Pathways](#)

requirements are available in [policy](#), on the admissions [website](#), and in the [SLCC Catalog](#). Graduation requirements are laid out in [policy](#), on the graduation office [website](#), and in the [SLCC Catalog](#).

1.C.5

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

SLCC has two formal systems of learning assessment: departmental and general education. Together these systems evaluate the quality of learning.

Annual Department-based Learning Assessment

Each academic department annually assesses a component of an instructional program. The faculty select which outcome they will assess and design an assessment plan. The department designates an assessment coordinator who leads the process each year. This coordinator works with department faculty to decide what, when, and how to conduct learning assessment that year. Historically this has compiled into an assessment [plan](#) and submitted to the [Learning Outcomes Assessment Office](#). This last year we did not require the plans to be submitted, only the results.

The department implements the assessment plan and details the results in an annual report. This report template has undergone many iterations. Currently, departments write a [narrative](#) regarding what they assessed, what they learned, and how they used that assessment data to improve student learning. The [reports](#) are submitted to and tracked by the learning outcomes assessment office.²⁵

We ensure this system is effective through a regular “assessment of assessment” (see 1.C.7). The Faculty Senate’s Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) committee [sponsors](#) a regular, formative peer evaluation of the assessment reports. A group of ten to fifteen faculty review and [score](#) each assessment report on six criteria. Each department receives confidential feedback from the peer evaluators. The SLOA committee then compiles an aggregated [report](#) to provide an overall picture of quality and effectiveness of the assessment process. This report is provided to faculty, administration, and was [recently considered](#) by the Board of Trustees as part of its mission fulfillment assessment process.

General Education ePortfolio Learning Assessment

For well over a decade, SLCC has pioneered general education assessment using student [ePortfolios](#). Since 2010, every general education course has required

²⁵ The historical archive of assessment plans and reports is available [here](#).

students to perform two tasks: 1) upload at least one “signature” assignment that addresses two or more general education learning outcomes, and 2) upload a reflection on that assignment or the learning experience in that class. Signature assignments and reflections are showcased by students in their ePortfolio.

Each year a group of general education faculty representing a variety of disciplines reviews the ePortfolios of a random sample of students who have completed the general education program. Using both custom and national ([AAC&U VALUE](#)) rubrics, faculty assess student learning on each of the general education learning outcomes. Their findings are aggregated and reported out in the annual General Education Learning Outcomes [report](#). This report is used by the General Education Committee²⁶, academic administration, and the Board of Trustees to assess learning and improve outcomes across the general education program. See 1.C.7 for more details on how we use this assessment to improve learning.

Lessons from the Two-System Approach

Beginning with NWCCU’s standards revision in January 2020, SLCC began a systematic review of its learning outcomes assessment process to ensure alignment. We conducted an intensive program review process on the learning outcomes assessment program. This included and an exhaustive two-part ([Part 1](#); [Part 2](#)) internal self-study and bringing in national experts for an [external review](#).

The review confirmed what NWCCU had affirmed in 2014. SLCC has an advanced, mature, and effective system of learning outcomes assessment (see Commendation #2 on page 54 of the [2014 NWCCU Report](#)). Notwithstanding our successes, and in the spirit of continuous improvement, we have some continued opportunities for improvement. The review produced several recommendations we are currently implementing. Some findings from the review and subsequent conversations include:

- An insufficient process to ensure program-level outcomes are regularly assessed
- That the two-system process creates confusion among faculty and administrators. It becomes difficult to track what assessment goes with which process.
- The relationship of learning assessment systems to instructional program review are ill-defined.

²⁶ A Faculty Senate subcommittee under the Senate Curriculum Committee, this body is tasked with reviewing and developing General Education criteria

In response the college implemented a [requirement](#) that each department assess a program-level outcome annually. The new assessment system also expanded the number of narrative responses to gather a broader picture of the assessment that is occurring. By the time of the site visit, SLCC will be restructuring the process to clarify and streamline efforts between the department and general education assessment systems and looks forward to sharing its progress with site visitors.

1.C.6

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

SLCC has both institutional and general education learning outcomes. We call the institutional outcomes “college wide student learning outcomes” ([CWSLOs](#)) They include:

1. Acquire substantive knowledge in the intended major and throughout General Education
2. Communicate effectively
3. Develop quantitative literacies necessary for the chosen field of study
4. Think critically and creatively
5. Develop the knowledge and skills to be a community engaged learner and scholar
6. Develop the knowledge and skills to work with others in a professional and constructive manner
7. Develop computer and information literacy
8. Develop the attitudes and skills for lifelong wellness

These eight outcomes provide the general framework for all other learning outcomes across instructional programs. Instructional programs align their learning outcomes with these CWSLOs within the program curriculum outline ([PCO](#)) and these are further reported to students in the [SLCC Catalog](#).²⁷

²⁷ To see how this works select any [instructional program](#) with the SLCC Catalog. Then, scroll down to the “program student learning outcomes” table which lists the CWSLOs and then aligns those to the specific instructional program learning outcomes. For example, the [Graphic Communication AS](#) program has a program outcome of “prepare artwork for print and digital outputs from design through file preparation using industry standard software.” The faculty have aligned this outcome with two CWSLOs. It aligns to both quantitative literacies (CWSLO #3) and computer & information literacy (CWSLO #7).

The SLCC General Education program has eight [outcomes](#) which largely mirror the CWSLOs but are more specific and apply only to the general education program. This means all general education courses must address one or more of the general education outcomes. These are assessed in a regular ePortfolio process described in 1.C.5.

1.C.7

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

SLCC has two formal systems of learning assessment, as described in 1.C.5: departmental and general education (through ePortfolio). Each system effectively uses the results of the assessment to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes. The instructional program review also plays an important role in using assessment results to continuously improve student learning.

Annual Department-based Learning Assessment

As described in section 1.C.5, the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) committee sponsors a regular, formative peer evaluation of the assessment reports. A group of ten to fifteen faculty review and score each assessment [report](#) on six measures. Question 4 assesses how well the department used what it learned in the assessment to improve student learning. In short, the committee assesses how effectively the departments “closed the loop” (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Closing the Loop

Question 4 Evidence of Closing the Loop

Score	Response	Percent
0	Nothing to Score	11.39%
1	No Evidence of Closing the Loop	6.15%
2	Linkages are Unclear	9.55%
3	Little to No Analysis/No Change	6.15%
4	Some Evidence	49.04%
5	Direct Linkages to Data	14.23%
6	Follow up From Previous Report	3.49%
		100.00%

This review reveals that over two thirds of departments demonstrate evidence of closing the loop. As laid out in the [report](#) on this finding:

This is perhaps the most gratifying and exciting result of the study. A careful review of the literature showing how well other campuses perform on this question tells us that SLCC faculty are in

the top tier. The majority of our faculty had at least some evidence of closing the loop in their reports. (pg. 6)

While pleased with this result, the SLOA committee will continue efforts to close the loop and improve student learning. The college is currently and actively shifting elements to both broaden participation and continuously close the assessment loop. Departments are now [required](#) to assess a CWSLO and/or program each year. Most faculty are now completing an annual assessment [report](#) in the form of a narrative, whereas in the past a single departmental representative would do so.

Assessment means little if the data are not used to make changes in students' learning experiences. Four examples below, selected by the 2020 SLOA Committee chair, show how faculty members made changes to student learning experiences based on their previous assessments:

1. [SAT Electronics](#) faculty used assessment data to redesign assignments to better clarify required tasks for students. A course gateway-segment was created to include Habits of Mind for students in need of study skills. The ePortfolio requirements were redesigned to further document this learning.
2. The [Accounting](#) department used assessment data to redesign their program to help students equitably graduate within two years and have opportunities for direct transfer to other USHE institutions with new transfer agreements. The department also assessed "core competencies" and redesigned ePortfolio assignments to better reflect student learning.
3. The [Communication](#) department's critical foundational course, Analysis of Argument (COMM 1270), determined via assessment that asynchronous online learning was impacting student success. The department used this opportunity to redesign not only instructions for assignments, but built-in scaffolding levels with lower stake assignments, such as annotation, that sequenced into more complex critical thinking of analysis (rather than expecting both outcomes simultaneously).
4. The [Chemistry](#) department recognized data revealed math skills as an indicator of success, and so designed a math-readiness quiz component to assess baseline needs from which to teach. This assessment of students' prior knowledge then prompted multiple learning opportunities (workshops, consultations, etc.) for students at multiple levels to accomplish the chemistry learning outcomes.

General Education ePortfolio Learning Assessment

The findings of the general education assessment described in 1.C.5 are aggregated and reported out in an annual General Education Learning Outcomes [report](#). The General Education Committee, academic administration, and the Board of Trustees review this report to assess learning and improve outcomes across the general education program.

Overall, the assessment demonstrates that SLCC students are achieving appropriate and expected levels of learning. The rubrics are designed on a 1-to-4 scale. Students tend to score around 2.5 across most learning outcomes. This is precisely the level of learning we expect to see at the end of a two-year general education program.

The assessment has led to several changes and improvements, including 1) strengthening students' understanding of the purpose of general education, 2) a revision in the program structure to emphasize international issues and explore the role of the United States in global affairs, and 3) efforts to enhance information literacy, an area in which students consistently scored low.

After reviewing the report, it became clear that, while students were acquainted with SLCC's general education learning outcomes, they often failed to understand the purpose and value of the general education program. SLCC responded by creating the [Explaining General Education Initiative](#), an effort to help students better understand the value of general education and, regardless of their major, view it as an integrated, foundational program.

We first conducted an [experiment](#) to test this hypothesis. Faculty across eighteen general education sections developed materials and a learning exercise explaining the rule and structure of the general education program. Faculty delivered these materials in half of the identified sections. The other half of the sections acted as a control group, and students did not receive either the materials or the learning exercises. The results demonstrated the positive effect of explaining general education on learning. Students in the treatment sections demonstrated greater understanding of and appreciation for general education, thus validating the Explaining General Education Initiative. The General Education Committee added a section to its [handbook](#) asking faculty teaching general education courses to explain to students how their course fits in the scope of general education courses, the nature of its general education designation, and the similarities and differences between that designation and others. A full complement of [resources](#) have been developed to help faculty explain general education to students.

Second, the general education assessment led to significant revisions of the general education program structure. For example, the assessment consistently

showed over several years that the program did not expose students to international issues or help students understand the position and role of the United States in a global context. Additionally, the assessment showed the interdisciplinary designation did not significantly produce strong comparisons across fields. In response, the college dropped the interdisciplinary designation and replaced it with an international and global designation. The new designation has now been in place for several years, and it is hoped upcoming ePortfolio assessments will demonstrate if this change results in broader exposure to international issues.

The assessment report has also consistently shown that students need more practice in a particular dimension of information literacy: the ability to use credible sources and appropriately cite them in support of a point or thesis. Most recently, the assessment validated the efficacy of students receiving library instruction on research and information literacy. The director of [Writing Across the College](#), in conjunction with staff members at the [library](#), are working to improve assignment design and expand library instruction so that students will be able to demonstrate stronger information literacy in their signature assignments.

Instructional Program Review

The SLCC Instructional Program Review process (see 1.C.1 and 1.B.1) has historically focused on student achievement measures (completions and enrollments), though it has always included a qualitative review component in which faculty reflect on learning. Recently, specific prompts were added to page 4 of the program review [template](#) asking faculty and administrators to reflect on larger learning assessment within the program, including one dealing specifically with learning outcomes assessment. The requirement to address learning assessment in instructional program review provides an additional method of centering student learning and support the already existing general education and departmental assessment systems.

1.C.8

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

Transfer credit and credit for prior learning is accepted according to clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible policies that provide adequate safeguards to ensure academic quality. Sections IV.5 and IV.6 of SLCC's [Transfer Credit Policy](#) outline how the college facilitates efficient transfer for students to and from Salt Lake Community College, while maintaining program integrity.

Transfer policies include parameters set by the USHE Policy [R470-7](#) as well as the SLCC [Curriculum and Graduation Standards Policy](#). SLCC students may find transfer information in the [General Catalog](#) and through the [Transfer Evaluation Office](#). In addition, Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) maintains the [TransferUtah.org](#) website, which details course and exam equivalencies across institutions within the USHE system.

In accepting transfer credit, the [Transfer Evaluation Office](#) ensures that such credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic rigor, and quality. The office works closely with deans and department chairs to determine how transfer credit is accepted according to the institution and [UBHE Policy R470-7](#).

SLCC awards credit under the following guidelines for students who transfer credit to SLCC:

1. College-level credits transfer for credit-bearing classes taken at a regionally accredited college or university. Exceptions to this rule are sometimes made by specific academic programs for credit applied to a major-related course requirement.
2. Credit is awarded if grades in individual classes were C- or higher, except in cases where a grade of C is required at SLCC as a prerequisite.
3. Classes must be college-level, rather than remedial or developmental. At Utah institutions this usually means numbered 1000 or above.
4. Transfer credit is awarded for classes designated as “general education” by the issuing institution, or by SLCC, or if they meet a requirement for graduation in the student’s SLCC program.
5. Due to the age of coursework (e.g., more than fifteen years), some credit may only transfer as elective credit.
6. Religion courses that advocate the doctrine of a particular sect or denomination will not be accepted.

The procedure for awarding credit for prior learning is established in SLCC’s [Credit for Prior Experiential and Noncredit Policy](#). Students wishing to earn credit for prior learning submit their request to the [Transfer Evaluation Office](#), which then works with the appropriate associate dean to make a determination. These guidelines, as well as instructions on how to transfer credit, may be found on the transcript evaluation office website. This policy and process is currently being updated to remain consistent with new state statutes.

The Utah Board of Higher Education adopted [Policy R472](#) in 2019, updated and approved in 2021, which establishes processes and standards for awarding academic credit through [prior learning assessment \(PLA\)](#). Opportunities for prior learning assessment include military credit, credit by exam (e.g., AP, CLEP, etc.), experiential language credit, Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), math

award for ACT/SAT score, course challenge exam, individual portfolio review, skills assessment demonstration, and industry certification.

Recognizing that students come from a variety of backgrounds with experiences that may result in college-level learning without formal coursework, senior leaders included expanding [PLA](#) as during the 2019 update to SLCC’s strategic plan. This working group recently piloted a PLA process in the college’s Institute of Public Safety and is exploring a competency-based PLA option for veterans enrolled in General Education courses.

As part of new USHE reporting requirements, SLCC analyzed the number of students served by PLA. The majority of students received credit by exam (AP, CLEP, etc.), but ACT/SAT and military credit was also common, as shown in Table 3 below.²⁸

Table 3: Types and Frequency of Prior Learning Assessment

PLA Category	Number of Students	Number of Credits
Credit by Exam	880	9,972
ACT/SAT Mathematics	249	747
Military Credit	137	2,189
Experiential Language Credit	33	169
Peace Officer Standards and Training Certificate	11	216
Course Challenge Exam	18	79
Prior Learning	13	88
Prior Work Experience	1	3

A systematic means of tracking and reporting these efforts is currently under development as the college plans to scale PLA activity.

UBHE Policy [R473](#) establishes guidelines for “granting academic credit for CTE coursework completed in non-credit instructional formats” (e.g., clock hours, continuing education units, and competency assessments). Typically, 30 clock hours is comparable to one credit hour, and technical programs consisting of at least 900 clock hours are commensurate with thirty credit hours toward an Associate of Applied Science. SLCC has a formal transfer [agreement](#) with the Technical Colleges in USHE as well as discipline-specific agreements with several of the individual technical colleges, such as the Culinary Arts agreement with [Uintah Basin Technical College](#).

SLCC developed internal [procedures](#) whereby students who complete a clock-hour certificate in its own School of Applied Technology can apply that credit to a credit-delivered degree program.

²⁸ Source: [Strategy #9 2021 Report](#)

1.D Student Achievement

1.D.1

Consistent with its mission, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational programs. It orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advice about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.

Recruitment and admissions

SLCC recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational programs. Recruitment and admissions procedures have undergone significant changes over the past seven years, most obvious in the creation of the [Office of Admissions](#) in 2016. The re-introduction of this office to the Division of Student Affairs is indicative of a shift to more intentional and focused recruitment as a response to maintaining steady enrollment.

The Office of Admissions recruits and assists students in applying to Salt Lake Community College. This office maintains [three](#) recruitment teams, each dedicated to working with a distinct set of potential students. The traditional high school team visits SLCC feeder schools to meet with students who are still in high school. They also target students who have taken some concurrent enrollment, encouraging them to work toward a general education certificate while still in high school. A second team is dedicated to working with students in charter and alternative high schools, as well as high-need populations such as incarcerated youth. A third group focuses on adult learners, returning students, and workforce segments.

A prospective-student CRM (Customer Relationship Management) database houses the admissions applications and is used to communicate with prospective students via email and text message. Students approach SLCC with a variety of needs. In order to address these needs, the Office of Admissions coordinates outreach on behalf of several specialized offices, including Orientation and Student Success, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, and Veterans Services. Based on how a student fills out the application, the CRM cues the system to send automated emails. An admitted student is automatically walked through financial aid/scholarships, placement, orientation, advising, registration, and post-registration processes. There are also automated messages for targeted groups who may have particular needs, such as veterans, Students of Color, students who identify as LGBTQ+, and students who may be undocumented.

SLCC [communicates](#) with high school counselors and community members regarding the new student application process, continuing student (concurrent/early enrollment) application update, and information on paths

toward matriculation, including certifications, AA/AS, or workforce training at SLCC targeted for high school seniors and adult student populations. Recruitment events include but are not limited to [scholarship and financial aid workshops](#), career and college access presentations, [live chats](#) with recruiters, [annual conferences](#), admissions application workshops, and [campus tours](#).

Partnering with the Division of Academic Affairs, students are given the opportunity for more focused engagement with specific departments. For example, the [Department of Culinary Arts](#) routinely invites high school students to tour the kitchens, test the equipment, and meet members of the faculty. Similarly, specialized campus tours are available for students interested in specific areas of study, such as the [School of Health Sciences](#). More broadly, the [Pathways](#) initiative has strengthened cross-functional integration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs by encouraging students to consider their area of study in the earliest steps of the recruitment process. In this way, students gain exposure to their chosen field and make valuable connections with faculty sooner in their academic career.

SLCC has a formal strategy to Increase College Participation. Recognizing that a variety of social, economic, and demographic factors has led to a significant decline in college attendance at both the local and the national level, this collaborative work team [developed tactics](#) to strengthen SLCC's "P-20 pipeline." P-20 refers to the lifespan of a student through the Utah school system, from preschool through graduate school. This group has focused on targeting middle schools in the college's service area to create a college-going mindset among these younger age groups.

Another effort to increase college participation is the [Partnerships for Accessing College Education \(PACE\) Scholarship Program](#). Geared toward high school students, this four-year program offers eligible²⁹ high school freshmen advisor support and advocacy, summer opportunities such as campus visits and job shadowing, expectation of college-level coursework while in high school, and a two-year scholarship to SLCC. The Office of Orientation and Student Success manages the [SLCC Summer Bridge Program](#) to prepare graduating high school seniors for college and provide the opportunity to earn college credit. Finally, [TRIO Education Talent Search College Bound \(ETS\)](#) is a federally funded program open to eligible³⁰ junior high and high school students. ETS offers campus tours,

²⁹ Eligibility requirements include 1) freshman status at one of four Salt Lake County high schools and 2) first-generation college student and/or demonstrated financial need (e.g., eligible for free/reduced price meals)

³⁰ Eligibility requirements include attending one of eight target schools and first-generation college student and/or demonstrated financial need

workshops, ACT preparation, assistance with college applications and financial aid forms, and career exploration.

To ensure students benefit from the college's offerings and to provide the best possible academic experience, SLCC requires students to go through its placement process. SLCC's [placement](#) process is somewhat unique. Recognizing the faults of traditional standardized tests in terms of bias, accuracy, and curricular relevance, the [Placement Committee](#) designed and approved its own questionnaire for both English and mathematics. The process is designed to match SLCC's curriculum and course progression. It is also significantly shorter and less intimidating than the typical standardized placement test.

Orientation

SLCC orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advice about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.

While many offices collaborate in orienting students to SLCC, the [Office of Orientation and Student Success](#) is primarily responsible for this process. Through new student orientation and a variety of transitional programming offered throughout the semester, students are made to feel comfortable and confident navigating the academic and social environment of SLCC.

Orientation is [required](#) for all first-time, first-year college students. This includes new, former concurrent, and early high school graduate students. Returning and transfer students are not required to attend orientation, as they are assumed to have some familiarity with higher education practices. However, they are incentivized to do so with an earlier registration window.

[New Student Orientation](#) is designed to help students get started and take advantage of available services, facilities, and opportunities. Orientation is offered in two formats: online and in-person at any of SLCC's three largest campuses as well as the West Valley Center. Both formats provide students with an overview of academic degree and program options, support services and student life, and include tutorials on critical enrollment processes.

At in-person orientation, students receive information regarding major and career exploration, engage in a variety of activities introducing them to campus resources and college success skills, and receive assistance with the course registration process. As part of the Pathways initiative, this format also offers students an opportunity to connect with staff and faculty within their [Area of Study](#). The [Office of Academic Advising](#) invites students to attend a group advising session tailored to their area of study, where they review program and degree requirements as well as plan a first-semester schedule. Because each area

of study maintains a team of dedicated advisors, and advisors are assigned to individual students, students can expect to have the same advisor throughout their SLCC academic career.

Online orientation is an option for students who live at a distance or for transfer students who are already familiar with college procedures. This format also contains a specific track for international students with information about maintaining both their academic and immigration status. Students who complete the online orientation are instructed on how to make an appointment with their academic advisor for an individual advising session.

[SLCC Days](#), a unique two-day orientation program, also improves access and eases the enrollment process for high school seniors within SLCC's primary feeder school districts. SLCC staff visit each high school on Day One, where students are introduced to the SLCC community, college life, and important enrollment steps. On Day Two, students are bussed to SLCC where they tour the campus, meet with their academic advisor, learn about campus resources, and register for classes. SLCC Days takes place in early spring, so students are enrolled for the upcoming fall semester prior to their graduation from high school.

Additionally, [Welcome Days](#) offers students a variety of fun and informative activities to help students find their place at the college and connect with meaningful resources. Welcome Days programming takes place during the first month of each semester, involves participation from departments across academic and student affairs, and includes events like resources fairs, Club Rush, community engagement fairs and multicultural meet and greets.

While the Office of Academic Advising is the primary means by which students encounter advisors, other offices offer specialized advising as well. Multicultural Student Success Coordinators in the [Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs](#) are an additional resource for Students of Color; [TRIO](#) advisors provide assistance for income-eligible and/or first-generation students; and the [Disability Resource Center](#) assists students with disabilities. The [Career Services Office](#) provides Career Coaches and Employer Specialists to support students in understanding their professional goals and steps needed to achieve them.

SLCC's [Bruin Scholars](#) program offers incoming students additional support to ensure their transition to college is as smooth as possible. This yearlong program connects students with a dedicated staff member and peer mentors to help them navigate college and access available campus and community resources. Students in the program also participate in the SLCC Summer Bridge program, which helps prepare students for their first year in school by introducing them to the college environment.

1.D.2

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

Salt Lake Community College has established and shares widely several indicators for student achievement. The strategic plan includes six primary metrics, while other leading indicators provide actionable information to faculty and administrators. Most of the visualizations developed and shared by the [Office of Data Science and Analytics](#) (DSA) may be disaggregated by several demographic factors, including ethnicity, gender, age, first-generation status, and Pell eligibility.

The [president](#) and [executive cabinet](#) oversee the college's six [strategic goal metrics](#):

1. Six-year completion rate: the percent of students who earn a degree or certificate within six years of first enrolling at SLCC
2. Transfer conversion rate: the percent of SLCC transfer-degree graduates (AA/AS/APE) who complete a bachelor's degree within four years of earning their associate's degree
3. Competitive wage rate: the percent of CTE graduates who earn above the Salt Lake County median wage for those with some college or an associate's degree one year after graduation
4. Participation ratio: the percent of SLCC students who identify as a member of a community of color divided by the percent of Salt Lake County residents who identify as a member of community of color
5. Opportunity gap in completion: the percentage point difference in six-year completion rates between students of color and their white peers
6. Annualized full-time equivalent enrollment (AFTE): FTE is calculated as the total credit hours each semester divided by 15 (full-time enrollment); an annualized measure sums summer, spring, and fall FTE and divides by two

Each of these metrics is a measure of student and institutional achievement. These metrics are updated annually, shared on the college's [strategic plan website](#), published in the Board of Trustees [Mission Fulfillment Report](#), and distributed to faculty and staff at the annual [SLCC 360](#) event. The college provides a [Strategic Goal Metrics](#) dashboard with the ability for users to disaggregate

several of the metrics by age, ethnicity, first-generation status, gender, and Pell eligibility. An [Outcomes](#) dashboard details graduation, fall-to-fall retention, and transfer for cohorts going back to 2005, with the ability to disaggregate by age, gender, ethnicity, and Pell eligibility.

In addition to the strategic goal metrics, the college tracks several leading and supporting metrics. The Office of Data Science and Analytics maintains the college's [Data Portal](#),³¹ a website available to all SLCC faculty and staff. Interactive dashboards, static data visualizations, and research papers can be found on this site by searching keywords. Users may favorite charts used frequently for easier access. Many of the resources in the Data Portal contain student achievement and outcome information.

The [Faculty Dashboard](#)³² provides individual faculty members with information about their current and former students. Instructors examine their current students and observe student engagement. Faculty are able to target individual students in need of extra attention. At the aggregate level, faculty members may also examine their former students' completion and transfer rates and compare them to overall department, school, and college rates. Faculty can view their final course grades and disaggregate by race, gender, and first-generation status. As development continues, this dashboard will soon allow instructors to disaggregate their assignment submissions. In this way, instructors may determine if their assignments have a pattern of cultural insensitivity, then either modify the assignment or provide additional resources to students who are struggling.

The [Academic Administrator Dashboard](#)³³ provides deans and associate deans with numerous metrics about their programs, courses, students, and faculty. The course success page shows metrics for a particular course, including final grade distribution, years to receive an associate's degree after completing the course, retention to the next term, and student outcomes in the next term after the course. All the metrics on this page can be disaggregated by race, gender, age, first-generation status, and degree-seeking status. Other pages on this dashboard show graduation and wage metrics for specific programs with options to disaggregate by the same attributes as the course page. Lastly, the dashboard displays department faculty counts by gender and race compared to SLCC overall, SLCC student body, and Salt Lake County demographics.

³¹ Reviewers can access the portal using the login provided by SLCC

³² The [Faculty Dashboard](#) and [Academic Administrator Dashboard](#) are data applications with unique displays by user and requires a login. Reviewers can use the login provided by SLCC.

³³ Appendix C (pg. 7) of the Strategy 2: Scaling Student Analytics Report outlines the phases and rollout of the dashboard

1.D.3

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

SLCC indicators of student achievement are widely published and available on the [Strategic Plan](#) website. Disaggregated indicators are published on the [Strategic Goal Metrics](#) and [Outcomes](#) dashboards. As discussed in the response to Element 1.B.2, SLCC uses student and institutional achievement metrics for strategic planning and decision-making.

The disaggregated indicators are aligned with meaningful, institutionally identified indicators benchmarked against peer institutions at the regional and national levels. Salt Lake Community College identifies regional and national peers using [Integrated Post-Secondary Data System \(IPEDS\)](#)³⁴, the [Voluntary Framework of Accountability \(VFA\)](#)³⁵, and the [National Student Clearinghouse \(NSC\)](#).³⁶ Typically, SLCC considers its peers to be other large (>20,000 students annually), urban or suburban, public, two-year-degree-granting institutions. Additionally, the [Utah System of Higher Education \(USHE\)](#) maintains a list of comparison institutions. Many of the student achievement metrics SLCC employs are not available at the individual or regional level. Thus, SLCC often benchmarks against a national figure. In addition, because of SLCC's unique status as the only comprehensive community college in Utah, apples-to-apples comparisons within the state can be difficult.

SLCC benchmarks several of its strategic metrics against national figures. The six-year completion rate is compared to the national [VFA main cohort](#). SLCC's 2021 completion rate (Fall 2014 cohort) fell slightly under the national average (25.9%, compared with 26.7%). Using data available on VFA's Benchmarking Dashboard,³⁷ some inequities emerge. In the [Fall 2013 cohort](#), students

³⁴IPEDS is the data collection and reporting arm of the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. Institutions participating in the federal student aid program are required to submit on enrollment, completion, employees, finances, and tuition annually.

³⁵VFA is a national system of accountability designed for community colleges, maintained by the American Association of Community Colleges. VFA metrics allow SLCC to benchmark against other community colleges, and better emphasize the community college missions of access and career and technical education.

³⁶NSC maintains the StudentTracker service, which allows colleges to understand student transfer patterns. Benchmarking of transfer metrics is also available.

³⁷ The VFA Benchmarking tool is not owned nor controlled by SLCC and we cannot provide access to NWCCU. We are happy to display the tool to reviewers during their visit.

identifying as Black or Asian were slightly more likely to complete at SLCC compared to the national average, but students of other backgrounds were less likely to do so. The difference was particularly stark among students who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native or Pacific Islander.

IPEDS measures completion at the three-year mark, rather than SLCC's preferred measure of six years; in addition, the completion cohort is limited to first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students. However, IPEDS allows SLCC to benchmark against peers, and examine a more complete disaggregation. In the [2020 Data Feedback Report](#),³⁸ SLCC exceeded the median overall completion rate (27% compared to 23%). SLCC also met or exceeded the completion figure for each ethnic group examined, with the exception of students who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native.

Transfer metrics are also benchmarked against national peers. SLCC's primary transfer metric is the transfer conversion rate, defined as the proportion of transfer graduates (AA/AS/APE) who complete a bachelor's degree within four years of earning their associate's degree. This metric is somewhat unique, and to our knowledge it is not calculated at the national level by any organization. However, NSC publishes four national transfer metrics as part of their newly designed [Tracking Transfer](#) report: transfer-out rate, transfer-with-award rate, transfer-out bachelor's completion rate, and bachelor's completion rate. SLCC was the first institution to request this data from NSC when it became available for purchase. SLCC is well below the average for each of these figures, signaling a potential issue for our students. This realization prompted greater discussion around improving transfer pathways to SLCC's four-year partners. As a result, two college strategies deal specifically with streamlining articulation and establishing 2+2 programs³⁹ with university partners. For more information on benchmarking, please see 1.B.2.

1.D.4

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

Salt Lake Community College's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing indicators of [student achievement](#) are transparent. Ready access to

³⁸ See page 6, Figure 11: Graduation rates of full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates within 150% of normal time to program completion, by race/ethnicity: 2016 cohort

³⁹ 2+2 Partnerships offer students the opportunity to complete the first two years of a bachelor's degree at SLCC while guaranteeing admittance to our university partner to finish the remainder. In order to minimize the hardship of traveling to a different institution, the university partners offer their courses at SLCC campuses.

these figures has allowed strategy development and resource allocation to be more evidence-based. For example, the opportunity gap in completion observed as a result of developing equity metrics spurred greater discussion around this issue, ultimately resulting in three formal strategies to ameliorate this inequity.

One of SLCC's five strategic goals is to "achieve equity in student participation and completion." While many of SLCC's strategies include discussions around equity as part of its long-term strategic plan, [three](#) strategies specifically deal with this issue: Strategy #10: Close the Opportunity Gap through Targeted Supports; Strategy #11: Increase Diversity in Hiring; and Strategy #12: Embrace Equity-Minded Culture and Inclusive Practices.

Strategy: Close the Opportunity Gap through Targeted Supports

When the completion indicator was initially disaggregated, senior leaders realized SLCC needed to take a more direct approach to addressing inequity. In place for four years and evolving over time, Strategy #10 has always emphasized a system of targeted support. In the 2019-2020 academic year, strategy leads expanded [scholarship](#) and [TRIO](#) programs, marketed summer enrollment, required disaggregation in Student Affairs program reviews, and revised the strategic plan for the [Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs](#). In the 2020-21 academic year, leads focused on 1) expanding [Bruin Scholars](#), a program designed to orient, advise and assist students who are first-generation, undocumented, transitioning out of foster care, or non-traditional; 2) creating the CARE Team (described in detail below); and 3) developing the Emerging HSI Taskforce, an effort to gain a federal Hispanic-Serving Institution designation in order to provide more robust resources to Latinx students.

Strategy: Increase Diversity in Hiring

National research suggests students are more successful when they see their own racial, ethnic, and/or gender identity reflected back to them by faculty and staff. Recognizing this reality, senior leaders developed a strategy to make the hiring process more inclusive to a broader range of identities, thereby increasing the diversity of employees at SLCC.

Strategy members developed two approaches: search advocates and the diverse faculty fellowship. A [search advocate](#) is an SLCC staff or faculty member who has undergone specialized training to recognize unconscious bias in the hiring process and advocate for diversity. They function as full members of a hiring committee, and the hiring manager for any position may request a search advocate be assigned to their committee.

The Office of Faculty Development and Transformational Educational Initiatives recently launched the [Racial Equity the Professoriate \(REP\)](#) Program, an effort to improve racial equity among SLCC faculty by fostering a community of mutual

support for new Faculty of Color. The REP program is aimed at embedding racial equity at SLCC. It supports this by providing Faculty of Color with trainings, encouraging a sense of belonging, restructuring course loads and release time, and creating a mentorship program.

Strategy: Embrace Equity-Minded Culture and Inclusive Practices

The Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) of SLCC leads this [strategy](#) to embrace equity-minded culture and inclusive practices. The CDO is the nexus to nurture and strengthen a campus-wide ecosystem, creating a synergistic framework that connects SLCC's resources, institutional memories, strategic efforts, and ongoing actions. SLCC is a complex ecosystem with a wide array of academic and technical programs, and a demographically diverse student population and employee base. To implement this strategy the CDO two new programs within the college:

- The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Council for Transformation ([EDICT](#)) is the practical/administrative arm, guiding processes, policies, metrics, and event planning with the goal of transforming campus culture to center justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion
- The Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for Social Transformation ([JEDI4ST](#)) Research Center is the community transformation arm, a collaborative and interdisciplinary space grounded in liberatory social transformation

This new body structure is designed to activate new equity work, while building deep collaboration across the College. The goal is to develop through this centralized JEDI and distributed EDICT an action framework to guide the strategic mainstreaming of equity, diversity, and inclusion at SLCC.

Other Equity Initiatives

At [SLCC 360 2021](#), the annual event sharing strategic goal updates with the entire college, the primary focus was illuminating and mitigating equity gaps. It featured speakers from the college sharing their ideas on how they have included issues of equity in their own areas, information on how the college is increasing diversity in its hiring practices, and discussions about how systemic bias impacts students and employees of SLCC.

SLCC is continuing to strengthen its program review process. Departments are now [asked to disaggregate](#)⁴⁰ their data as much as possible and consider their performance from an equity perspective. Funding requests that originate from program review recommendations will be given additional consideration in the college's [Informed Budget Process \(IBP\)](#).

⁴⁰ Program Review Guidelines encourage offices under review to develop disaggregated metrics (pg. 5)

The [New Student Application](#) was updated in 2019 to allow students greater flexibility in identifying their gender. The New Student Application now includes optional demographic questions, including identification as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Recognizing those who identify as LGBTQ+ face unique barriers, this will be an area where the college may further disaggregate its student achievement metrics and design targeted supports. For example, students who identify as LGBTQ+ will receive a welcome email from the college's [Gender and Sexuality Student Resource Center \(GSSRC\)](#). This aligns with the current practice of sending targeted welcome emails to new students who identify as People of Color. Finally, the [Office of Admissions](#) recently introduced a Spanish-language application in order to better serve English language learners.

In a similar vein, the Associate Dean of Biology supported members of the Biology faculty in developing a Spanish-language section of BIOL 1010. While faculty members are excited about this approach and believe it may ultimately alleviate some of the inequities observed, it has thus far not attracted high enrollment. The Department of Biology continues to experiment with different methods of outreach and pedagogy. A new faculty member who is a native Spanish-speaker has recently picked up this initiative and is leading it in its fourth iteration.

Another effort in the Department of Biology has seen greater success. [Biology 1610](#) is a gateway course for students studying biological and pre-health science. It has historically had a high DEW rate, and when disaggregated by ethnicity, we observe students of color failing or dropping this course at higher rates than their white peers. After completing the [Effective Teaching Practices](#) course through the [Association of College and University Educators \(ACUE\)](#), a faculty member redesigned the pedagogy into a more active learning model. [Preliminary results](#) are promising and show a far smaller proportion of students failing or dropping the course after the redesign (8% compared with the previous 19% in one example).

In terms of metrics, the college is in the process of moving toward utilizing leading, rather than lagging, indicators for student achievement. While lagging indicators describe what happened, leading indicators are actionable. Using leading indicators, staff members are able to intervene with targeted support. The goal of this approach is to have an impact on college-wide student outcomes such as retention, completion, and transfer.

One example of how SLCC uses leading indicators is the [CARE Team](#), an innovation SLCC recently introduced as a response to the opportunity gap in completion. A joint effort between the Student Success Unit and the Office of Data Science and Analytics, it is a cross-departmental case management team assisting over 1,200 first-generation students of color navigate unfamiliar and often biased landscapes and processes. The DSA team built a machine

learning algorithm to identify the students most in need of attention each week, based on their behavior in the learning management system. The data are then presented to the CARE Team, who intervene in a meaningful way to help students achieve their academic goals. A video presentation made on this topic at the SLCC360 event is available [here](#).

While SLCC has made great strides in using data to illuminate and mitigate inequities, it is still in the process of evolving into a data-literate culture. For example, DSA has not yet found a self-service data analytics solution that appeals to most end users. Some offices, such as Orientation and Student Success, use data as a regular practice to inform and innovate. Others have been slower to adopt data as a valuable tool, though this is changing rapidly. Both Student Affairs and college-wide program review processes require the inclusion of disaggregated data on department performance and student achievement, which will acculturate staff members to its use. In addition, DSA has established the [Data and Insights User Group \(DIG\)](#), a monthly meeting blending discussion and training, open to all SLCC employees who wish to learn more about data and analysis.

Conclusion

Our strategic plan is titled “Your Community College,” a phrase that emerged from the 2016 committee that reworked the college’s mission statement. The phrase conveys a broad and collective ownership of our mission, a dedication to collaborative work, and pride in the efforts we make on behalf of our college community. This sentiment carried through in the self-study process. We are grateful for all those who dedicated significant time and resources to this endeavor. It has made us better and improved our students’ experience.

Through the self-study process, we have come to understand that SLCC is an outstanding institution of higher education with amazing students, faculty, staff, and administration. When we reflect on the changes we have undergone since our last comprehensive self-study, we can see real progress and improvement. Our mission is well understood, our goals are broadly accepted, and indicators and data are prolific across the college. Learning assessment has never been stronger, with credible and cooperative leadership from faculty and administration. Student achievement continues to improve, even as we battle the chronic structural problems plaguing much of the community college sector.

Moving forward, we see opportunity to strengthen our approach in three primary areas: 1) improving the clarity and focus of learning assessment processes, 2) improving benchmarking and the timeliness of institutional indicators to provide actionable information, and 3) integrating learning assessment more directly into mission fulfillment. We also wish to continue to reflect on our separate processes of mission fulfillment and strategic planning, and whether this continues to be the best approach. Our next strategic planning phase is picking up these themes and will address them directly. We welcome any other insights from our NWCCU review team.

We conclude that SLCC is compliant with the NWCCU Standards for Accreditation and Eligibility Requirements. We thank the commission for its consideration and request that SLCC’s accreditation be reaffirmed.

Appendix: Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review

Please see the document [SLCC Policies Regulations Financial Review 2021](#) on SLCC's [Box](#) drive for responses to Standard Two, as well as Eligibility Requirements and financial statements.