

Aims Community College

HLC ID 1737

OPEN PATHWAY: Open Pathway Year 4 Assurance Review

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Context and Nature of Review

Review Date

6/13/2022

Review Type:

Open Pathway Year 4 Assurance Review

Scope of Review

- Assurance Review
- 2021–22 COVID-19 Response Form

Institutional Context

Aims Community College (ACC) has moved from the AQIP Pathway to the Open Pathway and this Year 4 Assurance Review is ACC's first experience with the Assurance Portal.

Aims Community College (ACC) is a mature---50+ years of operation---multi-site institution offering the services and programs of a comprehensive community college to its statutorily defined service area. Aims seeks to support its stakeholders with transfer degrees, career and technical education programs leading to employment, and through high school partnerships and industry relationships that enhance career opportunities for students.

With over 200 degrees and certificates spanning dozens of disciplines serving over 10,000 students and offered in varying modalities, ACC strives to provide accessibility, affordability and equitable practice to its diverse constituents. The large array of services and workforce programming the college provides directly support its publicly stated Purpose, Vision, and Mission statements.

Interactions with Constituencies

None; remote Year 4 Review.

Additional Documents

See Addendum.

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Aims Community College has shown focused attention to keep the Purpose, Vision, and Mission statements current and in line with statutory language that defines its service district and student audience. Programs and support for student success are determined with a focus on service area and Mission. The most recent review of these statements concluded in August 2017. The institution's attention to maintaining a current public message is consistent with its stated Values.

Mission statements were reviewed in 2017 as part of the process for preparation of the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. Review and discussion of the collection of Mission statements (Purpose, Vision, Mission) took place between the president and the Board at a retreat facilitated by and ACCT consultant in January of 2017. New or updated language was determined at the retreat by these participants and the statements crafted were approved/adopted by the Board in February 2017. In August 2017 the word "diverse" was added to the Mission statement through Board action. The team notes that this process did not engage other stakeholders typically involved in Mission review. It was not clear to the team when any larger audience for the college may have participated in Mission statement review in past years. As the college prepares for an upcoming strategic planning cycle---the current Strategic Plan 2018-2023 will sunset in another year---Aims is encouraged to involve a broader range of stakeholders, both internal and external, on any planned Vision/Mission review since the true context for the college's work is "community" as expressed in both its Values and its

interests in transparent communication.

The recent review of statements confirms the college's interest in keeping its public messages on Purpose, Vision and Mission current and relevant to its audiences. The collection of Mission statements specify expected audience, type of programs, and overarching purpose. ACC provides its constituents with consistent messaging of its Mission statements as evidenced across the multiple platforms that host and publicize these statements.

The Team notes that the president was engaged in a series of listening tours after her inauguration in January 2016. The output of the listening tours certainly had potential to inform both the construction of Mission statements as well as the intended cycle of strategic planning. The college conducted facilitated sessions in November of 2017 to consider and confirm its stated Values consistent with its interests in open communication.

The reported enrollment profile reflects the community ACC serves and a review of publicized programs and services confirms appropriate offerings e.g., certificates and degrees in career, technical and transfer fields. Enrollment information, e.g., first-generation, ethnicity, etc., confirms the college's commitment to offering academic credentials and support services that enable success and completion.

ACC publicizes its Purpose, Vision, Mission, and Values statements collectively affirming its role in providing educational opportunities for the Northern Colorado area. All of these Mission related statements are available on the college website in one-click under the "About" tab.

Visible in the college Catalog, Handbooks, annual reports and website, ACC broadly publicizes its Mission and strives to serve its constituents by providing courses, certificates and associate degree programs consistent with regional community employment and transfer potential. These program offerings are complemented by a broad menu of support services intended to aid student retention and completion. The variety of programs and services is consistent with the college's stated Mission and its statutory obligation.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Aims conveys a clear commitment to the public good through its programs, services and workforce focus. Evidence in the Assurance Argument narrative and Source documents confirmed ACC's strong and clear role to serve the public through its extensive programs and services. ACC serves as an ally and partner for business and community organizations, as a host for community events and sponsorships, and shows its responsiveness to local and statewide demand for needed trained workers. Notable, and most recently, ACC addressed the Certified Nursing Aide shortage with a new program and responsive scheduling. The college's financial commitment to Mission fulfillment is noted by a figure of 70% of expenditures being allocated to academics and support services.

As a public institution, ACC does not serve any super-ordinate entity; the elected Board of Trustees (BOT) is responsible for guiding the college's direction with the leadership of the president and executive Cabinet. Minutes/agendas of Board meetings confirm that the BOT is attentive to its role and responsibilities as outlined in statute and as supported by Conflict of Interest documentation.

The broad array of partnerships listed and referenced in the Argument confirm that the college focuses on district programs and potential expected to lead to employment or broader career/educational opportunities for students. ACC's connection to its community is clear in examples of service to industry, local boards, participation in many high school partnerships and concurrent enrollment programs. Advisory Boards also serve career and technical programs with members offering insight on skill levels, internships, and employment potential. All partnerships have a focus on educational attainment and employment. Additionally, faculty and staff participate/volunteer in a variety of community services and programs that reflect back positively on the college's profile.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Aims Community College provides ample opportunities within the curriculum and co-curriculum for civic engagement recognizing its community's diversity and the globally connected world. The Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs participate in service learning, internships, clinical experiences and apprenticeships that expose students to the diversity of the service district. Advisory groups for CTE programs bring together students, faculty and community members who provide observations, experience and recommendations for program curriculum, equipment, training and the essential skills student's need to traverse the rigors of their career field. The role of these advisory groups specifically contributes to the opportunity for students to achieve workplace success.

Both co-curricular and extracurricular events engage internal and external ACC constituents in a variety of offerings presented by faculty, students themselves and community members. Recent events presented as evidence include: a hosted Art Gallery focused on social assimilation of digital media and a presentation on Holocaust Remembrance Day exploring linkages between religiosity and violence. The Student Activities' Inclusion and Leadership (SAIL) web page provides information resources on the programs, services and events that support inclusiveness and foster respect for different perspectives and talents. Collectively, the SAIL program, the Center for Diversity and Inclusion and the Transitions programs lead the way in providing co-curricular opportunities for students. SAIL provides opportunities for students to get involved in leadership through the Association of Student of Aims Community College (ASACC), Student Clubs, Student Events as well as Service Learning and Civic Engagement. SAIL promotes community building and engagement programs and services to foster student belonging and holistic development.

ACC has formalized policy, process and procedures for constituents to inform the institution of unlawful discrimination. The policy covers Title II, Title VII, and Title IX. Furthermore, in the institution's recent review of Values in preparation for the strategic plan, there was increased emphasis in ensuring inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations. With the institutional Values revised, administration conducted a College Climate Assessment survey and reviewed pertinent policies and procedures through the Center for Equity and Inclusion. Through focused

recruiting and hiring practices, the college conveys a commitment to ensuring that students and employees are treated equitably and feel welcomed. Supporting the college's efforts to support a healthy climate, ACC presented a variety of college-wide professional development opportunities addressing a range of topics including: Workplace Respect, A Radical Approach to Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution, and Performance Management: Setting the Stage for Success. Additionally, the Faculty Teaching and Learning Center hosts a range of workshops to support faculty on diversity, equity and inclusion topics and provides access to Colorado's Department of Higher Education equity Toolkit.

Additional examples that convey Aims' commitment to equity and inclusion include the college honoring of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Black History101 Mobile Museum, the Ignite Social Justice Experience, the Veteran's Coining Ceremony, and Student Perspective workshops address student results from the Climate Survey. The Council for Equity and Inclusion (CEI) sub- committees also illustrate ACC's commitment. Student Government Association advocacy for and college implementation of "all gender" restrooms in buildings across the college is yet another instance of their broad commitment. The CEI worked with the Convocation planning committee to integrate diversity, equity and inclusion into the college's recent Conversation Day. To ensure cabinet level leadership for equity and inclusion, the college reassigned leadership of CEI from the Executive Director of Human Resources to the Vice President for Student Engagement, Inclusion and Success; this raised profile underscores institutional commitment to diversity, equity and inclusiveness. ACC clearly meets expectations for providing its constituents opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its Mission.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Rationale

It is clear that Aims Community College is mission-driven and seeks to provide every opportunity and advantage to its students for completion and workplace or transfer success. Programs and services reflect a broad menu appropriate to the college's role as a comprehensive community college serving a large district; these same programs and services are chosen to fulfill Aims' core mission.

Current Purpose, Mission, Vision and Values statements are widely publicized and are the overarching context for planning and budgeting. Both internal and external stakeholders participate in fulfilling the Mission. The collection of Mission statements are made vital through the offering of certificates, degrees and support services augmented by relevant community and cultural events.

ACC conducts its operations, planning, and budgeting consistent with its Mission and supports its core Mission appropriately while recognizing the different perspectives that must inform programs and services.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Aims Community College followed a model that had the President and Board of Trustees (BOT) crafting the Mission, Vision, and Purpose statements for the college. The most recent review and statement adoption was in August of 2017; the Mission was developed with consideration of the need to serve local students and their families.

The college has an established process for budget development and resource allocation, found in each of the operating budget documents. The Business and Budget Offices of the college maintain a strong system of internal controls that ensure resources are appropriately expended. The college engages an independent firm as required by college Policy to perform the annual audit. The college provided the audits for 2018, 2019, and 2020 all demonstrating consistently clean audits with no reported material findings. The college is not reliant on auxiliary funding for operations; its auxiliary functions consist of dining and coffee carts on each campus having no overall impact on the institution and are self-supporting

The requirement for the ethical treatment of applicants and employees is recorded in several policies and procedures, specifically Section 4-101, 4-200, 4-902, and Section 1-105. New employees are specifically directed to review the Code of Ethics documents and receive separate documentation regarding the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Title IX policies and procedures are directly aligned with the new ruling issued by the federal Department of Education reflecting Aims' commitment to ensuring an educational and work environment free from acts of sexual misconduct. The procedure outlines the process Aims adheres to when responding to formal complaints of sexual misconduct.

Aims has instituted a variety of policies and procedures to communicate institutional standards for the use of academic resources. The college uses technology to monitor student resource use and

ensure ethical academic practices. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with a college community assuming responsibility for their actions; observing federal, state, local laws and college regulations and showing respect for the rights, privileges, and property of others. The Assessment of Student Learning and Academic Program Review processes provide accountability for the integrity of the college's academic offerings.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Aims Community College presents itself clearly and completely to its students and the public. The institution's web pages, General Catalog, and Student Handbook are some examples provided confirming institutional messaging and information. ACC ensures the accuracy of information it shares on academic program requirements, faculty and staff credentials, program costs, and its accredited status with HLC as well as specialized accrediting bodies. Marketing, Institutional Research and the Registrar's office are all central elements in ensuring accuracy of information about programs and services to the public. The Marketing and Communication (MARCOM) Department has clearly delineated procedures for approval of content, timelines to request support of content development, brand utilization, and specifies a writing style for the college. Marketing materials from sub-units of the college must have approval of respective department chairs and deans; the Aims Community College Brand Guide 2022 comprehensively outlines relevant aspects required for ensuring accuracy of marketing and website materials. The Institutional Research Department reviews and approves all data included in marketing programs and services to internal and external audiences. The College Catalog, a primary document for students, families, and industry, is reviewed and approved by both faculty-led curriculum committees and the Registrar's Office.

ACC's landing page tab "About" identifies its accreditation affiliation with The Higher Learning Commission as well as other program level specialized accreditation. Web material shares the college's Mission, the Catalog and Student Handbook along with academic programs and expectations for students. The institution utilizes numerous media to present information publicly, including web pages with attendant consumer information disclosures, the Student Handbook and social media. Institutional processes confirm that ACC takes steps to ensure the accuracy of claims that it makes and information that it publicizes.

Aims Community College adequately cites and provides sources of information for data and statistics utilized in describing the college. Two brochures provided as evidence, titled Aims Community College 'Education That Works', and Aims Community College 'Common Learning Outcomes' respectively, cite sources and provide references on valuable college insight and data.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The Board of Trustee (BOT) Policy 19 "Board Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities" outlines the role of the Board in employment, fiscal health, policy, and advocating for the college. Board members are publicly elected for staggered four-year terms. Board meetings are open to the public which is notified as required by Colorado's Open Meetings Law. The Board packet and meeting agendas are posted on the webpage 5-7 days prior to the meeting. Board agenda items reflect the concerns, interests, and priorities of the institution.

The Board encourages regular reporting and interaction with college stakeholders to help inform their own actions and decisions. The Board holds retreats to consider accomplishments and challenges, participate in further education, set priorities, and determine planning initiatives in the case of strategic planning. The Board and the president/CEO establish institutional goals to prepare for each academic year. Accordingly, the Board provides approval and oversight of the president's and the college's annual goals. The Board reviews and considers the interests of students, community and service area constituents, industry, and the local economy while prioritizing the college's possible contributions to the district.

The college along with the State of Colorado has policies in place to preserve the Board's independence from undue influence setting forth Standards of Conduct and complying with Colorado Revised Statutes Title 24 (CRS 24-6-203); the Board operates under appropriate ethical standards.

The day-to-day management of the institution is delegated to the college president/CEO who is directly accountable to the Board. The president's duties and responsibilities include providing leadership and direction to the vice presidents, deans, directors, and other persons in leadership positions in order to provide and maintain an effective system of governance at all locations of the

college.

The college defines shared governance and establishes a commitment to practice distributed leadership and democratic governance through Board policy. As such, several faculty committees are responsible for oversight of areas related to academic affairs through the State Faculty and through the college's Curriculum Committees and Learning Council among other groups. The Learning Council examines issues that impact academic affairs alignment with Board policy. Through the curriculum committees, faculty are responsible for oversight of the program curriculum, monitoring of content and rigor, and student performance outcomes.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Aims Community College is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. The institution maintains a Board policy that describes, "...Academic Freedom as essential to fulfilling the purposes of education." The team found evidence that the Aims curriculum contains content, sometimes provocative or controversial, that represent openness and engagement on wide-ranging social and moral issues. The college also encourages students and faculty to engage in freedom of expression through art gallery exhibits, theatrical performances, and conference presentations.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Rating

Met

Rationale

ACC maintains professional standards and provides oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability. The institution operates under a Board policy that provides guidance to faculty and staff, with respect to copyright and intellectual property regulations. Aims convenes an Institutional Review board (IRB) made up of faculty, staff and students, to assure that the College adheres to the appropriate laws, regulations, and best practices where research with human subjects is concerned. In addition, the college communicates its policy on academic honesty in a standardized course syllabus template. The institution also provides academic integrity training as part of its new faculty orientation or onboarding procedures.

The college provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students. For example, Aims Board policy defines and delineates ethical behavior on the part of faculty and staff including the avoidance of conflicts of interest and unethical relations with others. The college conducts New faculty Orientations and Professional Mentoring programs to support its instructors and staff in the area of ethics. The institution's Student Handbook also stipulates student and community standards for conduct. Collectively, these documents and policies confirm appropriate contributions to maintaining integrity of research and ethical behavior.

The college provides students with guidance on research and use of information resources. For example, Aims' Online Writing Lab serves as a means to provide information on evaluating research references, accurate citation, and the avoidance of plagiarism. The College's Keifer Library also provides instruction on the use of information resources on campus during Information Literacy Sessions, and online through the use of digital LibGuides.

The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity. Aims' policies are guided by a set of practices outlined in the College's Student Code of Conduct. The College also provides faculty with a Classroom Management Decision Making Guide to ensure consistency when it comes to the

question of how the institution's policies on academic honesty are applied. Aims' faculty also make use of Turnitin software as a means to assure academic integrity in the case of written assignments.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Rationale

The college is a public institution that complies with state laws and regulations governing higher education in the State of Colorado. Its Board of Trustees is elected, and its meetings comply with the Colorado Open Meetings Law. The Board considers the interests of its stakeholders and makes decisions that seek to support its many constituents while adhering to a conflict-of-interest policy.

The institution maintains integrity in research, marketing, recruitment, academic operations, and operation of auxiliary functions. Accountability is evident in college fiscal operations and decision making processes. ACC operates with integrity and responsibility while offering appropriate support services in human resources and student relations.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

ACC aligns its courses with the Colorado Common Course Numbering System (CCCNS) for consistency across state higher education institutions in content, competencies and outcomes for the courses offered. Both the State Faculty Curriculum Committee (SFCC) and the college Curriculum Committee meet monthly to ensure all new courses and course revisions are adopted, maintained, and accurate. Program chairs, directors, and deans review syllabi each semester to confirm course currency, content, and quality. To ensure quality for new courses, course redesign, curriculum refresh, and changes in modality, Aims defined and adopted a course development process in 2018 to support faculty with the resources they need.

The Program Learning Outcome (PLO) process map lays out a five-year program for continuous improvement of courses and programs as specified in the first 5 steps of the process; steps 6 through 12 are completed annually requiring that outcomes are measured and action steps for improvement considered. Aims provided examples of its curriculum mapping results for Aviation, Graphic Design, and Agriculture, all of which identify program goals, program level outcomes and indications on where the skills/knowledge are offered in the curriculum.

ACC participates in program improvement outside of institutional processes by holding specialized accreditation for many of its career programs; the feedback from specialized accreditation reviews is incorporated into the program review process. In addition, CTE programs are required to provide annual information on graduation and placement data to the State allowing the college to track program relevancy through specific metrics. The program review process examines data at the departmental level as well as four-year program data to inform the CTE program renewal cycle.

Additionally, CTE programs collect and leverage data from employer surveys to gauge employer satisfaction with graduate performance.

The majority of program offerings at Aims are certificates and associate degrees; certificates are stackable and build into associate degrees which include courses requiring mastery of more complex content with higher-level (Bloom's) outcomes. ACC utilizes curriculum maps to ensure learning outcomes are both identified and appropriate at each level. Aims' participation in the Colorado State Guaranteed Transfer Pathway further ensures that courses are appropriately differentiated.

The college has developed and implemented a number of strategies to ensure consistency of course and program quality and learning goals regardless of the modality of instruction or location. Several overall strategies were provided as well as strategies specific to online and hybrid instructional support and concurrent enrollment support. Documents provided by the college to the team confirmed the work to ensure that processes were consistent across curriculum, assessment, and evaluation for concurrent faculty.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The college's general education program is appropriate to its Mission, educational offerings, and degree levels; the institution also articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its general education requirements. ACC maintains a 34 credit general education requirement for its Associate of Arts and Associate of Sciences degrees, and a 15-16 credit hour program for its Associate of Applied Science degrees. In a review of available documents, the team confirmed that in February of 2022 the college took steps to create a mission statement to articulate the goals of its general education program. In addition, the College participates in Colorado's Community College Course Numbering System (CCCNS) which ensures that general education courses offered by Aims transfer to the state's other 2 and 4-year campuses.

The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy developed by the institution. The program imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess. The college's internal documents and public web pages provide evidence that the institution took steps to develop a framework and philosophy of general education. Skills and outcomes included in the program include: critical thinking, problem solving and quantitative literacy, professionalism, and written and oral communication. The institution's general education definition and philosophy both include statements to the effect that the program provides, "all students with the knowledge and skills to advance quality of life, economic vitality, and overall success of the diverse communities in which they live and serve."

The education offered by ACC recognizes human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world. Within the college's curriculum, general education courses in fields like psychology and sociology offer students a means to engage with a diverse set of human and cultural questions. The college's extra-curricular activities also focus on providing students with a method for engaging a broad and diverse spectrum of human issues. Recent activities include a celebration of National Coming Out Day, on-campus activities during Latinx Heritage Month, and suicide prevention fundraising for first-responders and military veterans. As part of the college's professional development plan for faculty and staff, Aims also provides employees with an Equity Toolkit that offers strategies to ensure inclusivity in teaching and learning.

Aims faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to the institution's mission. Through its professional development process, Aims makes \$2,000 available to faculty, on an annual basis, in support of participation in professional development. Faculty take advantage of the program as a way to discover new knowledge, and in some cases, to present their own research or creative work. Similarly, on campus, students participate in workshops, concerts, and plays. Campus clubs and organizations provide Aims students with creative outlets. Examples include: creative writing club, the English Honors Society's participation in the Fort Collin's Common Read program, and the Design Department's annual Design Slam competition. ACC also showcases students' creative work in a publication called the *Aims Review*, and students in science and technology programs routinely participate off-campus in car shows and space technology conferences. All of these experiences serve as clear evidence that Aims values scholarship and creativity from all college ranks.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

ACC has the faculty and staff needed to effectively deliver quality programs and student services as declared in its Purpose and Mission statements. Within its employee ranks, the institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its service district and the state of Colorado. Evidence submitted by the college conveys a position budgeting process with attendant milestone dates for departments to make requests about addition of staff. The program review process as well as advisory boards are additional ways the college is informed about the need for additional faculty and staff. Aims Policy 4-702 specifies the guidelines for discipline staffing recommendations identifying consideration for student/faculty ratio and student credit hour.

As of September 2020, ACC employs 450 full-time employees, and 691 part-time employees. The employee demographic includes 65.8% White (down from 73.8% in 2019), 15% Hispanic or Latino (up from 12.5% in 2019), 2% Asian (unchanged from 2019), 2% African American (up from 1.2% in 2019) and 15.2% Other/unknown (up from 10.4% in 2019). Increases in the respective diverse populations bodes well for the teaching and learning environment as well as diversity, equity and inclusion at the college. Aims data compares favorable to NCCBP data for ratios of full time financial aid employees to students. Based on the information provided by the institution, overall staffing,

employee demographics, and the student to staff ratio as compared to NCCCBP data, it is clear, for a community college its size, the institution has adequate staff and faculty to manage its educational mission.

In recruiting employees, and to reach a diverse prospective applicant audience, the college advertises open positions in a variety of media; two cited examples are Diversity Jobs.com and Vets.com. Additionally, through the budgeting process, ACC annually reviews college wide staffing/expansion needs.

Information provided indicates that qualification and evaluation processes for all faculty---notably the concurrent faculty ranks of approximately 100---are standardized and adhered to regardless of the location or mode of delivery, including concurrent programs. Aims Policy 117-01 specifies the process for faculty qualification and an Appendix shared identifies the features considered in a faculty qualification rubric reflecting good practice and adherence to expectations in higher education.

ACC's new faculty orientation, a faculty mentoring program, professional learning communities, Teaching Squares, In House Faculty Conferences, and The Signature Magazine highlighting exemplary teaching and learning strategies are additional ways the institution attends to the professional development of the faculty. The college shared the form used for regular course and instructor evaluation, the Teaching Observation Resource Packets and a redacted observation example as insight on the evaluation process. Aims Policy 4-1701, addresses faculty requirements to be available to students and the Faculty Handbook speaks to this same expectation which is included in the college's Standard Syllabus Policy. These policies and practices confirm the college's good practice in making faculty available to students.

Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development. Evidence provided included a comprehensive onboarding and training agenda schedule for the Student Engagement, Inclusion and Success (SEIS) Departments. The onboarding and trainings included pathways advising, utilization of National Academic advising Association (NACADA) resources/conferences, subscription, utilization of National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) resources/conferences, and utilization of Noel Levitz resources.

The ACC new faculty orientation, a faculty mentoring program, professional learning communities, Teaching Squares, In House Faculty Conferences, and The Signature Magazine highlighting exemplary teaching and learning strategies are only some of the ways that the institution attends to the professional development of the faculty. Aims has a generous faculty development stipend to encourage continued professional development, a professional growth and development certificate program, and a recognition and reward program for faculty excellence. The faculty have additional support through the Professional Learning Communities. Piloted in 2019, cohorts of 2-4 faculty have an instructional coach who hosts semester-long weekly sessions to strengthen teaching practices. The Learning environment team provides instructional support and course design assistance for faculty in such topics as creating and assessing learning outcomes, alignment of course level outcomes, organizing course content, analysis of learning needs and tasks, and accessibility training.

The team makes special note that the topic of clock hour to credit hour conversion noted by the previous team is fully resolved. Documentation provided clarified institutional practice and monitoring of this conversion. Though Federal Compliance was not in the scope of this visit, the

team chose to review and understand this issue given its previous profile.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Aims Community College provides comprehensive support services designed to specifically support their student body including: financial aid, disability services, transfer services, TRIO, pathway advising, and equity and inclusion. ACC provides 2 unique support programs: the Navigation Station which offers a one-stop pro-active service to new and continuing students to create a positive Aims experience and the Campus Assessment Response and Education (CARE) service in support of students experiencing stress or distress and needing some special assistance to maintain well-being.

In 2021 the college launched a Hunger Free Campus initiative to enhance the existing *Arty's Pantry* effort serving those with food insecurity. The college web pages describe all of these support services and more, ranging from pre-collegiate 'College for Kids' summer programs, admissions support for prospective new and continuing students, peer support for students at the entering phase, a robust new student onboarding orientation, an academic advising model informed by Guided Pathways, a financial aid department that provides support on how to finance education, accommodation services from the Disability Access Services, to the career services, transfer services and a Finish What you Started program. The latter is a \$1.25M Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) grant that provides students with scholarships, academic, personal and transition success coaching. The Dean of Student Services provides support for resolving student disruptive behavior, coordinates responses to students with financial emergencies, as well as free counseling sessions.

Multiple measures are utilized to determine student readiness. Rather than utilize a single standardized high stakes placement test, consistent with current best practice the institution's testing services takes a holistic multiple measures approach that looks at measures including high school gpa and high school transcripts to guide the prospective student to course placement.

Academic advisers go through a rigorous training process and utilize a case management approach to guide students through selection of one of the six Guided Pathways. A broad menu of tutoring

services are also available to students. Evidence provided confirmed that tutors are carefully selected and trained; the college is certified by the College Reading and Language Association (CRLA) and follows those training protocols. The college's work on Guided Pathways is substantial and consistent with current best practices to help students clarify their goals and guide the student to the right pathway early in the onboarding process.

The college Library provides physical and remote access to its many services and resources. Students have access to published materials, 24/7 chat references, laptops and Wi-fi hotspots for check out, calculators, short term usage textbooks, and remote tutoring on a range of subjects. Library services support students through comprehensive and responsive services.

Learning resources are provided to students throughout their collegiate experience, whether through digital/technology environments, specialized classrooms/laboratory environments, library and study areas, simulations and guest lecturers. Since 2014 the institution has invested in building or renovating infrastructure to support a more responsive teaching and learning environment. In 2017 a \$1.1M Data Center was built to support college technology growth for innovation; in 2019 the college purchased and renovated the Aims Flight Training Center and renovated and expanded the College Center into a Student Commons Facility with interior and exterior student gathering spaces. All of these efforts underscore the support Aims strives to provide for programs, faculty and students. The evidence provided on support services and expenditures in support of the teaching and learning infrastructure confirm that ACC provides comprehensive and holistic support for student learning and ample resources for effective teaching and student services to support its diverse student body.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Rationale

Aims Community College seeks to provide and support quality education in all of the modes and locations where it operates. The faculty and staff are adequate to fulfillment of the educational mission. The faculty have the requisite qualification regardless of mode and location of instruction. Student support services subscribe to national best standards. Tutorial staff are carefully selected and trained; the college is certified by the College Reading and Language Association (CRLA) and follows those training protocols.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews. ACC conducts an annual review of departmental data, and a comprehensive examination of programs on a four-year cycle, consistent with the state of Colorado's guidelines. The college's CTE program review process includes "plan-of-work" sections that cite timelines and the parties responsible for acting upon their findings. With respect to its academic program review process, the college makes use of a reporting structure that includes a "data wish list" for each program. Although the team found merit in both approaches, the institution might consider a set of terms and practices that are consistent across the college's range of academic and vocational programs--a single set of terms and practices that describe how each program makes use of assessment data. (For the uninitiated, some nomenclature was confusing.) The team reviewed examples of completed Program Reviews for both transfer and career degrees and found them to be well documented and clearly useful to the college for program improvement.

The institution evaluates the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning. Aims staff maintain a library of transfer equivalencies that they use to assure the similarity of course learning outcomes when granting transfer credit. In addition, the college has a policy in place where appropriate academic departments or divisions are involved in cases where Registration and Records staff require assistance in the evaluation of transfer course credit. With regard to experiential learning, the institution has a policy and a set of practices in place that adhere to guidelines established by the state of Colorado; information on credit for prior learning is also available to the public on the Aims website.

Aims has policies in place that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer. The college has developed transfer support and training documents to provide staff with the information necessary to evaluate transcripts and course equivalence. The institution also maintains a set of "tracking documents" as a way to archive and create a record of decisions made with respect the the granting of transfer credit.

The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. The college ensures that dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum. Documents provided to the team confirmed that the institution evaluates its dual-credit offerings on the same schedule, and with the same instruments used to assess on-campus offerings. The college's curriculum committee oversees all program and course content through an established approval process. The institution also participates in Colorado's Common Course Numbering System as a means to ensure that Aims' course learning outcomes are consistent with those of the state's other public post-secondary institutions. In addition, ACC makes use of advisory committees made up of industry experts and professionals to offer oversight and advice on the means to improve degree programs.

Aims maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes. Ten of the programs at Aims maintain accreditation, certification, or approval by specialized agencies in technical and occupational fields; all programs are in good standing.

In evaluating the success of its graduates, the institution also looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its Mission, e.g., Aims conducts an employer satisfaction survey on a 4-year cycle. The institution tracks job placement for the graduates of its CTE programs, in keeping with the guidelines for institutions that receive federal funding as part of the Perkins program. In addition, with respect to programs that qualify graduates for professional credentials, Aims tracks licensure pass rates and benchmarks those rates against a group of appropriate peers. In addition to the evidence reviewed, we encourage the institution to include information on its transfer rates in a format that is accessible to stakeholders.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The institution has effective processes for the assessment of student learning and for the achievement of learning goals in academic and co-curricular offerings. In 2019, the college established a Curricular Assessment Committee to provide campus-wide leadership on the issue of assessment. Although some elements of the work paused as a consequence of the pandemic, the team found both historical and recent evidence that the institution takes steps to assess the achievement of its articulated Common Learning Outcomes (CLOs). Ongoing efforts include curriculum maps to guide assessment activities, and a standardized rubric for use in the assessment of institutional or common learning outcomes. In addition, the college provides training, in partnership with the Assessment Norming Institute (ANI), for faculty that take part in the evaluation of course-level learning artifacts. With respect to its co-curricular programs, in November of 2020 the college took steps to define the 11 offices and programs, or "functional areas" that provide its co-curricular offerings. In a review of pertinent documents, the team found evidence that the college has designed an effective approach for assessing the contribution of the co-curriculum and is poised to begin a comprehensive process of assessing its co-curricular units. The team encourages the institution to continue in its planned effort to assess the co-curriculum and follow through on currently planned efforts.

The college uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning. The team found evidence to suggest that the college's Curriculum Assessment Committee collects data on its program of assessing the achievement of the institution's Common Learning outcomes. As a means to make its Common Learning Outcomes data widely available and analyzed, in the fall of each academic year, the college presents a Curricular Assessment Report to Aims faculty and staff. The team also found evidence to confirm that the college creates "plans of work," based on student learning outcome data in its CTE programs and across the curriculum. Assessment reporting forms require faculty to address the question of how they will work to improve student learning and achievement.

ACC has processes in place to assess student learning that reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other staff members. At Aims, faculty and appropriate staff

are involved in the assessment of student learning through membership and participation in the institution's Curriculum Committee and Curricular Assessment Committee. Faculty also take part in the assessment of student learning artifacts at the "common" or institutional level. In addition, the institution has taken steps to map course level learning outcomes to broader program and institutional goals. Taken together, these pieces of evidence suggest that ACC's assessment efforts reflect good practice.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Aims Community College works diligently to improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its many academic programs. The college reviews retention, persistence and completion rates at the student cohort, program and institutional levels. Current institutional performance levels are tracked against the rolling benchmark and adjusted annually with applicable changes integrated into the annual strategy plan review process. The institution's 'Core Measures Report' is a scorecard that presents data on current performance to benchmarks in respective areas.

For instance, the benchmark for the overall 3 year fall-to-fall retention rate is 54.39% and the cited performance rate for 2018-19 is 52.74%. The benchmark for the 3 year average graduation rate (students graduating within three years) is 32.63% and the cited performance rate for 2018-19 is 31.40%. Above all, the institution's retention persistence and completion data for Trio programs has exceeded the federal standard persistence rate of 70% in each of the past three academic years with reports of 81% in 2019, 96% in 2020, and 91% in 2021. Aims also monitors its progress through the Aims2UNC (i.e., transfer of students to 4-year programs) as well as the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative *Finish What you Started* grant. For the Aims2UNC initiative, according to evidence provided, as of February 14, 2020, 205 total students completed Ams2UNC applications and of the 92 students in Fall 2019 cohort 95% persisted to Spring semester.

Additional evidence provided by the institution confirms its focus on evaluating retention and persistence data among its student cohorts, i.e., ACC provides disaggregated data for first-generation students, race and ethnicity grad rates, gender and veteran completion rates. This approach to study of data by sub-groups is commendable. Disaggregated data at the program level are shared with

advisory committees and integrated into program review and program improvement planning or action items. ACC participates in national data assessment conferences, such as the Association of Institutional Researchers which allows for additional professional insight on approaches and tools. Internally, the institutional data governance group, the Institutional Assessment Committee, the Curricular Assessment Committee and Institutional Research department all collaborate to attend to the data collection and analyses.

The combination of data elements provided and the results shown in the 'Core Measures Report' confirms that Aims collects, analyzes and uses data for actions on improving retention, persistence and completion.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Rationale

ACC demonstrates clear and focused responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services; the college continually seeks to measure and understand how and where it can improve delivery of content and service. The college conducts regular program reviews to inform continuous improvement efforts and conducts faculty-driven and state-sanctioned curriculum processes. Though its assessment regimen was paused in part as a result of the pandemic, ACC is poised to continue conducting continuous improvement efforts in academic and co-curricular programs. The evidence evaluated by the team instilled confidence in the college's overall approach to the assessment of student learning. The team would like to encourage the institution to carry forward with plans to identify and assess co-curricular learning outcomes now in nascent stages and to consider the use of common language and processes where possible for academic and career and technical program reviews.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Rating

Met

Rationale

ACC upholds the principle of shared governance by engaging internal constituents in planning, policies, and procedures, including strategic and budget planning. Board of Trustees Policy 74 defines shared governance for the institution and the college has developed a guide to implementing the policy which is evidence itself of the Board of Trustees and college leadership's commitment to distributed leadership and democratic governance. The president and members of the cabinet have conducted listening tours to encourage open communication and feedback on a variety of topics.

Strong evidence exists that the college uses data in making informed decisions. The process for the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan consisted of collecting information through the president's listening tours, conversation day, convocation, and other opportunities to engage and discuss the future of the college with a variety of constituents. The planning process specifically included establishing benchmarks and measurements. The comprehensive planning process provided many opportunities for collaboration and input into the Strategic Plan.

The administration ensures that faculty have the opportunity to be involved in setting policy, procedure, and practice. The Learning Council provides a venue to discuss issues and participate in shared governance through collaborative review and assessment of initiatives and changes specifically impacting Academic Affairs and faculty. Staff and students have several opportunities and avenues to engage in shared governance through student clubs, student government, along with

the Aims Staff Association (ASA).

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Rating

Met

Rationale

ACC employs approximately 400 full-time and part-time staff with hiring requirements for operations employees designed to bring qualified and experienced personnel able to provide needed support services in furtherance of the Purpose and Mission statements. Low turnover rate and high ratings on satisfaction surveys attest to the infrastructure that supports employee welfare.

ACC affirms in its Mission explication that providing both accessible and affordable education in a diverse a community and an equitable manner are specific interests and of specific focus in delivering an Aims education. To make college more affordable, ACC identifies and provides unique financial aid assistance beyond conventional support mechanisms. Aims has stated that it works to support equitable access by focusing on support of first-generation, non-traditional and under-represented groups in its student body and its enrollment data support this contention.

ACC demonstrates its substantial commitment to training and employee development with financial support for staff attending professional meetings or participating in professional development activity whether in person or online. Additional support for professional development is noted by the tuition waiver/reimbursement offered. Both of these support efforts are evidence that the college seeks to support employees in their positions and in relation to their own career growth.

The budget document shared is detailed and outlines the specific process the college follows in building a budget and receiving and approving budget expansion requests. Monitoring of budgets is available at the cost-center level; these individuals have real-time access to information enabling them to manage budget expenditures and reporting as needed.

The Academic Projects Summit is a unique feature contributing to budget development and focus of allocations on educational purposes. The expenditure of approximately 70% of the budget in support of the core function confirms that there is a focus on students and their support.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Aims developed a Strategic Plan 2018-2023 that flows from its Mission and Purpose statements and includes defined areas for budget priorities for those same years. Current allocation of resources takes into consideration enrollment estimates, local needs assessment, and adequacy of resources for college departments; accordingly, budget and resource allocations are specifically aligned with stated institutional strategies. The college's financial commitment to Mission fulfillment is noted by a figure of 70% of expenditures being allocated to academics and support services.

ACC uses its academic assessment and program review results to identify opportunities for programmatic improvement and links assessment findings in student learning to overall planning and specified budget processes. Evidence provided by Aims demonstrates their support for quality student learning and academic program needs through ongoing assessment efforts in regular cycles, program review, action plans, academic projects, and the employee supplemental service authorization program (ESSA) tool that allows for unique improvement requests in academics that fall outside of faculty contract language.

Aims provides the opportunity for faculty, staff, administrators, students, community, and stakeholders to share their perspectives on its planning processes. The current strategic plan identified and enabled Aims to focus on three initiatives over five years: Empowering students to Succeed, Enhance Operational Performance, and Enrich the NOCO Economic Development. In addition to faculty and staff input, Aims presented evidence of several examples of student input influencing the composition of committees, tuition, and student fees, as well as policy and procedures. External stakeholders influence the institution through the college's Foundation, advisory committees, and workforce development boards for the region.

ACC is keenly aware of its environment and its capacity to serve its service district. Aims receives funding through tuition, state appropriations, and local property tax revenue generation; property tax income accounts for close to 70% of the general operating revenue. During the annual budget planning process, the college takes into account the current and projected economic constraints, including changes in student enrollment and any potential loss of funding from local property taxes and state appropriations. ACC has shown itself to be responsive to shifting demographics, program needs, and workforce development issues identified by the industry and appears to have worked diligently to both maintain and project financial stability.

Aims continues to leverage the 2017 environmental scan and economic impact reports to inform institutional planning. As an example, Aims reported that since 2017 it has experienced an increase in Hispanic students and members of refugee communities. In response to the changing demographics, Aims provided evidence of their website and marketing materials being made available in Spanish and expanded efforts to support this community to improve English language skills. Aims does understand the changes associated with the demographic shifts in its service area as well as the external factors presented by the economy and potential shifts in state support. As noted in 3D, Aims has invested significantly to ensure academic programs have the technology, classrooms, labs, and equipment needed to support instruction and student achievement. Aims invested in a Data Center as a response to growth and technical changes and acquires new software among other technical support items as identified through program review and operational analyses. The college should take time to consider the impact globalization may have on college operations and what affect, if any, on student programming and support. Some understanding of the impact of changing patterns in the global economy may already come to the college's attention through advisory boards or industry partnerships, but focused attention can only enhance potential for anticipation and response.

ACC's commitment to continuous improvement and implementation of operations and plans were well documented. Examples of Business Process Reviews and Process Re-imagine and Redesign initiatives documented reviews and specific improvements. From the information and evidence provided throughout this document, Aims is clearly engaged and committed to the principles and concepts of continuous improvement.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Rationale

Aims Community College upholds the principles of shared governance by engaging stakeholders from across the institution and community in strategic planning and program decisions in its efforts for continuous improvement. The college has a well-developed strategic plan that has guided the institution over the past 4 years with actions and decisions linked to budgeting and revised as needed based on the most currently available data and program/service needs. Planning and decision making are informed by results from academic assessment and operational evaluations. Aims monitors its performance in several ways, including dashboards, allowing for tracking, trending and finally to decisions on potential improvement.

The Aims culture appears to value dialogue and input into planning and new initiatives, an approach that allows faculty, staff, and students the opportunity to share ideas and recommendations on areas for growth, change or improvement. Student and employee participation/perspective is also sought when debating new policies and procedures as well as review of issues for ongoing institutional planning. Several suggestions derived from stakeholder sessions have been incorporated into the strategic plan fortifying the college culture of shared governance.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	
5	Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	

Review Summary

Conclusion

Aims Community College is a mature institution with structures, policies, tools and experience in place to support its plans for continued growth, responsiveness and improvement; ACC enjoys stable human, financial and physical resources. The college is an integral member of its community/service district and seeks to fulfill its Mission through informed planning and decision making. ACC plans capably for growth and change and employs appropriately credentialed faculty and staff who manage its multiple locations. The college competently fulfills expectations in the Criteria and Core Components.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation

Met

Sanctions Recommendation

No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation

Not Applicable to This Review

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.