

# **Year Seven Evaluation Report**

**Truckee Meadows Community College  
7000 Dandini Boulevard  
Reno, NV 89512**

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## **General Introduction**

Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) is a two-year public comprehensive institution located in Reno, Nevada and is part of the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). The College serves more than 25,000 students each year in credit and non-credit programs at five educational sites and more than 20 community locations. Offerings support those individuals engaged in university transfer, occupational training, career enhancement and continuing education.

During the past several years the College has faced significant budget reductions while realizing reduced enrollment at times, and growth in enrollment at others. TMCC also experienced a large number of changes in leadership and management-level positions over the past few years.

The College demonstrated a high level of transparency and engagement during the visit, supporting the work of evaluators. TMCC noted many best practice efforts while expressing eagerness with respect to improving their performance and the experience of students.

This visit focuses on requirements and institutional responses during year seven of the accreditation cycle, as well as changes reported since the previous visit. The evaluation was conducted on site and team members employed the use of written documentation, electronic and paper exhibits, personal observations, and in-depth interviews to complete their work.

### **Assessment of the Self-Evaluation Report**

The institution's self-evaluation report was well-organized but solely relied on descriptive information in several areas. In some instances the content of the report presented conflicting data. Links to electronic exhibits were helpful; requests for additional information were met with quick responses. One piece of public correspondence was received from a currently enrolled student. Concerns stated in the correspondence were explored during the visit and are addressed in separate correspondence to the Commission.

### **Institutional History Impacting Accreditation Visit**

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) granted accreditation status to TMCC in 1980. The College hosted a comprehensive evaluation in 2005, followed by a focused interim report in 2007 and a regular interim report in 2010. TMCC hosted a year one visit in 2011, a year three visit in 2012, and produced an ad hoc report in 2014. The team found that one previous recommendation associated with General Education continues to be a challenge for TMCC.

### **Report on NWCCU Eligibility Requirements**

While the institution is in compliance with most NWCCU Eligibility Requirements, the following detailed information is provided for selected components:

Eligibility Requirement 3. Mission and Core Themes: Careful work was done to identify core themes consistent with the mission of TMCC; further effort is needed to ensure the inclusion of objectives that reflect all aspects of college operations (e.g., facilities, student services, police services, information technology, and the library) and provide a means for measuring their effectiveness.

Eligibility Requirement 10. Faculty: While evidence attests to a comprehensive and systematic method for evaluating full-time faculty, part-time faculty evaluations are likely not conducted in a manner that is regular, systematic, and substantive.

Eligibility Requirement 12. General Education and Related Discussion: TMCC has a history of recommendations related to the identification and assessment of the General Education components of certificates and degrees. A great deal of progress is evident related to the adoption of a substantial and coherent body of general education. What has not occurred is the identification, adoption, and implementation of General Education assessment indicators that demonstrate student acquisition of learning related to each General Education element.

Eligibility Requirement 23. Institutional Effectiveness: While there is a great deal of planning and assessment occurring throughout the College, such information fails to form a comprehensive and cohesive picture of and direction for all aspects of institutional performance. In several instances the College fails to widely publish the results of service and support assessment efforts and, at times, demonstrate their application to performance improvement.

Eligibility Requirement 24. Scale and Sustainability: TMCC has responded to fiscal, staffing, and external challenges in a skillful and effective manner. Careful assessment should be undertaken to ensure TMCC's resources and scale are sustainable and sufficient to ensure mission fulfillment and achievement of core themes. In addition, recent efforts to consolidate essential services across various Nevada community college campuses should be carefully examined to determine (a) whether anticipated efficiencies actually were realized, and (b) if basic operational functions are sufficient to ensure the institution remains sustainable and is able to demonstrate mission fulfillment.

## **Standard 1 – Mission and Core Themes**

### **Standard 1.A – Mission**

Documentation and interviews verify that TMCC reflects a mission statement that clearly articulates the purpose of the College. Individuals across the institution (administrators, faculty, staff, and students) are able to quote the mission statement and identify how it applies to them and their efforts. It is evident that the mission statement serves as a foundation for efforts to measure mission fulfillment.

### **Standard 1.B – Core Themes**

TMCC has identified three core themes to represent the mission of the institution. The themes are Student Success, Academic Excellence, and Access to Lifelong Learning. These core themes were most recently reaffirmed in a June 2014 status report to the NSHE Board of Regents. The core themes, along with their supporting objectives, appear to represent a substantial portion of the college's "education and services" as stated in the mission. However, it is not clear that sufficient discussion has occurred regarding what elements of college operations might be missing from the framework. For example physical, technological and financial infrastructure are generally accepted as critical components of student success. However, these infrastructure elements are not a component of the existing core themes and objectives.

Per Accreditation Standard 1.B.2, institutions are required to identify meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives (underlying each of the core themes). The Office of Institutional Research, Analysis & Effectiveness is charged with collecting and reporting the data associated with each of the indicators. Although the department is led by a seasoned Institutional Research professional, recent budget challenges have resulted in a reduction in research staff. It is clear that the department, even with reduced staffing, is encouraging the ongoing development of an overall culture of evidence at the institution.

Recent changes to the state funding model, absolutely critical to the financial stability of the institution, had

a significant impact on the selection of indicators. The state funding model focuses on student retention and completion, and includes the specific elements of one- and two-year certificates, associate degrees, transfers, gateway courses, and degrees and certificates in identified “Economic Development” fields (including primarily STEM and Allied Health). The data elements from the state model are expected to show an increase as the portion of state funding allocated through performance incentives grows from its current five to the expected 20 percent. Nevada added no new funding for performance incentives – a set-aside of existing funds serves as the basis for performance incentive.

Through leadership provided by the Office of Institutional Research, Analysis & Effectiveness Office, the identified indicators in the most recent iteration of the Strategic Master Plan are both assessable and verifiable. Indicators are also, however, required to be meaningful. Two dynamics impact the level of meaning that can be assigned to indicators falling under objectives one and three of the Core Theme I, and objectives one, two and three of Core Theme II.

First, the need to align indicators with the state funding model resulted in a number of indicators that are based on absolute numbers (such as the number of degree completions). While the alignment is significant to the institution for funding purposes, the focus on numbers versus rates or percentages detracts from the ability of the institution to track improvements over time without interference from fluctuating variables such as enrollment. It is feasible that the number of completions could go up over time while the rate (a more accurate longitudinal indicator of institutional effectiveness) goes down.

Second, the focus on process in objectives one (number of programs assessed), two (number of non-instructional units assessed) and three (number of...programs using Advisory Board input recommendations for continual program improvement) in Core Theme II infers but does not directly measure improvement as it relates to attainment of student learning outcomes.

TMCC’s Mission and Core Themes serve as an important foundation for generating goals and measuring the performance of the institution. Attention should be given to ensuring all elements of College effort is reflected in the indicators of achievement.

Concern: The institution fails to connect all units of the College to core themes, goals, and objectives. A review of current measures of effectiveness should occur in order to ensure the results tie to goal accomplishment and mission fulfillment. Support and service units such as institutional research, facilities, the library, campus police, and others should be clearly anchored in core themes, goals, objectives, and planning and assessment activities.

## **Standard 2 – Resources and Capacity**

### **Standard 2.A – Governance**

TMCC reflects a clearly-defined governance structure, answering to an elected Board of Regents of the NSHE. As a result of legislative action, the College was mandated to create an Institutional Advisory Council. As a result of conversations with an Advisory Council member, early indicators are favorable with respect to increased institutional support, connection with local partners, and a deepened understanding of institutional effort.

The Regents monitor institutional policy and focus careful attention on efficiency and resource allocation. The College actively monitors compliance with accreditation requirements and associated standards. Less evident is active monitoring of accreditation efforts at the Board level. Gaining increased knowledge about the accreditation process can more clearly focus Board and College efforts, ensuring the attainment of mission fulfillment.

Effective processes are in place to evaluate the President of the College. Not evident, however, is a means for evaluating the performance of the Board in a systematic, periodic, and comprehensive manner. While there was evidence that the Board engages in professional development, what was described as an evaluation process fails to demonstrate components that meet NWCCU Standards related to individual and collective evaluation of Board performance.

Concern: The NSHE fails to regularly evaluate its performance and use the results for improvement.

During recent years the College has met budget reductions by thoughtfully reducing operating and human resources. Given the size of the institution, the scope of its mission, and the location of various enterprises it became evident that some reductions had a negative impact on the delivery of services. Steps are being taken to carefully re-add positions at the administrative, faculty, and staff levels that ensure the student experience and goal attainment is well supported.

Most academic policies, including those associated with the library, are developed at the Board level. In some instances these policies could benefit from appropriate procedures designed specifically for TMCC. Of note is the absence of a policy related to hazardous material storage and safety.

Concern: The institution should fully develop a policy and associated procedures to ensure appropriate hazardous material storage and safety guidelines.

Academic policies are clearly communicated to students, faculty, administrators, and staff. Academic policies are addressed in orientations for students and new faculty and are discussed regularly by the Student Government Association and the Faculty Senate. There are a number of documents available on TMCC's website that clearly articulate policies to faculty, administrators, staff and students: the TMCC Policy Manual, Faculty Tenure Guidelines, Faculty Senate Annual Evaluation Criteria, NFA Contract, and TMCC Course Catalog.

The transfer preparation program at TMCC makes it easier for students to transfer General Education credits to four-year institutions in Nevada. This was made possible through a common course numbering system. Academic advisors provide convenient access to transfer services and also promote a transfer culture. In addition, the Board of Regents has rigorous policies that regulate transfer between NSHE's seven universities and colleges as well as clearly articulated rights related to the transfer of courses to state universities in Nevada.

The assessment of TMCC's transfer rates is based on several indicators; however, the college's transfer rates lag behind its peers, likely due to its physical proximity to the University of Nevada Reno and a current growing economy. The college has a seamless process for student transfer of General Education credits to four-year institutions, however, there is no mechanism to track the success these students once they transfer. The College just conducted TMCC graduate follow-up surveys this fall; the results of such data collection can be used help ensure a higher level of success for future graduates.

Evaluators found clearly stated and readily available policies regarding student rights and responsibilities including academic honesty, appeals and grievances in the Board of Regents Handbook. Administrators provided evidence during the site visit that student appeals are administered in a fair and consistent manner.

Open enrollment is at the core of the mission of community colleges. Some NSHE-imposed indicators associated with the newly-implemented completion-based performance funding model fail to include

valid measures when considering this important mission focus. They clearly have the potential to limit mission fulfillment at TMCC over time.

Concern: Recent NSHE performance funding measurement decisions impacting resource allocation and mission focus may, over time, limit the College's ability to fully demonstrate mission fulfillment. Careful consideration should be given to work being undertaken at the national level to adopt and implement institutional performance mechanisms at TMCC.

Basic admissions and placement policies are established by the Nevada Board of Regents and articulated in the NSHE Code. Admissions policies, practices, and systems at TMCC are consistent with the institution's mission. The effectiveness of admissions practices is carefully reviewed and adjustments made where warranted. Enrollment at TMCC is predicated upon high school graduation requirement acquisition or established qualifications of international student applicants. A student who does not meet these requirements may apply to be admitted under alternate criteria or by presenting test scores that demonstrate college readiness. TMCC has established alternate criteria for placement; these criteria are clearly delineated in the college catalog.

TMCC uses the Steps to Enroll process to enhance student success upon admission. As part of this process, mandatory orientation and academic advisement must be completed by all new degree- and certificate-seeking students prior to course registration.

The definition and requirement of satisfactory academic progress, the consequences for failing to maintain such academic progress, and the process to appeal these consequences are stated on the Vice President for Academic Affairs page on the TMCC website. Evaluators found an environment that supports fair and timely administration of the appeals process.

Clubs are recognized through petition to the Student Government Association. Policy 3525 in the TMCC Policy Manual states, "TMCC supports student clubs, organizations and activities because they encourage and foster academic and personal growth and learning through active involvement, individual commitment and personal enrichment." Bylaws of the Student Government Association of Truckee Meadows Community College, most recently updated in August 20, 2014, define the roles and responsibilities of students and TMCC.

NSHE policies provide the over-arching directive for human resources at TMCC. The TMCC Policy Manual and By-laws provide further direction. Human resource policies are published in various locations on the TMCC website: TMCC Bylaws, Article IV and TMCC Policy Manual, Section 2000, and direct links from the Human Resources webpage for other policies and procedures.

The Board has in place a conflict of interest policy that is reviewed on a regular basis. Faculty policy addresses intellectual property and copyright norms. Published language related to accreditation standing is accurate and readily available.

Contractual relationships fall under the purview of the Board of Regents. Policies and associated actions reflect adherence to practices that reflect integrity and ethics. Students and faculty alike demonstrate a strong commitment to the tenants of academic freedom and transparent engagement in critical thinking processes. Faculty report a high level of support for scholarship and attest to strong institutional promotion of control over their curriculum.

The institution has clearly defined policies, approved by the Board, regarding oversight and management of financial resources—including financial planning, board approval and monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fundraising, cash management, debt management, and transfers



and borrowings between funds. The institution has in place an agreement with the Foundation that details both the relationship and management of resources generated in support of scholarships, capital projects, and other instructional needs. This agreement is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

## **Standard 2.B – Human Resources**

The Nevada Board of Regents establishes the calendar for the review of NSHE policies including human resource policies. The Human Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC) engages human resource professionals across Nevada educational institutions to review and revise processes. Within the past year TMCC updated its human resource pages to reflect procedural changes as they are occurred. TMCC does not have an established calendar for review of their campus human resource policies and procedures although policies all have been reviewed and updated within the past four years. Although the New Employee Orientation is well-organized and appears to be a good introduction to the college there is no mention of the location of most of these human resource tools.

Concern: Employment policies and procedures are dispersed in multiple locations throughout the TMCC website: TMCC By-laws, TMCC Policy Manual, directly from the TMCC Human Resources website, and NSHE Code.

Administrative, professional and classified employees have current and accurate job descriptions. Classified job descriptions are created as part of the hiring classified process that is managed through the state. In 2013 a pay equity study for professionals and administrative positions revealed a limited number of jobs without descriptions and these omissions were corrected. Faculty conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, as well as criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion and termination are all defined in the Nevada Faculty Alliance Contract. The evaluation process for classified employees as described in Nevada Annotated Code is followed by TMCC. Supervisors retain classified evaluations. Human resource records are kept under lock and key in the Human Resource office on the Dandini campus. No security breaches have occurred. Employees with access to records are trained in confidentiality.

Interviews with multiple campus constituencies indicate that support and operations staffing at TMCC, while lean and effective, is at a bare-bones minimum. Certain faculty positions, notably in the gateway sequence courses including English and math, are needed and searches for these positions are in active process.

Per State of Nevada regulations and NSHE Board Policy, TMCC's Human Resources Department publicly posts job opportunities on its website and uses an online employment process for hiring full-time administrative and full- and part-time academic positions. The online hiring system supports the needs of College recruitment efforts and simplifies the employment process for applicants and search committees. In 2013 all professional recruitment guides and committee forms were updated and standardized. Human Resource and Equity and Inclusion personnel meet with each search committee to review legal hiring processes before the review of applications.

Position descriptions clearly delineate job duties, responsibilities, and authority and include the necessary position qualifications and criteria, including educational background, experience, and skills. While faculty and administrative staff are governed under NSHE, classified staff members are governed under the State of Nevada and thus apply through the State's application process.

The Human Resource Office provided documentation demonstrating that evaluations are conducted annually in accordance with adopted policies and procedures. For the previous evaluation period, 89% of the administrative/professional staff evaluations were on file in the Human Resource Office. Classified

staff are evaluated by their supervisors in accordance with their hiring anniversary date. Staff reported a high level of satisfaction with their evaluation process.

The Professional Development Office at TMCC provides a robust program of training opportunities for full-time and part-time faculty as well as classified and professional staff that complements the college mission and strategic objectives while increasing skill competencies. Evaluators were especially impressed with the certificate program offered to adjunct faculty that builds professional teaching skills.

Compliment: The professional development efforts of TMCC contribute at the highest level of positive morale and skill increase for all employees.

Appropriately qualified faculty are employed by TMCC to meet educational objectives. Required educational attainment is defined in the minimum qualifications for each faculty posting. Academic transcripts and other application material is reviewed by TMCC Human Resource personnel. Department chairs are responsible for checking the qualifications of adjunct faculty for the positions for which they are hired. Evaluators found that department chairs are fulfilling their responsibilities in this regard.

Responsibilities and workload for faculty are clearly articulated in the Nevada Faculty Alliance Contract. Faculty, department chairs, and deans establish priorities for faculty performance by completing the Faculty Annual Plan. Full-time faculty are evaluated annually using the Faculty Annual Plan tool. Over 91% of full-time faculty completed the Faculty Annual Plan during the most recent evaluation period.

Adjunct faculty are evaluated through a combination of teaching observation and student evaluation. Evaluators reviewed documentation from department chairs which demonstrated that teaching observations are being conducted by the departments. The format for these evaluations is not standardized between or within departments but the intent of the evaluation is being achieved. There was no way to determine what percentage of adjunct faculty are being evaluated.

Concern: TMCC should review processes and results of adjunct (part-time) faculty evaluation methods to ensure consistency as well as systematic, periodic, and comprehensive review is being accomplished.

## **Standard 2.C – Education Resources**

TMCC offers a wide range of program at various locations throughout the greater Reno area. Such programs demonstrate focus and content appropriate for the mission of the institution and are structured to meet the needs of the region. Student learning outcomes are in place for all programs and disciplines at the institution; assessment of some outcomes is still being developed, especially in the area of General Education. Programs demonstrate an appropriate breadth, depth, sequence, and synthesis of learning. With the recent implementation of the NSHE's policy related to a maximum 60-credit limit for two-year degrees, adjustments are still being made in some affected programs.

Faculty interviews attest to direct faculty responsibility for the development of student learning outcomes. Faculty Senate Bylaws protect and direct faculty involvement in the curriculum process. The Curriculum Assessment and Programs (CAPS) body is viewed as an effective, motivated part of curriculum adoption, review, and modification steps.

Faculty and students alike report the inclusion of the library in curricular decisions. During student and faculty forums, strong evidence was shared that the library is viewed as an important asset and tool for many individuals. Substantial evidence verified TMCC faculty with teaching responsibilities partner with library faculty to integrate the use of library and information resources into the learning process. Library faculty liaisons work closely with faculty in several disciplines including English, construction, nursing,

geology and the social sciences to address critical thinking and information literacy outcomes appropriate to the disciplines and course content. The library faculty provide more than 100 independent information literacy instruction workshops annually. In general, interviews with faculty confirmed their support for information literacy instruction and the integration of library resources into course curriculum.

Credit for prior experiential learning, if granted should be guided by approved policies and procedures; however, the TMCC policy related to credit for prior learning was put in a hiatus by action from the Board of Regents. After being awarded a Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) Round 4 Grant, the College has implemented CLEP credit for prior learning model, an American Council on Education (ACE) certified evaluation process of military or other post-secondary transcripts for active military, reserves and veterans.

TMCC made a concerted effort to assess General Education courses; this led to the creation of a General Education matrix used to map General Education courses to General Education abilities. The current General Education courses reflect competencies within each of the five General Education categories. The College also purchased and administered the standardized Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) instrument; however, data summary from the assessment provided little insight into General Education program at TMCC.

**Concern:** There is no clear evidence of the continuous assessment of General Education. Although recent Board of Regents policy changes impact, to some degree, General Education, it is imperative that the institution develop clear, measureable, and assessable learning outcomes for General Education, implement the assessment process, and then use the results to improve instruction and student success. The College reflects an appropriate degree and certificate emphasis and use the Student Learning and Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) Committee to employ a regular cyclic of review. The College has an active CANVAS shell serving as an easily accessible repository for these outcomes. The College uses a course assessment review (CAR) process to track, update/revise, add, and delete all college-wise education learning outcomes.

A wide range of non-credit programs are offered by TMCC. These courses and workshops are appropriate in meeting the demands of individuals within the College's service area. The College uses the SLOA Committee to move non-credit course offering proposals forward on a regular basis as documented in meeting minutes and through interviews. Credit bearing continuing education (CE) is approved in the same method used for regular credit bearing instruction.

All CE offerings include student evaluations and are on a five-year assessment cycle. The CE Program undergoes an annual program review. All new CE offerings are reviewed by faculty and instructional deans through multiple classroom observations. The institution maintains records that describe the number of courses and nature of learning provided through non-credit instruction.

## **Standard 2.D – Student Support Resources**

The College has established numerous programs and services designed to support student learning. These programs are designed to enhance the enrollment and learning process and help students overcome financial, personal, and academic obstacles that may stand in the way of attaining educational goals. Included in these programs and services are enrollment and advising services, retention and tutoring programs, various forms of financial aid, counseling, and student engagement opportunities.

The 2015 TMCC Annual Security Report which includes data through 2014 indicates that crime is minimal at TMCC. Two arrests for drug violations and one disciplinary action for illegal weapons were reported. For the two prior years before that a similar low level of criminal activity. Uniformed campus

police officers are sworn Nevada peace officers and are a familiar presence on each campus. Incident response time is from one to three minutes.

Concern: The Board of Regents is to be lauded for their continued focus on identifying budget efficiencies. When considering consolidation of security services across multiple institutions, careful consideration must be made to providing a safe and secure learning environment resulting from an adequate campus safety personnel presence. If a consolidation occurs, careful assessment of the impacts related to the new campus safety/police structure must be undertaken to ensure an adequate campus safety and personnel presence is maintained.

Degree-seeking students participate in mandatory student orientation and academic advising. Students who change their status from non-degree seeking to degree-seeking are required to complete student orientation and academic advising at that time although they are encouraged to complete student orientation when they first enroll. Holds are placed on student registrations until participation in orientation and advising is completed. Students receive a SOAR guidebook which provides a useful overview of their education process at TMCC as well as materials to assist during their meetings with advising and financial aid personnel.

Procedures are in place to ensure that students enrolled in programs scheduled for discontinuation or significant changes are able to complete their program in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption. The student catalog is published online and demonstrates current and accurate information as required by this standards of accreditation.

Certain programs at TMCC have specific eligibility requirements associated with national and/or state licensure. Descriptions of special licensure or admission requirements are included in the applications, catalog and program information for Dental Assisting, Dental Hygiene, Nursing Assistance, Nursing, Phlebotomy, Radiologic Technician and Veterinary Technology. The Early Childhood Education (ECE) program information website and program brochure do not mention any special or unique requirements for program or employment eligibility although page 69 of the self-study indicates that the ECE program may have such requirements.

Student records are securely maintained in accordance with established policies and procedures for backup. Those with access to student records receive FERPA training regarding student privacy and release of records. The Professional Development Office provides the FERPA training and also documentation that it has been completed.

The Financial Aid Office at TMCC is a proactive unit in the Student Services Division. As with other units in the Student Services Division they conduct an annual self-assessment followed by a retreat at which they develop their plan for continual improvement. Financial aid information is featured as part of the Steps to Enroll process as well as contained in the SOAR Guidebook provided to students. Completion of a web-based financial education tool is required of all students receiving student loans. Financial aid is available in the form of loans, scholarships, grants and work/study.

In 2014, a random on-site audit by the Federal Department of Education affirmed the accountability of the Financial Aid program. The review – broad in scope – produced no findings, a fact of which the Financial Aid Office is justifiably proud.

Students receiving financial aid are counseled regarding their repayment obligations. TMCC is actively working to reduce their default rate that has increased over a period of time. The increase was attributed to the poor economy and budget cuts that reduced staff. The plan to reduce the default rate includes counseling offered at the time of loan application. Additional counseling is provided at TMCC through

the Financial Literacy and Money Education by Students (FLAMES) program. Students trained as peer mentors help other TMCC students in on-on-one coaching as well as group work sessions.

Student forum attendees reported that the advising staff is helpful and accessible. Following the assessment and planning for improvement methods used by all units within the Student Services Division, advising staff prepare an Annual Academic Advising Report which documents their program metrics and achievements. The general student population is served by five professional advisors with some special populations of students having advisors specific to that group (e.g., veterans). Advising resources have been strategically applied to ensure that all degree-seeking students are advised and continue to be aware of advising importance and resources, especially throughout their first year. Advising software tracks student contacts and progress and enables efficiency and effectiveness. Faculty do not assist with advising (per the faculty agreement) but some faculty serve as student mentors. Program directors for special entrance programs discuss admissions requirements with student applicants.

TMCC recognizes the importance of activities as a way of engaging students and increasing their odds of academic success. As a non-residential campus with a diverse population engagement provides students with a way to establish relationships and identity within the student body. Student clubs are recognized and approved under the umbrella of the Student Government Association. The number of student clubs has increased over the last few years from only four to thirty. This dramatic increase is attributable to the hiring of a full-time Student Activities and Leadership Coordinator as well as changing the requirements for number of students and faculty advisors required to apply for SGA for approval.

An effort is made to engage students at the beginning of the semester and the keep them active. The Student Activities Coordinator shared many creative ways that students have been encouraged to participate and had a host of additional ideas for future implementation.

Auxiliary services at TMCC support the institutional mission and contribute to the learning environment. Students, faculty, staff and administrators reported having adequate opportunity for input on campus food services and reflected subsequent satisfaction. A Textbook Task Force committee was appointed by the previous Vice President of Academic Affairs in 2014 and charged with exploring ways to keep textbooks accessible and affordable. Their recommendations were release in the spring of 2015.

There is no student housing at TMCC nor are there intercollegiate athletic or other co-curricular activities beyond those sponsored by the Student Government Association. The identity verification process for students was reported to be effective by staff in the Student Services Division forum.

## **Standard 2.E – Library and Information Resources**

TMCC holds and provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth, and breadth to support the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services. The library's print holdings and online resources are adequate to serve the face-to-face and online demands of the campus community and programs. Database usage statistics provided by the library director verified online databases are heavily used and gate count statistics as well as evaluator observation of the library facility demonstrated high student use in common areas. The main library facility offers ample quiet and collaborative study space and there is room for collection growth. A review of available library databases verified adequate subject-specific as well as multi-disciplinary coverage. The library's print collection is readily accessible and organized in a very browser-friendly way.

No evidence was found to demonstrate that planning for library and information resources is guided by data that include feedback from affected users and appropriate faculty, staff, and administrators. In

addition, no recent evidence was found to support the use of evaluative data to inform the TMCC Library Services strategic planning process. The Self-Evaluation Report and an examination of materials provided by the library director verified the library planning process is in its early stages following significant reoccurring turnover in library leadership over the last six years, as well as the reorganization of the library administrative structure to allocate only a .5 FTE Library Director position. An interview with the TMCC Library Director, faculty and staff confirmed uncertainty and lack of clarity regarding how library staff and faculty will proceed with planning in a meaningful way that aligns with College Core Themes. This interview also emphasized a broader campus lack of preparation and planning for sustainable funding to support library and information resources as well as staffing.

Concern: The library fails to participate in processes that reflect planning, assessment of services and offerings, and the use of results for performance improvement.

Substantial evidence verified TMCC provides appropriate instruction and support for students, faculty, staff, administrators, and others to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in obtaining, evaluating, and using library and information resources that support its programs and services. Information Literacy and critical thinking are embedded into each campus General Education Outcome. Statistics provided by the library director and interviews with library faculty verified that more than 100 information literacy instruction sessions taught for various courses over the duration of the last year in a variety of disciplines. The library web page links to robust information for students on the research process and how to seek assistance. At this time, there is no evidence of data gathering, tracking, or assessment currently tied to the information literacy/critical thinking General Education outcomes.

Interviews with library faculty verified that the librarians have the opportunity to review proposed curriculum additions and changes through curriculum prior to their approval. At the course level, syllabi reviewed by the evaluator, primarily in English, note that students must use library services for research and course outcomes are tied to broader information literacy outcomes.

On-site interviews with faculty indicated that technical courses and programs are consistently using online library materials. The library's limited staffing levels are a potential additional barrier to successful and consistent integration of information literacy instruction and General Education outcomes across the curriculum.

No substantial evidence was found to demonstrate the regular, systematic evaluation of the quality, adequacy, utilization, and security of library and information resources and services. An interview with the library director, library faculty and staff, and materials provided in the evaluation room and by the library director did not demonstrate a consistent method for regular data gathering, assessment of user services and collections or prioritization for collection planning. The Sturm Library has experienced significant turnover in library leadership over the last six years, which library staff and faculty interviews verified has resulted in sporadically gathered data, lack of a planning process and a general absence of systematic evaluation. An interview with the library director and Self-Evaluation Report verified there is currently no consistently secure system in place for students to access library resources from off campus (identical generic user names/passwords are provided for all students). Although the library has made significant attempts to implement a system such as EZproxy to ensure secure access to vendor hosted databases, this progress has been slow. The library director verified plans to implement a library satisfaction survey for students in order to incorporate feedback from library users.

## **Standard 2.F – Financial Resources**

The institution demonstrates financial stability with sufficient cash flow and reserves to support its programs and services. Financial planning reflects available funds, realistic development of financial

resources, and appropriate risk management to ensure short-term solvency and anticipate long-term obligations, including payment of future liabilities.

TMCC has instituted financial controls that allowed it to transition programming, services, enrollment trends and revenue variations during the past five years and into the near future. These controls include establishing a 15% contingency fund utilizing one-time funds, coordination of requests for discretionary revenues, and a budget request model with linkage to core themes and objectives. The institution also created long range documents such as a strategic master plan, facilities master plan, a technology strategic plan, and others to guide the decision process in allocating resources. A review of financial statements and supporting documentation further supports the institutions position that it has the financial basis to support TMCC's mission and core themes.

Resource planning and development include realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and responsible projections of grants, donations, and other non-tuition revenue sources. TMCC has experienced enrollment declines over the past several years and took actions to address the related reduction in revenues. It also increased monitoring and tracking efforts for enrollment levels and that information is widely shared with the campus from the Institutional Research, Analysis, and Effectiveness Office. The budget process also takes into consideration legislative factors, auxiliary and self-support operations, and foundation support. The institutional operating budget is presented to the Board of Regents for final approval. A review of internal and external documents, including reports on reserve and contingency balances, supports the conclusion that TMCC is in compliance with this standard.

The institution clearly defines and follows its policies, guidelines, and processes for financial planning and budget development that include appropriate opportunities for participation by its constituencies. A review of the TMCC policy manual provided evidence that policies exist to address reserves for operating budgets, ancillary and auxiliary operations, capital, and contingency funds. The results and recommendations of departments and advisory committees and councils were documented in minutes and correspondence. In interviews with faculty and staff, the majority felt that the opportunity for meaningful input into the budget development process was available to them. However, a number of TMCC staff still feel they do not fully understand the ramifications of the performance allocation method from NSHE and how it supports mission fulfillment and sustainability of the institution.

The evaluation team reviewed documents produced by the institution, along with audit and management reports from NSHE auditors. It was confirmed that the institution ensures timely and accurate financial information through its use of an appropriate accounting system that follows generally accepted accounting principles and through its reliance on an effective system of internal controls.

Capital budgets and long-range capital plans reflect the institution's mission and core theme objectives and relate to its plans for physical facilities and acquisition of equipment. Long-range capital plans reflect projections of the total cost of ownership, equipment, furnishing, and operation of new or renovated facilities. Debt for capital outlay purposes is periodically reviewed, carefully controlled, and justified, so as not to create an unreasonable drain on resources available for educational purposes.

## **Standard 2.G – Physical and Technological Infrastructure**

The evaluation team reviewed the facilities master plan and supporting documents completed in 2014, which was compiled with campus-wide input via surveys and forums. In addition, the team also reviewed the ADA survey completed by external evaluator along with the follow up report from the institution, which indicates compliance with accessibility standards. Minor capital request funding is reviewed through the RAP (Resource Allocation Process) for prioritization. Interviews with faculty and staff indicated not only satisfaction that the facilities and equipment support the mission, programs and services of the college, but a high level of pride as well.

Compliment: The College has created campus facilities across the service district that faculty, staff, students and the general community report as being innovative and highly supportive of effective teaching and learning. TMCC's Facilities Master Plan is an excellent example of careful and strategic facilities planning.

The evaluation team reviewed the Hazardous Waste Preparedness & Prevention Plan, dated October, 2015. However, it requested and did not receive policies and procedures related to instructional lab safety. In addition, the team requested direction on where or how these policies are published and was not able to verify where these were made available to the campus community. The institution does not fully comply with Standard 2.G.2.

Concern: The evaluation team recommends that the institution review, develop and publish for access by the college community policies and procedures regarding the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials, as required by Standard 2.G.2.

The institution provides sufficient equipment to meet mission, core themes, and goals. The team reviewed the equipment budget, prioritization lists and interviewed faculty and staff, who expressed satisfaction with the level of equipment. This was further enhanced by the efforts of the TMCC Foundation, who assisted by raising funds to support equipment needs.

The IT department consists of Network and Telephony, IT Customer Service, and IT Enterprise groups. The department provides support for the hardware and software utilized by faculty and staff, the computer labs, classrooms, and the video conferencing rooms. Campus interviews indicated a high level of satisfaction with the support IT provides faculty, staff and students. The evaluation team also reviewed survey information, replacement policies, and committee structure documents.

Academic Computing, Administrative Computing, Software/Account Management, and Media Services compose the IT Customer Service group, which trains faculty, staff and students in the use of software and hardware utilized within the college. The Help Desk provides a single point of contact for the campus community to request assistance for hardware and software issues and training. The evaluation team reviewed supporting documentation regarding the age, condition and capacity of the technology infrastructure, interviewed faculty, staff and students all with positive indications of standards compliance.

The TMCC technological infrastructure planning is guided by the College Technology Committee, which receives input from the Administrative Computing Committee, The Academic Computing Committee, and the Web Advisory Committee, regard priorities, Tech Fee applications, and the college website. The committees address issues impacting Student Services, Academic Affairs, professional development and training, web management, smart classrooms, Library support, and computer labs



Similar to other nationwide colleges, recent economic conditions and budget reductions impacted the established technology replacement cycle for TMCC. The college was able to utilize student tech fees to keep computer labs, instructional equipment and student centered technology current, but administrative computers were becoming dated. Over the past year progress was made and the college has nearly brought all desktop computers to minimum performance levels.

In summary, there are many practices in place at TMCC that indicate a high compliance with accreditation expectations related to resources and capacity. Concern was shared by members of the evaluation team that the full implementation of performance funding may have a negative effect on the College – not because of performance issues but due to the performance indicators chosen as measures.

Two issues in this section were noted as being problematic – the lack of library planning and assessment, and the absence of a policy that guides safety and storage practices for hazardous material.

### **Standard 3 – Planning and Implementation**

#### **Standard 3.A – Institutional Planning**

Multiple planning efforts are readily evident throughout the College. In many instances the results of such planning are carefully considered and used to implement improvement. Of special note is the planning undertaken in the student services units. What is not present is a cohesive, overarching strategic plan that articulates long-term academic, student services, financial, and facilities goals for the institution as a whole – a plan that aligns with core theme work and can be used as a measure of mission fulfillment.

Concern: TMCC fails to engage in long-term strategic planning that guides the direction of the institution and provides a means for measuring goal attainment and, therefore, mission fulfillment.

#### **Standard 3.B – Core Theme Planning**

TMCC core themes are grounded in the institution’s mission. As a result of their research, evaluators found them to be sufficient to reflect all aspects of the institution’s efforts. In practice, however, the objectives and measures associated with each core theme fail to encompass the full scope of the College’s work. Further work on the part of the College to develop indicators, collect data, analyze the results, and use them for performance improvement is encouraged. While the Core Themes are adequate, planning and inclusion of operational units must be reflected.

Accreditation Standards require that planning for each core theme is consistent with the institution’s comprehensive plan; guides the selection of programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to accomplishment of the core theme’s objectives; and that planning is informed by appropriately defined data.

TMCC has made significant progress in terms of planning at the unit level. However, other than the Year Seven Report and a recent (one-time) critical enrollment plan prepared in August 2015, it is unclear that an institutional plan meeting the spirit of this standard exists. The Strategic Master Plan, most recently reaffirmed in a June 2014 report to the NSHE Board of Regents, consists of the institution’s mission, vision, values, core themes, objectives, indicators and recent data (along with mission fulfillment and aspirational targets). The plan does not indicate what strategies or actions the college as a whole has undertaken or is planning in order to help the institution make improvements in regard to goal attainment. While it is clear through such processes as program and unit assessment that this work is underway

throughout the organization, the information does not “roll up” to provide an overall guide, plan or list of priorities for the institution.

### **Core Theme 1 – Student Success**

TMCC staff and faculty demonstrate a strong commitment to student success. During interviews with students this commitment is readily evident to them in their classroom learning and in the support services offered throughout the service area. Of special note is the skill of faculty and their readiness to be available to students.

Objectives tied to the Student Success Core Theme are relevant and appropriate. One or more additional objectives could be added, ensuring all aspects of College operations are included. There is a great deal of planning and assessment work being done to measure the effectiveness of Core Theme 1; however, such planning is often accomplished in “silos” and fails to form a cohesive picture that fully informs decisions with respect to mission fulfillment.

The assessment of objectives related to Core Theme 1 is clearly taking place. Attention should be paid to ensuring that assessments are meaningful and adequate in providing data that is meaningful and fully informative. The use of percentages, for instance, fails to fully inform and document whether progress is being realized. Work at the state level is likely necessary to help craft indicators that are (a) appropriate given the community college mission, and (b) relevant to the nature of community college students.

### **Core Theme 2 – Academic Excellence**

Documentation, the institution’s self-study report, and numerous individual testimonials speak to the quality of academic excellence at TMCC. Students report seamless transition to four-year institutions; many of the workforce programs have achieved national and local recognition; and student satisfaction survey results all attest to strong academic programming.

Planning for Core Theme 2 is strong and vibrant. Curriculum is approved through an effective system of checks and balances. Proposals for new programs are thoroughly vetted and guided by faculty and administrators. Interviews with community members attest to the quality of teaching and learning offered at TMCC. As with other core themes, the inclusion of additional indicators associated with support services, facilities, and resource allocation is needed in order to “paint the entire picture” for academic excellence efforts.

While course and program assessment is readily apparent and effective in most areas, concern continues to focus on the assessment of General Education. Learning objectives for General Education elements appear to be developed and in place. Actual assessment of these objectives has yet to occur in an effective, systematic, periodic, and comprehensive manner.

### **Core Theme 3 – Access to Lifelong Learning**

TMCC offers a wide array of credit and non-credit lifelong learning options. Objectives associated with the assessment of lifelong learning efforts include measuring the variety and quality of programming, providing access to a wide variety of community individuals and groups, and creating partnerships that benefit the college and the community it serves. As with other core themes, the addition of elements that speak to the broad efforts of the College will ensure the appropriate collection of data to inform programming and measure mission fulfillment.

## **Standard 4.A and 4.B – Effectiveness and Improvement**

It is clear that substantial progress has been made regarding the core themes, objectives and indicators since the last accreditation report was submitted. In the most recent iteration of the Strategic Master Plan (submitted to the NSHE Board of Regents in June 2014), baseline and current data was provided. In alignment with Accreditation Standards, the data presented was both assessable and verifiable. However, there are indications that some of the measures are not as meaningful as they could or should be.

There were clearly underlying factors at play with the selection of particular metrics in the current Strategic Master Plan, the most significant being a need to align with a new state funding model that bases a portion of allocations on student retention and completion numbers. Additionally, there are metrics tied directly to processes including the proportion of programs/units assessed.

Although many of the indicators are meaningful to the institution, this is not universally true. The metrics related to processes, in particular, do not provide any direct assessment of progress toward achievement of student learning outcomes or other aspects of the institution's core themes and objectives.

Accreditation standards require that faculty have a primary role in the effective evaluation of educational programs and services, and that the process is integrated and holistic. There is ample evidence that the institution has developed a strong foundation for course and program/unit assessment processes that include defined timelines and templates. It is apparent that the process is led by teaching faculty, who are responsible for identifying and assessing associated learning outcomes.

The process is facilitated by an Associate Dean for Assessment. Turnover in this position (three individuals in four years) appears to have slowed the process a bit, but recent developments—such as the addition of an administrative assistant and support for professional development for the Dean—have been positive. The current Dean is a former faculty member who appears to have considerable credibility with the faculty.

While the stage is set for a process that is predictable, systematic and participatory, it is clear that the faculty as a whole is not yet entirely engaged (although there are undeniably pockets of excellence). It is also apparent that more work is needed to close the loop on the outcomes assessment process—by effectively utilizing assessment data that informs improvements to teaching and learning at the course, program and institutional level across all programs and units.

Although TMCC has made substantial progress over the past few years and built a solid foundation, the College's student learning outcomes assessment process is still developing. A tremendous amount of effort has gone into the development of templates and timelines to ensure that both courses and programs/units are assessed. Recent data reflect that the institution is currently on track with the timelines that have been implemented. However, it is apparent that the institution has not engaged in deliberate and systematic discussions geared toward determining whether or not the processes they have developed are resulting in meaningful data and analysis leading to improvements over time. It is anticipated that stabilization of staffing in the positions of Vice President for Academics and Associate Dean for Assessment will contribute to a more robust and sustainable process that includes a component of ongoing self-evaluation.

TMCC's framework of core themes, objectives and indicators has progressed substantially since the last report and contains several meaningful measures of achievement. In some cases, an emphasis on process (such as with the proportion of programs/units participating in assessment) obscures the focus on direct assessment of student learning and other aspects of the mission. The institution's resource allocation request/reduction process is directly tied to the core themes, which is a strength.

It is evident that the information is being used at the program/unit level to make improvements, but aside from a one-time strategic enrollment plan published in August 2015 and the Year Seven Report, this information does not appear to be captured in the form of an institutional plan. The lack of evidence of an overarching plan or priority list (or other documented method that informs planning and decision making) suggests that the institution is not yet meeting the spirit of this standard. Instructional Program Unit Review and course assessment data are available through accessible databases and appear up-to-date.

## **Standard 5 – Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation, and Sustainability**

### **Standard 5.A – Mission Fulfillment**

A common theme throughout this visit focused on the good work being done by TMCC, but the lack of large-scale, coordinated planning and assessment that fully documents mission fulfillment and opportunities for improvement of the organization. Many planning and assessment efforts are in place. Indicators from an examination of the self-study, available exhibits and documents, and numerous conversations internal and external to the institution reflect the need to (a) align all institutional efforts with the current or future core themes, (b) engage in broad-based planning across the institution (likely developing a new strategic plan), (c) fully incorporate all aspects of institutional effort, (d) develop meaningful indicators of success, (e) measure advancement of core theme efforts, and (f) use the results for performance improvement.

One additional element appears to be a barrier to fully reflecting NWCCU Standards expectations: the Board of Regents and the NWCCU appear to have different interpretations of what is meaningful and effective in measuring institutional performance. This may be the result of a lack of true understanding on the part of the Board about the mission of the community college and of assessment best practices. The team was encouraged to learn that the Board is exploring the issue of assessment in light of their determination to adopt measures that support effective policy and resource allocation decisions.

### **Standard 5.B – Adaptation and Sustainability**

Despite numerous changes, significant budget reductions, and highly impactful external mandates, TMCC continues to be a viable, effective, and high-quality institution. Strong and effective leadership has served to steward the College through many challenges while realizing emerging opportunities. The institution currently demonstrates a focused mission and the ability to sustain efforts to ensure mission fulfillment is realized.

## **Summary**

With the adoption of new elements in the Governance Structure at both the Board and community level, opportunities exist for strengthening communication, policy development, resource allocation decisions, and planning. The team strongly encourages all parties to work together toward greater understanding of TMCC and the benefit it adds to those it serves. Clearly articulated, measureable, and appropriate evaluation metrics will serve to ensure mission fulfillment and the engagement of all parties in appropriate performance improvement efforts.

Concern is noted that planned resource reductions, both fiscal and service-related, may impede the current level of service and performance at TMCC, thereby threatening sustainability as defined by NWCCU Standards. Careful consideration must be undertaken to proactively and collaboratively engage in Board and College efforts to mitigate negative impacts on the mission of TMCC.

## **Commendations**

1. TMCC staff and faculty are commended for their broadly-evidenced, clearly articulated commitment to student success. This focus creates a strongly collegial atmosphere, enhancing the institution's ability to support mission fulfillment.
2. The TMCC Student Services Division is commended for their commitment to continual improvement and excellence in the provision of high-quality, valuable support services for students, developed and monitored through effective assessment and planning processes.
3. The TMCC Professional Development Office is commended for the variety and relevance of training programs available to the College. During a time of dramatic budget reductions their commitment to creating a broad range of offerings serves to meet the learning needs of multiple campus constituents.
4. TMCC, and most specifically the College Foundation, is commended for their success in developing strong partnerships that result in the acquisition of resources to support the development of programs, services, scholarships, and facilities.
5. TMCC is commended for the adoption of an exemplary Facilities Master Plan that sets the direction for future development of facilities designed to meet a wide range of educational needs at a variety of locations.

## **Recommendations**

1. The committee recommends that TMCC engage in renewed dialogue about gaps or exclusions that may exist in core themes and corresponding objectives in order to ensure that all aspects of the mission of the College are adequately and appropriately represented (Standard 1.B.1).
2. TMCC has developed core theme indicators that are assessable and verifiable. The committee recommends that all indicators be reviewed and revised as needed to ensure they are meaningful and provide the necessary framework for effectively evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes (Standard 1.B.2).
3. While the Nevada System of Higher Education Regents are to be commended for their commitment to ongoing professional development and to initiating a discussion regarding board evaluation, the committee recommends that they fully develop, adopt, and implement a systematic method for evaluating their performance (Standard 2.A.8).
4. TMCC faculty have taken steps to clearly define the general education components of all certificates and degrees. What has not occurred is the development of an effective and appropriate means for measuring student acquisition of general education outcomes. The committee recommends that this work be identified as a major priority given the recurring nature of general education development and assessment concerns (Eligibility Requirement 12, Standard 2.C.9).
5. The committee recommends that the TMCC library engage in systematic, periodic, and comprehensive planning related to library and information resources, guided by data and used for performance and service improvement (Standard 2.E.2).
6. While in partial fulfillment of the standard, it is recommended that TMCC fully adopt, publish, review regularly, and adhere to policies and procedures regarding the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials (Standard 2.G.2).
7. While there is evidence that a wide range of planning activities occur at TMCC, the committee recommends that such planning reflect a systematic, integrated, and comprehensive approach that defines, supports, and guides mission fulfillment efforts (Standard 3.A.1).