

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students

of

BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Pittsfield, Massachusetts

by

An Evaluation Team representing the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
of the
New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Prepared after study of the institution's
self-evaluation report and a visit to
the campus October 25-28, 2009

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This report represents the views of the evaluation committee as interpreted by the chairperson. Its content is based on the committee's evaluation of the institution with respect to the Commission's criteria for accreditation. It is a confidential document in which all comments are made in good faith. The report is prepared both as an educational service to the institution and to assist the Commission in making a decision about the institution's accreditation status.

Introduction

Berkshire Community College (BCC) was well prepared for the Evaluation Team's visit. The campus appeared aware of the visit and its purpose. All individuals with whom the team met were familiar with the self-study and discussed it thoughtfully. Interviews and meetings were held with BCC trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students. All were candid and engaged. Requests from the Team for additional meetings and materials were handled accurately and efficiently. All aspects of the visit were well planned and executed. Three open meetings: one with faculty, one with students, and one with the college community all were well attended (25-30) and informative. Twenty-five percent of attendees at the open meeting were local community members. The meeting with the Board of Trustees was well attended and included both new members and those whose term had recently ended. Evaluation team members visited the Intermodal Education Center in downtown Pittsfield (a site used by both BCC and Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts). A visit to the South County Center was originally scheduled, but the team chair deleted it from the itinerary because of time constraints.

The evaluation team found the Self-Study Report, the workroom documents, and additional materials requested to be sufficiently comprehensive and accurate. The team appreciates the electronic links provided and notes that the workroom documents were well-organized and easy to access and use. The self-study process was reflective and included wide participation. The committee structure for the self-study was sound and the report candid. In several instances, however, issues listed as warranting attention in Appraisal sections were not addressed in the following Projection section. On the other hand, once on campus, the team found several positive accomplishments that were not included in the self-study.

Barbara Douglas, President of Northwestern Community College in Connecticut, conducted the Chair's preliminary visit. Due to illness, President Douglas had to withdraw five days before the visit. Dean Barbara W. McCarthy served as Chair during the site visit. Prior to the start of the evaluation visit, President Douglas reviewed all aspects of the preliminary visit with Dean McCarthy, and shared her responses to the self-study as well. President Douglas has reviewed this report.

1. Mission and Purposes

Berkshire Community College is one of fifteen public community colleges in Massachusetts. Founded in 1960, it celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this academic year. Its many celebratory activities have deepened awareness and commitment to the College's mission. In an open campus meeting with the visiting team, the discussion turned to the anniversary's theme: "First to Fifty." Faculty, staff, students,

and community members attended the meeting. All who spoke expressed great pride in, and appreciation for, the College. The mission, as stated below, defines the institution's distinctive character, addresses societal needs, and identifies the students it seeks to serve:

Mission

As the college founded to serve the needs of Berkshire County, the mission of Berkshire Community College is to place higher education within reach of all Berkshire County residents.

BCC is committed to access, academic excellence, student success, and leadership in the community as a non-governmental, nationally recognized organization whose affiliated institutions include elementary schools through collegiate institutions offering post-graduate instruction.

- We will provide access to higher education by helping students overcome financial, physical, or social barriers.
- We will hold the college to standards of academic excellence that prepare students for transfer or careers, and that foster a lifelong enthusiasm for learning.
- We will promote student success by providing the resources and services students need to meet our academic standards and to achieve their personal and professional goals.
- We will provide leadership by convening and supporting collaborative efforts among community organizations, employers, and civic leaders by meeting the county's economic development needs, by serving as a center for cultural activities, and by providing learning opportunities for families and residents of all ages.

Both the mission statement above and the values that follow below reflect BCC's tradition and future. The institution's priorities, as defined in its strategic plan, align with the College's mission and reflect its values. All programs and services derive from the mission. The institution's purposes are concretely and realistically articulated in its Annual Action Plans. The current Strategic Plan reflects a commitment to enhance BCC's surrounding communities. This same commitment can be found in both the College's mission and values.

Values

In recognition of its tradition and excellence in service, BCC affirms the following values:

Integrity in the College Workplace: Expect that the actions of all members of the college community are forthright and consistent with the college's mission.

Innovation: Promote an environment that encourages innovative thought and creative expression.

Community Engagement: Encourage all members of the college community to actively participate in the fulfillment of the college mission.

Respect for Differences: Foster an environment that respects and supports diversity and assures equity within the community.

Service: Maintain a community that demonstrates respect for growth, responsibility, and leadership through service to others.

BCC's mission is embraced by its Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff. It is published in the catalog, on the website, and in the *Student Policy Guide*. It was last revised in 2007 by a committee of eighteen that was representative of the College. It was approved by the College's Executive Council and Board of Trustees that same year.

Institutional Effectiveness:

As of 2007, reevaluation of the mission will occur each time the institution develops a new strategic plan which is currently on a three-year cycle. The current mission is pertinent and provides overall direction in planning and resource allocation.

2. Planning and Evaluation

Planning: BCC is committed to comprehensive and systematic planning across all divisions of the institution. The strategic plan is reviewed and revised on a 3-year cycle, including a review of the college's mission. While the strategic plan and annual goals provide ample evidence of planning, there is less evidence that the continuous feedback loop made possible by assessment has been fully implemented across the institution.

The College has allocated significant resources to support planning and evaluation, including the hiring of a Director of Institutional Research and Planning in 2000. The IR director is also supported by a full-time data specialist. Together, they provide a wealth of data regarding the state of the institution, the progress being made on a variety of institutional objectives, and student success. Strong planning and data development have no doubt contributed to BCC being awarded three Title III grants within the past nine years.

The office of Institutional Research and Planning compiles an annual action plan of objectives from across the institution that aligns with the seven priorities of BCC's strategic plan. The document contains eighty separate institutional objectives which vary widely in scope and significance.

Priority Six of the strategic plan focuses on planning and assessment and reads: *Engage management systems for data collection and analysis that measure operational performance at all levels, assess institutional effectiveness, and inform annual and strategic planning.* This stated priority helps to ensure that annual action plans will contain objectives to strengthen the planning and evaluation process.

Given the overall strength of data development at BCC, there are some odd omissions on the S-forms included in the self-study. For example, although improving retention rates for students requiring developmental education courses is in the strategic plan

and the main theme of the current Title III grant, retention data for these groups are not available on the S.1 forms. The same is true for students with disabilities, another group targeted for improved retention in the annual action plan. It is also not clear why the S.1 form reports numbers of graduates but not graduation rates, given that such data for both graduation and transfer are readily available elsewhere. On the positive side, the comprehensive data included on the S.3 form provide more evidence of BCC's commitment to ongoing data development.

The process for developing the Annual Action Plan allows for objectives to be included at any time during the planning process which can run from April through September. This year, seven objectives entitled "Executive Council Objectives" were incorporated into the annual action plan; however, at no time was the entire plan submitted for review or approval by any governance body. Indeed, the college's Executive Council never looked together at the 55-page document in its entirety during the past year. The Annual Action Plan does serve as an instrument for tracking institutional performance in meeting its goals, but is not a tactical document that establishes priorities and aligns them with realistic appraisal of available human and fiscal resources.

The expanded timeline for planning can make annual evaluation difficult and the systematic linking to budget decisions even more so. Instead of aligning priorities with possible budget contingencies, the severity of budget reductions has led some to feel that planning is less important because there will simply be no money for new initiatives. On the other hand, there is clearly an awareness of the need to link the annual planning cycle more fully with budget development, since this objective is included in the projections section of standard 2 in the self-study (p.10) and in the Annual Action Plan as well. It should also be noted that there is a general sense on campus that decisions made by the leadership during the current fiscal crisis have been participatory and well communicated to campus constituencies.

Evaluation: Compared to the rigor of planning and data development, the evaluation of data often seems fragmentary and incomplete. Completion of the Annual Action Plan items is reviewed by the Steering Committee for Institutional Planning and Assessment (SCIPA). The Committee includes eighteen members from all the college's divisions, and two members from the Executive Council including the Director of Institutional Research. SCIPA met twice last year, mainly to assign particular objectives to members of the committee who then individually contacted the people responsible for those objectives. The purpose was to check on whether objectives were still important and if they were being met. The Director of IR updates the Action Plan with this information.

As in the case of annual planning, there is neither collective review nor sustained discussion about how well the College is meeting objectives, either by SCIPA, or any other group in the college. There are many examples at BCC of evaluation occurring and results being monitored, but the results are not always widely or systematically shared.

The academic program review process is an example of where use of data, including external perspectives, has been rigorously applied. This follows the introduction in 2006 of a new model for program reviews that aims to improve teaching effectiveness and student success.

Institutional Effectiveness: BCC can point to many areas where there has been success in carrying out plans, including the implementation of a new model for academic program review and a new approach to the assessment of core competencies across the curriculum. Because one of the priorities in BCC's strategic plan focuses directly on planning and assessment, the college regularly undertakes review of its planning and evaluation process. Although not achieved yet, BCC faculty, administration, and staff clearly recognize the need to better utilize outcomes data to track institutional performance and to communicate more effectively the results of evaluation.

3. Governance and Organization

Berkshire Community College is one of fifteen community colleges in Massachusetts. It is governed by its Board of Trustees whose authority is granted by Massachusetts General Law, chapter 15A, section 5. The Board holds ultimate authority and responsibility for governing the College and ensuring quality and integrity throughout the institution. This is outlined in chapter 15A, section 22 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

BCC's organizational structure and system of governance support and facilitate the institution's mission-driven purposes and goals. Since the 1999 self-study, significant enhancements to the governance structure have been made and are evident in new Committees, new and revised bylaws, and evaluations of committees and their functions. Faculty have a significant role throughout the governance system.

The authority, responsibilities, and relationships among the Board, administration, faculty and staff are clearly described in the institution's bylaws. The system of governance is highly participatory. In a meeting the visiting team held with governance committee leaders, all major college constituencies were represented. Students serve on the Board and other appropriate college committees.

The Board of Trustees demonstrates sufficient independence and expertise to represent the public interest and fulfill its responsibilities. It understands the institution's distinctive mission and purposes and is deeply committed to the institution's success. The visiting team chair met with the full Board and the conversation revealed an informed and shared vision regarding BCC's future opportunities and challenges. It should be noted that this vision is shared beyond the

Board and was evident in discussions with the President, Executive Council, governance committee leaders, and during the campus open meeting.

The Board of Trustees' meetings are well publicized and open. Bylaws, membership lists, agendas and minutes are available on the website. The self-study noted the substantial improvement in relations between the Board and the campus. This was born out in conversations with campus personnel. When asked about major achievements of the past five years, the trustees cited these improved relations as one of them.

The Board has begun to formalize assessment of its effectiveness that was previously achieved through informal means. The Chair of the Human Resources subcommittee is planning a process for chair development for new Board members. A *Statement of Commitment and Responsibilities for Berkshire Community College Board of Trustees* was updated in June 2009 and is now in final draft form.

The Board reviews the President regularly. To do so, it seeks outside input and openly communicates its findings. In the most recent instance, the Board sought feedback from twenty-five people including external stakeholders and a representative group from the college.

The President models and fosters respectful and open communication. He effectively manages the institution through an appropriate administrative structure. He is widely credited for a change in the campus culture that has allowed the College to more successfully fulfill and expand its mission, purposes, and goals.

The Chief Academic Officer reports directly to the president, and governance within Academic Affairs assures the integrity and quality of programming and instruction. The revised program review process and opening of the Center for Teaching and Learning have been significant contributions toward this end.

General governance at BCC has expanded, and for the most part, in very systematic ways. Documents such as the Curriculum Approval Matrix complement formal bylaws and help make procedures transparent. There remains, however, a large number of committees and some confusion regarding their status. The comprehensive inventory that has been completed of all possible committees (a list of 30) has helped update the campus on current and inactive committees. A review of the College Senate completed a few years ago has also contributed to greater clarity regarding committee duties and relevance. Now that all the major governance bodies are in place with formal bylaws, the College can refine the secondary governance mechanisms.

Institutional Effectiveness: BCC has an effective organizational and governance system; however, there are few means in place to assess effectiveness and, thus, facilitate the process of continuous improvement.

4. *The Academic Program*

Introduction: Berkshire Community College offers eleven A.A. programs, twenty-four A.S. programs, and twelve certificates. All programs are in recognized fields of study with appropriate coherence, credit hours, and general education requirements. They further the college's mission "to place higher education within the reach of all Berkshire County residents." The college catalog and website include a description of program content and of career and transfer possibilities as well as course requirements, elective options, course prerequisites and suggested course sequences for all programs and program outcomes for most degree programs. Most certificate programs are embedded in the first year of corresponding associate degree programs. BCC participates in the Massachusetts Joint Admission Program and the Massachusetts Transfer Compact to ease transfer to public baccalaureate programs in the state and has articulation/transfer agreements with twenty-seven private colleges.

Undergraduate Degree Programs: The College's associate degree and certificate programs follow appropriate and clearly defined semester schedules. Some health programs require a summer session to accommodate required clinical instruction. The Early Childhood Education Program suggests a three-year, six-semester sequence for course completion that includes up to eight credit hours of pre-college coursework as needed. A Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing, awarded by the University of Massachusetts and taught by University faculty, is offered in collaboration with BCC. This opportunity is designed for working nurses with a diploma or an associate degree.

Oversight of all academic programs is shared by faculty and administration. Faculty Program Advisors, Department Chairs and Assistant Deans, along with contractual guidelines provide a coordinated structure to ensure the quality of all academic programs. BCC has been unable to add full-time faculty positions due to budget cuts and this creates some concern for maintaining curricular consistency and uniform standards. For example, Early Childhood Education continues to be coordinated by adjunct faculty, and only two of twenty-eight sections of Composition I classes are taught by full-time faculty. Although there is an effort to include adjunct faculty in departmental meetings, it continues to be difficult to engage in discussions regarding curriculum and teaching methodology with only one full-time faculty in many programs.

Academic Program Review is organized in five-year cycles. The process was revised in 2006 to include more input from external stakeholders and to increase emphasis on learning outcomes and the evaluating of program mission, goals and objectives, demographics, and resources. For example, the Physical Therapy Assistant program made curricular changes in response to external feedback regarding the graduation rate. They included more student self-assessment and increased faculty intervention for at-risk students. Several programs, including Engineering, Biological Science, Business Software Systems, Business Careers/Business Administration, Human

Services and Liberal Arts have completed program reviews under the revised 2006 guidelines. There are some programs that still need to complete program reviews under the revised model. In some cases, declining state appropriations have made it difficult to link program review findings with funding. Nonetheless, where possible, the College has been responsive to findings by dedicating funds to make improvements to facilities such as the new MIDI lab for the Music Program.

The Dean of Academic Affairs has final approval of program changes after proposals by faculty program advisors are reviewed by the Educational Affairs Committee. New programs with fewer than thirty credit hours require final approval from the President and the Board of Trustees, and new programs with more than thirty credit hours must be approved by the Department of Higher Education. Since AY2004-05, four new concentrations or options within existing programs have been added: a Biotechnology concentration, an Elementary Education concentration, a Social Work Transfer concentration, and replacement of the Applied Engineering Technology Option with a Manufacturing Technology Option. Description of courses, learning objectives, assessment strategies, grading policies, course schedule information and teaching methods are all identified in syllabi and are reviewed each semester by the Assistant Academic Deans as required by the MCCC collective bargaining agreement.

Recently, BCC has expanded its distance education program and offers almost all of a Liberal Arts degree online with the exception of science labs which must be taken on campus. BCC currently offers twenty-nine online classes with eight of these being hybrid classes (defined as a combination of online and onsite interaction with students). In 2008, BCC submitted a report of Substantive Change in Distance Education to NEASC. The report was accepted, and distance education included in BCC's accreditation.

Professional development to prepare faculty for online teaching was identified as a need by external reviewers. BCC responded by adopting the criteria of "Quality Matters," a nationally recognized standard of quality assurance. It is in the initial phase of implementation. In addition, BCC opened a Center for Teaching and Learning by utilizing Title III grant monies. The CTL provides training in various technologies to support both online and onground teaching. A recent Cyber Café attended by approximately twenty participants focused on technologies such as webcams and smart boards. Attendance at most CTL offerings average from two to twelve participants. Considerable attention has been given to improve online instruction including review of syllabi, developing a faculty mentoring program, and formation of the Academic Technology Advising committee.

General Education: BCC has a strong general education requirement in all degree programs. Associate in arts degree programs include at least thirty-three credits and associate in science degree programs include twenty-one general education credits. Many certificate programs also require at least one general education class which is often English Composition. Thus, students in both degree and most certificate

programs demonstrate college level writing skills. Degree students must also complete the “writing with sources” core competency. Students are required to use information literacy and are instructed by the Librarian in mandatory orientation programs required in all Composition I classes. The effectiveness of this instruction is assessed using pre- and post-tests.

BCC has developed and implemented a core competency system that assesses general education competencies of all degree students. The core competencies are interdisciplinary and help students integrate their education rather than seeing it as a collection of unrelated courses. Many faculty have included the relevant core competencies applicable to their class in their syllabus. Rubrics have been developed for most of the competencies and plans are in place for all competencies to have rubrics. While participation by faculty to certify competencies for students is voluntary, many do participate because they know that students need them to graduate.

Developmental Education: BCC has committed considerable time, energy and resources to strengthen developmental education. They were awarded a five-year Title III grant to support their efforts. In the fall of 2008, nearly 90 percent of students were found to need developmental course work in math, 40 percent in writing, and 30 percent in reading. The Director of Developmental Education reported that there is a need to improve the data collection process and to look at ways to use data for improvement. The College has formed the Developmental Education Advisory Committee to begin this work.

Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit: Berkshire Community College uses the Classification of Instructional Program codes to categorize programs. All course offerings are published in both print and electronic formats. They are available to students for pre-registration and are mailed to all Berkshire County residents. Ensuring academic integrity and the quality of the curriculum is the responsibility of faculty and administration, but other groups such as the Honors Advisory Board, the Developmental Education Advisory Board, and the Academic Technology Committee also contribute to ensuring quality and integrity.

Evaluation of student learning occurs primarily in the classroom, and faculty are required by collective bargaining to include the catalog description, methods of instruction, learning objectives, grading procedures and assessments methods in their syllabi. Each faculty member is responsible for ensuring the academic integrity of grades and credits, but all oversight in the award of academic credit lies with the Dean of Academic Affairs. Students who believe that a grading error has occurred may file a grievance which is described both in the Student Policy Guide and on the website. Graduation requirements are published in the college catalog, on program sheets, and on the website.

Academic dishonesty is handled by faculty with oversight by the Assistant Academic Deans. Information regarding plagiarism is included in the College handbook and in

the Student Policy Guide. Generally, the situation is resolved between the instructor and the student, but may be referred to the Dean of Academic Affairs if necessary. As mentioned in the self-study, there is some concern regarding the considerable variation in how instructors handle the situation of academic dishonesty; BCC expects to address this. Increasingly, instructors are including information regarding cheating and plagiarism in their syllabi. The grievance process can be employed by students if they believe they have been unfairly charged.

Assessment of Student Learning: BCC uses multiple methods to assess student learning including: internships, practicums, written examinations, oral presentations, portfolios, writing assignments, student success rates on licensure exams, client evaluation forms, capstone courses, and clinical assessments as evidenced on the E-1 forms for degree programs. Expected learning outcomes have been developed for most programs and are assessed in various courses within the programs. Biology, Human Services and Business Software Systems are excellent examples as evidenced by their recent program reviews.

As mentioned previously, the core competency system assesses student achievement of general education competencies. Faculty participation in the core competency certification process is voluntary, but many faculty, both full-time and adjunct, are engaged in certifying competencies using rubrics or descriptions. Many syllabi include the competencies that can be achieved in the course and conditions for certification of those competencies. As of 2004, all degree students must complete and have certified six out of ten competencies. Data collection of student work is in progress, but it is proving to be a challenging process. An e-portfolio method was tried and abandoned as being too cumbersome. In 2009, at the suggestion of faculty, students were given a core competency binder in which to collect pieces of work relevant to the competencies. Plans are underway to review the data once it is collected.

There seems to have been some confusion on how to utilize the E-1 forms at the institutional and general education levels. No data were reported in these areas and, thus, not integrated into the self-study report. Although there has been significant progress implementing the core competency system with the development of rubrics, the inclusion of the core competencies on syllabi, and the increase in faculty participating, more work needs to be done to collect, analyze and use the data for reflection and curricula improvements.

Although academic program review has already been discussed above, it should be noted here that with its data-driven focus, it is a method to assess student learning as well as program effectiveness. Faculty at BCC are committed to the identification of learning objectives and teaching practices that promote student learning by using various assessment practices, offering out-of-classroom learning experiences, mastering technology to advance pedagogy, and gearing instruction to different learning styles. As impressive as these efforts are, there has not been sufficient analysis and evaluation of these efforts to determine their effect on student learning.

Institutional Effectiveness: Berkshire Community College has placed emphasis on promoting the quality, integrity and effectiveness of its academic programs as evidenced by the following: (1) their ongoing revisions of the Core Competency Program, (2) the focus on improving developmental education, (3) the development of program outcomes, and (4) the revision of the Program Review process to be more data-driven. BCC has expanded its online education program to comply with its mission to “place higher education within reach of all Berkshire County residents.” BCC has committed resources, time and energy to further these initiatives.

Continued focus in the areas of data collection, analysis and reflection, and implementation of findings need to occur as the College moves forward to develop a culture of evidence. BCC has been candid in their appraisals of their strengths and challenges, but there is limited connection between their own findings and the items listed in the “Projection” sections of the self-study report.

5. *Faculty*

BCC benefits from a community of enthusiastic full-time and adjunct faculty fully devoted to the mission of the college, the ongoing improvement of teaching and learning, and student success. There are 51 full-time and, approximately, 133 adjunct faculty. 19 of the full-time faculty are male and 36 are female; 71 of the adjunct faculty are male and 62 are female. In these times of budget cuts and declining resources, BCC’s full-time and adjunct faculty continue to meet the challenge of maintaining services and quality for students. Perhaps the best evidence of the mood and commitment among the BCC faculty is that last year there was not a single grievance filed by a full-time faculty and only two by adjuncts.

Faculty members are well qualified for their teaching positions with 96 percent of full-time faculty holding a masters or PhD in their curriculum area, and 88 percent of adjuncts. Faculty qualifications are listed in the college catalog and on the BCC website.

Full-time faculty participate fully and eagerly in searches for both full-time and adjunct faculty, realizing the importance of selecting the best people to become members of BCC’s faculty community. BCC ensures equal opportunity in faculty hiring and strives to increase diversity among its faculty. Adjunct faculty have been hired into full-time faculty positions.

Collective bargaining contracts for full-time and adjunct faculty provide clear definition of faculty responsibilities and reasonable contractual security. They also clearly state the criteria and process for hiring, evaluation, promotion and tenure. Statewide policies detailing expectations for responsible and ethical behavior are also in effect, including policies on sexual harassment, support of pluralism, and non-discrimination. The administration and faculty are all committed to increasing the

proportion of minority full-time faculty above the current level of just 1.4 percent. This contrasts with the county percentage of 5.3, and the BCC student community percentage of 12.6 percent.

Salaries and benefits are determined by collective bargaining and are slightly below the average 75th percentile in comparable state systems. Actual average salaries have been between 4 percent and 7 percent lower than this target level for the past several years. Even so, when a full-time faculty search begins, it is common for the college to receive over 100 applications. The college was also able to fill two nursing positions for the FY10 academic year, an indication that salary levels are not a barrier to attracting well-qualified faculty.

With declining numbers of full-time faculty and a significant increase in the number of students, workload is increasingly an issue for faculty. Contractually, faculty are not supposed to have more than three preparations per semester, but this fall there were ten faculty with four preps and two with five. While the administration makes a good faith effort to adjust other workload components accordingly, the issue continues to cause concern. It means that there is less time for other obligations such as advising or contributing to program assessment and improvement.

Currently at BCC, there is widespread concern among faculty, both full-time and adjunct, that if the current decline in full-time faculty should continue, it may be difficult to sustain the College's present array of programs. The greatest concern is for smaller, more specialized programs (e.g. culinary arts, engineering technology, hospitality) where there is currently only one full-time faculty member teaching in the program.

BCC's Executive Council is well aware of the impact of declining faculty and is striving to fill full-time positions even in times of severe budget cuts. This fall, two positions were replaced in nursing and one in English. Another full-time appointment may be made in FY10. One senior faculty member expressed appreciation that despite funding cuts, personnel reductions have been accomplished through attrition rather than layoffs.

BCC exhibits a strong institutional commitment to professional development for both full-time and adjunct faculty. The creation two years ago of a Center for Teaching and Learning, made possible by Title III funding, has increased the number of professional development activities from two per semester to two per week. Some of these events are scheduled specifically for adjuncts, such as a Saturday morning conference on the millennial student held at BCC's South County Center in Great Barrington. Twenty-five adjuncts attended this event. The Center for Teaching and Learning runs workshops on learning technology, and effective assessment techniques for core competencies. While generally five to eight faculty attend most workshops, the frequency of offerings has created a climate where the continuous improvement of teaching effectiveness becomes a shared expectation.

Teaching and Advising: BCC faculty have embraced the new model of program review as an effective tool for assessing the quality of teaching and learning. Program reviews call for a thorough assessment of teaching methods, student achievement of program objectives, and program contributions to core competencies in general education. Based on these reviews, faculty develop specific plans for program improvement.

There is still concern among faculty about the implementation of the core competency system. While the rift that existed four or five years ago between faculty regarding the process has lessened, an uneven commitment to the success of the competencies is a concern. Long-term success depends on the broad-based participation of the faculty. Positive signs certainly exist, however. While faculty cannot be obligated to include core-competency requirements in their syllabi, nearly all have now done so. Additionally, the majority of faculty have participated in the development of rubrics for the core competencies, engendering important conversations about student learning outcomes. Most, too, are participating in certifying students who have met a core competency in one of their courses.

The combined factors of increasing enrollments and declining numbers of full-time faculty are challenging the current model of providing comprehensive advising for all students. Responsibility for advising at BCC is split between full-time faculty, who have a limit of advisees set at 19, and the Academic Advising Center (AAC). The advising center is run by a full-time faculty member who receives a 3/5th reduction in teaching load in return for this responsibility. The Academic Advising Center began years ago as a support for adjuncts who were assuming some advising responsibilities. It has now become the main player in providing advising. This fall, the AAC is serving a total of 1231 students, including 530 students with undeclared majors, while full-time faculty are advising 1,152 students. It is the first time that the AAC is serving the majority of enrolled students. The AAC does intake advising for all new students, as well as any returning students who did not register the previous semester.

The coordinator of the AAC used to report to the Dean of Academic Affairs, but several years ago began reporting to the Dean of Student Affairs. As mentioned in the self-study, this division in oversight creates concern about the institution's ability to develop a coordinated approach to professional development for all advisors.

Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity: BCC faculty participate broadly in an array of scholarly activities, including membership in professional organizations, conference attendance and presentations, and publications. According to the self-study, 14 percent of faculty have published in a professional journal or newsletter, written a book chapter, or written a book in the past five years. Over 40 percent maintain professional licensure or certifications in their field. The administration fully supports these activities.

Institutional Effectiveness: BCC regularly evaluates the support provided for faculty and the effectiveness of faculty in teaching and advising. Program reviews, faculty evaluations, and the development of program objectives and core competencies have all contributed to a climate where continuous improvement of instruction is a well-established goal. The improvement of teaching is given priority in BCC's strategic plan and is sustained by many ongoing activities.

6. Students

Admissions: Berkshire Community College enrolls a student body that is broadly representative of the community it serves. Enrollment has grown modestly in the past two years despite the shrinking population of BCC's service area. Although there have been fluctuations, total FTE for FY2009 was 2.4 percent higher than in FY2005. The College has an orderly and ethical program of admission that complies with the requirements of legislation concerning equality of educational opportunity. Admission and academic standing policies and procedures are clear, consistent with its mission, and available to all students and prospective students on the website and in the catalog. The College has a strong admissions plan that focuses on a wide range of demographics that exist in the community it serves. It is unclear, however, of how the plan's effectiveness is evaluated.

The College administration has taken strides to meet the growing diversity of its student population by hiring a multicultural admissions counselor.

As an open access institution, BCC's standards for admission ensure that student qualifications and expectations are compatible with the college's mission. Individuals who are admitted demonstrate through their intellectual and personal qualifications a reasonable potential for success in the programs to which they are admitted. Students take the Accuplacer Placement Tests in order to measure their readiness for college level work in mathematics, reading, and writing. If placement scores suggest a lack of readiness, BCC offers appropriate developmental coursework and academic support to prepare students for collegiate study. The Tutorial Center offers help to all students.

The college's admission policy includes a policy for disabled students and provides an extensive array of support services through its Disability Resource Center.

The College has recently begun administering the Accuplacer Placement Test to juniors at local high schools. This has been viewed as a positive plan by the student affairs and admissions staff as it gives high school students a clear picture of how to focus their studies during senior year in order to be better prepared for college work.

Retention and Graduation: While staying true to its open access mission, the college demonstrates its ability to admit students who can be successful in its academic programs. The college reports 1,388 FTEs and a graduation rate of 22

percent for the 2004 Cohort. The Tutorial Center provides accessible programs including tutoring, workshops, adaptive technology, and career counseling. Students are provided with information and guidance regarding these programs and services through the placement testing process, new student orientation, bulletin boards and newsletters. The faculty plays a role by referring students to the Tutorial Center, personal counseling, the Disability Resource Center, and Career Services.

The Dean of Academic Affairs and the Student Standing Committee make decisions about the academic standing of enrolled students based on policies that are clearly stated on the college's website and in the college's catalog.

The college has experienced a 175 percent increase in online students during the past five years. While some of these students are taking both onground and online courses, the student affairs administration recognizes the challenge emerging to meet the needs of a growing population of purely online students.

The college's fall-to-fall retention rate is reported as 58.8 percent.

Student Services: Student Services has a mission statement that aligns with that of the College and reflects the special character of Student Services at BCC. It could provide the basis upon which services to students are evaluated; however, it is not published in the catalog, student handbook, or on the website.

The college has administered the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), but has made limited use of the results as a way of identifying the characteristics and learning needs of its student population. The team recognizes that many dedicated student service personnel implement new ideas on a regular basis. There is also an acknowledgement that little is done in the way of evaluation of the effectiveness of these innovations.

The College offers student services that are appropriate to its mission and the needs and goals of its students, including academic support services appropriate to the student body. Those services include the college bookstore, the bursar's office, food service, academic and career counseling, personal counseling, financial aid, tutoring, and the library. During a student luncheon, the students expressed concern about the hours of operation of the cafeteria as it is only open until 2:00pm during the week.

The college provides available and responsive information resources and services, information technology, academic advising, career services, disability services and complaint and appeal mechanisms. The college adheres to both the spirit and intent of equal opportunity.

The College provides a clear description of the nature, extent, and availability of student services. This information is easily available on the website, in the catalog and the student handbook. The college provides an orientation for new students. The orientation includes information on student services, as well as a focus on academic

opportunities, expectations and support services. The college recently changed the format of orientation moving from holding multiple smaller sessions to one larger session before the semester's start. These changes were widely appreciated by the college community as evidenced by a student survey. The college makes great use of their Student Government Ambassadors at new student orientations.

During the 2008-2009 year, the college administered financial aid through a well-organized program to 1,272 students for a total of \$5,549,287. Awards are based on an equitable application of criteria consistent with federal, state and private sources of funding. The college's website and catalog provide extensive descriptions of the types of aid available to students.

The college supports opportunities for student leadership and participation in campus organizations and governance. The Student Government Ambassadors (SGA) is clearly the most visible organization on campus. SGA's mission is to represent, relate, recruit and retain students. This mission supports the overall mission of BCC. The NEASC team recognizes the accessibility, input, and assistance provided by many SGA members during the site visit. In order to become an SGA, students must be in good academic standing, have an enthusiastic attitude and wish to be a visible student leader who shares firsthand information about their BCC experiences.

The SGA members have a prominent leadership voice at the college. In recent years, SGA members successfully argued for the construction of an elevator in the Library, and for the discontinued student handbook to be restored.

Beyond the SGA, BCC students have many opportunities for extracurricular involvement. These opportunities are recognized by the student affairs professionals as vital to a student's ability to maximize chances of academic success. While some organizations have limited participation, others, such as the Nontraditional Student Organization, Diversity Club, and Multicultural Student Services Club are highly visible organizations for the College. The team recognizes the dedication and understanding held by student services personnel about the importance of these opportunities. As one student mentioned, "the opportunities for involvement are there; you just have to reach out and grab them."

During the site visit, several students and administrators discussed their desire for the college to reinstitute intercollegiate athletics, though with full knowledge of current budget constraints. The College benefits from having onsite athletic facilities including a full gymnasium, fitness center, outdoor swimming pool, and outdoor soccer field.

The college ensures that individuals responsible for student services are qualified by work experience, if not always by formal training, and that they address the needs of students effectively. The facilities, technology, and funding appear adequate to implement the institution's student service policies and procedures.

Student Services personnel provide reasonably comprehensive services to students who attend off-site locations, and this is a measure of their dedication and commitment to BCC's mission given current staffing limitations.

The BCC administration has made improved ADA compliance a priority, and progress has been made in recent years. It is understood that fiscal decisions regarding deferred maintenance are not made by the College; nonetheless, it must be stated that the College continues to have significant accessibility issues for persons with physical disabilities.

The college follows the policies and guidelines of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) in maintaining the permanent records of students. The college follows the policies set by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Those departments and offices most directly affected by FERPA have received appropriate training, though training has not yet occurred on a campus-wide basis.

Institutional Effectiveness: While it is clear that the student services personnel strive to meet the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse student population, there is little evidence that the College analyzes the data it gathers regarding progress. A deeper analysis of accumulated data may lead to a better understanding of institutional effectiveness of student services.

7. Library and Other Information Resources

The Library at the college occupies almost 16,000 square feet of the two-level building forming the south side of the main campus quadrangle. The library is bright and provides a comfortable space for study and research.

The Library collection includes more than 58,000 books, more than 240 print subscriptions and a collection of video and audio recordings. To enhance their offerings, the library participates in regional and national networks (like Online Computer Library Center, and Central/Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing) for resource sharing and cataloging. The Library provides access to more than 50 online, multidisciplinary and subject specific databases.

The main floor of the library houses the circulation desk, reference and computer area, staff offices, periodicals, audiovisual, microfilm, and archival areas. The reference area is also used to hold information literacy sessions for students and is equipped with an overhead LCD projector and screen. The circulating book collection and quiet study area are located on the lower level. The Library is open 56 hours per week during the regular semester.

The Director of the Library supervises the Library and the Tutorial Center. The Director is supported by librarians and library assistants. Of the first, there is one

full-time and one part-time; of the second, there are two full-time and one part-time. The staff is experienced, professionally qualified, motivated and service-oriented. The Director encourages the staff to attend workshops and seminars to keep current with the advances in library related technology and information resources. Reduction in staff since 2003 has made it difficult to provide weekend library hours or extended hours during exam week.

At the open meeting with the students, the team found that students are aware of the Library's online resources and make regular use of them for academic assignments. Students who visit the library find the librarians helpful and approachable.

The Library participated in the LibQUAL survey in 2007. (LibQUAL is a standardized user survey to measure and understand user perception of library services.) The Librarians used the survey results to improve services. The results showed that the faculty and staff were finding it difficult to navigate online databases and catalog. The Library has planned workshops to address this issue.

The library has shown a strong commitment to training students in information literacy skills. The effectiveness of the library instruction is evaluated by pre- and post-testing students in English 101 and 102. The Librarians used the results to improve information literacy instruction. Discussing the information literacy sessions with students in the library revealed that though they find the information helpful, they would prefer the sessions to include some hands-on learning.

Though the institution recognizes the importance of the library, the decline in the budget over the past three years from \$105,173 in FY07 to \$96,932 in FY10 is a concern. The library has had to cancel journal subscriptions and delay database subscriptions to meet the challenge of budget shortfalls. Despite the budget shortfalls, the Library has used creative ways to continue to provide a wide array of traditional and contemporary services through networking and consortia agreements. Recently, BCC utilized \$18,000 of federal stimulus monies to purchase a new security system for the Library.

Distance learning students, as well as students at BCC's off-campus locations, access the library resources online. The students have complete access to the online databases and can request books through the online catalog. The books are delivered to the nearest public library. The librarians travel to the South County Center and the Intermodal Education Center to provide information literacy sessions as needed.

The library recognizes and is committed to providing resources for programs at the college. The librarians learn about new programs through direct contact with individual faculty rather than through participation on the Educational Affairs Committee for Curriculum.

Institutional Effectiveness: The Library has shown a commitment to evaluating its resources and services and initiating improvements based on the assessment results.

This can serve as a model for other services on campus. The library should continue to foster their process of systematic review and evaluation, to assess utilization, adequacy of resources, and impact of services. Continued institutional and financial support will help assure that the library can continue to provide both quality services and resources.

8. Physical and Technological Resources

Physical Plant: The BCC physical campus is composed of 311 acres, with the main campus located on 180 acres, 3.5 miles west of Pittsfield, MA. Original buildings were established in 1970. Additional educational centers are as follows: (1) The South County Center in Great Barrington which has been open since 1984 and is leased space. (2) The Intermodal Education Center in Pittsfield that has been open since 2008 and is the site of a collaboration with the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. (3) BCC rents classroom space at the C.H. McCann Technical School. A total of 243,915 square feet are provided across 12 buildings. Substantial resources have responded to and adequately support community educational needs, although the 2008 expenses for plant operation and maintenance reflect a decrease of 3.3 percent over 2007.

The Director of Facilities operates the plant and landscape/hardscape with a modest staff of five technicians and eight custodial personnel. Electrical and HVAC work are outsourced on-call. Annually, \$1.4 million provides basic services for maintenance/repair, utilities, security, space scheduling, equipment, and general support. This expense equates to \$6 per square foot of owned space.

Additionally, the Commonwealth Department of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) appropriated \$8.2 million for capital projects. This helped to meet the mandate to spend 5 percent of the average annual state appropriation on capital projects and improvements. Examples include transformers/substation replacements, roof repairs/replacement (3 buildings), floor and window replacement, exterior lighting, and ADA (\$450,000) improvements. In spring 2010, a \$4.3 million envelope repair project will correct PCB and mortar degeneration problems.

While sufficient, the majority of buildings have not been upgraded or renovated since their construction, and require investment to avoid continued deterioration and to meet future requirements for academic needs.

The Regional Campus Master Plan (2007, DCAM), and accessory Deferred Maintenance-Capital list indexes 104 projects estimated at \$123 million, all sanctioned by the Executive Council. Of concern are ADA compliance, fire notification system upgrade, water quality, and lockdown-related security improvements.

Foresight in financial planning has maintained an effective learning and teaching environment with collateral support services to support the mission. While proactive outreach to DCAM has increased deferred maintenance revenue flow, the current economic environment severely restricts available funds for the near term. Capital project allocations must be approved by the Massachusetts Capital Bond Commission.

As part of the DHE Regional Master Planning Initiative (2007), BCC has undertaken a space study to achieve the following: (1) enhance use of classrooms and flexibility of existent space, (2) form a foundation for future planning regarding FTE growth, (3) improve functional realignment, (4) evaluate plant and technology needs, and (5) prioritize requirements. Sustainability programs are enthusiastically implemented via the college-wide Green Team: members of the campus and external community. Functioning as a Standing Senate Committee, the team advises on facilities construction, waste recycling and reduction, energy use, global warming reduction, and neutralization of greenhouse gas emissions and purchasing. A DCAM funded project (\$3.5 million) will install photo voltaic panels campus-wide projected to generate 500,000 kilowatt hours, offsetting 24 percent of the annual electric utility cost.

Contracted, un-sworn, guards provide 24/7 campus security presence. The Clery report is current, on file, and reports minimal local violence and crime. Emergencies can be reported via a 911 system (PBX) or linked-campus extension to the South County Dispatch Center. Sworn police support is provided by the Massachusetts Department of State Police. BCC has also contracted to provide a campus emergency notification system enabling communiqués to registered students and staff. The system may additionally be used for evacuations, lockdown, or anticipated school closures, meeting contemporary expectations for campus protection. Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans are reviewed annually with a variety of police, fire department, and public health organizations. The BCC Emergency Response Committee provides copies of plans and supportive drawings to first-responders, administers regular fire drills and practice evacuations, and is working to develop table top exercise scenarios to enhance response capability. There remains lockdown-physical security concern regarding missing door locks.

Information Technology (IT) Substantial resources and operations support a broad-scale, effective IT program that is an important tool for academic and administrative mission support. The total 865 PC units are distributed across general use labs, smart classrooms, staff and faculty. The five-year replacement cycle uses “cascading,” and achieved 150 upgrades during FY 08. Upgrades of machines and networks resulted in new student laboratories, a Center for Teaching and Learning lab, upgrades of the DataTel student information system, server enhancement, a new phone system (VOIP), campus WiFi, and ADA computer functionality. Internal broadband capacity is exceptional at 50 megabytes. An Information Technology Infrastructure Plan delineates the needs for upgrade and expansion. A total expenditure of \$852,671 is targeted for FY 2010 (funded via the \$13/credit hour IT fee) with an additional \$1.6

million identified for future equipment/system/software upgrades over a five-year period. Fiber and Cat 7 networking internal to the college are more than adequate to handle continued broadband traffic.

Technology on campus is administered through five separate offices: Academic Technology (AT) (smart classrooms, labs (30), media, distance learning); Information Technology (Networks, telephones and VOIP, digital equipment, wireless access points, general repairs); Public Relations (WEB site); Registrar (WEB Advisor); Center for Teaching and Learning (technology development). The ATACOM (Academic Technology Committee) was recently established with broad representation to plan and coordinate academically related IT issues. This is helping to address the current disconnect between technology purchases and projected support and maintenance needs.

Data security, integrity and privacy are aligned with federal and state regulations, but formalized documentation of implementing policies should continue to ensure full compliance.

Title III and donated Foundation resources vastly expanded technology resources for students and academic programs such as WiFi and computer labs. BCC IT Service and administrative support is provided by 2.5 FTE professional and four support personnel. AT staff includes four full-time people and one, part-time person for evening. IT staff effectiveness may become limited unless their professional development is continually aligned with the institution's IT priorities.

Technology advancement has challenged BCC to maintain currency with limited funding. WebAdvisor services for students and faculty are considered satisfactory, but expanded training for use of DataTel and related programs is desired. The expansion of wireless portals to nearly all portions of multiple campus locations reflects a 77 percent approval rate by students. Budgetary and student data are accessible via DataTel or WebAdvisor; email is available to all staff; and Survey Monkey enables surveys as required. The growing ratio of PC machines to support staff may become a concern. Provision of student email, fall 2009, will enable standardized electronic student communications.

Smart/super-smart classrooms (41) are adequately equipped with video projection, DVDs and VCRs, or document cameras; although some are dated and in need of replacement. Students access a wide variety of technology programs: TRIO-related, Accuplacer, computer labs, MS suites, Blackboard CE, distance learning, a tutorial center, and the Cyber Café. AT staff survey students annually for input into the Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan. The new contracted WEB page is transitioning to the primary BCC source of information for interested audiences.

Institutional Effectiveness: Facility and technology resources at all campus locations provide adequate mission support, and have received substantial resource investment to support the academic mission. Buildings are clean, neat, and secure,

though of outdated aesthetics and economic productivity. The 2008 Strategic Plan links the planning process across academic and administrative functions, enabling a realistic forecast of budget needs. The BCC planning process, constrained by state funding limitations outside of the College's control, can result in limited opportunities to expand the physical plant, to resolve personnel and academic needs, and to improve information technology system support.

9. Financial Resources

BCC's financial administrative and oversight structure provide a stable, well-planned support base for the execution of the Strategic Plan and integrated elements. Clearly documented policies, controls, procedures, planning forms and processes, and significant dialogue establish the financial program foundation. These documents consist of text applicable to most Massachusetts community colleges providing statewide consistency for financial program administration.

Staffing at BCC includes 51 full-time and 135 adjunct faculty, plus 119 full-time staff members. The tuition/fee charge for FY 2008 was \$3,060 (in-state), or \$127.50/credit hour. The Board of Trustees approved a 2.4 percent fee increase (\$3.50 per credit) to help overcome loss of revenue resulting from state imposed tuition freeze caps from 2000 to 2008.

Sources of revenue to fund the FY 2008, \$22,528,854 budget were Tuition/fees (\$4.1 mil/16.9 percent), Grants and Contributions (\$5.0 mil/20.5 percent), State Appropriations (\$14.9 mil/61 percent), contributions and interest (\$0.4 mil/1.6 percent). Matched against total expenses, net assets increased by \$1,927,636 (28.6 percent) over 2007. This reflects a substantial increase over FY 2006. Total assets grew to \$8.7 million for FY 2009. Total operating revenues grew by 12.1 percent vs. equivalent expense growth of only 8.3 percent for the FY 2008 period.

Expense allocations for FY 2008 support the academic mission: \$16.5 million (73 percent); Instruction, Academic support, Student Services, Scholarships and fellowships; Operation and Maintenance of Plant \$2.2 million (10 percent); Institutional support \$3.1 million (14 percent); Depreciation and Auxiliary Operations \$0.7 million (3 percent). Costs directly related to the classroom increased 9.4 percent over 2007; academic support increased 22.1 percent; student services up by 8.3 percent; and scholarships up by 11.6 percent.

BCC Executive Council meetings with direct oversight and frequent coordination with the Board of Trustees ensures the integrity of reporting and process, and ties directly to educational activities. The college leadership understands the various financial plan elements of revenue and expenses and prudently optimizes financial expenses to meet key academic concerns.

Annual audits are conducted and the October 7, 2008 audit report reflected neither deficiencies in internal control nor instances of non-compliance reportable under Government Auditing Standards. Grant management follows federal EDGAR and Massachusetts Department of Education guidelines.

There is ample evidence of top-to-bottom participation in the budget development process. Monthly financial reports are distributed to account holders and reviewed by senior leadership to monitor expense excesses or necessary adjustments. Budgets can be viewed at any time online via WebAdvisor. The Dean of Finance and Administration is working to expand budget oversight participation to include the College Senate in an advisory capacity.

The Foundation, administered by the Dean of Institutional Advancement, generated gifts of \$412,000, which grew to \$740,000 when supplemented by the State matching HE Endowment Incentive program. The BCC Office of Grants Development has widened its outreach to corporations and foundations. FY 2008/09 bequests of \$650,000 were received for general scholarship and Nursing program enhancement.

Prior to 2006, foundation efforts focused primarily on scholarship support. Since then, foundation support has expanded to support infrastructure initiatives: computers, labs, classroom equipment, furniture, etc. The Planned Giving Program has been established for long-term foundation account growth based on a new alumni address database. External fundraisers such as theatre and gala productions have further expanded fundraising opportunities. If state appropriations continue to decrease, the college considers it of critical importance to maintain growth and diversify available financial support by drawing on both public and private sources.

BCC has achieved a 92 percent success rate from grant applications which average \$2.2 million annually from federal, state, and private foundations. Currently, twenty-three grants sum to \$3,416,515.00 (e.g. Title III, TRIO, Tech Prep, ABE, etc.) not including an additional \$1.7 million in Pell and federal student financial aid. Clearly the college has self-initiated quality efforts to overcome shortfalls in traditional revenue sources. While this gain is especially helpful during these difficult fiscal times, it does leave programs open to risk if these sources disappear and cannot be replaced.

Of concern is the declining, and somewhat unpredictable, level of state appropriation. While a key source of funds, the state appropriation has declined from \$9.68 million in FY 2001 to \$7.442 million in FY 2010). Traditionally, the state allocation, used primarily for salaries/fringe, is 52 percent of the total budget. That level will have declined substantially by 2011. To avoid a major deficit in 2011, the DF&AM has a strategic plan using ARRA funds to mitigate the loss and increase 2010 Trust UNA, but “financial conservation” will need to be practiced to continue at current levels of service. A separate, but equally important concern is the minimal level of DCAM funds for FY 2010. Though BCC administrators have worked diligently with DCAM,

lack of perceptible progress on the extensive deferred maintenance project list may result in degraded buildings and failed systems.

Institutional Effectiveness: The College provides oversight to streamline procedures, monitor revenues and expenses closely, and ensure integrity of financial application and documentation. Process and policies are documented, widely understood by staff and faculty, and effectively enable identification of academic/service needs for subsequent budget address. The institution has implemented internal and external mechanisms to evaluate its fiscal condition and financial management, but is only just beginning to use the results for improvement.

10. Public Disclosure

BCC makes sufficient information accessible to the public so that intended audiences can make informed decisions about the institution. The college uses print and media channels as well as the college website to communicate and connect with its internal and external constituents. Of the 70 items included on the CIHE Public Disclosure Form, 100 percent are available in print, and 93 percent are available both in print and on the website.

Published annually, the college catalog provides an accurate picture of the college and its programs, resources, policies and procedures. The catalog also includes clearly defined “core competencies” needed for graduation, as well as the “expected outcomes” for the programs offered. Scanning through the catalog revealed that expected outcomes were not listed for some engineering and hospitality administration degrees. In addition to the catalog, the college also publishes semester schedule booklets and an Alumni magazine. The publications are attractive and professionally produced.

The college advertises on the local radio, community television, and in area newspapers to publicize its programs and community events. Marketing materials are designed to improve outreach to the varied communities in the College’s geographically expansive service area.

The Public Relations office is attempting to “brand” all publications with the college colors and a consistent look. They have also provided soft copies of the college logo and colors for use by the college community for in-house publications. The Office of Public Relations has a process in place for the systematic and annual review of information included in the catalog.

The college used the self-study process to determine the extent to which it made publicly available the information required in the Public Disclosure Standard. Though all the information available in print format is available on the web, it can be difficult to locate. The website is attractive, but navigation of it needs to be enhanced to

improve functionality. A quick review of the website found that some links lead back to the homepage.

Keeping the changing demographics of the county in mind, the college has included some preliminary information about the college in Spanish on the website.

The college recognizes the increasing use of the website as the primary source of information about the college. The college is working to resolve its problems with the host company. Plans are underway to develop the website and institute a process of ongoing assessment.

Institutional Effectiveness: The College has a systematic process of review in place for its print publications. While the college does not have a systematic review process for the website, the college recognizes the need to have a user friendly and up-to-date website facilitating access to pertinent information. The College plans to hire a webmaster and this could help the College to extend its systematic review from print to the website.

11. Integrity

The Board of Trustees and the College expects trustees, administration, faculty, staff and students to act responsibly and with integrity. The president fosters an atmosphere where issues of integrity can be openly considered and members of the college community seem to understand and assume their responsibilities in the pursuit of integrity. Policies and procedures exemplify the College's mission and values.

The College mission and value statements guide honest and ethical behavior. Outlines of grievance procedures are available to faculty and staff in collective bargaining agreements and to students in the student handbook. One area of concern raised in the self-study is the need to improve processes related to academic honesty. The sections of the catalog and student handbook that cover the judicial system need to be clarified and more comprehensive.

The college appears committed to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. It assures faculty and students the freedom to teach and study a given field, to examine all pertinent data, to question assumptions and to be guided by the evidence of scholarly research.

The college appears to observe the spirit as well as the letter of applicable legal requirements. It has the formal authority of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to grant all degrees it awards and operate within this authority.

The college adheres to non-discriminatory policies and practices in recruitment, admissions, employment, evaluation, disciplinary action and advancement. It fosters

an atmosphere within the college community that respects and supports people of diverse characteristics and backgrounds.

The college provides every indication that it manages its academic, service, administrative operations, responsibilities for students and interactions with prospective students with honesty and integrity.

The college assumes responsibility for all instructional and enrichment activities that it sponsors or which carry its name. These activities support the college's mission. The college accepts responsibility for the appropriateness and integrity of such activities.

The college adheres to established policies ensuring institutional integrity. As indicated above, however, the College's self-study indicates concern about inconsistent consequences for students who engage in academic dishonesty. Some faculty members have a discussion with the student while others would assign them a failing grade for the course. The students would benefit from a clear policy that is followed by the College administration and faculty.

The college appears to demonstrate honesty and integrity in its relationships with the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education and complies with the Commission's standards, policies, and requirements of affiliation and requests. The college has been open, honest, and forthcoming and accommodating in cooperating with the visiting team.

Institutional Effectiveness: The College's activities are closely aligned with its mission, and the BCC community serves the community and students with high integrity and purpose. Although many policies and conditions exist that foster an atmosphere where issues of integrity can be frankly discussed, periodic review to ensure their continued success has yet to be put in place.

Institutional Effectiveness Summary:

Berkshire Community College has made progress expanding evidence-based evaluation for improvement. Both the self-study and the site visit revealed ample evidence of this. It is particularly true in the key areas of institutional planning, academic programs, and the Library. BCC faculty, administration, and staff clearly recognize the need to better utilize outcomes data to track institutional performance, and to better communicate the results of evaluation. The College is encouraged to continue its work to further ensure these practices become institutionalized throughout all college programs and departments.

Report Summary:

The faculty and staff of Berkshire Community College have made tremendous strides during the past five years in the following areas: governance, assessment, facilities, fundraising, community outreach, diversity and campus climate. These are significant achievements for a short period of time. The visiting team takes note of both the institutional momentum that has developed, and the high level of engagement and enthusiasm displayed by faculty, staff, students, administration, trustees, and the community.

Strengths

- Governance has become increasingly formalized with clearly delineated by-laws for major committees. Governance is highly representative and participatory.
- The Board of Trustees is deeply committed to the College and displays a high level of understanding regarding its accomplishments and challenges.
- The campus trusts and respects the President and his Executive Council. The integrity, respect for others, and open communication that the President models has had a positive and transformative effect on the campus.
- The College has made a commitment to careful and comprehensive planning and has developed practices of thorough data development on several fronts.
- There has been considerable attention given to revising the core competencies. The visiting team found students had an understanding of what was entailed in this process and a significant number of faculty are involved in competency certification.
- The institution, faculty and staff have made intensive efforts to improve student success in developmental courses. Title III monies are being wisely used to support developmental education initiatives and the Center for Teaching and Learning.
- The revision and employment of a data-driven academic program review has taken hold at BCC. Faculty have embraced the new model of program review as an effective tool for improving teaching and learning.
- The College has increased staffing to focus on the specialized needs of an increasingly diverse student body.
- A professional and thorough Deferred Maintenance project list (that makes ADA compliance a priority) has been developed and provided to DCAM to ensure their knowledge of facility project needs.

- Programs for sustainability and “green” environmentally friendly efforts receive exceptionally high visibility; academic, staff, and student support; and funds application in varied uses.
- The Administrative leadership reflects exceptional understanding of and proficiency with a complex, multi-sourced revenue stream that enables optimum budget flexibility and application strategies.
- The College’s outreach and service to local communities have both been expanded and successful. The opening of the Intermodal Education Center in Pittsfield achieves two important goals: outreach to the community and collaboration with a primary transfer institution.

Concerns

- Institutional evaluation, especially the interpretation of data for decision-making, is often fragmented and incomplete.
- There is little evidence that the college governance committees are assessing their effectiveness in a formal or systematic fashion.
- Although improvements to the Core Competency program have been substantial, there is still considerable work to be done. Faculty participation is uneven. Planning for this ambitious project has been insufficient and, thus, failed to forecast several major obstacles to implementation.
- There appear to be organizational impediments keeping Academic Affairs and Student Services from developing a coordinated approach to assessing and improving student advising.
- The CCSSE data which indicate fairly low levels of student engagement on several measures have not generated an analysis of these issues or a holistic college-wide response.
- Although substantial progress has been made on ADA compliance, and the College’s commitment is clear, there remain serious limitations to physical access on campus.
- Although it is evident that the College has benefited from its pro-active approach with DCAM, the lack of funding for the forecasted \$70 million Deferred Maintenance backlog is of concern, as is the lack of fund support for the fire notification system replacement, and heating system repair projects.
- The College faces challenges regarding how it will sustain long-term key positions and initiatives that are currently being funded by short-term grant and federal stimulus dollars.

