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2.C.1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance RMCC.

2.C.2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of RMCC's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

2.C.3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of RMCC.

2.C.4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of RMCC to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

2.D. Rich Mountain Community College is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

2.E. Rich Mountain Community College ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

2.E.1. RMCC provides effective oversight and support to ensure integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.

2.E.2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

2.E.3. RMCC has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Criterion Two Summary

Criterion Two Strengths

Criterion Two Challenges

Criterion Three: Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

3.A. Rich Mountain Community College's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

3.A.1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

3.A.2. RMCC articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate and certificate programs.

3.A.3. RMCC'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, and through contractual/consortial arrangements).

3.B. Rich Mountain Community College demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

3.B.1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the College.

3.B.2. RMCC articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in philosophy or framework developed by RMCC or an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and

intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes the College believes every college-educated person should possess.

3.B.3. Every degree offered by RMCC engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

3.B.4. The education offered by RMCC recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

3.B.5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the RMCC mission.

3.C. Rich Mountain Community College has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

3.C.1. RMCC has sufficient number and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

3.C.2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

3.C.3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established RMCC policies and procedures.

3.C.4. RMCC has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles: it supports their professional development.

3.C.5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

3.C.6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

3.D. Rich Mountain Community College provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

3.D.1. RMCC provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

3.D.2. RMCC 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 students are adequately prepared.

3.D.3. RMCC provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

3.D.4. RMCC provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning, as appropriate to the College's offerings.

3.D.5. RMCC provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

3.E. Rich Mountain Community College fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

Introduction and History of Rich Mountain Community College

Rich Mountain Community College (RMCC) understands the value and necessity of accreditation and peer evaluation. Therefore, the College has been dedicated to the ongoing process of examining its various functions within the academic and community environment. It has worked diligently to ensure that it is performing at the highest level possible in order to meet the expectations of its student body, service-area residents, faculty, and staff.

RMCC exists to serve those connected with the college. First, it strives to provide a quality education to students who enroll in the programs offered. Second, it has a strong bond to the community responsible for its existence. The College firmly supports the efforts of faculty and staff to provide a positive learning experience for all who enter the school. The self-study has given the College further opportunity to look for ways to enhance its service to constituents and to affirm current practices. As committees delved into the various aspects of the self-study, they examined practices and looked for ways for the College to improve. Those recommendations are incorporated into the College's plans for the future.

Rich Mountain Community College began in 1973 as Rich Mountain Vocational-Technical School serving Polk, Scott, and Montgomery counties under the Arkansas Department of Vocational Education. Additionally, Henderson State University offered the first two years of general education courses toward a Bachelor's degree at various sites in Polk County. The Polk County Committee for Higher Education, under the direction of Rachel Goforth as chair, worked to establish the college in Mena to combine these services.

Act 16 of 1983 was authored by State Representative Ode Maddox and established the community college system in Arkansas. In April of that year, the voters of Polk County approved a 5-mill tax to establish the Polk County community college district. With Dr. Mary Louise Spencer as president, Rich Mountain Community College opened July 1, 1983 with an enrollment of 290 students. The college immediately applied for candidacy for accreditation with the North Central Association. After the required number of compliance years, Rich Mountain Community College received full accreditation in 1990 during the tenure of Mr. Bill Abernathy who became president in 1987.

By 1993, ten years into its successful history, RMCC's enrollment had increased to 766 students and the faculty had grown from its original 11 full-time faculty to 16 full-time faculty. Programs and offerings changed to include computer programming, and course offerings in the math and science fields increased substantially. Federal programs to ensure student success were added through grant applications.

In fall 2001, RMCC reached the 1,000 student mark. Shortly after the arrival of President Dr. Janet Smith, the North Central Association designated Rich Mountain as a "model rural community college," at the completion of their site visit. Progress continued with the addition of an aviation maintenance program in partnership with the City of Mena and a grant through the Department of Labor. An entire building was added to accommodate advances in Machine Tool technologies. Grant funds allowed for renovations to

the RMCC historic National Guard Armory. A campus walking trail and outdoor amphitheater were also completed during this time.

By 2008, the RMCC strategic plan included significant needed renovations to several college buildings. In 2009, during the tenure of President Dr. Wayne Hatcher, the time-line for progress drastically changed when a tornado destroyed parts of the campus, causing over three million dollars in damage. Although every building was impacted, classes and services were not interrupted more than a few days. Classes relocated to various building around Mena, and summer sessions were held on the Acorn Public School campus. Following the reconstruction of the RMCC campus, Student Services were moved into the Tower Room, creating a one-stop admissions center upon completion of needed renovations.

Since its inception, through 2012, RMCC has graduated 2,235 students in various fields of endeavor. At this time, under the direction of President Dr. Phillip Wilson, plans are to build on the past successes. Programs now include cosmetology, registered nursing, and online delivery of entire degrees. Delivery methods now include traditional site classes, compressed interactive video, and online courses. RMCC has grown from one original building to a multiple site learning institution with locations in all three counties of its service area. Multiple progressive renovations to campus buildings have taken place over the years: the Tower Room houses admissions, financial aid, and the registrar, among others for a one-stop-shop:

- A new Learning Commons was created within the library.
- An expanded Student Union includes food service.

New buildings added to the College's footprint:

- Culinary Arts Facility
- A multi-purpose facility, the Ouachita Center, provides space for cultural offerings on campus, such as performances by the Actors Guild.

Over its thirty-year history, RMCC has been at the forefront of progress for the Polk, Scott, and Montgomery county service area. Its mission to provide exemplary educational opportunities for the residents of the Ouachita Mountain region continues to be the guide for programming, service, and involvement in the community.

The tables below show the demographic statistics for the service area, the student body, and the faculty. Even though the service area has little ethnic and racial diversity, the RMCC service area is very socioeconomically diverse. The RMCC service area is one of the poorest regions in the state. Further demographic information is detailed in Criterion 1.

Service Area Profile

RMCC Service Area	Polk	Scott	Montgomery
Population	20,662	11,233	9,487
Under 18	2.4%	24.5%	19.7%
Over 65	21%	18.1%	19.7%
White	94.7%	90.7%	95.3%
African American	0.5%	0.8%	0.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1.9%	2.5%	1.1%
Asian	0.5%	3.7%	0.7%
Two or More Races	2.3%	2.3%	2.2%
Hispanic or Latino	6.2%	7.4%	3.7%

County	Enrolled in K-12 2013-2014	High School Graduates Percentage of Population	Population with Bachelor's Degree
Polk	3,620	82.7%	11.7%
Scott	1,493	75.0%	10.3%
Montgomery	1,104	81.1%	11.0%

Data obtained from Arkansas Department of Education and 2010 U.S. Census

RMCC Student Profile 2014 by County of Residence	
County	RMCC Students
Polk	699
Scott	162
Montgomery	92
Other Arkansas	28
Oklahoma	15
Other State	9

Age of Students	
Under 18	6
Ages 18-19	123
Ages 20-21	81
Ages 22-24	86
Ages 25-29	78
Ages 30-34	43
Ages 40-49	55
Ages 50-59	29
Ages 60-64	34
Ages 65+	139
High School	295

Student Race Ethnicity	
White	90%
Hispanic	3.7%
Black	
Two or More Races	2.8%
Asian	
American Indian	2.4%

Gender	
Male	321
Female	684

Faculty Profile Fall 2014	Full-Time	Part-Time
Male		
Non Resident Alien		
Hispanic		1
Amer. Indian/Alaskan Native		
Asian	1	
Black		
Hawaiian		
White	8	19
Two or More Races		
Race/Ethnicity Unknown		
Total Male	9	20
Female		
Non Resident Alien		
Hispanic		
Amer. Indian/Alaskan Native		
Asian		
Black		1
Hawaiian		
White	13	23
Two or More Races		1
Race/Ethnicity Unknown		
Total Female	13	25
Total Faculty	*22*	*45*

Vision

Rich Mountain Community College is committed to being an institution of distinction where an exceptional faculty and staff serve to awaken students to a love of learning. The College is dedicated to empowering each individual to pursue a higher quality of life by providing access to dynamic, lifelong learning opportunities.

The College's caring approach to teaching and learning allows individuals to enhance and expand their knowledge base and to enrich their lives through intellectual challenge and self-discovery with the support of skilled human resources and of emergent technologies. The College demonstrates respect for the worth and dignity of each person and recognizes the uniqueness of each individual. In addition, the College encourages personal growth by offering affordable, high quality, accessible education in preparation for transfer and technical degrees, workforce development, career advancement, and personal enrichment.

Mission

Rich Mountain Community College exists to provide all residents of the Ouachita Mountain region with exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities to improve the quality of life and standard of living.

Values

Rich Mountain Community College, as a leader in a growing community and a vibrant contributor to the quality of life of the Ouachita Mountain Region, continues to develop an exemplary learning environment. Success in this endeavor hinges on turning the following values into action:

- All who choose to use Rich Mountain Community College's resources are treated with dignity and are challenged to maximize their potential.
- All students are given the opportunity and are encouraged to accept responsibility for learning and growing as individuals and citizens.
- All College personnel are committed to providing an atmosphere of respect and cooperation where ideas, inquiry, and the continued pursuit for self-development are valued as means towards learning and growth.
- All College personnel are dedicated to responsible stewardship and continued sustainability of the human, fiscal, and natural resources with which we have been entrusted.

Philosophy and Scope

Rich Mountain Community College recognizes the worth and dignity of the individual, as exemplified by its commitment to serving the multi-dimensional educational needs of its constituency.

Toward that end, Rich Mountain Community College endeavors to provide academic, vocational, and personal enrichment opportunities and dedicates itself to quality programs in each of these areas. Guided by these principles the scope of the college is as follows:

- To offer associate degrees, technical degrees, and certificates of proficiency in occupational education for students who wish to gain competence in specific skill areas or to upgrade their skills.
- To provide the first two years of university parallel course work of high academic quality for students who transfer to senior institutions.
- To provide foundational based educational programs for students who need basic academic skills.
- To provide services for students who desire academic, vocational, financial, and personal guidance.

- To offer the facilities and resources of the College to promote educational, civic, and cultural endeavors within the community.
- To provide programs and services that support and enhance the social, civic, and economic development of the community and state.
- To offer a variety of programs and courses designed to meet academic, vocational, and personal enrichment needs.

Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Access to Higher Education

Rich Mountain Community College continues to provide the Ouachita Mountain Region with accessible, quality, and affordable education. RMCC will provide the service area's population with expanded access to educational opportunities for those who seek lifelong learning. In addition to serving traditional and nontraditional students, special programs are available to the disadvantaged, those requiring foundational based studies, or students wanting to enter the workforce. The College will continue to provide best value and seek out every viable opportunity to augment its ability to further serve the community.

Goal 2: Student Success

Rich Mountain Community College is committed to student success by providing programs and services that will help students achieve their educational and career goals. RMCC promotes student success at every level of the academic process. Foundational based education programs are available for students who need to improve math, reading, and writing skills. Qualified, dedicated faculty are committed to student learning. The Associate Vice President for Student Affairs develops and maintains collaborative activities geared toward student success in and out of the classroom. Federal, state, and student services programs offer additional resources to students.

Goal 3: Quality Learning Environment

Rich Mountain Community College creates quality learning environments by promoting excellence in teaching and learning enhanced by state of the art facilities, technology and delivery methods. Rich Mountain Community College provides an effective teaching and learning environment. Quality educational programs and services are accessible and responsive to the needs and interests of the communities it serves. Faculty and staff foster a supportive challenging atmosphere dedicated to serving those who will become tomorrow's leaders and actively engaged members of society.

Goal 4: Educational Partnerships

Rich Mountain Community College develops and maintains partnerships with area school districts, colleges, universities, and business and industry to address the educational and workforce development needs of the Ouachita Mountain Region. Working collaboratively with communities and schools, Rich Mountain Community College seeks to improve academic achievement and expand post-secondary educational opportunities for students. RMCC works with teachers, counselors, administrators, and families to foster systemic change and build a college-going culture. Through a comprehensive program of articulation and course transfer agreements, including advanced degree partnerships, with colleges and universities, RMCC contributes to economic growth through teaching, outreach, and cultural enhancement.

Goal 5: Development of Resources

Rich Mountain Community College strives to develop and improve its programs and services by seeking additional financial, physical, and human resource opportunities. RMCC strives to develop additional sources of funding. The College actively pursues public and private sector grants and support to enhance programs and services.

Goal 6: Continuous Planning and Improvement of Outreach Centers

Rich Mountain Community College continuously develops all outreach centers to meet the needs of the communities they serve. RMCC actively supports and commits significant resources toward continued development of the service area through the operation of outreach centers in Polk, Montgomery, and Scott

Counties. Further development of these sites is essential for individuals in these areas to receive superior educational opportunities. The College fosters growth in these areas through continued communication with all interested parties.

Note: After the completion of the HLC reaccreditation process the College will go through its scheduled five-year review of the strategic plan.

Major College Developments Since 2005

The following illustrates the developments of RMCC since its last accreditation visit in 2005.

- New Programs
    - Registered Nursing
    - Aviation Maintenance
    - Aviation Management
    - Small Business Development
    - Industrial Maintenance
    - Welding
    - Culinary Arts
    - Computer Forensics
    - Database design
    - Cosmetology
    - Healthcare Billing and Coding
- Increased online course offerings
- Received approval from ADHE and HLC to deliver online degrees
- Developed wireless Internet capabilities campus wide
- Added Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts for the Institution
- Rebranded the College logo and color scheme
- Mandated orientation for first-time degree-seeking students
- Increased concurrent credit courses
- Participated in the Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year self-study project facilitated through the John Gardener Institute funded through a grant from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation
- Added the position of Director of Student Success Initiatives based on data from Foundations of Excellence to improve retention
- Redesign of the Lifelong Learning Department thereby increasing workforce and continuing education offerings
- Gained and completed a Title III grant to redesign developmental education and expand instructional technology
- Expanded outreach through compressed interactive video
- Underwent facility renovations or construction
    - Mount Ida
    - Edward and Deedee Johnson Learning Commons
    - Student Union
    - Student Services in the Tower Room
    - Greenhouse Construction
    - Ouachita Center Construction
    - Additional parking lots
    - Campus restoration after a direct hit from an EF3 tornado on April 9, 2009
- Completed revision and review of the Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Plan
- Increased scholarship opportunities for students through the RMCC Foundation
- Conducted a successful capital campaign
- Received student services grants: Career Pathways, Upward Bound Math and Science, CCAMPIS
- Online tuition payment capabilities
- Upgraded all classrooms with electronic teaching stations
- Restructured the administration
- Reordered the committee structure

An institution's self-study report plays specific roles in the Higher Learning Commission's Process:

- *The Self-Study Report constitutes Rich Mountain Community College's formal request for continued accreditation.*
- *It summarizes the purposes and findings of the Rich Mountain Community College self-study process.*
- *It demonstrates the College's ability to analyze its effectiveness and to develop plans for improvement.*
- *It provides evidence that the College fulfills the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation.*
- *It succinctly summarizes the information necessary for the evaluation visit, the review process, and Commission action.*

RMCC 2015 Self-Study
Process

The self-study process at Rich Mountain Community College started with pre-planning in the President's Cabinet in January 2011. The Cabinet focused on communications regarding the "New Information on Accreditation Criteria."

Next, a division chair/faculty member was appointed as Self-Study Coordinator in 2011. The Coordinator provided leadership for the completion of a self-study in compliance with Higher Learning Commission criteria. The Coordinator worked under the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs/Chief Academic Officer (VPASA) and provided Steering Committee leadership.

After developing an initial draft of the self-study plan and timeline, the Coordinator met with the President and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs to identify individuals to serve on the Self-Study Steering Committee and various subcommittees. Individuals were chosen on the basis of the following criteria:
- Diversity
- Expertise and College-wide knowledge
- Length of service
- Leadership
- Willingness to serve

In particular, steps were taken to ensure full involvement by faculty and staff in the self-study process. Selections for the Self-Study Steering Committee were completed in 2011, and the Self-Study plan was completed. All criteria chairs were afforded the opportunity to attend Higher Learning Commission events. Selections for subcommittees were completed by 2012.

Contents of the Self-Study Plan
The self-study plan shall:
- Establish a self-study calendar and timetable.
- Identify goals for the self-study process.
- Determine how the Criteria Statements, Core Components, and Evidence will be addressed in the self-study process and report.
- Identify how the institution will respond to and report on concerns expressed by previous HLC Evaluation Team visits.
- Include a preliminary outline of the Self-Study Report.

RMCC Self Study Timeline/Process of Self-Evaluation
Fall 2010
- Institutional self-study coordinator is appointed.

Spring 2011
- Institutional self-study steering committee is appointed.
- Steering committee meets for the first time and participates in an HLC webinar.
- College representatives attend HLC Conference and self-study workshop.

Fall 2011
- Self-study steering committee put on hold until the spring 2012 semester due to the changes in the accreditation criteria. College representatives attend HLC workshops on the changes and meet with the steering committee to review the changes.

Spring 2012
- Steering Committee meets every other Friday to review Criteria.
- Criteria chairs and leadership attend HLC Conference in Chicago April 1-3.
- Steering Committee reviews previous RMCC self-study and visiting team recommendations.
- Steering Committee attends to deficiencies.

Fall of 2012
- Steering Committee continues to address deficiencies and address assumed practices.
- Subcommittees meet regarding their specific criterion and assumed practices.
- Steering Committee decides on format.
- Editor proposes standardization.

Spring 2013
- Subcommittees collect data and information to support criterion.
- Chair, Steering Committee and others
    o Review History
    o Response to previous visit
    o Identify Distinctive Qualities of College
    o Ensure continued Federal Compliance
    o Import an Institutional Snapshot.
- Prepare for electronic documentation.
- Chair, Leadership, and others attend HLC Conference.

Fall 2013
- Subcommittees write.
- Subcommittees submit drafts to Steering Committee.
- Steering Committee critiques drafts.
- Resource Committee starts construction of resource room.

Spring 2014
- Visit by HLC Liaison.
- Subcommittee chair rewrites.
- Steering Committee critiques revisions.
- Resource Committee creates resource room.

Fall 2014
- Steering Committee Chair rewrites and puts together first draft.
- Steering Committee completes the revision process and sends to editor.
- Editor completes the final product with many proofreaders in early fall.
- The Chair sends the final e-copy of the Self-Study.
- RMCC prepares for spring visit.

Spring 2015
- Team visit March 2-4, 2015.

RMCC HLC Reaccreditation Committee Organization

Self-Study Steering Committee
Ann Furr – Chair
Steve Rook – Liaison
Recorder – Denise Collier
Resource Room – Jeanette Berry and Brenda Miner
Electronic Document Coordinator – Mark Barton
Distance Education – Craig Jumper
Institutional Research – Tammy Odom and Mark Barton
Criterion 1 – Terry Francis
Criterion 2 – Kandy Page
Criterion 3 – Susan Tipton
Criterion 4 – Krystal Thrailkill
Criterion 5 – Amy Ludwig

Criterion One: Mission
Terry Francis, *Chair*
Phillip Wilson, *Resource*

Cassandra Parks	Debbie Todd
Elizabeth Davis	Lisa Rackley
Nathan Fowler	Bonnie Medlin
John Lloyd	Lisa Harrison
Nancy Booth	

Criterion Two: Ethical and Responsible Conduct
Kandy Page, *Chair*
Morris Boydstun, *Resource*

Kathy Adams	Tammye Sherrill
Pam Barron	Jonathan Lunsford
Brenda Miner	Craig Jumper
Brandon Burk	Michelle Quinn
Penny Lunsford	Mary Standerfer

Criterion Three: Teaching and Learning – Quality Resources and Support
Susan Tipton, *Chair*
Steve Rook, *Resource*

Joanne Coogan	Jennifer Smith
Jeff Neufeld	Larry Kropp
Robby Burt	Charlotte Wiles
Jennifer Howard	Shannon Rogers
Jerod McCormick	

Criterion Four: Teaching and Learning – Evaluation and Improvement

Krystal Thrailkill, *Chair*
Steve Rook, *Resource*

Joel Bush	Craig Jumper
Lee Chapman	Amanda Seidenzahl
Charla Hollin	Theresa Davis
Lora Hosman	Lura Powell
Julie Ulmer	Gaumani Gyanwali
Lana McDonald	

Criterion Five: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

Amy Ludwig, *Chair*
Morris Boydstun, *Resource*

Dennis Hill	Vicki Sanders
Nancy Hohman	Grover Hill
Jason Wood	Pat Hall
Maureen Keese	Linda Ellison
Betty Roberts	Tammy Young

Resource Room Committee

Jeanette Berry, *Chair*
Brenda Miner
Tammy Odom
Klinda Rath
Joyce Sanden

RMCC's Response to 2005 HLC Visit

Following the 2005 HLC visit, RMCC received full accreditation with no follow-up required. However, recommendations were made by the visiting team. The following are RMCC's responses to those recommendations.

Criterion 1: Mission and Integrity – No Findings

Criterion 2: Preparing for the Future – No Findings

After a thorough review of the Criterion Two Assurance Section of the 2005 HLC Visit, it has been determined that no changes were necessary in regards to the Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion. Each section under Criterion Two of the 2005 Response by the visiting team was determined to meet the necessary requirements and demonstrated that there was no need for further institutional attention. Each section was also proven to demonstrate that no Commission follow-up was necessary.

Criterion 3:   Student Learning and Effective Teaching

After reviewing written faculty evaluations and interviewing instructional staff, the team presents the following two concerns and one observation:

1. *"The organization should construct a formal evaluation procedure for evaluation of on-line faculty that assess teaching and encourages faculty participation."*

   In 2005, online delivery was minimal with no formal, distinct evaluation methods in place. As internet capability expanded, in 2006, the RMCC Board of Trustees directed the administration to increase the number of web- based classes offered.

   The Distance Learning Taskforce was charged with establishing a rubric to ensure quality online classes and recommending a learning management platform. The taskforce also created an online faculty evaluation tool for students. The evaluation is given to all students in all online courses each semester. The survey responses are automatically sent to the Director of Institutional Research who calculates the data and forwards it to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs (VPASA). The aggregate data and comments are shared with the instructor.

   Further, faculty created a comprehensive evaluation rubric for online courses. The Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs uses the form to review online courses to ensure quality outcomes. The Distance Learning Committee also uses the rubric to evaluate proposed courses for online delivery.

2. *"The organization should design and implement a consistent evaluation procedure for all adjunct faculty regarding teaching strategies and course syllabi."*

   Adjunct faculty are evaluated in the same manner as full-time faculty. All courses, including concurrent, are evaluated by students using the SIRII instrument. The results are shared with the faculty member. Department chairs, the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA), and the VPASA conduct classroom visits. Observations and recommendations are shared with the instructor.

All instructors must turn in a copy of the syllabus for each class to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. Syllabi are checked to see if they follow the 13-Point Syllabus model. Instructors are contacted if any changes need to be made to syllabi.

All instructors meet as academic departments a minimum of twice annually to discuss common degree learning outcomes. Course outcomes are aligned regardless of mode of delivery or faculty assigned to the course.

Criterion 4: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

"Based on interviews and written documentation provided by the organization, the team found that college faces tremendous challenges in meeting diverse staffing and programmatic needs for a comprehensive community college. The team is concerned that the college develop an aggressive program minority applicants in the employment process and utilize individuals of differing ethnic and racial backgrounds in campus, classes, and student activities."

RMCC's service area has become more diverse since the 2005 visit, and the College population reflects the change. The Service Area Profile shows the demographic data for the service area, the student body, and faculty of the College.

RMCC has deliberately advertised open positions to attract a more diverse candidate pool. Offers have been made to minority candidates for faculty position over the past 10 years with limited success.

Criterion 5: Engagement and Service – No Findings

RMCC's Unique Qualities

RMCC houses five TRIO programs due to the service area poverty rate ranging from 20% to 22% with 71% of the students on financial aid for Fall 2014. RMCC is situated in a historically low-income area. Residents have few opportunities for well-paying jobs as the locale lacks businesses that offer high salaries and benefits. The counties have some manufacturing jobs, but others have moved out of the country following plant closures. Residents work for hourly wages at assembly lines at poultry processing plants or manufacturing companies. The single parent and teen birth rates are high in the area. Lack of education is pervasive.

RMCC is isolated. RMCC's main campus is located on US Highway 71, the main artery between Kansas City and Shreveport, but the highway between Fort Smith and Ashdown remains two-lane. State highways from RMCC's service area to larger cities are narrow and winding. The closest universities are Henderson State University (85 miles east) and the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith (82 miles north). Cossatot Community College, part of the University of Arkansas system, is 50 miles south, providing students in the southern part of the RMCC service area with other technical options. Students pursuing further education must conduct a dangerous commute or relocate. Mena is 1.5 hours in any direction from a larger city. Traveling to the Arkansas capitol, Little Rock, is a 2.5 hour one-way trip.

Since the last HLC visit, RMCC expanded access to education throughout the service area through improved technology. In 2006, the Board of Trustees directed the President and Vice President of Academic Affairs to expand the online course are offered. The number of online courses offered increased from nine to over thirty per semester and more courses through compressed interactive video (CIV). In Fall 2013, the College installed two new high definition systems at the Mena campus, with similar systems at Waldron and Mount Ida. In addition, RMCC installed two new systems at Cossatot River High School and one new system at Waldron High School to increase concurrent opportunities in 2014.

RMCC demonstrates a true dedication to Lifelong Learning (LLL) with programs ranging from Kids College to 55+ program. Throughout its history, RMCC has offered enrichment opportunities for its residents. A popular program is Kids College, a summer day camp for students from kindergarten through sixth grade. An assortment of sessions addresses the interests of the students, ranging from fishing and digital photography to marine life.

The LLL department is providing residents many short courses in subjects like QuickBooks, Word, Computer Basics, and in the culinary arts. Approximately 75 classes are offered each year.

The 55+ program or Double Nickel is extremely popular for residents over age 55. The courses offer lectures and enrichment trips. Presentations cover subjects of interest to older residents, including talks on local history and financial planning.

The following document demonstrates RMCC's efforts to meet and exceed the criteria of the Higher Learning Commission. This report is the result of hard work and dedication on the part of employees and constituents of the College over a period of years. The project has been beneficial in highlighting the strength of the College and illuminating areas where it can continue to improve. Above all, RMCC is committed to fulfilling its Mission.

Request for Re-Accreditation

Since the last HLC visit in 2005, RMCC has managed enrollment fluctuations, and expanded and added new programs, services, and functions. The last ten years have brought challenges ranging from multiple presidential transitions to rebuilding from the impact of a tornado. All while, resource allocations barely kept pace with institutional needs. Through this, the College continues to adapt, evaluate, and innovate to meet community needs.

The College has made a good-faith effort to validate its strengths, identify its shortcomings, and prepare itself for continued growth and improvement. The College embraced the self-study process and looks forward to its peer review. Therefore, Rich Mountain Community College respectfully requests reaffirmation of its accreditation status with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Criterion One: Mission

Rich Mountain Community College's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operation.

1.A. Rich Mountain Community College's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

Empowered by ACA §6-61-207 (ID 817), Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) established the role and scope of Rich Mountain Community College. The role and scope as designated by the AHECB provided for the creation of RMCCs mission (ID 398).

In an effort to determine the depth of understanding of the mission within the College, employees completed a survey in Spring 2014. They rated their understanding and how they thought the mission guides operations. Respondents also had the opportunity to share how the mission of the College guides their behaviors and planning (ID 299). Survey results indicated:

- 89% know the RMCC mission well or extremely well.
- 93% understand and support RMCC's mission well or extremely well.
- 81% believe the mission drives Board policies and practices.
- 82% believe the mission drives strategic decisions of the College.
- 79% believe planning and budgeting priorities flow from and support the mission.
- 90% believe the mission documents convey why RMCC exists.

Mission survey respondents gave examples of personal behaviors demonstrating their support and understanding of the mission.

- An overwhelming majority of faculty responses included references to providing positive student reinforcement; having an open door for their students; helping students on weekends; offering positive, exciting, and quality learning opportunities; treating students with respect and dignity; and offering equal treatment and assistance to all students. One reported giving money to students to buy books.
- Common themes in the responses of classified and professional staff included relating to students in a professional manner; being kind, helpful, upbeat, and courteous; keeping an open mind by understanding that each student is different; encouraging potential future students that RMCC is a good choice; and supporting community needs by volunteering.

The following survey response captures perfectly the desire to live the mission statement: "I get up every morning and come to work knowing that in some small way I will change somebody's life for the better."

Faculty and staff shared how they incorporate the use of RMCC's mission statement in their planning, program design, and delivery. Responses included the following:

- Offering different programs (academic, 60+, Kids College, Lifelong Learning, Adult Education, community service) demonstrates the College has something substantial to offer everyone in the region.
- Trying to keep departmental goals and policy that match the mission.
- Employing teaching techniques for different learning styles.
- Striving to make each transaction in the Business Office a pleasant experience.
- Avoiding discrimination against race, color, national origin, religion.
- Ensuring that students are given the proper information or are directed to the appropriate department.

When asked how they personally promoted awareness of the RMCC mission statements, respondents offered the following examples:

- Including RMCC's mission statement on syllabi.
- Incorporating into lectures and training in clinicals with words, attitudes and actions.
- Working at the County Fair and Lum 'n Abner Festival.
- Designing a banner photo of mission statement for use on Facebook page.

In summary, responses to the survey illustrate not only a College-wide understanding of RMCC's mission, they also indicate RMCC staff believe in and strive to make the meaning of the mission a reality for service area residents.

1.A.1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and adopted by the governing board.

RMCC's fundamental mission of bringing exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities to its service area has remained constant since the inception of the College as a Vocational-Technical School in 1973. It continued with the RMCC charter as a community college in 1983.

Until the 1999-2000 academic year, the College's philosophy and scope statements served as its mission. In 1999 after consulting with faculty and staff, the administration presented a proposed mission statement to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees approved the statement as presented in February 2000. The original mission statement read, *"Rich Mountain Community College exists to provide all citizens of the Ouachita Mountain Region with exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities to improve the quality of life and standard of living."* The Board of Trustees reaffirmed the mission statement in 2004.

In 2009, while developing the 2010 strategic plan, a committee of college employees and community members reviewed of RMCC's mission documents. Recognizing the changing demographics of the service area and to maintain relevance, the committee recommended replacing the term "citizens" with "residents" in the RMCC mission statement. When the RMCC Board of Trustees approved the new strategic plan, it also approved the proposed change in the wording of the mission statement. The Board officially adopted the new mission statement in 2010 (ID 259). Changing the word "citizens" to "residents" created a more appropriate statement for RMCC's constituency and allowed for a more

inclusive mission statement. RMCC's mission is: *"Rich Mountain Community College exists to provide all residents of the Ouachita Mountain Region with exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities to improve the quality of life and standard of living."*

1.A.2. RMCC's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

Enrollment Profile

The RMCC service area is known for its scenic beauty; however, living here comes at a cost. The service area is rural, sparsely populated, geographically isolated, and marked by a high level of poverty. Residents on average have a low level of educational attainment, which makes the mission of bringing educational opportunities to raise the quality of life a challenge. It also presents obstacles when trying to attract business and industry to the area. The service area is challenged by a loss of major manufacturing. With few exceptions, large industry has relocated or ceased operations.

Geographic Factors

The three service area counties, Polk, Montgomery, and Scott, have a combined area of 2,530 square miles, which is almost 5% of Arkansas' total. The combined population is 40,821, which equates to 1.4% of Arkansas' total. This translates into 48.9 people per square mile as compared to 56 people per square mile for the state. Eighty percent (80%) of the service area is considered rural compared to 46.5% for the State and 24.8% for the nation. Population density for the RMCC service area is one third of the state average and one sixth of the national average (ID 529) (ID 743) (ID 744).

Metropolitan areas are distant. Therefore, access to employment prospects as well as access to cultural, dining, entertainment, and shopping opportunities is limited if not unreachable for many residents of the area.

Poverty

RMCC's enrollment is largely low income, first-generation, and underprepared. Many students face social factors that present obstacles to matriculation and persistence in college. RMCC's enrollment profile is reflective of the service area demographics.

The RMCC 2014 Fast Facts offers a profile of its service area using data drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts. This profile provides stark detail of the area poverty level. An average of 22% of area families are living in poverty compared to 14.3% nationally. The median household income of the service area is $30,678 compared to $50,221 nationally (ID 114). Free and reduced school lunch data for funding year 2014-2015 shows 70.7% of the students attending school in one of RMCC's six service area school districts qualify for free or reduced school lunches (ID 528).

Area poverty is further evidenced by the number of RMCC students needing financial assistance. Table 1.A.2-1 shows the number and percentage of degree-seeking students receiving federal financial aid (Pell) and the number of RMCC degree-seeking students in the 2009-2013 Fall semesters.

Table 1.A.2-1					
Percentage RMCC Degree-Seeking Students Receiving Federal Financial Aid Fall Semesters 2009-2013					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total Degree-Seeking Population	638	666	674	632	553
Students Receiving Federal Financial Aid (Pell)	404	471	468	390	360
Students Receiving Federal Financial Aid (Pell)	63%	71%	69%	62%	65%
The apparent drop in students receiving federal financial aid is due to changes in federal Pell requirements and changes in enrollment.					

Source: RMCC Financial Aid Department

A five-year average puts the number of degree-seeking students at 632. That same five-year average reveals a full two thirds (66.23%) of RMCC students receiving federal financial aid (Pell).

Many RMCC students care for dependents as single heads of household further exacerbating financial difficulties. Table 1.A.2-2 offers a comparison of single parents attending RMCC to the total degree-seeking population of the College.

Table 1.A.2-2					
Percentage RMCC Single Parent Population Fall Semesters 2009-2013					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total Degree-Seeking Population	638	666	674	632	553
Single Parents	46	134	149	136	127
Single Parents	8%	20%	22%	21%	23%
Census Bureau 5-year survey (2008-2012) places the single parent populations of Polk, Scott, and Montgomery Counties at 25.9% of the general population.					

Source: RMCC Office of Institutional Research

Table 1.A.2-2 shows that, on average, 22% of RMCC's degree-seeking students are single parents, a number reflective of the 25.9% single parent population of its service area. A five-year average of single parents receiving Pell shows 61% received Pell. The rate of single parents receiving Pell has risen steadily with a low of 41% in 2009 to an alarmingly high 69% in 2013.

Residents in RMCC's service area population face many barriers to higher education access. In order to provide educational opportunities to residents in various socioeconomic and life situations, the College is committed to keeping its tuition as low as feasibly possible. RMCC offers its students one of the lowest tuition rates among all of Arkansas' public colleges and universities with tuition set at $69 per credit hour for the 2014-2015 school year (ID 775). The Business Office allows students who receive no financial aid or have a tuition/fee balance to set up payment arrangements (ID 607).

In addition to paying markedly higher tuition rates, students attending other Arkansas colleges and universities pay extra fees for a myriad of services. RMCC demonstrates sensitivity to the financial

difficulties faced by many students by charging a matriculation fee of $3 per credit hour, which adds $45 to the bill of a student taking 15 hours and covers the following services. As the matriculation fee does not fully cover the costs of these services, RMCC absorbs any additional costs.

- COMPASS and Asset placement examinations
- Application for admission
- New student College Orientation
- Schedule changes
- Adding or dropping classes
- Changing a major
- Graduation (cap and gown and diploma)
- Transcripts
- CAAP test
- I.D. card
- Parking
- Library card

Education Attainment

The average education attainment level of RMCC's service area population is markedly lower than the national average. RMCC's Fall 2014 Fast Facts state that 77% of its service area population age 25 or older have a 12th grade education or higher compared to 85% nationally. Only 9.8% of RMCC's service area population age 25 or older have a baccalaureate degree or higher compared to 27.5% nationally (ID 114).

RMCC is a public two-year institution of higher education with an open door admission policy. This policy often results in the admission of first-generation college students who may lack initial college readiness skills. Table 1.A.2-3 offers a comparison of RMCC's service area population aged 25+ who are first-generation college students to state and nationwide figures. The rate of RMCC's service area first-generation individuals is 9.2% higher than Arkansas's average of 81.1% and 17.8% higher than the national average of 72.5%.

Table 1.A.2-3			
First-Generation Individuals RMCC Service Area			
County	Population Age 25+	# First-Generation	% First-Generation
Polk	13,856	12,517	90.3%
Scott	7,251	6,593	90.9%
Montgomery	6,421	5,739	89.4%
Total/Average	27,528	24,849	90.3%
Arkansas			81.1%
U.S			72.5%

American Community Survey (2005-2009)

The percentage of RMCC's first-generation students in its degree-seeking population is given in Table 1.A.2-4.

Table 1.A.2-4	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
First-Generation *	360	378	391
Degree-Seeking	632	553	533
Headcount	1051	957	1005
First-Generation	34%	39%	39%

Source: RMCC Office of Institutional Research

*A misinterpretation of the definition of "first-generation" resulted in inaccurate first-generation data prior to 2012.

It is widely accepted that community colleges are the gateway to a postsecondary education or provide access to technical skills training for many adults. RMCC's mission is to offer programs to help its nontraditional students overcome "situational, dispositional, and institutional barriers." These barriers are discussed in the February 2012 *Pathways to Success* report to the U.S. Congress and Secretary of Education (ID 611). Table 1.A.2-5 shows RMCC's enrollment of nontraditional students (24+ years). RMCC's six-year average of 47% of nontraditional degree-seeking students is consistent with the rising trend nationally of nontraditional age students making the decision to go to college from 2009 to 2014 (ID 818).

Table 1.A.2-5						
RMCC Nontraditional Degree-Seeking Enrollment						
Fall Semesters 2009-2014						
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Degree-Seeking	638	666	674	632	553	533
Nontraditional	314	333	319	268	236	264
Nontraditional %	49%	50%	47%	42%	43%	50%

Source: RMCC Office of Institutional Research

Academic Preparedness

As previously stated, RMCC is an open door community college with many students entering with low levels of academic preparedness. Table 1.A.2-6 shows the percentage of degree-seeking students in the total RMCC population who enrolled in one or more developmental class during the 2009-2014 Fall semesters.

Table 1.A.2-6						
Percentage of Degree-Seeking Students Enrolled in One or More Developmental Class Fall Semesters 2009-2014						
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Degree-Seeking Students	638	666	674	632	553	533
Degree seeking students in 1 or more developmental classes (unduplicated headcount)	243	214	208	195	141	137
Students in 1 or more developmental classes	38%	32%	31%	31%	25%	26%

Source: RMCC Office of Institutional Research

Table 1.A.2-6 shows that during the 2009-2014 Fall semesters, an average of 32% of RMCC's degree-seeking population needed remediation in one or more subjects. Almost one third of RMCC's degree-seeking population is not academically prepared for the rigor of college level classes. RMCC's mission of bringing educational opportunities to its residents includes those who enter college without any academic deficiencies and those who enter with them in multiple areas. To this end, the College devotes considerable energy to ensure that all students, including the most underprepared, receive the best possible education.

Academic Programs

Consistent with its stated mission of providing exemplary educational opportunities, RMCC offers Associate degrees, technical certificates, and certificates of proficiency. The Associate of Arts offers a rigorous general education program designed for maximum transferability into a Bachelor's degree. The Associate of General Studies provides students flexibility in their course of study to meet individual employment, educational, and transfer goals. Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, as well as the Technical Certificates (TC) and Certificates of Proficiency (CP), are designed for students who plan to seek employment upon graduation. The AAS and TC degrees are regularly evaluated for relevance to trends in business and industry. Most recently, adjustments were made to the Business Administration, Information Systems, and Office Technology AAS degrees, and, as a result of the redesign, classes offering instruction in more current skills were introduced into the curriculum. The RMCC Catalog offers a complete listing with descriptions and requirements of the degrees and certificates awarded (ID 516).

Students enrolling at RMCC in 2007 chose from four (4) Associate of Applied Science degrees, six (6) Technical Certificates, and one (1) Certificate of Proficiency. Students enrolling in 2013 could choose from five (5) Associate of Applied Science degrees, a 40% increase in offerings from 2007; 10 Technical Certificates, a 40% increase in offerings from 2007; and 11 Certificates of Proficiency, a 90% increase in offerings from 2007. These increases demonstrate the College's commitment to respond to changing community needs (ID 306).

The change in degree offerings produced an increase in the number of degrees and certificates awarded. Table 1.A.2-7 shows the number of Associate Degrees, Technical Certificates, and in Certificates of Proficiency awarded from 2009 to 2014. The significant increase Certificates of Proficiency (*) in 2013 is the result of awarding Child Development Associate, Certified Nursing Associate, and Emergency Medical Technician certificates to students who had previously completed these degrees but never applied for graduation. A more accurate number for Certificates of Proficiency in 2013 is 71. The 2015 graduation numbers will help determine if the decrease was an anomaly or part of a larger trend.

Table 1.A.2-7							
Number of Degrees and Certificates Awarded 2009-2014							
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Associate Degrees	66	78	95	117	135	118	609
Technical Certificates	29	35	27	48	43	40	222
Certificates of Proficiency	54	55	75	89	139*	71	483
Total Degrees Awarded	149	168	197	254	317	229	1,314

Source: RMCC Office of Institutional Research

RMCC's Strategic Goal 3 states, *"Rich Mountain Community College creates quality learning environments by promoting excellence in teaching and learning enhanced by state of the art facilities, technology and delivery methods."* This affirms the commitment of the College to provide students with the most up-to-date learning environment possible (ID 193).

The accomplishment of Strategic Goal 3 is dependent on high speed internet. However, the rugged terrain and remoteness of the area hampered the delivery of reliable, high speed internet services. Prior to October 2012, Mena's sole internet provider was AT&T. AT&T's equipment structure leading into Mena was limited to microwave technology and was copper based throughout the area. This archaic equipment structure placed major limitations on the courses and services the College could offer students.

Recognizing that it must improve its internet delivery system before enhancing and modernizing instruction, RMCC entered into an agreement with the Arkansas Research and Education Optical Network (ARE-ON) (ID 563). Where the College once had a 10M fiber circuit, it now has a 100M network. The ARE-ON connection was fully implemented November 2013. The additional bandwidth available supplies the Mena, Waldron, and Mount Ida locations a faster, cleaner internet connection, and it enables instructors to use web-based ancillary materials as part of their classroom instruction while providing high definition compressed interactive video (CIV).

RMCC is committed to maintaining technology access for students. This commitment is demonstrated through budgetary outlays detailed in Criterion 5. The steady increase in budget appropriations for relevant information technology demonstrates the College's commitment to providing the most technologies as financially possible.

Students benefit from this technology investment as RMCC is able to offer more classes via distance. RMCC dedicates four classrooms as distance learning classrooms: two on the Mena campus and one each in Mount Ida and Waldron. In order to improve the CIV learning experience for faculty and students, the

College purchased LifeSize ® equipment, a high definition video conferencing system for the classrooms. CIV equipment was also installed at Cossatot River High School and Waldron High School.

The Fall 2013 semester marked the initial use of the new CIV system, and RMCC broadcast 14 college courses and three (3) concurrent classes to multiple locations. During the inaugural semester, RMCC was able to offer 12 classes (six in Waldron, five in Mount Ida, and one in Mena) that would have otherwise been cancelled due to low enrollment. To enable faculty to fully and effectively use this new technology, the College provided professional development and support services.

Students take advantage of online classes. This is especially true for students with transportation or work issues. In 2007, RMCC offered only five (5) online classes. Fall 2014, RMCC offered 33 technology based classes with 22 web based courses, seven (7) CIV classes, and four (4) hybrid classes. Student enrollment in online courses has increased from 36 degree-seeking students in Fall 2007 to 204 degree-seeking students taking one or more online classes during the Fall 2014 semester. Delivering a quality online experience to students, technically and academically, is important to RMCC. Students are asked to complete a confidential survey about their online experience using 13 criteria to evaluate courses. The 20 online courses offered during the Fall 2013 semester were evaluated at the end of the semester. Over 88% of the respondents found their online classes effective, and over 88% of those completing the online evaluation of their classes rated their online instructors as effective. The complete survey is available in the HLC resource library (ID 530).

Results from RMCC's 2014 Graduation Survey (ID 520) show the following:
- 90% of respondents were satisfied with their access to computer facilities and services
- 98.5% indicated the ability to use technology effectively was important to them (ID 735)
- 98.5% stated they had made progress in their ability to use technology effectively (ID 736).

Student Support Services

In 2012, RMCC renovated the Tower Room to create a seamless and more efficient admissions and registration process for students. The offices of Admissions, Financial Aid, Testing, Education Opportunity Center, Registrar, and the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs are centralized in one area. To complete the registration process, students are able to activate student emails, obtain student IDs, receive pre-advising services prior to meeting with their faculty advisors, and settle accounts with the Business Office without leaving to leave the Maddox Building. Students registering during the regular Fall 2014 registration were polled about their experience.

Table1.A.2-8		
Fall 2014 Entrance Survey		
	Met Expectations	Exceeded Expectations
Admissions	29.7%	70.3%
Financial Aid	35.6%	63.4%
Advising	27.7%	72.3%

Source: Office of Admissions

While not all registrants completed the survey, results from the Fall 2014 Entrance Survey show 100% of the 101 respondents felt the admissions and advising experience during registration met or exceeded their expectations, and 99% of respondents stated their experience with financial aid met or exceeded expectations. Plans are to add satisfaction questions about the other components of the registration process to the survey by the Spring 2015 registration.

RMCC believes that a quality relationship between students and academic advisors is vital to the long term success of the student and the College. Therefore, academic advising is mandatory for all students. The Student Success Committee, created in Fall 2013, is charged with evaluating RMCC's current advising practices and procedures for adherence to the College mission. The committee examined the existing advising mission statement and determined that it supported the RMCC mission but edited the statement for clarity. The new mission reads, "*The primary mission of advising at Rich Mountain Community College is to provide academic advising and assistance that will help all students to successfully transition into college life, set personal and academic goals, develop strategies for achieving those goals, and complete their educational plans.*"

Upon admission, every degree-seeking student is assigned a faculty advisor with expertise in the student's area of interest. An advising folder containing test scores, degree plans, and transcripts is created for all students. Students give the folders to advisors, who use them to assist students in choosing appropriate courses prior to registration each semester. Advisors also use the folders to record meetings with students. Students are encouraged to meet with academic advisors each term to review curriculum requirements, to discuss career and educational goals (including transfer), and to resolve problems that may interfere with academic success (ID 603).

Advising is not a one-time event occurring only at registration; rather, it is an ongoing process. Using intrusive advising strategies described by W.R. Earl as "…action oriented…a direct response to an identified academic crisis with a specific program of action," RMCC developed a Student Success Plan, which employs a multi-departmental, early intervention approach for addressing student difficulties (ID 518). Important to implementing the Student Success Plan is the RMCC's Faculty Portal. A key feature of the Faculty Portal is the attendance module. All instructors are encouraged to use this module to report students exhibiting at-risk behaviors such as irregular attendance, missing assignments, low test grades, poor attitudes, etc. The Associate Vice President for Student Affairs (AVPSA) regularly monitors the site and notifies academic advisors of student issues. At that time, the advisors, in addition to the classroom instructors and the AVPSA, contact the student to offer assistance in overcoming the difficulties affecting academic performance. Despite the use of nationally recognized best practices, RMCC's Fall to Fall overall retention rate has declined from a high of 41.5% in Fall 2010 to a low of 35% in Fall 2013 (ID 613). RMCC faces challenges in regard to its retention and graduation rates. To address this challenge, the College reconfigured its committee structure to better coordinate its efforts in the area of student retention.

Important to RMCC's Student Success Plan are the Student Support Services (SSS) program, the Learning Enrichment and Advising Center (LEAC), and the Career Pathways Initiatives (CPI). SSS, a federally funded TRIO program, offers students free academic support in the form of tutoring, academic advising, and transfer advising. LEAC offers free tutoring to those students who do not qualify for SSS services. CPI assists eligible adults in meeting education and employment training goals in order to acquire and maintain a self-sustaining job and career pathway.

The success rates within these programs are impressive. SSS reported 98% of their students in good academic standing with a persistence rate of 85% (ID 580). LEAC assisted 47 students in 18 subjects and reported a 94% Fall 2014 pass rate in subjects tutored.

1.A.3. RMCC's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

"All College personnel are dedicated to responsible stewardship and continued sustainability of the human, fiscal, and natural resources with which we have been entrusted." Adhering to this RMCC Value statement ensures that the planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission of the College.

RMCC's budgeting processes are transparent and involve all faculty, department heads, and administrators. All those tasked with creating a departmental budget are aware of the constraints caused by decreasing state appropriations and the increasing cost of delivering quality educational services. Copies of the final College budgets are stored in the Johnson Learning Common and are available to all interested parties (ID 40). This subcomponent is fully addressed in 5.C.1.

1.B. The mission is articulated publicly.

Rich Mountain Community College uses several modalities to communicating its statements of mission, vision, and values to students and the general public. The primary method of communicating its mission, vision, and values is through the RMCC Catalog/Student Handbook (Catalog), which is available to all interested persons via the RMCC website (ID 547).

To increase awareness of the institution's mission among students, the institution conducted a campus wide campaign in 2010 to have faculty include the RMCC mission statement in their syllabi. As of Fall 2014, 90% of all syllabi includes the RMCC Mission statement. (Copies of these syllabi are located in the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs office.)

Plaques with the mission statement are posted at the main entrance of every building on the main campus and outreach locations. A mandatory freshman orientation is offered at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters where students are introduced to the RMCC mission documents. In 2013, the College modernized its logo, and new faculty and staff business cards now include the RMCC mission statement.

1.B.1. RMCC clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.

RMCC clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents. The documents, which include the Vision, Mission, and Values statements (ID 547), the Philosophy and Goals statements (ID 746), and RMCC's Strategic Goals (ID 747), serve as the standard by which all decisions, academic and non-academic, are made. The President's message in the 2014 Fact Book speaks directly to the mission.

1.B.2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of RMCC's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application or research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.

To ensure the documents guiding all college processes are current and reflective of RMCC's mission, the College reviews its mission documents as part of its strategic planning process. RMCC is in its fourth year of a five-year strategic planning cycle. The last revision to the strategic plan occurred in 2010 (ID 193). While the mission of RMCC to bring "exemplary education and enrichment opportunities" is unchanged and its philosophy and values remain constant, the ever-changing needs of local constituencies require a regular evaluation of the vision for the direction of the College.

In 2010, a taskforce comprised of eight RMCC students, 62 community members from the service area, and 11 RMCC faculty and staff identified eight performance indicators to use as a guide when establishing the strategic goals for the College. Always mindful of the College's overall mission, the taskforce established the six strategic goals that would influence the decisions and direction of the College for the next five years.

Strategic Goal 1: Access to Higher Education
Rich Mountain Community College continues to provide the Ouachita Mountain Region with accessible, quality, and affordable education.

Strategic Goal 2: Student Success
Rich Mountain Community commits to student success by providing programs and services that will help students achieve their educational and career goals.

Strategic Goal 3: Quality Learning Environment
Rich Mountain Community College creates a quality learning environment by promoting excellence in teaching and learning enhanced by state of the art facilities, technology and delivery methods.

Strategic Goal 4: Educational Partnerships
Rich Mountain Community develops and maintains partnerships with area school districts, colleges, universities, and business and industry to address the educational and workforce development needs of the Ouachita Mountain Region.

Strategic Goal 5: Development of Resources
Rich Mountain Community College strives to develop and improve its programs services by seeking additional financial, physical, and human resource opportunities.

Strategic Goal 6: Continuous Planning and Improvement
Rich Mountain Community College continuously develops all outreach centers to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

Twice a year, faculty and staff submit a report of accomplishments from the current ending semester to the RMCC President. Each reported accomplishment is tied to a strategic goal. Two examples are

provided: (ID 236) (ID 543). This further demonstrates that the mission guides strategic planning as well as academic programs and daily operations of the College.

1.B.3. The mission document or documents identify the nature and scope and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services RMCC provides.

ACA 6-61-207 confers upon the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board the responsibility of establishing the appropriate role and scope designation for each public higher education institution. The designation presented to an institution identifies its intended audiences, the array of programs and services it may provide its constituents, and defines any special features of the college (ID 398).

RMCC affirms its commitment to its learning communities and outlines the nature and scope of the programs and services it provides in its Philosophy and Scope statement (ID 746).

Rich Mountain Community College recognizes the worth and dignity of the individual, as exemplified by its commitment to serving the multi-dimensional educational needs of its constituency. Toward this end, Rich Mountain Community College endeavors to provide academic, vocational, and personal enrichment opportunities and dedicates itself to quality programs. Guided by these principles the scope of the college is as follows:

- To offer associate degrees, technical degrees, and certificates of proficiency in occupational education for students who wish to gain competence in specific skill areas or to upgrade their skills.
- To provide the first two years of university parallel course work of high academic quality for students who transfer to senior institutions.
- To provide foundational based educational programs for students who need basic academic skills.
- To provide services for students who desire academic, vocational, financial, and personal guidance.
- To offer the facilities and resources of the College to promote educational, civic, and cultural endeavors within the community.
- To provide programs and services that support and enhance the social, civic, and economic development of the community and state.
- To offer a variety of programs and courses designed to meet academic, vocational, and personal enrichment needs.

As previously stated, "RMCC exists to provide all residents of the Ouachita Mountain Region with exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities to improve the quality of life and standard of living." This statement further explains the nature and scope of the College as well as identifies the intended recipients of programs and services. "All residents" identifies intended constituents while providing "exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities" identifies the scope of the College and "improving the quality of life and standard of living" of its constituency identifies the nature of its programs and services.

1.C. Rich Mountain Community College understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

Evidence that the College understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society is woven throughout its mission documents.

- As mentioned in the Mission, "RMCC exists to provide "all residents" with exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities."
- RMCC's Vision includes the statement, "The College demonstrates respect for the worth and dignity of each person and recognizes the uniqueness of each individual."
- RMCC's Philosophy and Scope states, "Rich Mountain Community College recognizes the worth and dignity of the individual, as exemplified by its commitment to serving the multi-dimensional educational needs of its constituency."

RMCC adopts a global definition of diversity by recognizing that diversity includes the visible attributes of race, ethnicity, gender, age, and physical abilities as well as the invisible attributes of socio-economic status, religious and political beliefs, cultural background, distinctive life experiences, learning abilities, and physical disabilities. RMCC strives to offer relevant learning opportunities and create an environment in which all students are welcomed, valued, respected, and nurtured during their academic and social development. Results from the 2014 RMCC Graduation Survey attest to the success RMCC's efforts to create this environment:

- 94.6% believe the college is equally supportive of men and women (ID 748).
- 93.8% agree the college is equally supportive of all racial/ethnic groups (ID 749).
- 93% are satisfied with the level of respect given to students by faculty (ID 750).
- 90.8% are satisfied with level of concern shown to them as individuals (ID 751).
- 86.5% felt a sense of belonging on the campus (ID 752).
- 90% felt free from harassment on campus (ID 753).
- 87% of nontraditional students indicated satisfaction with College responses to their needs (ID 754).
- 79.2% of students with special needs were satisfied with college response to their needs (20% were neutral or indicated the question did not apply) (ID 755).
- 83% felt the campus atmosphere was one of ethnic, political, and religious understanding (ID 756).
- 79.2% felt their college experience contributed to their social growth and in their understanding of others and their views. (ID 757).

1.C.1. RMCC addresses its role in a multicultural society.

For many students, their first introduction to the diverse ideas and issues found in a multicultural society occurs at RMCC. Recognizing that this may be the only time some students may be exposed to this diversity, the College works to incorporate opportunities within existing programs that allow students to grow in their awareness of and appreciation for a multicultural society.

While RMCC does not offer a specific course in multicultural studies, RMCC faculty embed assignments within curricula that allows students to explore different cultures and cultural practices (ID 519). Further discussion of classroom cultural exercises is provided in Criterion 3.

- Business Communications – Students research business practices in non-western countries, with a focus on values, attitudes, biases, viewpoints, and nonverbal communication.
- World Geography – As stated in the Goals and Objectives section of the class syllabus, students are expected to:
  - Demonstrate an understanding of the different world regions and where they are in relation to one another.
  - Discuss ways that the location, history, and natural resources affect each region's culture and economy.
  - Acknowledge the importance ethnicity, tribalism, government and religion play in the role of both developed and undeveloped countries; and explore issues of diversity.

  Students are also assigned reading passages from Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns.*
- Sociology – Students explore the elements of social structure, social stratification and its effects in the United States and the world, and seek an understanding of the origins and impact of racial and ethnic inequality. One assignment calls for the students to reflect on the stereotypes they hold and how those stereotypes impact their interactions with others. Students are also given five quotes that "celebrate the human race in all of its diversity" and asked to identify the individuals to whom the quotes are attributed.
- World Literature – Students read passages from the *Koran* and selected Middle-Eastern poems. They also read *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave.*
- English Composition II – Students read from the collections of Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes, and Alice Walker.
- Basic Nursing Principles and Skills – Learning outcomes in Basic Nursing include
  - Respecting patient sexual identity and personal choices/lifestyle,
  - Recognizing patient need to discuss sensitive issues related to sexuality,
  - Respecting patient religious and spiritual beliefs and recognizing the effect of those beliefs on plan of care,
  - Identifying the importance of patient culture/ethnicity when planning/providing/monitoring care,
  - Respecting the cultural background/practices of the patient, and
  - Making appropriate adjustments to care with consideration of those spiritual and cultural beliefs.
- Theatre Arts – Diversity awareness is accomplished through the reading of plays, reading *American Theatre* magazine, and attending live theatre.
- Philosophy – Students are introduced to important classical and contemporary philosophers and to the central themes of philosophy.
- College Literacy – Assigned reading passages expose students to concepts such as diversity in family structures, relationships, and norms; racial concerns; generational diversity; and changes in American family structures.
- Spanish – Students undertake a systematic study of the structure of the Spanish language and explore readings in the area of Spanish-American culture.

To expand the cultural experiences of RMCC's students, many of whom have never been to a museum or a symphony, culturally enriching activities are integrated within the curriculums of several classes.
- Theatre Arts students attend plays presented by the Arkansas Repertory Theatre and the Theatre Festival.

- Art Appreciation students visit the Mena Art Gallery, the Philbrook Museum, and the Crystal Bridges Museum. Students also have the opportunity to visit a local home designed by Fay Jones, an award winning architect and former student of Frank Lloyd Wright.
- Music Appreciation students attend the performances of the Fort Smith Symphony and musicals performed at the Arkansas Repertory Theatre.
- Science students visit the Mid-America Science Museum, Albert Pike State Park, and the Pine Blue Stem project demonstration area.

In a further attempt to bring about awareness, appreciation, and respect for diversity, the RMCC Student Government Association regularly displays posters with themes celebrating diversity, and posters highlighting ethnic observances are also displayed each month. Posters have included Black History Month, Native American Month, Holocaust Remembrance, Pacific Islander Month, and Hispanic American Month. In addition to displaying posters, the Student Government Association has donated books relating to the particular ethnic observance to the Johnson Learning Commons (ID 585) (ID 586) (ID 587).

The Johnson Learning Commons provides students access to numerous books and periodicals that feature a variety of world themes. Additionally, patrons have online access to collections housed at the Library of Congress, the Arkansas State Library, the Arkansas State Library Traveler Access, and the University Libraries Fayetteville (ID 730).

1.C.2. RMCC's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Processes

RMCC is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution. The College adheres completely to the Higher Education Act of 1965 (including all amendments through reauthorization up to 2008) and other Civil Rights laws in its processes and activities as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves (ID 727). The Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) statement can be found in Board of Trustees Policy (ID 772) as well as the admissions application and website (ID 537). RMCC is steadfast in upholding the ideal that every person deserves an opportunity for an education and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability status in providing educational services, employment, or promotion within the College.

Processes in Minority Recruitment

Act 1091 of 1999 (ID 797) requires all state-supported colleges and universities to establish a program for the retention of members of minority groups as students, faculty, and staff. Act 1091 requires each institution to prepare an annual progress report on the steps taken to reach the goals stated in the institution's plan. A summary of RMCC's 2012-2013 Minority Retention Plan Annual Report follows. The complete report is available in the HLC Resource Library (ID 281).

- RMCC continues to review and update its marketing and recruitment strategy, especially as it pertains to minorities. Projections show an increase in the Hispanic population throughout the RMCC service area.
- RMCC Adult Education offered an increased number of English as a Second Language (ESL) courses in all counties in the service area.
- RMCC advertises position openings nationally to attract a more diverse candidate pool.

- All other activities and actions outlined in the original plan were implemented and assessed.
- Two RMCC Board of Trustees are minorities.

RMCC faces several challenges in its attempt to attract and hire minorities. Some of the challenges include the rural nature of the area and limited compensation packages due to decreasing state allocations. RMCC advertises positions in national publications to encourage a diverse applicant pool, and all employment ads include the statement, "Women and minorities are encouraged to apply." Minority candidates have interviewed and been offered positions yet few have accepted. RMCC recognizes that the lack of community racial/ethnic diversity may have an impact on faculty/staff hiring.

Processes in ADA Compliance

RMCC's Affirmative Action Policy and Procedure declares that the College does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of age, race, sex, color, religion, ethnic origin, or handicap in any of its programs or activities. Furthermore, the College does not discriminate on the basis of handicap in admission or employment in programs and activities. This policy is available to interested parties via RMCC's online Catalog (ID 727). All class syllabi contain the following ADA statement:

> "It is the policy of Rich Mountain Community College to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal law, state law, and the college's commitment to equal educational opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodations is instructed to inform the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs at the beginning of the semester. The student and the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs will contact the faculty member as to the accommodations needed for the course."

To accommodate students with physical disabilities, all main entrance doors are automatic and all interior doors are handicap accessible. Multiple computer labs are equipped with a wheelchair accessible table and big screen computer for the visually impaired. RMCC recently completed installing new signage for all campus buildings. All interior doors have Braille lettering. Classroom accommodations are provided in cooperation with faculty. The 2004 ADA compliance report found RMCC facilities fully compliant with respect to wheelchair accessibility, parking spaces, and bathroom accommodations (ID 728).

RMCC cooperates with the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services offices in placing students in approved training programs. Area rehabilitation counselors determine the educational benefits students should receive from this program. Additionally, RMCC cooperates with the American Indian Center and the Choctaw Nation Educational Office in placing and documenting attendance of students in approved degree programs.

Activities

As stated in 1.C., RMCC recognizes the diverse nature of its students and appreciates the varied challenges they face as they seek an education. College activities reflect respect for individual student needs. Accommodations are provided in an attempt to best addresses those challenges.

Low-Income Students

Recognizing that poverty poses a significant barrier to educational success and because 65% of RMCC Fall 2013 students qualified for federal financial aid, all faculty and staff participated in the "Bridges Out of Poverty" simulation during the Spring 2014 in-service (ID 433). Involvement in this simulation led participants to gain a greater understanding of the obstacles faced by students living in poverty and the

potential impact those obstacles may have on a student's college experience. During a mid-semester Fall 2014 professional development activity, faculty and staff watched the HBO documentary *Paycheck to Paycheck* as a reminder of the circumstances many students face. When surveyed about their participation in the two staff development activities, 81% responded they had gained greater insight into the obstacles faced by students living in poverty, and 85% stated they had greater insight into the potential negative impact those obstacles could have on a student's college experience. Respondents were asked to share how participation in these activities it may affect responses to future student behaviors. Survey results are in the Resource Library (ID 593).

First-Generation Students

As outlined previously in Table 1.A.2-4, an average of 30.4% of RMCC's students were low-income, first-generation from Fall 2009 through Fall 2013. Research shows that first-generation students typically "have less knowledge of how to apply for college and for financial assistance, and have more difficulty in acclimating themselves to college once they enroll" (ID 594). RMCC's Educational Opportunity Center (EOC), a federally funded TRIO program with offices at all RMCC locations, serves this population and helps students navigate the college admissions process. During the 2012-2013 academic year, EOC served 1372 participants. Of those participants,

- 966 were low-income first-generation college students,
- 701 completed a financial aid application,
- 724 applied for admission to postsecondary education program, and
- 601 enrolled in a postsecondary institution (ID 315).

To further address first-generation concerns, new students are required to attend an orientation session. Topics include attendance, financial literacy, time management, and Title IX among others.

Military Students

RMCC offers the following services to its military members, active and retired, and their dependents:

- A.C.A. §6-60-205 – Members of the armed forces stationed in Arkansas and their emancipated dependents receive "in-state" tuition (ID 783).
- A.C.A. §6-60-211 – 25% of the tuition of a National Guard member stationed in Arkansas is waived (ID 784).
- Members of the military who receive orders that transfer them out of the area for a prolonged period may, when such transfer interferes with class attendance, request a full refund at any time during the semester.
- Two hours of P.E. credit may be waived for veterans on the basis of their military service.
- Student activated during the course of a semester shall be entitled to free tuition for one semester at the institution where attendance had been interrupted unless other benefits are available to cover beyond educational costs.
- Veterans Certifying Official on site full-time.
- Academic Advisor trained in veterans' education benefits.
- Priority registration and opportunity for early book purchase.
- Veterans Center.
- 2014 Graduation Survey 67.67% satisfied with veterans services (32.31% marked NA) (ID 758).

Retirees

RMCC's service area is a popular vacation destination, and many people return as retirees. The latest census data shows that 24.5% of Mena's population is 65 or older as compared to 15.4% for the state (ID 759). RMCC offers relevant learning opportunities to all, whether the goal is to earn a transfer degree or a technical certificate, to enhance workplace skills, or to expand experience. To engage the growing retired population in the education process and in accordance with A.C.A. §6-60-204, RMCC waives all tuition and mandatory fees for students 60 years of age or older wishing to take credit courses (ID 408) (ID 601).

In order to further encourage this growing demographic, RMCC offers a program to area residents 55 years of age and older. As stated on the RMCC website, the Double Nickel program:

- provides an informal educational environment which supports the premise that learning is a lifelong experience,
- meets the interests and specific needs of the older nontraditional student by promoting physical, emotional, and social activities which lead to improving the quality of life,
- promotes self-worth by sharing life experiences through activities that are integrated with the community as a whole, and
- provides new "retirement" vocational and avocational activities.

Classes offered through the Double Nickel program include Ouachita Regional History, Ozark Regional History, Exercise, Arthritis Foundation Exercise, and Line Dancing. A new addition to the 55+ curriculum is Resources for Healthy Aging. These classes have found their niche in the community as they fill up quickly and usually have a waiting list of people wishing to register. Since 2009, 832 seniors have taken these classes. RMCC recently added a 55+ program in Waldron and is preparing to add a similar program in Mount Ida.

RMCC's Lifelong Learning Department offers over 225 personal enrichment and continuing education classes that appeal to diverse ages, interests, and needs. Enrichment classes range from quilting, pottery, yoga, and bread making to computer basics, photography, iPad and iPhone basics, and CPR. A complete listing may be found in the HLC Resource Room Library (ID 621).

Pre-College

Believing that it is never too early to introduce children to the joys of learning and to a college campus, RMCC began Kids College in 2000. Kids College offers community children from kindergarten through sixth grade the opportunity to engage in a fun learning experience while on a college campus (ID 595) (ID 596) (ID 597) (ID 598) (ID 599). In 2009, the College had to cancel the program due to damage from an F3 tornado. Kids College resumed in 2010, but was suspended due to site construction in 2013. The College and the community look forward to this popular program scheduled to resume during Summer 2015.

1.D. Rich Mountain Community College mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

All College decisions reflect RMCC's commitment to the public good. RMCC's recognizes its obligation to the communities it serves and its responsibility to respect and protect the public's trust as expressed in the following Value statement: "All College personnel are dedicated to responsible stewardship and continued sustainability of the human, fiscal, and natural resources with which we have been entrusted."

This dedication is demonstrated in activities and initiatives launched by the College that extend into the communities of its service area.

1.D.1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role RMCC serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

As a public community college, RMCC is vested in the constituencies it serves. Actions and decisions consistently reflect the dedication to improving lives of area residents. RMCC's foundation is public service and programming reflects this obligation.

As discussed in 1.A.2, a high percentage of RMCC degree-seeking students identify as low income first-generation, a population historically at risk for not completing college. RMCC hosts five federally funded TRIO programs: Educational Talent Search (ETS), Upward Bound Classic (UBCL), Upward Bound Math/Science (UBMS), Educational Opportunity Center (EOC), and Student Support Services (SSS). TRIO programs identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds typical of the service area.

- ETS recruits participants from local area middle and high schools. The program provides tutoring, career exploration, aptitude assessments, counseling, mentoring programs, workshops, and information on postsecondary institutions.
- Through the local area high schools, UBCL serves low-income potential first-generation college students. RMCC's UBCL program provides tutoring, counseling, mentoring, cultural enrichment, education, or counseling services designed to improve the financial and economic literacy of students.
- The UBMS goal is to help students recognize and develop their potential to excel in math and science. RMCC's UBMS program provides participants summer programs with intensive math and science training, year-round advising, computer training, participation in scientific research, and counseling services to improve the financial and economic literacy of students.
- The EOC program provides information and counseling for GED and college admissions to qualified individuals who desire to enroll or continue in a program of education. Another important object of the program is to provide services to improve the financial and economic literacy of participants.
- The goal of SSS is to assist RMCC students in reaching graduation and/or transferring to a four year institution. An SSS participant receives specialized, on-on-one attention with advising, career development, and tutoring, and has access to latest technology in the computer labs.

RMCC's Strategic Goal 6 commits the College to continuous development of all outreach centers to meet the needs of the surrounding communities. To this end, RMCC actively supports and commits significant resources toward the operation of an off campus site in Scott County and an outreach center in Montgomery County.

Seeking a way to expand educational offerings and better serve the public in Scott County, RMCC secured a building formerly used by the Waldron School District and entered into a long-term lease agreement. RMCC leases the building at a minimal cost per year. In 2005, the College received $10,000 in state appropriations through legislative assistance to update the facility. With an additional $15,000 investment from the College, the building was renovated into six classrooms. All of these rooms are up-to-date technologically. In addition to its function as a classroom building, several community groups

regularly hold meetings in the facility. A modern computer lab is also available for community use (ID 558) (ID 559) (ID 560).

RMCC began offering classes in Montgomery County in 1994 in a building provided through county government. Recognizing the need for a long term solution, the College in partnership with the RMCC Foundation invested $750,000 toward a new facility. This outreach center expanded educational opportunities and provided space for community meetings (ID 581) (ID 582) (ID 583) (ID 584).

RMCC understands that continued development of these sites is essential. As discussed in 1.A.2, RMCC has dedicated substantial resources in technology enhancements to deliver superior educational opportunities to these communities.

RMCC's mission is to provide all residents in the region with the educational opportunities to improve their quality of life and standard of living. For many in the service area, improvement begins with obtaining a General Education Diploma (GED). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, individuals with a high school diploma or its equivalent experience a lower unemployment rate, 7.5% as compared to 11% for those with less than a high school diploma or GED, and they can expect a higher weekly income, $651 as compared to $472 (ID 602). Further fulfilling its mission and its obligation to the public, RMCC houses Adult Basic Education (ABE) centers on the main Mena campus as well as at RMCC facilities in Mount Ida and Waldron. Additional ABE locations are in Wickes, Delight, and Glenwood. The ABE program provided free GED classes to 179 clients from May 2013 to May 2014. Although RMCC's ABE program is the smallest in the state, it was recently recognized as the program with the most students passing the GED in 2014.

RMCC invites GED graduates to participate in its college commencement ceremony: 54 participated in 2011, 98 participated in 2012, and a record 138 participated in 2013. RMCC awards a Tuition and Fees Scholarship each year to the graduate with the highest score on the GED exam.

Commitment to public good is demonstrated through activities sponsored by RMCC student organizations. Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), a national scholastic honor organization, partners with the Student Government Association (SGA) and sponsors an annual Easter Egg Hunt for Literacy for area preschools. The children participate in story time, art activities, and an egg hunt. Children leave the College campus with story books, candy filled eggs, and a coloring book with crayons. The preschools are given several books for their libraries (ID 333). Another popular community service event occurs at Christmas. For a number of years, SGA has partnered with the RMCC Foundation for the Trail of Trees around the campus walking trails. Local businesses purchase Christmas trees and donate sponsorship monies. SGA members decorate the trees to the purchaser's specifications. Money raised from this activity is donated to the Toys for Tots Telethon on RMCC television. In December 2012, SGA presented a check for $600 to Toys for Tots (ID 354). Renovations and construction projects prevented decorating outside in 2013 and 2014, and a wreath silent auction has substituted. Proceeds again benefited Toys for Tots.

SGA invites nationally known motivational speakers to campus to present on topics such as leadership and goal setting. In 2013, as part of its commitment to the community, SGA engaged motivational speaker Jeff Yalden to present at an area high school during assembly and again in an evening session open to the community (ID 614). SGA sponsors several blood drives each semester. Members of PTK and SGA often volunteer to help at college and community functions like College Goal Sunday, Relay for Life, Special Olympics, RMCC Honors Evening, and RMCC's graduation.

The administration, faculty, and staff are deeply involved in a variety of community activities, including but not limited to participation and/or leadership in:

- Mena Area Community Chorus
- Walk Across Polk County
- Relay for Life
- 4-H
- Sabbath School
- Ouachita Little Theatre (acting, directing, set design)
- Summer programs for area youth
- Montgomery County Assisted Living Center
- Youth football, soccer, baseball, softball, and basketball league
- ESL program or
- Special Olympics

In addition to volunteering at numerous community events, members of RMCC staff serve on numerous community boards:

- Hospital Commission
- Polk County Library
- Polk County Developmental Center
- Healthy Connections
- Mena Water Commission
- Airport Commission
- Housing Authority
- Public school and church boards
- Polk and Montgomery Single Parent Scholarship Boards
- Acts of Love Food Pantry*

*An RMCC staff member was recently recognized as "Citizen of the Week" for her work in establishing Acts of Love, which distributes an average of 16,500 pounds of food monthly. This same staff member was also honored by the Mena Chamber of Commerce as the 2014 Volunteer of the Year.

RMCC regularly offers its facilities to community organizations, many times at reduced or no cost to the organization. Facility usage for the 12-month period from September 2013 to August 2014:

- Historic Armory – 55 events
- Mary Bales Ingles Lecture Hall – 68 events
- Student Union – 30 events
- Classrooms – 208 events

The newly constructed Ouachita Center on the main campus of Rich Mountain Community College was completed in Fall 2014. The community center and conference facility is over 13,000 square feet and includes a grand hall equipped with high definition audio/visual equipment, a retractable theatre-style seating section, six meeting rooms equipped with state-of-the-art technology, and a fully equipped catering kitchen. The Ouachita Center is an attractive addition to the RMCC campus and promises to be a

focal point for civic activities for the region. Since the Ouachita Center opened in August, over 30 events and activities have booked the center for use in the 2014-2015 year.

A sample of college-sponsored events held in the Ouachita Center thus far includes
- Fall Convocation for RMCC faculty and staff.
- Senior Day: Approximately 425 seniors from 6 service area school districts came to the RMCC campus and received information on degrees and programs offered at RMCC as well as important information regarding Financial Aid and other services available to them upon graduating from high school (ID 619).
- Career Day: Students from seven high schools gathered to hear motivational speaker Chad Foster and visited with over 30 local professionals (ID 615).
- Duke Frederick Lecture – 2014 ARCO Summit (ID 616).
- Dinner Theatre: Dinner prepared and served by the RMCC Culinary Arts Program while RMCC's Actors Guild presented the play *The Good Doctor* (ID 618).
- College Preview Night: An event designed to introduce the nontraditional student to the RMCC campus and its programs and services (ID 617).
- Annual Christmas Open House

A sample of community events held in the Ouachita Center thus far includes
- AERIS Teacher Training
- Mena Lioness Lions Club Art Auction
- Polk County Clerk Training for Poll Workers
- Traditional Ozark Life with Susan Young

1.D.2. RMCC'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.

As a public state institution of higher learning, RMCC has no investors, parent organization, or external interests.

The College is responsible to the students and public constituencies in its service areas and to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. RMCC supports itself through tuition and fees, legislative appropriations, and millage. RMCC received $376,014 in county millage revenue in 2013. RMCC is able to fulfill its role as established by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board and deliver high quality programs to its students with 65% less yearly tax revenue than the nearest community college 45 miles to the south (ID 562).

1.D.3. RMCC engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Engaging with its external constituencies and communities of interest is an important part of the scope of RMCC. In its Philosophy and Scope statement, RMCC is dedicated to "providing programs and services that support and enhance the social, civic, and economic development of our community and state" (ID 547). To this end, the following advisory committees work closely with RMCC by providing valuable

input in the development of new classes and programs as they communicate their needs for a skilled workforce (ID 24):

- Business Research and Education Center
- Machine Tool Technology
- Computer Systems Technology
- Nursing
- Lifelong Learning
- Television Radio Broadcast
- Mena Aviation Complex
- Cosmetology

As the result of ongoing discussions with area business and industry leaders, the College saw the need to redesign and give new direction to its Workforce Education Department. In August 2013, RMCC created the Department of Lifelong Learning (LLL).

LLL is dedicated to coordinating ongoing strategy meetings with business and industry leaders to provide relevant professional development opportunities for students and businesses. Since the creation of the department, numerous trainings have been offered. Five new technical certificate programs are now offered as the result of the conversations between RMCC's LLL department and its business partners.

Further demonstrating its support of initiatives directed toward the economic development of the community and state, RMCC is an active participant in the following local and state organizations (ID 724):

- Mena/Polk County Chamber of Commerce
- Mount Ida Chamber of Commerce
- Waldron Chamber of Commerce
- Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce
- Council for Resource Development
- Arkansas Community Colleges
- Arkansas Regional Coalition of the Ouachitas (ARCO)

RMCC is fortunate to have six (6) cooperative and supportive public school districts in its service area. The school districts are:

- Mena School District
- Ouachita River School District (Acorn and Oden Campuses)
- Cossatot River School District (recent consolidation of the Wickes, Van-Cove, and Umpire districts)
- Waldron School District
- Mount Ida School District
- Caddo Hills School District

All school districts offer concurrent and dual credit at varying levels. Mena and Ouachita River participate in the Secondary Career Center. All superintendents and principals are active partners in new

programs and offerings at the college. Public school administrators are invited to campus at least once per year to discuss needs, concerns or new ideas. Public school counselors are hosted on campus once per year for the National Counselors training to be updated on financial aid and scholarship developments.

Studies show that offering concurrent college credit has a major impact on rural areas. The National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) states, "Rural students are less likely to enroll in college than their urban peers. As such, they are in a unique position to benefit from concurrent enrollment, given that participation in concurrent enrollment increases the likelihood that an individual will enroll in and complete college." Understanding the importance of earning college credit while in high school, RMCC offers concurrent credit. The program began by offering four courses on the RMCC campus. It has expanded to include seven courses at all area high schools. RMCC served 295 high school students by offering 32 concurrent classes using multiple delivery methods to the service area school districts (ID 403) (ID 404) (ID 787).

Many come to RMCC seeking skills to change their earning potential. Understanding this, RMCC has a long history of offering career and technical education. Through the Secondary Career Center Program, local public school districts send 12th grade students to the Mena campus to take courses in Machine Tool Technology, Medical Professions Education, and Radio and TV. Students completing two semesters of Machine Tool Technology receive a Certificate of Proficiency. Students completing the Medical Professions pathway leave the program CPR certified and need only complete clinical hours and a state exam to become a Certified Nursing Assistant. Radio and TV students complete an internship to earn a Certificate of Proficiency in Radio and TV. In response to requests made by area superintendents and state legislators, RMCC has applied to the Arkansas Career Education Department to open a satellite location career center in Mount Ida.

RMCC's service area has a significant number of parents choosing to homeschool their children. To better meet the needs of these students as they transition to college, RMCC has hosted several homeschool student/parent meetings to discuss the college admissions process, features of an acceptable home school diploma, financial aid, and curricular offerings (ID 588) (ID 589).

An important partner for RMCC's future is the RMCC Foundation. The Foundation was "established to promote the interest and welfare of Rich Mountain Community College by aiding and extending the work and activities of the College" (ID 773). In addition to raising awareness of the mission and role of the College and the Foundation itself, the Foundation focuses fundraising for the following objectives (ID 774):

- Provides scholarships to increase access to a college education for full and part-time students based on merit and financial need.
- Enhance a wide range of academic programs to improve the education of students and provide cultural opportunities for the community.
- Enhance the buildings and grounds of the college.

As a result of the Foundation's ongoing efforts, 75 students received Foundation Scholarships totaling $52,259 for the 2013-2014 academic year, and over $600,000 was raised for the new Ouachita Center.

Criterion One Summary

Rich Mountain Community College is guided by the role and scope established by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Under the leadership and guidance of the RMCC Board of Trustees and President, the College fulfills its stated educational mission. Faculty, staff and administration fully understand the mission of the college and work in a culture committed to the ideals expressed in the mission, vision and values. Faculty, staff and administration follow guidelines provided by strategic goals to complete RMCC's public purpose.

The service area and enrollment profile of the College are marked by a high level of poverty and low level of educational attainment. However, the College constantly strives to transcend area demographics and bring a high level of service to its students. Technology is current and continually improved. Academic programs are rigorous, yet developmentally appropriate for those overcoming academic deficiencies. Technical programs offer training in high demand occupations. The needs of RMCC students, from the time of their admission until the completion of their educational goals, are met by student services, programs and staff.

RMCC clearly articulates its mission through several documents via multiple modalities, all of which are easily accessed by the public. RMCC's Mission Statement explains why it exists, its Values Statement declares the College's guiding principles, the Vision Statement describes its goals for the people of its service area, and, finally, the Philosophy Statement provides the nature and scope of the College. The practice of formally evaluating RMCC's mission documents as part of the strategic planning process allows for a critical analysis of its statements. This process ensures the documents are current and relevant to its constituency and in alignment with the strategic goals of the College.

By its very nature, a community college is a diverse institution that serves a constituency with variable needs and goals. Diversity at RMCC is valued and respected, and programming is inclusive. Consequently, all processes and activities of the College from Affirmative Action and ADA compliance to academics and student activities are designed to create an atmosphere to promote the achievement of all students. RMCC strives to instill social competencies required to succeed in a multicultural environment.

RMCC provides the service area's population with expanded access to educational opportunities for those who seek lifelong learning. Special programs are available for foundational based studies, workforce or skills upgrades, or the hobbyist seeking personal enrichment. The College mission is to serve its residents though whatever means necessary.

Criterion One Strengths

- RMCC faculty, full and part-time, and staff are aware of and understand the mission of the College and are committed to carrying out the intent of the mission in their classroom and community activities.
- College programming is appropriate for its constituencies.
- College mission documents are current and widely disseminated.
- All College decisions are mission driven.
- The College fosters a culture of respect for all students.

- The College hosts a dynamic Lifelong Learning Program.
- The College provides programs and services to support the social, civic, and economic development of the community and state.
- The College strives to maintain state-of-the-art technology that bridges the gap created by rural location.

Criterion One Challenges

- The College must maintain progress in the midst of continuing budget constraints.
- The College will continue to face challenges related to recruiting minority faculty and staff.
- The College must investigate innovative ways to introduce multicultural elements into a homogeneous population.
- The College must continue to offer relevant cost-efficient professional development
- The College must identify the reasons for and stem the decline in retention numbers which persist despite use of nationally recognized best practices.

Criterion Two: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

2.A. Rich Mountain Community College operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Policies and procedures are in place to enforce the integrity of budgeting, hiring, grievances, affirmative action, discrimination, sexual harassment, and to ensure a safe environment for both employees and students. In 1983, the RMCC Board of Trustees (Board or BOT), as the governing board, adopted a Board of Trustees Policy Manual (ID 37) to establish fair and ethical policies and processes. The Board's duties are outlined in the Arkansas Code Annotated (ACA) §6-61-521 (ID 475). The Board is given the charge "to make rules and regulations consistent with the provisions of ACA §6-61-520 (ID 476), §6-61-521, and with the rules and regulations of the state board as are necessary for the proper administration and operation of the community college."

Between 2003 and 2005, the Board revised and reorganized the Board Policy manual. In 2008, a situation revealed similar but differing policies among Board Policy, Administrative Policy (ID 637), and the Employee Handbook (ID 419). The interim RMCC president recommended the Board review and consolidate these policies. The Board's Policy Committee worked with the new president to create an RMCC committee to help with the review. To break the project into manageable pieces, the new College Policy Advisory Committee looked for similar policies to consolidate with existing Board Policy. Phase 1 resulted in a large number of revision recommendations approved by the Board on December 7, 2010. Phase 2 addressed remaining items in the Employee Handbook and Administrative Policy (currently outdated documents). Because both included procedures, the first task was to separate policy from procedure. Procedures were filtered back to appropriate areas like the Business Office Operating Manual, library procedures, the Governance Through Committees document, faculty position descriptions, etc. After lengthy research, the Phase 2 policy recommendations were presented to the Board Policy Committee for consideration in 2014 and approved by the full Board on September 10, 2014. For research purposes, a policy cross reference (ID 638) was created. In addition to the consolidation project, a number of policies were reviewed and revised throughout the project as recorded in minutes with approval dates indicated on individual policies. The result of the evaluation, assessment, and eventual changes for improvement is the College is now better situated for the day-to-day operations with clear and concise policies in one document.

Policy evaluation is an ongoing process. New policies are currently being researched. An example is a social media policy. Work is underway with other Arkansas community colleges to review the few that have been adopted already.

The RMCC Board Policy manual (ID 37) is accessible online to Board members, faculty, staff, students, and community members. The President's Office is the repository for college policy and procedures. Employees are knowledgeable about the location of policies and procedures. New employees first learn

this during employee orientation. Existing employees are given notice of changes, corrections, or additions to policies and procedures via email, employee meetings, or during bi-annual in-service sessions. Legislation requires annual notification of particular policies, the Human Resource office retains the appropriate audit files.

Integrity of Financial Management Functions

RMCC uses a balanced budgeting process in order to manage its financial resources properly and effectively for the institution and its students. The Budget Committee spearheads the development of the budget, which incorporates the College's Mission (ID 682) and the Strategic Plan (ID 193). The budget is continuously monitored by area supervisors and Business Office personnel. More information on the budgeting process is explained in detail in Criterion 5.

RMCC Business Office

Personnel adhere to Government Accounting Standard Board (GASB) financial practices. According to the Legislative Joint Audit Report for 2011-2012 (ID 117) conducted by the Arkansas Legislative Joint Auditing Committee, RMCC is financially positioned to provide resources where appropriate despite uncertain financial support from the legislature. Arkansas Legislative Joint Auditing Committee audits from prior years noted that RMCC financial standards are maintained. No significant findings were found during the annual audit. The RMCC Business Office Procedures Manual (ID 313) details proper financial operations.

RMCC personnel have the ability to monitor respective departmental budgets throughout the year by accessing the RMCC Intranet. Detailed general ledger expenditures and income for the year are provided. Each department is responsible for maintaining the funds allocated for the year in an ethical manner when choosing to purchase products or spend funds for departmental needs.

The Board oversees the financial responsibilities of the College. The Board reviews monthly and year-end financial statements produced by the Vice President of Administration (VPA) and the Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources. Board members are appointed to one of three standing committees: Finance, Planning, and Policy. The Finance Committee meets with the President, the VPA, and the Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources to oversee budgeting determinations for the next fiscal year. Policies that govern the Board are located in Article I of Board Policy (ID 640).

RMCC Foundation, Financial Aid Office, and Scholarships

The RMCC Director of Development and Community Relations (DDCR) coordinates with the Foundation Board of Directors to develop policies to ensure the proper management of donated funds. The DDCR works collaboratively with the Financial Aid Office (FAO) to provide updates and information on scholarship availability and to collect applications for scholarships. The RMCC Scholarship Committee is appointed annually by the President. The Committee reviews and selects Foundation scholarship recipients based on scholarship eligibility, need, and/or donor-specific criteria. A description of the Scholarship Committee purpose and responsibilities can be viewed within the Governance Through Committees document (ID 122) located on the RMCC Intranet. In addition to Foundation scholarships, the Scholarship Committee selects the RMCC Academic Scholarship recipients by using RMCC-defined academic measures and test scores. Information about this procedure is located within the Institutional Programs and Scholarships section of the RMCC Catalog (ID 641). FAO personnel and the DDCR serve as ex-officio members during the scholarship selection process. The FAO produces award letters for the recipients based on the approval or denial of scholarships as determined by the Committee and processes the award funds for RMCC scholarship programs.

The RMCC Foundation exists to promote the interest and welfare of Rich Mountain Community College by aiding and extending the work and activities of the College and its students. Foundation operations are administered under the direct supervision of the President and the DDCR. Working with the President and DDCR, the Foundation Board of Directors provides leadership and guidance for the development, growth, expansion, progress, and accomplishment of educational objectives, cultural events, and activities that aid and enrich the RMCC student body, alumni, and the residents of the Ouachita Mountain Region. To maintain proper operation and administration of funds, an external audit is conducted annually to review the financial records of funds expended and received during the prior fiscal year. The Foundation operates under the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) financial guidelines and is considered a not-for-profit organization with a 501(c) (3) status. Copies of the Foundation Policy and By-Laws are located online (ID 321).

All financial aid that students receive, other than scholarships, is governed by the U.S. Department of Education. Students must complete the Free Application for Financial Aid (FASFA) to receive a government Pell Grant. No selection process is used for Pell grants recipients as these are awarded based on Federal Guidelines (ID 521). The Financial Aid Office (FAO), in conjunction with the RMCC Business Office, manages the disbursement of Pell Grant awards. Information about financial aid is found on the Financial Aid tab of the RMCC Website (ID 522).

The FAO uses PowerFAIDS (ID 523) software which has a built-in quality assurance function for administering federal funds. All financial-aid related funds are administered by the Financial Aid Office. There are several reports that can be produced to review students' awards and budgets to help confirm students do not exceed the established cost of attendance.

In order to ensure the proper processing and awarding of financial aid funds, the FAO distributes awards to the Business Office. All disbursement checks and refunds are administered by the Business Office. The Business Office reviews each financial aid recipient's statement for accuracy. Both offices coordinate monthly to balance funds and affirm that funds are administered according to state and federal guidelines.

RMCC FAO and Business Office audits provide evidence that student financial aid funds are managed in an ethical manner. The A-133 audit (ID 279) (ID 280) conducted by the State of Arkansas and Veterans Administration Compliance surveys (ID 271) state that RMCC had zero findings in administering state and federal funds through these offices. Audits from previous years can be found in the Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources office or the Financial Aid Office.

RMCC financial resources are managed with integrity. The Business Office, Financial Aid Office, RMCC Foundation, TRIO programs, and Career Pathways departments consistently prove ethical and responsible operation of RMCC financial resources. Audits reveal the proper use and distribution of such funds. The TRIO and Career Pathways programs are funded through federal and state grants and covered in more detail later in this Criterion.

Purchasing Process

RMCC follows state guidelines for purchasing items for the institution. The purchasing processes allow departments to submit purchase order requests via the College's Intranet, use College-issued procurement cards (P-Cards), or through the procurement clerk. Supervisors approve purchases for their departments. In all cases, employees are responsible for assuring budget funds are available. There is an internal approval hierarchy in place for each type of purchase with some values requiring presidential approval. The Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources reviews electronic requests to confirm the correct general ledger account is used to track expenses appropriately. The Controller reviews those used on P-Card logs. All employees who are issued a P-Card are trained in the proper use and documentation

required. Guidelines are located online in the RMCC Procurement Card Program Policies and Procedures Manual (ID 314). Article III of Board Policy, section 3.02 (ID 642), focuses on fiscal-related policies. The purchasing process is addressed in depth in the Criterion 5 section. These processes assist the College in using funds properly in accordance with state requirements.

Bid Process

According to the Introduction to Procurement section of the Business Office Procedures Manual (ID 313), "Purchase for most commodities and services totaling $10,000 or less…may be made by Procurement without bid procedures." RMCC follows a Competitive Bid process for materials or projects with a projected cost between $10,000 and $50,000. Purchases exceeding $50,000 for normal commodities and services or "capital improvements" undergo a formal Competitive Sealed Bid procedure. The full process can be found in the Business Office Procedures Manual (ID 313). Because laws, limits, and guidelines may change, Board Policy 3.02.03 (ID 642) directs the College to operate under state purchasing laws.

Grant Funded Programs

RMCC relies on many grant funded programs to provide services to the residents of the Ouachita Mountain Region. Each program is governed meticulously according to state or federal guidelines. The RMCC Board of Trustees formally accepts all substantial grants during the initial award phase. Board Policy 1.01.02 (ID 643) contains the full description of this policy. In 2014, the grant management policy 3.02.16 (ID 644) was revised, renamed, and merged with administrative policies to more accurately describe the actions required. Each grant coordinator works closely with the Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources. Printed copies of Annual Performance Reports (APR) are available in the individual grant coordinator's office, except when noted below.

The Adult Basic Education program is funded through annual grant awards from state and federal funding sources. These funds are performance driven and are based on a three year average of data collected through the adult education accountability portal coined "AERIS." The bulk of RMCC funds are provided by the state grant which typically provides $250,000 annually. Federal funds are supplemental funds in the Direct and Equitable category and focus on Adult Basic Education students. At the beginning of the fiscal year, the Adult Education department submits an Initial Budget Amendment form (ID 466). During the course of the year, monthly expenditure reports (ID 467) (ID 468) are completed for both state and federal funding and are submitted to the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center in Little Rock. At the end of the fiscal year, amendments (ID 469) (ID 470) to the yearly budget are completed. The original budget is then reconciled with the final budget. Detailed narratives are completed for the initial budget and any budget amendment.

Career Pathways Initiative (CP) (ID 524) (ID 329) is a state-funded program. CP program funds must be administered in accordance with state requirements. CP funds are reimbursed to the College on a monthly basis for accrued expenses. Since its inception in 2007, CP has passed all required audits (ID 266) (ID 267), and the program has been rewarded with additional performance funds for its continued success and operations.

Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) (ID 526) is a federal program funded through the US Department of Education. RMCC is awarded funds through a competitive grant process. Parents who are eligible to receive a federal Pell grant and are enrolled in a degree program at RMCC are eligible to receive childcare assistance. Agreements (ID 471) are set up between RMCC, the student, and the daycare or preschool where the child will attend. An APR (ID 472) (ID 473) (ID 474) is submitted to the US Department of Education. Copies of documents relating to CCAMPIS are located in the office of the Director of Career Pathways.

The Path to Accelerated Completion and Employment (PACE) grant was a Department of Labor grant with three components. The first redesigned developmental education programs in an attempt to shorten a student's time to degree completion. The second component developed a program that includes test preparation for those taking placement exams, online academic advising, and a virtual career center. The final component included the development of two new Certificates of Proficiency and two new Technical Certificates. Northwest Arkansas Community College (NWACC) provided fiscal oversight for the twenty-two (22) Arkansas community colleges participating in the program. A time and effort report (ID 485) were submitted monthly. Quarterly reports (ID 486) were also compiled and submitted. Purchases required prior approval from NWACC before items were reimbursed to the College.

The Carl D. Perkins grant is a federally-funded grant program that focuses on the academic achievement of career and technical education students and strengthens the connections between secondary and postsecondary education. Time and effort reports (ID 418) and Personnel Activity Reports (ID 417) are submitted quarterly. These reports are submitted through consortium partner Southern Arkansas University for reimbursement. The AVPSA is the Perkins grant coordinator.

The Title III Program (ID 525) is a federal grant program to improve education for low-income students. The program helps expand capacity by providing funds to improve and strengthen the academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability of eligible institutions. RMCC received grant funds from the Title III program for a five-year period that ended in 2009. The RMCC Title III grant was managed by a Title III coordinator. In order to qualify for the grant, RMCC had to identify an activity project. RMCC had two project activities: enriching learning opportunities for developmental students and developing an endowment. Objectives and performance indicators were listed for each year. Appropriate APRs were generated that included a detailed budget spreadsheet and analysis. Spending was tied to the achievement of objectives. Each expense was supported by narrative documentation for the purpose and intent of the expense and how it related to stated objectives. Copies of the APRs for Title III are stored in the Director of Lifelong Learning/Program Development's office.

RMCC receives funds for five federal TRIO grant programs: Educational Opportunity Center, Educational Talent Search, Student Support Services, Upward Bound, and Upward Bound Math/Science. These TRIO programs are under the direct supervision of the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs (VPASA). Each program has a director who works in conjunction with the VPASA and the Business Office when administrating federal funds. The Business Office draws down funds in accordance with US Department of Education guidelines. TRIO programs submit APR to the Department of Education for evaluation to ensure that the program is meeting or exceeding the required objectives set forth for each program. As evidenced by TRIO APRs (ID 315) and the listed individual grant objectives, all five RMCC TRIO programs consistently meet or exceed program objectives.

RMCC's newest grant, the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant, is funded by the Department of Labor. This grant provides RMCC with funds to expand and improve the ability to deliver career training programs. The programs are to be completed in two years or less and suited for workers who are eligible for training under the TAA for Workers program. The programs are to prepare students for employment in high-wage, high-skill occupations. RMCC is a member of the South West Arkansas Community College Consortium (SWACCC) which comprises seven community colleges committed to the economic development of the southwest region of Arkansas. Quarterly and annual reports are used for tracking and reporting outcome measures. At the time of this writing, the first cycle for quarterly and annual reporting was not yet completed. Time and effort reports (ID 489) are submitted monthly.

Academic Functions

RMCC follows fair and ethical policies and processes by students, faculty, and staff in all programs. This is evident in the new Academic section, Article V (ID 645) of Board Policy, created during Phase 2 of the policy consolidation project. It captured the academic-related policies from the now outdated Employee Handbook. Academic freedom is covered in policy 5.01.03 (ID 687).

Additional academic-related expectations and procedures were written into the 2013 revision of the full-time and adjunct faculty position descriptions (ID 555). The policies, along with others, lay the groundwork for faculty to create fair and ethical procedures for students. Course syllabi are covered in the academic advising handbook (ID 23). Students are introduced to syllabi guidelines during new student orientation (ID 64).

Instruction

Faculty members at RMCC desire to provide residents of the Ouachita region with educational opportunities to enrich their lives and do so ethically and responsibly. This is shown in small part by the faculty consistently re-evaluating degree and certificate programs to meet the needs of the service area. Since the last self-study, the list of new certificates developed to meet those ever-changing needs includes Information Technology-Business, Cosmetology, Computer Forensics, Database Applications, Small Business Development, Aviation Maintenance, Industrial Maintenance, Welding, Certified Nursing Assistant, Culinary Basics, Introduction to Radio and TV, and Office Systems – Medical.

Faculty evaluate degrees, certificates, and programs to determine if changes, additions, or corrections are needed. Faculty in technical programs are tasked with staying current within their disciplines to address business and industry changes. Technical program faculty also meet with business and industry advisory committees to stay abreast of possible curriculum changes. The general education degrees follow the guidelines set by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADHE) for program requirements and transferability. All changes to degrees and certificates are reported to ADHE.

In addition, ADHE requires every public institution to establish a program review schedule were every degree and certificate program is reviewed and reported every seven years. The current program review schedule (ID 688) for the academic years from 2011 through 2019 creates an ongoing evaluation of offerings. When new programs are added, the revised program review schedules are submitted to ADHE. The programs reviewed during the 2013-2014 academic year were the Computer Systems Technology degrees and certificates (ID 622) and the Associate of Arts and Associate of General Studies degrees (ID 697) (ID 700) (ID 701). In June 2014, the Nursing program review by the State Board of Nursing was completed (ID 696). In 2011-2012, Machine Tool Technology (ID 633) certificate program was reviewed. When programs are reviewed through the ADHE process, degree requirements are a part of the review criteria. Evaluation results are presented in Criterion 4.

Academic Freedom

RMCC faculty members are guaranteed academic freedom in the classroom, but must adhere to guidelines set forth in Article V, Academics (ID 645) in Board Policy. Research for pecuniary return requires prior approval from the VPASA and the President. In the classroom, faculty are asked to "refrain from introducing controversial matter bearing no relationship to the subject. Faculty members are citizens, members of a learned profession, and members of an educational community. Speaking or writing as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline. However, as individuals of learning and as members of an educational community, instructors should understand that the public may judge the profession and the institution by their utterances, appearance, and actions. It is,

therefore, expected that they will at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and conduct themselves in a professional manner."

Students

Students are expected to adhere to ethical and fair processes as defined in the Catalog under Dishonesty (ID 666). Prohibited Conduct section (ID 667) defines policies for students in regards to endangerment, harassment, disruption, sexual misconduct, illegal drugs and alcohol, fire and safety, gambling, property violations, computer violations, administrative summons, smoking, and other violations.

Computer Use Policy

Faculty, staff, and students are required to adhere to strict guidelines in regard to the use of technology. RMCC faculty and staff are required to read and sign an Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy 4.04.06 (ID 319) detailing the proper use of computers, the Intranet, and all technological resources before being given an email address and data access. To access information resources, students are mandated to adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy and accept the policy during their initial Student Portal setup. Students sign an agreement to abide by all RMCC policies and procedures as part of the Application for Admission (ID 527).

The Acceptable Use Policy for students is listed under the Information Resources – Acceptable Use Statement within the College Catalog (ID 668). Furthermore, students agree to abide by RMCC policies during each registration period by signing the Student Registration Form (ID 282). It states, "I must abide by the RMCC acceptable use policies concerning the utilization of RMCC information resources. Failure to abide by these policies will constitute cause for termination of resource access and further disciplinary and/or legal action…."

Personnel Functions

Personnel-related and environment-related policies are found throughout Board Policy (ID 37), primarily in Articles II (ID 646) and Article IV (ID 647). The policy covering transfers and internal hiring is policy 4.02.04 (ID 648). The policy covering external hiring is policy 2.03.02 (ID 649). The search committee responsibilities are located in Governance Through Committees (ID 122). The formal employee Grievance Procedure Policy 4.04.04 (ID 650) includes the process an employee follows to file a complaint. The Sexual Harassment Policy is defined in detail in 4.04.05 (ID 651). The Fair Employment Practice/Nondiscrimination Policy 4.02.01 (ID 652) outlines nondiscrimination in regards to fair treatment of employees without regard to race, gender, color, creed, religion, ethnic origin, age, or disability. RMCC employees also have access to the Dismissal Process found in policy 4.02.08 (ID 653).

All employees must adhere to policy 4.02.02, the Employee Code of Conduct (ID 760). The code provides uniform conduct standards. A copy of the Code of Conduct is provided to new employees and available for employee review on the College Intranet. Faculty must also adhere to the policies in the Academic section, Article V (ID 645) of Board Policy, and expectations are listed on instructor position descriptions.

RMCC Employee Compensation and Benefits, Contracts, and State of Arkansas guidelines for salaries and benefits are defined in the policy section 4.03 (ID 654).

Auxiliary Functions

The Ouachita Center on the Mena campus was built in 2014 and opened in August 2014. The Historic Armory, owned by RMCC, is located on DeQueen Street in Mena. Both buildings are available for rental to the public for community events. An individual or group may make reservations through the RMCC

Development Office. The reservation agreement and policies of usage (ID 276) can be obtained from the Development Office.

The RMCC Student Union, which encompasses the Bookstore and the Mountain Range Grill, handles the purchasing and sales of textbooks, merchandise, and food products. RMCC Student Union operations are governed under the Vice President of Administration.

Salon Services are offered to the general public through the RMCC School of Cosmetology. This program is operated under the general supervision of the VPASA.

2.B. Rich Mountain Community College presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

RMCC's academic program descriptions and requirements are listed on the College website (ID 532) as well as in the Catalog (ID 669). Tuition and fees are also published online (ID 533) and within the Catalog (ID 670). RMCC adheres to federal government regulations for net cost of attendance. A link to the net price calculator (ID 522) can be found on the Financial Aid page of the College website.

The Personnel Directory (ID 671) in the RMCC Catalog lists all full-time faculty and staff credentials. Adjunct faculty credentials can be viewed upon request by contacting the office of the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs (AVPAA).

Syllabi for each course adhere to the RMCC Basic 13-Point Syllabus (ID 317) provided by the AVPAA. Besides course specific information, students receive information regarding the ADA Section 504 statement, RMCC's tobacco policy, the College's mission statement, a credit hour definition (as defined by the US Department of Education), a credit hour calculator, and the instructor's policy for academic dishonesty, which adheres to the academic dishonesty guidelines located in the RMCC Dishonesty portion of the Prohibited Conduct section in the College Catalog (ID 667). Additional information that the faculty member or RMCC deems necessary may also be included.

Programs and Requirements

Information pertaining to academic and/or lifelong learning courses is accessible through the RMCC website (ID 532) (ID 534). It is also published in local media prior to registration. Costs of courses and associated fees are also posted and printed with the course schedule. The College provides information for individuals of all ages who wish to enhance their knowledge in a broad range of offerings. RMCC provides educational opportunities to residents of all ages through a diverse program offering. Program requirements are also communicated through the website. Some of the programs include:

- Kids College for elementary school students
- Concurrent credit and Secondary Career Center for high school students
- The Double Nickle program for students 55 years of age and older.

Information about tutoring is available in print and on the College website. RMCC is host to the Learning Enrichment and Advising Center (LEAC). The primary goal of LEAC is to assist students in becoming more efficient and effective learners. LEAC provides guidance and assistance to students by other students on a peer to peer level and funded from student fees. LEAC is housed in the Johnson Learning Commons near Student Support Services (SSS). SSS is a federal grant that provides funding for

professional tutors for students who qualify for the program. Both programs are available to students at no cost.

The Student Handbook was combined with the College Catalog in the summer of 2010 in order to facilitate easier access to information for students and reduce redundancy and outdated information.

Student Programs

Information on student programs and activities is posted on campus as events occur. RMCC provides several student enrichment and involvement opportunities through student organizations. These organizations include the Student Government Association, Phi Theta Kappa, Baptist Collegiate Ministries, Actors' Guild, and Skills USA. In 2014 to promote STEM initiatives, two new clubs were established: RMCC Science Club and RMCC Math Club. The latest new club is a choral club, the Voice of the Ouachitas. These organizations to enrich student life, provide an avenue for campus involvement, develop relationships amongst peers, promote engagement and leadership opportunities, and create a medium for students to provide input. Information regarding each of these organizations is available to current and potential students on the RMCC website (ID 535).

A portion of student fees is set aside each year in a Student Activities budget. These general ledger accounts are overseen by the Director of Admissions and/or the club advisors (faculty/staff). These funds are primarily for the development and logistics of student activities and purchasing supplies needed for those activities. Student organizations adhere to policies and procedures set forth within the Student Activities section of the College Catalog (ID 672).

Admissions

Admissions information is available to the general public on:
- RMCC website (ID 536)
- College Catalog (ID 673)
- Front desk of the main entrance of the Maddox building
- Admissions office
- Waldron and Mount Ida facilities

The Application for Admissions (ID 537) can be accessed on the College website. Admissions information and requirements, as well as information about RMCC degree plans and programs, are also placed in high traffic areas off campus for easy access, i.e. high school counselors' offices, Department of Workforce Services, and local businesses.

RMCC added a recruiter position during 2014. The responsibilities of the recruiter include being the point-of-contact for inquiry from new and returning students of diverse ages and educational goals, and for providing student assistance throughout their tenure at RMCC. The Recruiter and Director of Admissions coordinate recruitment events and activities for the College at local, state, and regional recruitment programs, fairs, community events, and service area schools. The position is involved with the development, printing, and distribution of information and recruitment materials.

RMCC staff visit multiple high schools each year. The President and VPASA visit with superintendents, principals, and counselors at least once each semester off and on campus. Four of the five TRIO programs' staff are at service area schools on a weekly basis during the year. Every semester, Financial Aid, Admissions, Educational Talent Search, and Upward Bound staff coordinate efforts to present opportunities for parents and students at service area high schools. Special events such as Junior Day and Manufacturing Day are publicized with appropriate information distributed to the targeted audiences. A

majority of faculty and staff volunteer and work at local annual events like the Lum 'n Abner Festival and the Polk County Fair.

Financial Aid

Financial aid information is available on the Financial Aid page on the RMCC website (ID 522), in the Catalog (ID 679), and in the Financial Aid Office. Students also have access to scholarship material, federal and state scholarships, and requirements for receiving and for continuing eligibility.

Staff, Faculty, Administration

Full-time College personnel credentials are listed within the Professional and Support Staff section of the Catalog (ID 674). Staff, faculty, and administrators are available to students throughout the year via email or office visits. Faculty post teaching schedules and office hours on their office doors so students can plan appointments accordingly. Staff members are accessible to both future and current students during regular business hours, and after hours by appointment.

Costs to Students

RMCC adheres to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and the U.S. Education Department regulations for providing the cost of attendance to students. The College developed its own net price calculator in order to provide students with a more realistic cost of attending RMCC. The calculator is located on the Financial Aid section (ID 522) of the website. A list of tuition and fees is also available on the RMCC website (ID 533) and in various materials used to promote semester registration.

The Board recognizes the importance of keeping costs to students down. In 2009, the Board set a maximum markup percentage for textbooks sold in the Bookstore. During 2013, faculty began actively pursuing alternatives to full textbooks, i.e. loose leaf options, custom books, and online resources. The Bookstore operates a book buyback program each semester.

Accreditation Relationships

RMCC is fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC) and, in 2005, was labeled a "model rural community college" by the North Central Association visiting team (ID 709). As stated on the HLC website (ID 538), "The Higher Learning Commission is an independent corporation and one of two commission members of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, which was founded in 1895 as one of six regional institutional accreditors in the United States. The Higher Learning Commission accredits, and thereby grants membership in the Commission and in the North Central Association, degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in the North Central region." Documentation of the accreditation relationship between RMCC and HLC can be found on the website for HLC (ID 539).

The Office of Long Term Care (OLTC) (ID 540), a division of the Arkansas Department of Human Services, is the approving agency for Nursing Assistant Training Programs. The OLTC approves training and competency evaluation programs for individuals who provide nursing or nursing-related services to residents in long term care facilities and who are not licensed health professionals. The nursing assistant program provides courses of instruction and experience that will prepare students to be a qualified member of a health care team. The OLTC requires approval every two years. RMCC's most recent approval was June 23, 2014 (ID 437).

RMCC's Practical Nurse Program (ID 541) was granted initial approval by the Arkansas State Board of Nursing (ASBN) in 1975. The Registered Nurse Program (ID 542) is offered through the Arkansas Rural Nursing Education Consortium (ARNEC) (ID 7) since 2011. Nursing theory is taught through

compressed interactive video (CIV), and clinical experiences are conducted locally. ARNEC was granted initial approval by the ASBN in 2004. Both programs have maintained full approval by ASBN since initial endorsements.

RMCC is accredited by the Veteran's Administration (VA). Students must apply for benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs which then determines eligibility for educational benefits. Once approved for benefits, the veteran student works closely with the Financial Aid Director, RMCC's official VA certifying official, and the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs (AVPSA), advisor for all VA students, to ensure each student is in compliance with all VA regulations as they relate to education benefits. RMCC evaluates all military transcripts and awards credit as suggested by the Army/ACE Registry Transcript System and the Navy Sailor, Marine American Council on Education Registry Transcript. RMCC is approved by the Department of Veteran's Affairs State Approving Agency (SAA). This allows students receiving VA benefits to be eligible for their funds while attending RMCC.

The RMCC Cosmetology Program is approved and reviewed through the Arkansas Department of Health Systems Licensing and Regulation – Cosmetology (ID631). This program was approved in 2013.

The Welding program was established in 2013. RMCC instructors initiated the accreditation application process with the American Welding Society in August 2014 and received acceptance in November.

2.C. The governing board of Rich Mountain Community College is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

The RMCC Board of Trustees (Board) is the governing board for Rich Mountain Community College and is an autonomous body dedicated to the governance and decision making of the institution. The Board is comprised of nine members who are elected by qualified electors of the community college district at the general election. New members take office on January 1 following the date of election. If a vacancy on the Board occurs due to death, resignation, or other cause, it shall be filled by the appointment of the Arkansas Governor (ID 761). The Board has full authority over all aspects of the college and final responsibility for its proper operation granted to it from Amendment 33 to the Constitution of the State of Arkansas (ID 545). The Board is a policy-making body concerned with the objectives, purposes, nature, range, and pace of efforts made by RMCC to best serve its constituents in a manner that places integrity at the forefront. The Board of Trustees maintains general oversight and control of RMCC entrusting the conduct of the proper day-to-day institutional operations and procedures to the College President and administrators. The Board oversees the development of long-range planning in cooperation with the President and administrative staff. With the exception of July and December, RMCC Board meets monthly.

According to Board policy section 1.04 (ID 655), the election of officers begins with an election of three Board members for the Nominating Committee at the October Board meeting. The committee is tasked to nominate one individual for each position of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary at the November meeting. The Nominating Committee is responsible for obtaining the prior consent of each nominee to serve prior to nomination. The election is held at the January meeting, and the process allows for additional nominations from the floor for each position. Each officer is elected for a term of one year, assumes office immediately, and holds office until the successor is elected.

2.C.1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance RMCC.

Each elected Board member begins service to the community by participating in a swearing in ceremony performed by the county clerk in which they declare support of the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Arkansas and pledge to faithfully discharge the duties of the office of the Board of Trustees before they can conduct College business.

The powers and duties of the Board are set by the State in Arkansas Code § 6-61-521 (ID 475). The policies of the Board (ID 37) reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution. One role of the Board is to oversee the policies that are consistent with Arkansas law. RMCC's Board strives to make decisions in the best interest of the College and to insure its integrity and mission. Policies specifically for the Board are outlined in Article I (ID 640) including policy 1.01.02 (ID 643) and in 1.03 (ID 656). Over the past few years, RMCC transitioned from a total paper process to a digital version of Board minutes and meeting informational packets (ID 32).

Examples of related policies and evidence of practice in action include:
- Selecting officers is covered in policies 1.04.01 and 1.04.03 (ID 655) with elections held at each January Board meeting (ID 720) (ID 721).
- The College seal is used on diplomas and is currently featured on the Board Policy cover (ID 37).
- New educational programs must be approved by the local board before presenting to AHECB. Examples include the Cosmetology Program (ID 718) (ID 719).
- A primary responsibility of the Board is to hire the President as the chief executive officer of the College. The initial hiring and annual contract renewal are done during the June Board meeting (ID 762) (ID 763). Specific polices numbers are 2.01.01 and 2.01.04 (ID 574).
- The President's recommendations for annual contract renewal are presented to the Board at the February and March Board meetings (ID 764) (ID 765) (ID 766). Hiring-related policies are located in Article II, beginning with 2.03.03 (ID 649).
- References to the hiring of necessary personnel for proper administration and operation and the budget to reasonably establish, maintain, and operate a community college are made in multiple codes. The topics include electronic data, requirements mandated by AHECB, courses, and budget-related areas like capital outlay, acquisitions, community college districts, millage, limitations, and tuition and fees. Code list: § 6-61-101 -- 6-61-103 (ID 477), 6-61-201 -- 6-61-209 (ID 478), 6-61-212 -- 6-61-216 (ID 479), 6-61-301 -- 6-61-305 (ID 480), 6-61-401 (ID 481), 6-61-402 (ID 482), 6-61-501 -- 6-61-524 (ID 483), and 6-61-601 -- 6-61-603 (ID 484).
- Formal granting of diplomas and certificates usually takes place at the April Board meeting (ID 767).
- Board acceptance of grant funds is a new practice, implemented in 2011 (ID 768).
- An example of acquisition and disposal of property owned by the College is evidenced with the planning of outreach in the southern portion of Polk County. Suitable property was identified in Wickes and it was purchased (ID 769). As architect renderings for the renovation were being finalized, the two small public school districts in the area began talks of consolidation. If that happened, the schools would be merged and a new high school built somewhere between the communities. Because their talks also included RMCC continuing to provide concurrent classes to their students at the new high school, the College determined the Wickes location was no longer needed. The property was sold in April 2010 (ID 770) (ID 771).

2.C.2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of RMCC's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

The Board considers the interests of internal and external constituencies during the decision-making process. Members make reasonable, practical efforts to review action items prior to Board meetings and meet with appropriate interested parties if necessary. While the Board considers individual concerns, decisions are made based on the best interests of the institution without undue influence of any one internal or external stakeholder. Board meetings follow a published process for conducting College business. Patrons have the opportunity to address the Board about relevant topics if they follow the process set forth in Board Policy 7.01.01 (ID 658).

In accordance with Board Policy section 1.02 (ID 657), during the June Board meeting, the Board establishes the meeting calendar for the upcoming academic year. Advanced notification of Board meetings is given to the media each year for appropriate announcements to the public. In addition, the community is alerted through the RMCC website on the Board of Trustees page (ID 572) and to employees via email. Most Board meetings are filmed by RMCC TV staff and televised on cable Channel 19. The minutes are placed on the College Intranet and printed copies stored in the RMCC Johnson Learning Commons for public access. When changes to Board meeting location, date, or time are required, they are announced to the media and employees.

The College President develops appropriate meeting agendas and provides relevant information to the Board. Requests for placing items on the agenda are given to the President in sufficient time to place on the agenda and have backup materials developed (ID 571). In 2013, RMCC began the practice of sending the meeting agenda and materials to the Board digitally and providing printed copies at the meeting.

No new business is transacted by the Board unless the item(s) are placed on the agenda and relevant information has been in the hands of the board members for at least 48 hours prior to each meeting. To allow flexibility, new business items may be brought up for Board action without the 48-hour notice if five (of the nine) members vote to allow it.

Policies and procedures are set forth for autonomous policymaking and to assure integrity in all aspects of the decision-making process.

2.C.3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of RMCC.

As required by the State of Arkansas, all elected Board of Trustees and RMCC administrators must submit an annual Statement of Financial Interest Form (ID 278) revealing any conflict of interest to the Arkansas Secretary of State. The Trustees acknowledge the high-ranking office to which they have been elected and strive to act with integrity in all decision making pursuant to ACA § 6-61-521 (ID 475). RMCC Foundation has a separate board to oversee its operations.

RMCC's Conflict of Interest policy, 2.02.02 (ID 680), was revised twice since its last accreditation visit. During the search for lease property to house the Cosmetology program in academic year 2012-2013, one of the locations being considered was owned by the family trust of a Board member. In order to weigh each property to minimize the conflict of interest, a Facility Evaluation Form (rubric) (ID 681) was used. In addition, the Board member was not active in the negotiations or discussions leading up to the lease and was not present or involved in the related Board discussions.

2.C.4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of RMCC to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

As stated in ACA § 6-61-521 (ID 475), the Board implements policies regarding the College and makes the final decisions in terms of oversight and governance of the College. The procedures and day-to-day operations of the College are entrusted to the President, administration, staff, and faculty. The College established an organizational chart that reflects the flow of authority in which the President is the chief executive officer and is directly responsible for the operation of all phases of College programs, furnishes leadership for the College, and ensures the objectives of the College are achieved. The President implements the broad general policies established by the Board and works with administrative staff to delegate management responsibilities. The VPASA is responsible for the overall operation of the academic and student affairs units. Faculty oversee academic matters pertaining directly to their classrooms, departments, and curriculum. Faculty teaching the same course agree upon the use of the same textbook. Any deviation from this must be approved by the department chair and/or the VPASA. Faculty teaching the same courses must also cover the same learning outcomes as deemed necessary by ADHE or the academic department. These two measures help assure consistency of teaching and learning. For consistency of delivery, teaching, and learning, faculty teaching the same course use the same textbook and strive to achieve the same learning outcomes. The Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA), under the delegated authority from the VPASA, oversees course scheduling to fulfill the needs of students and ensure qualified adjunct instructors are employed. The VPASA, under the delegated authority of the President, handles larger matters. The hierarchy of the College is located within the RMCC Organizational Chart (ID 152).

2.D. Rich Mountain Community College is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

RMCC ensures that student, faculty, and staff are allowed academic freedom of expression through strong Board policies, employee and student codes of conduct, and employee procedures. Established policies facilitate commitment to academic freedom and the search for truth and free expression. Academic Freedom is covered in three different areas: policy 5.01.03 (ID 659) in the Academic section of Board policy, 6.01.03 (ID 660) in the Student section, and in the Classroom Expression portion of the Catalog (ID 675). The instructor has the authority to maintain order in the academic environment, "but this authority must not be used to suppress the expression of views related to a subject contrary to his own." Faculty members are "entitled to the full freedom of research and publication" as well as freedom in the classroom to adequately discuss their discipline. These assurances are upheld and encouraged so that faculty and students may participate in well rounded, robust discussions to enhance teaching and learning opportunities. Faculty members, both full-time and adjunct, are allowed to choose course content in accordance with agreed department outcomes.

Students are encouraged to participate in discussions freely and to express their views openly. Faculty members must maintain an orderly classroom but should in no way suppress or hamper the expression of views related to course content. Even though some course content may be controversial, students are provided numerous opportunities for sharing and self-expression.

Students are allowed opportunities for self-expression outside the classroom through a variety of clubs and organizations. More information about the formation of student organizations and student activities is located within Criterion 2.B. and in the Student Activities section of the Catalog (ID 676). Clubs available to students include:

- Student Government Association (SGA)
- Actors' Guild
- Baptist College Ministry (BCM)
- Phi Theta Kappa (PTK)

Actors' Guild promotes free speech as evidenced by some of the adult-themed productions and the Variety Shows as referenced in Criterion 3. BCM sponsors *See You at the Pole* for an annual prayerful gathering also held across the nation. At the March 2011 Board meeting, students spoke to the Board in support of tuition increases, especially favored if faculty and staff would receive salary increases (ID 711). Speech classes provide other avenues for self-expression. RMCC provides a free speech area for individuals. The College maintains the right to oversee time, place, and manner.

Procedures are in place for the formation of new student organizations and clubs. Any student that is interested in forming a new club or organization can acquire the necessary documents and guidance from the office of the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs or by reviewing the Student Organization Handbook (ID 439). Advisors to student organizations may find guidance and procedures in the Organization Advisor Handbook (ID 438). In the fall 2014 semester, three new student clubs were formed:

- The new Chemistry Instructor helped students establish a Science Club. Their first endeavor on the Mena campus was to promote recycling by placing recycle bins in high traffic student locations and classrooms. (Faculty and staff had access to recycle bins in faculty lounges.)
- RMCC Math Club's promotes math enrichment programs, workshops, and tutoring. It targets students in the Mena area to develop and teach math skills, increase enjoyment in learning and using math, and raise appreciation of the diversity of mathematics and its applications.
- The Voices of the Ouachitas choral club was organized to develop and maintain high musical standards in the community and to provide opportunities for the performances of the members. Their mission is to enhance and enrich individual musical ability and encourage musicians to work together.

Faculty and non-administrative staff are allowed to express themselves freely through participation in the Professional Association (ID 162), as well as through serving on a variety of committees. These committees shape the governance of the College and allow numerous opportunities for freely sharing ideas. The right to freedom of discussion and expression at RMCC is strongly and closely protected.

2.E. Rich Mountain Community College ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

The following excerpts from College's Mission, Vision, Values, and Philosophy and Scope (ID 682) demonstrate what RMCC's actions are based on.

- Mission: "provide all residents of the Ouachita Mountain Region…opportunities to improve"
- Vision: "dedicated to empowering each individual to pursue a higher quality of life," a "caring approach to teaching and learning…intellectual challenge and self-discovery…respect for the worth and dignity of each person"
- Values: "encouraged to accept responsibility for learning…respect and cooperation where ideas, inquiry…"
- Philosophy and Scope: "endeavors to provide academic, vocational, and personal enrichment opportunities"

2.E.1. RMCC provides effective oversight and support to ensure integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.

RMCC provides oversight and support to ensure integrity of research and scholarly practice, though research is not a stated part of the College mission. Academic integrity and student conduct are addressed through policy. As faculty and students do not typically engage in research involving human or animal subjects, the College does not have a research review board.

The College addresses oversight and support of scholarly practice for faculty and staff through its policies. As stated in the Board Policy 5.01.03 (ID 659) pertaining to academic freedom, "Public institutions of higher education exist for the common good. The common good is dependent upon a free search for the truth and its free expression. The College is committed to the principle that faculty members must be free to pursue scholarly inquiry without undue restriction and to publish conclusions concerning the significance of evidence that they consider relevant. Faculty members may be assured that their professional careers or resultant material benefits will not be jeopardized because of differences of opinion with anyone inside or outside the College." Further, the Sabbatical Policy (ID 661) and the procedures in Governance Through Committees (ID 122), support faculty endeavors to engage in research and allows for extended leave by modifying employment contracts. Faculty are encouraged to take advantage of such policies.

Student research and scholarly practice also occurs within the oversight and support of the College. The Academic Honesty Policy (ID 666) as stated in the Prohibited Conduct section (ID 667) of the College Catalog appears in every course syllabus each semester. Additionally, students receive information about plagiarism and academic honesty in the College Orientation workshops.

Policy section 4.05 (ID 662) covers professional development and college representation. Policy 4.05.01 (ID 662) "encourages staff and faculty members to attend worthwhile educational and professional meetings and to participate actively on professional committees." Faculty attend professional development to maintain academic quality. The budget support for professional development is addressed in further detail in Criterion 5. Faculty and staff evaluations are conducted on an annual basis to assure performance and effectiveness as evidenced by policy 4.05.05 (ID 665). These evaluations assess nine areas of expertise and stewardship on the Performance Review Form (ID 325). In addition, faculty receive peer evaluations and classroom observations by the VPASA. Each semester, all students in all classes complete either the Student Instructional Report II survey (ID 183) or an online survey about their classroom experience. The survey results give administrators both course and instructor evaluations to help assure integrity and quality in the classroom.

RMCC follows policies and procedures that ensure ethical conduct in research and instructional activities. The College is committed to providing an exemplary learning environment that enables students to be successful in this global, diverse, and technological society. However, the College needs to specifically address research and student work product in a new policy and procedure. While this has not yet been an issue, student work is becoming more advanced in computer programming, entrepreneurship, and other areas. A policy is needed to address student ownership of such work.

2.E.2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

The Student Code of Conduct, as defined within the Catalog (ID 666), applies to all library information users; and copyright notices are on display in the library's copy center. The RMCC Acceptable Use Statement (ID 668) includes a detailed list of guidelines. The RMCC Librarian and assistants, along with

the SSS Computer Lab Coordinator, instruct students regarding the ethical use of information resources. In addition, instructors offer guidance to students in regards to proper use and ethics of information technology in student counsel and in classroom settings. RMCC also offers an ethics class that is required for both the Information Technology and Business degrees.

RMCC's Johnson Learning Commons provides access to printed and computer-based resources for RMCC students, staff, and faculty. These information resources support the educational mission of the college. In addition to the policy, there are established procedures (ID 573) for the appropriate use of resources. It is the individual user's responsibility to follow those policies and procedures and to ensure information resources are used appropriately. The computers located in the Johnson Learning Commons are provided to enable user's access to the collections, other information resources, and services in support of curriculum needs. The curriculum of general education classes covers plagiarism, and the VPASA has mandated that all faculty syllabi address this issue as well.

RMCC realizes the necessity of ensuring user authenticity. Student identity is originally verified by the Office of Admissions and Registrar's Office during enrollment and re-verified when student identification is created. Students receive a unique username and password that is used for the duration of their enrollment to access all student records, online courses, and e-mail correspondence. Students are counseled during the mandatory Freshman Orientation on the importance of safeguarding their passwords and ensuring the security of their account at all times. Students agree to abide by the College's Acceptable Use Statement located in the Catalog (ID 668) and by signing admissions application and semester registration forms.

2.E.3. RMCC has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

RMCC takes academic honesty and integrity very seriously and has policies in place to reinforce this expectation. Students are informed of the consequences should either be violated. These policies are located in the Prohibited Conduct section of the Catalog (ID 666), on the Student Portal, within each instructor's syllabi as part of the 13-point syllabi guidelines (ID 317), and as part of new student orientation (ID 64). Each instructor informs students about the academic honesty policy at the start of each semester by reviewing syllabi in class. Students are provided a hard copy of syllabi when meeting in a traditional classroom. Online classes offer a link to syllabi within each course, and many instructors require students to take a quiz over the syllabi as a method of verifying that students are reviewing the document.

Any student found in violation of the policies or deemed to be dishonest can be subject to disciplinary action. Dishonesty is defined as cheating, plagiarism, providing false information, forgery, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Disciplinary sanctions will draw upon the experience and professional judgment of faculty, staff, and administrators and on a range of disciplinary techniques. Possible disciplinary sanctions are receiving an 'F' for subject in question; withholding of grades, official transcripts, or degree; and disciplinary probation, which could lead to suspension or expulsion. Reprimands are initially up to the instructor. If the student disagrees with the decision, the student can file an appeal with the VPASA. This process is described in more detail in the Catalog (ID 678). Academic dishonesty is considered both an academic offense and a behavioral violation. The VPASA Office provides information to the student on the academic due process in instances of academic dishonesty. For an appeals hearing, faculty, staff, and student are appointed to an appeals committee by the President each year in Governance Through Committees (ID 122). If found responsible, the student may face the behavioral sanctions, as well.

Faculty are expected to include a definition of academic dishonesty and outline any grade penalties for offenses in syllabi. Faculty are also encouraged to talk to students to clarify expectations as it pertains to academic dishonesty. Depending on the severity of the offense or if it is a repeat offense, the student may face behavioral sanctions in addition to a grade penalty.

Criterion Two Summary

Rich Mountain Community College adheres to all state and federal laws and guidelines and to the policies of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education in a continuing effort to conduct the academic and financial affairs of the College ethically and responsibly, with dedication to its mission. Policies and procedures are published and are adhered to by College stakeholders. These policies are intended to confirm ethical and responsible conduct by all who represent the institution, both internally and externally.

RMCC has active and effective planning processes and program evaluation processes, including procedures for annual program review to confirm the continued improvement of the academic experience for students. RMCC also conducts a comprehensive program review every seven years for each of its academic programs to ensure the integrity and justification for program continuation. Programs that fall below specified graduation rates are reviewed by the academic departments and ADHE for timely program modifications.

A commitment to freedom of expression through academic freedom is evident throughout academic affairs at RMCC. Administration, staff, faculty, and students function together to achieve the College's Mission. By embracing the College's policies and procedures, as well as professional and ethical standards, RMCC reveals that integrity is the foundation upon which a quality institution is built.

Criterion Two Strengths

- The Board of Trustees Policy manual is current (September 2014) and continuously updated.
- The College legislative audit reports reveal no significant findings.
- The College has grant funded programs, such as Career Pathways and TRIO programs which provide additional services to students.
- Board of Trustees members are elected by voters and hold monthly meetings.
- Board of Trustees meetings are open to the public and are publicized through local media and cable station Channel 19.
- Minutes of the Board of Trustees meetings are accessible online, and printed copies are kept in the Resource Room in the Johnson Learning Commons.
- Students and faculty are encouraged to freely discuss controversial topics without fear of censorship.
- RMCC's mission statement is located throughout the campus, on the RMCC website, included on all course syllabi, and printed on the backs of employee business cards.
- Meetings of the President's Council review policies, procedures, and practices for effectiveness in meeting the mission of the college and to make changes as needed.
- Because of the small size of the campus, employees are more engaged with colleagues, and, as a result, many issues or concerns are easily addressed in a timely fashion.

Criterion Two Challenges

- Keeping the College's website up to date as necessary to remain transparent and have accurate information.
- Ongoing training is needed for new employees beyond the new employee orientation with regard to policies and procedures.
- The employee Uniform Conduct Standards needs to be reviewed and possibly renamed.
- Methods of student authentication for online classes and admissions need to be reviewed to ensure ethical, responsible student use.
- There is no formal Board policy setting standards of conduct for research integrity and scholarly practice.

Criterion Three: Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

Rich Mountain Community College provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A. Rich Mountain Community College's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

Rich Mountain Community College offers 33 degrees and certificates in transfer and technical areas of study. The degrees offered include the Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Applied Science (AAS), and Associate of General Studies (AGS). All Associate degrees require 60 credit hours for completion. RMCC also offers certificates of proficiency and technical certificates. These certificates require a minimum of 7-18 credit hours in a specialized area for a proficiency certificate and 19-30 credit hours for a technical one.

Table 3.A-1 Degree Programs		
Certificates of Proficiency	Technical Certificates	Associate Programs
Radio/TV Production	Computer Forensics	Associate of Arts
Culinary Arts	Cosmetology	Associate General Studies
Industrial Maintenance Multi-Craft	Culinary Arts	
Early Childhood Development	Industrial Maintenance Multi-Craft	Associate Applied Science
General Aviation Maintenance I	General Aviation Maintenance II	General Technology
General Aviation Maintenance II	Machine Shop	Nursing (LPN/LPNT to RN)
Aviation Management	Welding	Business & Information Technology
Machine Tool Technology	Health Information Billing & Coding	General Studies
Welding	Practical Nursing	
Health Information Billing & Coding	Office Technology	
Emergency Medical Technician	Database Applications	
Nursing Assistant	Small Business Development	
Small Business Development	Computer Systems Technology	
Computer Systems Technology		

The Professional Association Curriculum Committee with the advice of technical advisory boards, local employers, department chairs, and teaching faculty develops, updates, and revises degrees and certificates. Curriculum ideas and changes are thoroughly vetted through the Curriculum Committee, the

College Effectiveness Committee, Office of the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, President's Council, and the Board of Trustees.

Upon completion of institutional review, suggested curriculum and program changes are recommended to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) for review and approval following state guidelines and policy. All RMCC programs are involved in an ADHE periodic review process outlined in Criterion 4.A.1.

The Curriculum Committee also recommends courses to include in the Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS) (ID 289). Courses in this system are guaranteed transfer to any public institution of higher learning in Arkansas. In addition, students who complete the Associate of Arts program are guaranteed transfer of all 60 hours within the degree to any Arkansas public institution. Other courses may guarantee transfer for Articulation Agreements with several universities within the state.

In addition to college-level courses, RMCC offers college remedial courses in English, with a reading component, and mathematics. Other courses offered by the college include work force training, lifelong learning enrichment courses, Adult Basic Education, cultural enrichment activities for grant program participants, and a summer Kids College.

3.A.1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

RMCC requires levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate being awarded. The College Effectiveness Committee, the Learning Assessment Committee, and the Curriculum Committee cooperate with department chairs and instructional faculty to assure quality and relevance of student performance for degrees and certificates. Each academic department is charged with developing and implementing assessment measures for the respective disciplines. Career and technical education programs also use the guidance and advice of advisory committees as well as employer input to maintain the accuracy and relevance of course materials, subject matter, and required performance levels.

The appropriateness and content of general education courses are continually monitored through participation in the Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS). In March 2006, 22 faculty teams reviewed 88 freshman and sophomore general education courses for content consistency and transferability. Review team members were nominated by their respective institutions or appointed by the Executive Council of Presidents and Chancellors of the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The criteria and learning outcomes for the original 88 courses were established at that time.

The Chief Academic Officers (CAO) of all institutions of higher education, including private institutions, meet quarterly at the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) to discuss issues of curriculum, transfer, and articulation. Within this committee is a CAO Transfer Committee that meets at least annually to determine if additional courses should be included within the course transfer system. Institutions may submit requests for additional courses to ADHE to initiate this process. These procedures provide the structure to ensure that curriculum is reviewed for accuracy, relevance, and appropriateness to higher education in Arkansas.

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education approves all Associate of Applied Science Degrees and certificate programs. All technical programs have advisory committees to assist in planning and evaluating program curriculum and relevance. Each of these advisory committees is comprised of persons

with experience and expertise in the program field. The purpose is to advise on design, sequence, outcomes, and relevance of technical programs. These committees meet at least annually, but frequently more often, to ensure that programs are meeting current workforce needs. Advisory committees also provide information pertinent to Perkin's grant proposals, funding priorities, and possible student employment opportunities. Programs are required to undergo a program review by ADHE every seven (7) years to ensure relevance. The most recent program reviews were in machine tool technology, information systems, and nursing. Further information about these reviews is detailed in Criterion 2.A. and in Criterion 4.

General education in the Associate of Arts degree is assessed through identifying and measuring general education learning objectives and outcomes across the curriculum. Course instructors and departments outline measurable learning outcomes for each course that include critical thinking, communication skills, research skills, and technology use, among other specific department objectives. Every course at RMCC is required to have at least one objective linked to a campus general learning outcome. Applied Science programs have additional outcomes based on career readiness factors.

RMCC documents student performance levels appropriate to the degree/certificate being awarded. The Learning Assessment Committee, comprised of faculty and learning support staff, operates within the College Effectiveness Committee with the guidance of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA). This committee is responsible for work done within the HLC Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning, for implementing assessment activities, and for gathering evidence to accurately report what students learn at RMCC. This evidence is used to report, evaluate, and improve the learning process and outcomes. Further, it is used as a tool to provide important feedback to instructors to improve teaching, learning, and program quality. Assessment is a continuous process involving the entire college. More information on assessment is presented in Criterion 4.

3.A.2. RMCC articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate and certificate programs.

Assessment of student learning in all degree and certificate programs involves identifying, teaching, and measuring achievement of stated learning outcomes across content areas. RMCC defines general education as competencies not directly related to technical, vocational, or professional preparation. It is a part of every student's course of study, regardless of the content or program area. General education is intended to impart common knowledge, intellectual concepts, and critical thinking skills which every educated person should possess. General education is outlined for RMCC by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education's ACTS course roster. The learning goals for these courses are provided as a minimum expectation for general education courses guaranteed to transfer. Teaching faculty are permitted to enhance or expand on this minimum. Programs outside of general education determine their departmental learning outcomes with the assistance of advisory committees and are based on discipline and workplace needs.

3.A.3. RMCC'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, and through contractual/consortial arrangements).

RMCC provides classes on-site, online, through high definition compressed video, and hybrid options. Students access courses online through the RMCC website using the Moodle course management system platform. RMCC has a main campus in Mena and two other locations, an off campus site in Waldron, and

an outreach center in Mount Ida. Furthermore, the college offers classes concurrently to area high school students on their respective campuses and through an on campus Secondary Career Center.

Learning goals are established at the faculty and/or department level for general education and encompasses all Associate of Arts, Associate of Applied Science, and Associate of General Studies degrees across all programs and modes of delivery. Student learning outcomes are developed based on what students are expected to know and do at the end of the educational experience at the College. In addition, program specific goals and related expected outcomes are developed at the department level for all modes of delivery, irrespective of location. Course level goals, developed by faculty, are aligned with ADHE transfer course goals or workforce expectations depending on the course type.

All teaching faculty work together to select common textbooks for courses within the respective disciplines to ensure consistency across modes of delivery. There are individual department meetings, department chair meetings, faculty (including concurrent) meetings, and program meetings to discuss evolving pedagogies or needed improvements. Curriculum is enhanced and modified as necessary to maintain quality of instruction.

RMCC has procedures in place to assure consistency and quality of curriculum across all locations and modes of delivery. Department chairs, the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs are responsible for differing aspects of oversight and quality assurance regardless of teaching modality. Site visits, course planning and scheduling, faculty evaluations, and classroom observation occur on all campuses. Online courses are monitored by the VPASA, and faculty are evaluated by online students at the end of each course.

The Distance Learning Committee is responsible for evaluating and approving new courses offered in an online format. Additionally, the committee is responsible for reviewing the online course offerings. In 2013, RMCC completed the Distance Delivery site visit. The HLC reviewer found RMCC adequate in all areas and endorsed the highest recommendation: RMCC is approved to offer 100% of programming in an online format (ID 714).

RMCC has a Secondary Career Center coordinator who works with the regional DeQueen-Mena Educational Cooperative to offer Career and Technical Education to secondary students on the RMCC Mena campus. Secondary students are also offered concurrent enrollments on their respective campuses through on-site faculty, or through compressed video from various RMCC locations. All faculty teaching RMCC courses have the same required credentials and qualifications, including concurrent instructors. All are expected to attend faculty meetings and participate fully in the review and improvement processes. Common class assessments are used in select courses, and others are in development. RMCC makes no distinction between concurrent and on-campus college course work in expectations or outcomes.

To further measure educational quality, the College administers the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) to students across all delivery modalities. Some 2014 results are presented in Table 3.A.3-1 on the following page.

Table 3.A.3-1 CCSSE 2014 Survey Results			
Quality of Education All Campuses			
How much has your experience at this college contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? (Sum of Quite a bit" and "Very much")	RMCC	Peers	ACC
Acquiring a broad general education	75%	78%	76%
Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	63%	62%	61%
Writing clearly and effectively	64%	70%	67%
Speaking clearly and effectively	56%	65%	63%
Thinking critically and analytically	71%	74%	74%
Solving numerical problems	63%	62%	63%
Using computing and information technology	70%	74%	71%
Working effectively with others	68%	69%	67%
Learning effectively on your own	75%	77%	75%
Understanding yourself	60%	63%	63%
Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	40%	49%	50%
Developing a personal code of values and ethics	51%	52%	52%
Contributing to the welfare of your community	39%	36%	36%

These results show students believe RMCC contributes significantly to their growth in education and personal development. Comparison to peer institutions and other colleges within Arkansas reveal broad consistency in the results reported. In reviewing the mean score data from CCSSE reports, RMCC does not significantly differ from its peers on the variables presented here. However, there are three areas of concern of more than five percentage points in variability. These are in writing clearly and effectively, speaking clearly and effectively, and understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. It is important to note that two of these three, writing and speaking clearly and effectively are addressed by the RMCC Assessment Academy project with HLC. Recognizing that these two facets are integral to the success of graduates, a concerted effort is made to include and assess these elements across the curriculum. Additionally, understanding people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds fosters growth in relationships, personal efficacy, and employment success. Therefore, making sure students understand diversity is an important task. The lack of racial diversity in the local population makes this especially challenging. However, RMCC attempts to expand student perspectives by recognizing holidays, traditions, and cultures different than the local population and providing enrichment activities on campus.

Table 3.A.3-2 CCSSE 2014 Survey Results			
Quality of Education All Campuses			
How much has your experience at this college contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?	RMCC	Peers	ACC
Would you recommend this college to a friend or family member? (Percentage of yes responses)	98%	97%	96%
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this college? (Sum of "good" and "excellent")	91%	89%	89%

With regard to the quality of the education students feel they receive, 98% of would recommend to family and friends. This is comparable to other cohort institutions.

3.B. Rich Mountain Community College demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

3.B.1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the College.

As outlined in Criterion 1, the mission of RMCC is to "provide all students of the Ouachita Mountain Region with exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities to improve the quality of life and standard of living." As stated previously in this Criterion, general education is comprised of the things all students are expected to know upon completion of a degree program. Not all RMCC programs of study require specific knowledge in fields typically considered general education, such as language proficiency or mathematical skill. However, all courses within RMCC's offerings are expected to address skills in critical thinking, technology use, research techniques, and communication.

The general education offered is appropriate to the mission and degree levels at RMCC. Each Associate of Applied Science degree requires general education courses in English proficiency (6 hours) and mathematics (3 hours), a minimum of nine (9) credit hours that does not include prerequisite developmental courses. Students must complete a three-hour social science requirement, and a course in oral communication. A student completing an Associate of Arts degree is expected to complete the state minimum core of 60 hours of general education courses as this degree is intended as a foundation for transfer. Indeed, 60 hours are guaranteed transfer to any other public institution of higher education within Arkansas upon completion of the degree. The specific requirements for an AA, AAS, and AGS are listed in Table 3.B.1-1.

Table 3.B.1-1

Degree Requirements

	AA	AGS	AAS-GT	AAS-BA	AAS-IT	AAS-OT	AAS-RN
English/Communications	9	6	6	9	9	9	6
Arts and Humanities	9	3	0	0	0	0	0
Math	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sciences	8	7	0	0	0	0	12
Social Sciences	15	6	3	0	0	0	6
Computer Science	0	3	3	6	39	16	3
Business	0	0	0	30	3	18	0
Accounting	0	0	0	6	0	8	0
Economics	0	0	0	6	3	3	0
Health/Physical Education	2	2	0	0	0	3	3
Electives	14	30	45	0	3	0	33
Total Hours Required	60	60	60	60	60	60	66

3.B.2. RMCC articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in philosophy or framework developed by RMCC or an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes the College believes every college-educated person should possess.

Rich Mountain Community College articulates the content of its undergraduate general education requirements for each degree in the College Catalog (ID 669). In addition, requirements are presented to students upon applying for admission and specific degrees. As per financial aid guidelines, any student wishing to receive financial aid must declare a degree program. The office of financial aid and faculty advisors counsel students prior to registration regarding specific degree requirements including general education. Each student entering and registering for a program signs an agreement acknowledging his or her chosen degree plan. Degree plans are available on the website. They are also printed and available to students prior to registration. General education requirements are specified in departmental print brochures where applicable.

RMCC's General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) were established by faculty through participate in the HLC Assessment Academy. Work within the Academy has provided a framework for gathering evidence of these skills not previously formalized, though certainly taking place. As stated in Criterion 3.B.1, all students are expected to have some level of proficiency in critical thinking, technology use, research skills, and communication prior to receiving a degree or certificate from RMCC. The proficiency level is expected to be more extensive for students receiving Associate degrees than those in shorter certificate programs.

As mentioned in Criterion 3.A., the Learning Assessment Committee tasks instructors to include one or more General Education Learning Outcomes in each credit course. Faculty align course objectives with GELOs each semester and submit proposed course activities for teaching to meet these objectives to department chairs and the AVPAA. At the end of the semester, faculty provide evidence of assessment

tied to these activities and outcomes. RMCC general education courses also follow the ADHE guidelines for course content and expected outcomes within ACTS.

3.B.3. Every degree offered by RMCC engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

RMCC is committed to developing the knowledge and skills that prepare students for transfer or employment upon graduation. Course work offers multiple opportunities for simulated work projects and skill application. All students engaged in the learning process are in classes which require students to collect, analyze, and communicate information in various forms, engage in substantive inquiry, and develop skills transferable to changing environments.

As mentioned in an earlier part of this report, the College uses the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) to gather information regarding student impressions of their learning experience. The CCSSE is designed to "provide information on student engagement, a key indicator of learning and, therefore, of the quality of community colleges. The survey, administered to community college students, asks questions that assess institutional practices and student behaviors that are correlated highly with student learning and student retention" (ID 497). The CCSSE is used as a benchmarking instrument, diagnostic tool, and a monitoring device on the RMCC campus to document and improve learning and institutional effectiveness.

Information gathered from CCSSE instruments indicate RMCC students are engaged in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments. RMCC administers the CCSSE instrument on a biannual basis to students at all locations and delivery platforms. The most recent was Spring 2014. The survey includes items asking students about perceptions of course activities and skill areas, as well as how RMCC has contributed to their ability to perform these activities. Specific questions address critical thinking, speaking, writing, community engagement, information literacy, and mathematics. In addition, the survey has a general question regarding the students' perception of how RMCC has contributed to their personal knowledge base. RMCC Spring 2014 CCSSE results are presented in Table 3.B.3-1.

Table 3.B.3-1 CCSSE 2014 Survey Results - Student Work				
Item	Response	RMCC	Peers	ACC
Made a class presentation	Often	14%	21%	19%
	Very Often	8%	8%	8%
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	Often	21%	31%	29%
	Very Often	19%	22%	22%
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	Often	33%	37%	35%
	Very Often	25%	27%	24%
Had serious conversations with students who differ from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	Often	22%	23%	22%
	Very Often	12%	16%	18%

Comparisons to selected cohort groups reveal some concerns. The cohort group for comparisons throughout this Criterion and Criterion 4 is comprised of peer Arkansas community colleges with similar, though inexact demographics. These institutions include Arkansas State University - Newport, Black River Technical College, Cossatot Community College of the University of Arkansas, East Arkansas Community College, and Ozarka College. East Arkansas did not administer the CCSSE in 2014 precluding comparison in Table 3.B.3-2. The ACC cohort includes all 22 Arkansas community colleges.

Table 3.B.3-2 CCSSE 2014 Survey Results – Using Information				
Item	Response	RMCC	Peers	ACC
During the school year, how much has your coursework emphasized making judgments about the value or soundness of information arguments, or methods	Quite a bit	33%	35%	33%
	Very much	19%	20%	20%
During the school year, how much has your coursework emphasized using computers in academic work	Quite a bit	29%	29%	30%
	Very much	51%	57%	55%

With regard to using information, RMCC students are comparable with cohort peers. While slightly fewer students report using computers in academic work, not all courses or programs require this particular technology. Information synthesis may be addressed in other formats.

Self-reported CCSSE results indicate RMCC is comparable to peer groups regarding some aspects of critical thinking, evidenced above by the judgment question. This is also true regarding integrating ideas from various sources. Results regarding class presentations and written assignments raise concerns as students report less engagement than peer institutions. Results from CCSSE are shared with faculty and staff during an annual "data day" professional development. Faculty, departments, and the College Effectiveness Committee discuss appropriate interventions and ideas for improving engagement and learning.

Table 3.B.3-3
CCSSE 2014 Survey Results - Written Papers and Reading Engagement

Item	Response	RMCC	Peers	ACC
During the current school year, number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	5 to 10	12%	13%	14%
	11 to 20	8%	5%	5%
	More than 20	4%	5%	5%
During the school year, number of written papers or reports of any length	5 to 10	33%	33%	31%
	11 to 20	14%	16%	16%
	More than 20	7%	8%	8%

Table 3.B.3-4
CCSSE 2014 Survey Results – RMCC Contribution

Item	Response	RMCC	Peers	ACC
How much has RMCC contributed to your 'acquiring a broad education'	Quite a bit	40%	40%	40%
	Very much	35%	37%	37%
How much has RMCC contributed to your 'writing clearly and effectively'	Quite a bit	35%	37%	37%
	Very much	29%	33%	30%
How much has RMCC contributed to your 'speaking clearly and effectively'	Quite a bit	30%	35%	35%
	Very much	26%	30%	28%
How much has RMCC contributed to your 'thinking critically and analytically'	Quite a bit	39%	39%	39%
	Very much	32%	35%	35%

A delimiter of these survey responses is they are self-reported. Students may believe that they are thinking, speaking, and writing more clearly and effectively as a result of RMCC efforts. An objective test, such as CAAP, may provide more reliable, valid measures of these skills. A pre- and post-CAAP test would assess this more accurately.

3.B.4. The education offered by RMCC recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

Rich Mountain Community College serves approximately 1000 credit seeking students each fall and spring semester. Additional students participate in Lifelong Learning seminars and workshops, Workforce Education training, Kids College, and various other activities which bring the community to campus. Of the credit-seeking student population, approximately 40% are first-generation college students. Approximately 68% of RMCC students are women, and the median age is 21 years old. Seventy-six percent (76%) of students receive some financial aid to attend college, and of this number, 62% receive federal Pell grants. Only 10% of the student population is nonwhite in ethnicity, which mirrors the RMCC service area. While not widely ethnically diverse in its student population, RMCC makes a concerted effort to bring programs and ideas that reflect human and cultural diversity to campus. Presented in

Criterion 1 and reiterated in Tables 3.B.4-1 through 3.B.4-5 data shows pertinent demographics for the student population.

Table 3.B.4-1 Age Range			
Age Range	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
24 and Under	658	616	591
25 and Over	393	341	414
Unknown	0	0	0
Total	1051	957	1005

Table 3.B.4-2 First-Generation			
	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
First-Generation	360	378	391
Headcount	1051	957	1005
Percent First-Generation	34%	39%	39%

Table 3.B.4-3 Financial Aid Applications			
Financial Aid	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Number Applied for Aid	746	712	644
Unduplicated Enrollment*	871	846	772
Percent Applied	86%	84%	83%

Table 3.B.4-4 Financial Aid Assistance			
Financial Aid	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students Receiving Any Aid	686	637	611
Unduplicated Enrollment*	871	846	772
Percent Receiving Any Aid	79%	75%	79%
Percentage by Category			
Loans	0%	0%	0%
Work-Study	1%	2%	1%
Scholarships/Grants	79%	75%	79%
Academic Based Merit Based Scholarships	14%	13%	13%

*Degree/Certificate Seeking Students

Table 3.B.4-5

Student Demographics

Full and Part-time Students	Fall 2012		Fall 2013		Fall 2014	
	Degree	Non-Degree	Degree	Non-Degree	Degree	Non-Degree
Male						
Non Resident Alien	0	1	0	0	2	1
Hispanic	10	5	6	7	5	10
Amer. Indian/Alaskan Native	9	4	5	3	4	5
Asian	8	3	3	0	5	1
Black	0	1	0	0	1	0
Hawaiian	0	1	0	0	0	1
White	192	137	153	128	141	137
Two or More Races	4	0	8	4	6	2
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	0	0	3	2	0	0
Total Male	223	152	178	144	164	157
Female						
Non Resident Alien	2	1	2	1	3	2
Hispanic	15	20	16	4	16	10
Amer. Indian/Alaskan Native	15	6	10	5	9	6
Asian	4	6	4	1	1	0
Black	2	1	2	0	0	0
Hawaiian	1	1	2	0	1	0
White	363	231	333	236	330	295
Two or More Races	7	1	4	8	9	2
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	0	0	2	5	0	0
Total Female	409	267	375	260	369	315
Total Enrollment	632	419	553	404	533	472

Diversity is apparent on the RMCC campus in socio-economic status. Arkansas law prohibits community colleges from owning and/or managing residence halls. This limits the amount of time that students are available on campus. Many students are also employed and/or have multiple family obligations. To accommodate some of this diversity, courses are offered at differing times and several modalities, including online, hybrid, and through compressed video to limit the commute time for students at distant locations. Most classes are offered on Monday-Wednesday, Tuesday-Thursday schedules to accommodate time and expense concerns. Classes are offered mornings, afternoon, evenings, and weekends, and several degrees can be attained exclusively online.

College Preparedness
As a traditional, open-access community college, RMCC offers a range of preparatory or remedial general education classes in English, reading, and mathematics. Summer bridge courses are available for rising

seniors who have not yet received the satisfactory test scores required for concurrent college course work. Bridge programs are also being developed in career and technical programs. Students are assisted through the Learning Enrichment and Advising Center (LEAC) available to all students and through federally funded Student Support Services. The Associate Vice President for Student Affairs ensures that students with disabilities are accommodated in an appropriate, timely manner. All buildings and classrooms are Americans with Disabilities Act compliant.

Course Enrichment

Diversity is recognized in a variety of culture-based courses, including but not limited to World Literature, Art Appreciation, Theater Appreciation, sociology, psychology, history, and foreign language. All faculty are encouraged to enhance classroom experiences with appropriate field trips and cultural experiences. The budget adequately accommodates these field trip requests.

Student Life

Student Life offers a wide range of activities, and several organizations assist students in recognizing human and cultural diversity. Programming includes community service projects, community tutoring, theater productions, performing arts, and other academic interests. Within the last calendar year, students have attended the Arkansas Repertory Theater, Fort Smith Symphony, Crystal Bridges Art Museum, Philbrook Art Museum, Arkansas Arts Center, and the American College Theatre Festival. Table 3.B.4-6 shows the locations visited by students within the 55+ program.

Table 3.B.4-6 Polk County 55+ Program Visits Fall 2013- Spring 2014	
Location	Number of visits
Norman/Caddo Gap	4
Arkansas Arts Center/Old Mill	2
Rogers Historical Museum	4
Daisy BB Gun Museum	4
Gangster Museum/Dryden Pottery- Hot Springs	1
Gangster Museum/Fox Pass Pottery - Hot Springs	3
Fort Smith Museum/Historical Site	4
Spiro Mounds/LeFlore County Museum - Oklahoma	1

Table 3.B.4-7 Scott County 55+ Program Visits Fall 2014- Spring 2015	
Location	Number of visits
Spiro Mounds/LeFlore County Museum - Oklahoma	2
Terra Studios	4
Chihuly Exhibit at the Clinton Presidential Library	3
Old State House Museum	3
Belle Grove Historic District/Fort Chaffee Museum - Fort Smith	4
Barber Shop Museum/Doll Museum - Fort Smith	4
Subiaco Academy - Subiaco	2
Crystal Bridges	3

Financial Literacy

Many incoming students have issues with financial literacy. The vast majority of students withdrawing from RMCC have historically cited financial instability and lack of funding as the reason for withdrawal. Recognizing this, financial literacy is taught starting with College Orientation. Students are required to attend financial management workshops and complete the Federal Depositor Insurance Corporation's financial literacy program online before the end of the first four weeks of class. Additionally, speakers periodically present seminars on campus from local banks, insurance companies, and the Federal Reserve Bank from Saint Louis, Missouri.

Duke Frederick Lectures

The RMCC Foundation is actively involved in fostering cultural experiences and student and community engagement. Each year, the Foundation sponsors the Duke Frederick Lecture in honor of Dr. Duke Frederick to bring speakers to campus to address issues of economic development and community progress. On March 27, 2013, the Duke Frederick Fund for Public Understanding of Civic, Community, and Economic Issues sponsored the Arkansas Regional Coalition of the Ouachitas (ARCO) Resource Fair. Over 25 state and federal agencies and other organizations were represented at the event to provide resources, grant information/applications, and support to southwest Arkansas. Over 40 local and regional businesses and organizations attended to develop new and innovative opportunities to grow local communities and the region. This event was a catalyst for new projects revitalizing downtown.

On July 25, 2013, ARCO conducted a workshop titled, "Trees Are Good for Business" for community leaders and downtown businesses in Polk, Scott, and Montgomery counties to promote tree projects for enhancing and revitalizing downtown areas and promoting economic development in the ARCO Region. The Arkansas Urban Forestry Council and Arkansas Forestry Commission partnered in this workshop, and the funds were provided by the Duke Frederick Fund.

On October 23, 2014, the Fund hosted the 2014 Arkansas Regional Coalition of the Ouachitas (ARCO) Summit. The guest speaker for the lecture was Mr. Grant Tennille, Executive Director of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. The topic of the lecture, *The Role of Community Colleges in Economic and Community Development*, was thought-provoking and informative. Over 70 people attended from a cross-section of students, staff, and community leaders.

Veteran Services

Veterans discharged from the armed forces face special challenges as they re-enter civilian life. Combat veterans have these issues in greater numbers as they often suffer from post-traumatic stress. Service member veterans are assigned to the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs for advising and counseling. Additionally, a veteran's center is available for study and research on the Mena campus.

Ouachita Center

In August, 2014, RMCC opened the Ouachita Center, a multi-purpose meeting place with capacity to seat 500 persons. The space is versatile enough to accommodate stage performances, community banquets, and conferences. The facility hosts activities ranging Senior Day for service area high schools to quarterly economic forecast seminars sponsored by a local bank.

3.B.5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the RMCC mission.

The mission of RMCC does not specifically promote research scholarship or creative works, though these activities are encouraged. As a two-year commuter campus, opportunities are limited for major artistic productions. However, RMCC faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge through classroom assignments, campus projects, and student activities. Creative work is present in theatre, art, dance, pottery/ceramics, culinary production, and entrepreneurship.

Culinary Arts is a partner in producing various campus and community events. Students showcase their skills and service expertise preparing and serving foods created in the culinary courses. A Fall 2014 dinner theater recently displayed the talents of culinary students and those in the RMCC Actors Guild.

The Radio/Television program is offered through the Secondary Career Center. This program allows students to produce both radio and television programming for broadcast. Radio station KRMN (88.9) is a student/faculty/staff volunteer operation where students are responsible for developing and producing programming. Community events are covered by RMCC video crews, edited, and broadcast on local cable Channel 19. A weekly fall project is filming local football games for broadcast (especially exciting Fall 2014 as Mena high school advanced to the state final game). Additional programming includes local business ads, College events, and public school musicals and productions. Students within this program actively participate in, and win, state Skills USA competitions.

The drama department regularly schedules two or more drama productions per semester. Spring 2014 brought "*Winnie the Pooh*," a play performed for the campus, public, and early childhood centers. Fall 2014 was "*The Doctor*," a series of vignettes based on the works of Anton Chekov. One of the Spring 2015 productions is "*The Bully Show,*" and the drama instructor is actively seeking participants.

The Lifelong Learning department sponsored the Operation Jumpstart Entrepreneurship program in Fall 2013 with a grant from the Winrock Foundation. This intense eight-week course, open to community members, allowed participants to develop a business plan with the assistance of experts in accounting, finance, and communication. The program ended with a live presentation competition with local business leaders serving as panelists.

RMCC supports and encourages faculty to innovate and create new techniques and pedagogies to engage students in the learning process. Student engagement techniques are used across the curriculum in science labs, classroom simulations, role play, and critical thinking discussion. Guest speakers on a multitude of

topics are also part of the classroom experience. Spring 2014 brought "Anti-Procrastination Day," a collaboration of teaching faculty and resource staff to help students complete major work projects, such as term papers, before the end of the semester. This project received excellent reviews from students.

3.C. Rich Mountain Community College has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

Through rigorous hiring practices and commitment to professional development for all positions, RMCC ensures that faculty and staff are appropriately qualified to deliver high quality programs and services. RMCC budgets for professional development opportunities to enhance growth, improve post-secondary pedagogy, enhance job skills, and strengthen career development. The College's strategic plan expresses this commitment and dedication to quality programming.

3.C.1. RMCC has sufficient number and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

RMCC employs full-time, adjunct, and concurrent credit faculty to fulfill instructional duties. Additionally, all faculty participate in updating the curriculum, developing shared assessment tools, and assessing student learning. Full-time faculty are hired for an initial three-year probationary period. Adjunct and concurrent faculty are hired on a semester-by-semester basis. Contracts for adjunct faculty are expressly limited and written so that continued employment beyond the current semester is not expected. Concurrent faculty are employees of local school districts and receive no salary from the College for teaching College courses during the school day. There are sufficient number and continuity of faculty members to fulfill all roles of faculty.

Table 3.C.1-1 Full Time/Part Time Faculty Ratio - Fall 2014			
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
Faculty	21	45	67
Total Courses	143	94	
Average Students per Instructor	76.9	22.3	100
Average Class Size	11.3	10.9	
Faculty Full-Time Equivalent	20.69	10.35	31.04
Faculty per Student FTE	20.69	10.35	31.04
Student to Faculty Ratio	15:1		

Full-time faculty carry a minimum of a 15 credit hour teaching course load per semester and maintain a minimum of 15 office hours per week. Courses taught in excess of the required 15 credit hours are counted as overload. Faculty are compensated as per board policy for overload classes. Faculty overload may not exceed six credit hours per semester. Non-teaching overload may also be permitted for work performed as a department chair or program/project administrator. Adjuncts are not scheduled to teach more than two courses for RMCC if employed full-time in another position.

Table 3.C.1-2		
Student FTE		
	Enrollment	FTE
Fall 2010	1116	620.9
Fall 2011	1108	643.0
Fall 2012	1051	604.6
Fall 2013	857	571.0
Fall 2014	1005	558.3

Student FTE has declined slightly over the last five years. Fall 2014 saw an increase in the number of students, though a decrease in overall FTE. The number of faculty is also consistent. Locating qualified instructors at the outreach and off-campus sites was more of a challenge prior to the advent of high definition compressed interactive video (CIV). The compressed video system allows full-time faculty to teach at multiple locations simultaneously, alleviating much of this problem. The compressed video classrooms are typically scheduled at capacity.

The number of faculty has remained stable at 21 in 2006 and 21 in 2014, though the number of instructors among the disciples has shifted due to changes in program offerings. The average years of service to RMCC for full-time faculty is 7.94 years, while adjuncts, not including concurrent, average 8.14. The length of service for concurrent faculty ranges from one to 12 years, though many of these instructors have extensive service within public school systems. Instructors with the requisite credential are often recruited from secondary schools for night or weekend courses.

Full-time faculty are significantly involved in non-classroom activities, including advising and committee work. Faculty also serve as department chairs. Board policies and procedures govern faculty workload, including overload. Faculty are expected to be involved in college and community activities. Department chairs guide their respective discipline in matters of pedagogy, curriculum, textbook adoption, course scheduling, and expectations of student performance.

The Curriculum Committee, as a subset of the Learning Assessment Committee, reviews and recommends changes to curriculum and instructional practices. The Learning Assessment Committee consists of 19 members, 14 of whom are teaching faculty. The charge of the LAC is to
- Establish a shared conceptual understanding to define outcomes and assessments across the curriculum, and communicate these to stakeholders.
- Establish a vision for the assessment process by articulating outcomes, and determining the means for evaluation of the process.
- Align learning assessment with College strategic goals.
- Ensure that the importance of assessment is communicated to the College Effectiveness Committee and the President's Council.
- Ensure that assessment is a process established, supported, and evaluated by faculty.
- Establish a process for using data, incorporating quantitative and qualitative methods to make recommendations to faculty and staff to bring about meaningful, substantive change.
- Maintain the process established through the HLC Assessment of Student Learning project into subsequent yearly iterations to consistently improve the assessment plan.

3.C.2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

All instructional hiring follows established Board policy (ID 37) for employment procedures and processes to ensure appropriate qualifications. Instructional faculty teaching courses within the Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS) must have a minimum of a Master's degree, with 18 graduate credit hours in the subject field. The Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs is the hiring authority for full-time faculty and approves the job description (ID 234) prior to announcing a vacancy to the public. Job descriptions contain the essential functions, knowledge, skill/abilities, and educational/experiential requirements for the position. A hiring committee, appointed by the College President, reviews application materials and credentials. This committee conducts interviews and makes a recommendation to the VPASA and the College President. Upon the President's final approval, the applicant submits official transcripts. These transcripts are verified, and copies are filed in the Human Resource Office. The official transcripts are maintained in faculty files in the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs office.

Adjunct faculty are hired through collaboration of the respective department chair and the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. There are no published, public announcements of adjunct vacancies, and positions are filled on an ad hoc basis. Adjunct faculty credential requirements duplicate those of full-time faculty.

All career and technical teaching faculty are credentialed appropriately, either with graduate credit hours in the teaching field, professional licensing, technical training proficiency, or extensive professional experience in the field. Among the RMCC faculty, professional licensing is required and maintained in nursing, cosmetology, aircraft maintenance, welding, and emergency medical technician.

RMCC has two consortium instructors with Master's degrees due to membership in the Arkansas Rural Nursing Education Consortium (ARNEC) (ID 490). Contractual faculty teach in courses scheduled through Lifelong Learning and Workforce Training or through grant programs. Faculty teaching courses developed as non-credit in the office of Lifelong Learning that become credit are expected to adhere to the same credential guidelines as other teaching faculty in the discipline.

Table 3.C.2-1						
Faculty Highest Degree Earned						
Degree Level	Fall 2012		Fall 2013		Fall 2014	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
Doctorate	3	3	2	5	3	6
Master	11	44	13	32	10	28
Bachelor	2	9	2	6	4	5
Advanced Certificate	1	0	1	0	1	0
Associate	1	1	2	1	3	3
Certificate	2	2	3	2	0	2
Life Experiences	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	20	59	23	46	21	45

3.C.3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established RMCC policies and procedures.

Faculty are evaluated on a regular basis. Due to RMCC's small size, full-time faculty are supervised by the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs (VPASA). Adjunct faculty are evaluated and supervised by department chairs and the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA).

RMCC uses a multi-tiered approach to faculty assessment by students, peers, and a supervisor. Student surveys are conducted each semester. Results are returned to all faculty at a later faculty meeting. In addition, faculty are evaluated by classroom observation by department chairs, peers, the AVPAA, or VPASA, depending on the evaluation cycle. All observations use a standard classroom visit report (ID 491). Full time faculty have annual performance reviews conducted by the supervising VPASA. This process is designed to provide meaningful feedback to teaching faculty to improve the quality of instruction and student learning.

Students evaluate instructors each semester using the Student Instructional Report - SIR II evaluation instrument (ID 183). This evaluation asks for student perception of teaching effectiveness, including curriculum, content, and delivery. Students are typically surveyed at the end of the semester, when only successful students remain in the course. Recognizing this may skew results, the SIR II instrument was distributed at approximately six weeks into the course in Spring 2014. These data were compared to the Spring 2013 results to see if there were significant differences in student evaluations. The other data supplied here are national community college means using information from 107,071 courses at 62 institutions.

Table 3.C.3-1 SIRS II Results			
Category	Spring 2014	Spring 2013	Community Colleges
Course Organization and Planning	4.61	4.64	4.36
Communication	4.65	4.66	4.39
Faculty/Student Interaction	4.63	4.67	4.4
Assignments, Exams, and Grading	4.58	4.58	4.2
Course Outcomes	4.12	4.13	3.88
Student Effort and Involvement	4.13	4.14	3.88
Overall Evaluation	4.29	4.27	4.05

Instructor scores appear consistent without regard for when the instrument was administered during the semester. These means are reported in the aggregate for the campus. SIRS results are greatly affected by the number of respondents completing the survey. RMCC's class size is typically small, affecting the evaluation scores for most individual faculty. Small class size may affect the satisfaction means of RMCC faculty; however, RMCC scores are consistently above national means.

3.C.4. RMCC has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles: it supports their professional development.

RMCC recognizes the need for continued employee professional growth and development of employees to provide an effective learning environment for changing student needs. The College provides professional development opportunities for faculty to learn about pedagogical and/or educational trends, develop student learning assessment goals, and synthesize changes into the curriculum. Professional development is also provided to allow faculty to maintain necessary certifications and improve credentials.

The College provides a minimum of two days for professional development at the beginning of each semester. The Professional Development Committee is a subcommittee of the Professional Association and meets regularly to determine professional development needs (ID 785). Most of these are institutional in nature, though some are faculty specific. Recent topics of professional development:
- Title IX training on sexual harassment
- Poverty simulation workshop
- Data on persistence and retention
- HLC Assessment Academy
- Committee Restructure
- Moodle (online platform) Training
- Faculty Portal/Student Portal Course Management System

Each department has a specific budget amount allocated to professional development each year. This amount depends on the number of faculty within the department, but all faculty are encouraged and expected to participate in discipline-specific staff development each year. Application for conferences and travel is made through the VPASA's office for approval. Faculty are permitted one national discipline meeting every three years and one state meeting each year. Upon completing off-campus staff development, a participating faculty member documents attendance and provides a plan for sharing information with the respective department (ID 303). To limit travel expenses, faculty are encouraged to receive professional development through webinars, Skype, or other media if appropriate.

Adjunct faculty professional development is typically addressed by the individual, as the majority of adjuncts are otherwise employed and receive professional development through other means, such as The Arkansas Bar Association or other licensing body, the DeQueen-Mena Educational Cooperative, or respective school districts. Adjunct faculty are compensated for attending RMCC faculty and department meetings as part of professional development.

Faculty and staff are encouraged to take courses at RMCC relevant to their discipline if applicable. This is especially true for technical courses. No tuition is charged to faculty/staff, but they are required to pay associated fees.

3.C.5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Each full-time faculty member is required to schedule 15 hours of time outside of class for student advising and assistance. Within a week of the beginning of each semester, faculty schedules including office hours are forwarded to the VPASA. Office hours for each instructor are part of the required 13-point syllabus (ID 639) submitted for all courses each semester. Faculty are required to maintain this office schedule for the duration of the semester.

Faculty schedule appointments during pre-registration for returning students and advise them before the end of the current semester. All full-time faculty are available the week prior to the beginning of the semester for academic advising without appointment for new or returning students. Typically, adjunct instructors do not advise students, though adjunct instructors are wholly responsible for instruction in Culinary Arts, Emergency Medical Technician, and Early Childhood certificates. Students in these programs are assigned full-time instructors knowledgeable of the program.

Adjunct faculty are expected to be accessible to students outside of class but do not have required office hours. The times of availability are on course syllabi, and a means to contact the instructor is printed as well. Due to FERPA laws, adjunct faculty required to correspond with students using RMCC email. All adjuncts have active email accounts for student contact. Online and hybrid course instructors have times listed for when students can reasonably expect to contact them. Student surveys confirm satisfactory accessibility for RMCC instructors. As detailed earlier in this Criterion, SIRS II results show Faculty/Student Interaction as 4.62 on a five-point scale. Five represents "very effective." The average score for two-year institutions is 4.40.

Graduation survey results show overall satisfaction with faculty availability at 93% for 2014 and 89% for 2013. Table 3.C.5-1 lists other survey results related to faculty/student interaction. Dissatisfaction is consistently less than one percent.

Table 3.C.5-1 Graduation Survey				
Item	Response 2014		Response 2013	
Faculty respect for students	Satisfied	29%	Satisfied	35%
	Very Satisfied	64%	Very Satisfied	60%
Quality of Instruction	Satisfied	32%	Satisfied	41%
	Very Satisfied	61%	Very Satisfied	52%
Availability of faculty for office appointments	Satisfied	31%	Satisfied	35%
	Very Satisfied	61%	Very Satisfied	54%
Concern for me as an individual	Satisfied	33%	Satisfied	38%
	Very Satisfied	58%	Very Satisfied	52%
Informal contact with faculty in non-academic settings	Satisfied	31%	Satisfied	40%
	Very Satisfied	55%	Very Satisfied	47%

CCSSE results also indicate overall satisfaction with faculty accessibility. The only area below the comparative mean in this category was "Contacting faulty via e-mail." This may be attributed to faculty allowing students to contact them via text or private cell phone, perhaps not an option at a larger institution.

3.C.6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

The State of Arkansas' Department of Finance and Administration determines employee qualifications for classified staff in support positions. At hire, each employee is assigned to one of the following classes: Classified and Non-Classified. All classified personnel are hired according to required core competencies; otherwise, job qualifications are the responsibility of the College President. In general, direct department supervisors follow established job descriptions to determine required qualifications. Qualifications include job competencies and duties, but may also include professional competencies and/or minimum educational degrees. As covered in Criterion 2, RMCC follows state guidelines and laws as well as Human Resource Department procedures when evaluating candidates. Each RMCC job description lists the qualifications and educational degrees required (ID 556). The hiring process follows the same processes as mentioned in Criterion 3.C.2.

Staff providing student support services at RMCC are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development. Tutoring is provided through federally funded Student Support Services (SSS) and the institutional Learning Enrichment and Advising Center (LEAC). Persons providing tutoring in SSS are hired by the Director of Student Support Services. There is a professional full-time tutor, qualified through standard hiring practices. Peer student tutors are hired as needed and are qualified through instructor recommendation and/or a minimum grade of "B" in any course for which they provide tutoring. SSS tutors undergo formal training prior to working with students.

LEAC peer tutors are hired by the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs upon expressed student and/or faculty need. Students must have a 3.0 minimum cumulative grade point average and a minimum grade of "B" in the course they tutor. Tutors participate in a formal training outlining expectations and student learning styles. Tutoring is provided on an appointment schedule though walk-in sessions may be available. Detailed records of tutoring sessions are relayed to instructors at two-week intervals.

The Financial Aid Director and two staff members are duly qualified to provide student support services in financial aid counseling. Professional development is provided through state and national training, conferences, and financial aid directors' meetings. All staff members attend the Arkansas Association of Financial Aid Administrators fall and spring conferences for state and national updates. Staff members also attend the Western Association of Veterans Education Specialists conference, and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators meeting every other year. Staff members take advantage of webinars offered by NASFAA on federal updates and changes when available. Evidence of quality in financial aid administration is documented in audits finding no audit points (ID 279) (ID 280) (ID 793).

The Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) is a support program for students who are eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The CPI director and professional staff both hold Bachelor's degrees as required by the grant. They also attend state and regional conferences to keep apprised of changes to the program. Further details of this program are in Criterion C.2.A. and in Criterion 3.D.1.

Federal grant programs at RMCC follow strict guidelines to ensure personnel are qualified as dictated by each grant. The Student Support Services director holds a Master's degree, the professional tutor a Bachelor's degree, and the classified staff an Associate's degree. The staff is comprised of the director, an advisor/professional tutor, a tutor coordinator, a computer lab coordinator, and a half-time advisor/tutor.

Staff members attend position-specific professional development each year also dictated by the terms of the grant. More extensive information on these programs is located in Criterion C.2.A. and in Criterion 3.D.1.

The Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) employs one director, three full-time outreach representatives, and one half-time outreach representative. All staff members exceed the minimal grant qualifications for staffing. The Director and two staff hold Master's degrees and others hold Bachelor's degrees. EOC staff provide services to nontraditional students over 19 years of age at four locations: Mena, Waldron, Mount Ida, and Nashville, Arkansas. All staff attend the Arkansas Association of Student Assistance Programs (AASAP) conference in alternating years and exceed the required number of staff development hours each year, including position-specific training. Additionally, all members of EOC meet biweekly.

Educational Talent Search and Upward Bound Classic and Math/Science are federal programs housed at the RMCC campus. Their services are intended for students in the six through twelfth grades. Upward Bound works with students who become RMCC students as part of the program after their junior year of high school. All staff members are duly qualified.

3.D. Rich Mountain Community College provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

RMCC provides multiple support resources to enhance the learning experience and success of all students. Recognizing diverse student needs, RMCC strives to assure all students have the opportunity to improve their standard of living through education. Programs and resources are focused on helping students succeed.

3.D.1. RMCC provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

RMCC faculty, staff, and administration are aware of the level of preparedness, demographics, and special needs of the varied student population. Efforts are continually made to address evolving issues and dynamics. Due to diverse student needs, programs and processes are in place to address issues, implement changes, and assess the quality and effectiveness of these changes. The Student Success Committee is charged with developing strategies to help students remain in college and achieve their educational goals. The CCSSE survey addresses particular student support services. RMCC is comparable to its cohort peers and Arkansas Community Colleges in the categories shown in Table 3.D.1-1.

Table 3.D.1-1 2014 CCSSE Institutional Report Support for Learners			
How much does this college emphasize each of the following? (Sum of "Quite a bit" and "Very much")	RMCC	Peers	ACC
Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying	85%	78%	80%
Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college	82%	81%	80%
Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	52%	53%	55%
Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	40%	38%	37%
Providing the support you need to thrive socially	42%	46%	44%
Providing the financial support you need to afford your education	62%	66%	64%

As mentioned in previous parts of this Criterion, tutoring is an essential part of the services provided to students. Tutoring centers are open each day of the class week, and students are encouraged to make appointments with SSS or LEAC coordinators. SSS tutoring serves approximately 512 students per semester with average tutoring hours of 256 hours per week. Faculty receive tutoring reports twice monthly regarding students receiving tutoring. For Fall 2014, there were 190 student visits and 285.5 total hours spent in the LEAC.

The success of RMCC's efforts in student services is further evidenced by these results from CCSSE as shown in Table 3.D.1-2. The data shows RMCC regularly scores above the mean in student satisfaction with RMCC student services (ID 501).

Table 3.D.1-2 2014 CCSSE Institutional Report			
	RMCC	Peer Colleges	ACC Colleges
Receiving help with coping with non-academic responsibilities	2.32	2.25	2.23
Receiving the support needed to thrive socially	2.41	2.43	2.42
Receiving the financial support needed to afford their education	2.80	2.89	2.86
Relationships with instructors	5.99	5.95	5.83
Relationships with administrative personnel and offices	5.78	5.62	5.43

RMCC's 2014 Graduation Survey revealed the following student satisfaction rates with RMCC student services:

- 88.5% were satisfied with library/learning resources center services (ID 737).
- 86.2% were satisfied with developmental, remedial, and tutorial services, including writing labs and math labs (ID 738).

- 90% were satisfied with student access to computer facilities and services (ID 520).
- 91.5% were satisfied with Business Office services (ID 739).
- 89.2% were satisfied with Bookstore services (ID 740).
- 90.8% were satisfied with Financial Aid services (ID 741).
- 83.8% were satisfied with New Student Orientation (ID 742).

RMCC has several support programs and processes in place to address the needs of particular student groups. A concerted effort is made to ensure students benefit to the greatest extent possible from courses. Specific programs are outlined here.

Career Pathways: The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) is a comprehensive grant project implemented in Arkansas in 2005 and brought to the RMCC campus in 2007. The program is designed to improve the post-secondary education, and ultimate earning potential, of low-income TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) -eligible adults with children under age 21. The initiative emphasizes program components such as job readiness skills, basic academic skill preparation and/or remediation, and post-secondary credentials tied to high wage, high demand occupations. CPI staff provide career counseling, assessment testing, academic advising, workshops, employability guidance, and job placement services. Financial assistance is provided through payments for tuition and fees, childcare assistance, and transportation vouchers. The program also loans books, calculators, supplies, and laptop computers. Lastly, the program pays for necessary testing and licensing fees. Funding for the program is filtered through ADHE and awarded through the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services Federal TANF funds. The grant award is based on performance measures provided by ADHE and DWS (ID 262) (ID 264). Assessment information regarding this program is presented in Criterion 4.

CCAMPIS: Child Care Access Means Parents in School is a federal grant program that supports participation of low-income parents in post-secondary education by providing campus-based child care services. RMCC does not have a child-care facility on campus but contracts with area facilities to provide childcare and preschool services for children of parents receiving Pell grants. This program serves a minimum of 10 students annually. Funding is awarded at one percent (1%) of the federal Pell grant amount awarded at RMCC in the year prior to submitting the grant proposal (ID 296).

Carl D. Perkins: Perkins grant money provides enrollment and employment placement assistance for career and technical education students. RMCC is in a consortium with Southern Arkansas University and University of Arkansas at Little Rock to promote career awareness, preparedness, technical programs, purchase equipment, and placement of students (ID 402).

Johnson Learning Commons: Recognizing the way students acquire information has changed, the library underwent extensive renovation in 2012-2013, becoming the Johnson Learning Commons. Housed within this location are the RMCC library, the Learning Enrichment and Advising Center (LEAC), and Student Support Services (SSS). Research databases and study materials are available as well as the Saint John book collection, computer lab, and technology-enhanced group study rooms. LEAC assists students in becoming more efficient and effective learners, providing academic coaches to assist with study and note taking skills, study techniques, test strategies, laptop loans, and tutoring. SSS provides another computer lab with an on-site tutor, a transfer counselor to assist with academic transfer issues, and subject matter tutors.

TRIO Programs (ID 830): Federal TRIO programs provide various support services suited to the RMCC population. Student Support Services (SSS) assists first-generation college students who meet income

qualifications or students with disabilities to complete a degree or transfer to a four-year institution. The Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) provides financially limited, first-generation college students over the age of 19 with assistance with applying for financial aid and completing admission applications. In addition, EOC provides assistance with career planning, placement testing, and agency referrals. Upward Bound (UB) and Educational Talent Search (ETS) are also part of the RMCC campus. However, most of these services are provided to pre-college aged students, though UB students remaining in the program become RMCC students after their junior year of high school. These services address the RMCC mission of enriching and improving the quality of life for the participants. ETS services include academic guidance, career planning, financial aid counseling, and personal assessment. Upward Bound provides academic instruction, tutoring, financial literacy instruction, cultural enrichment, and college admission assistance. Finally, the UB program provides financial aid counseling, college entrance exam preparation, and a six-week summer program.

Financial Aid: As part of the mission to improve the standard of living, RMCC recognizes that financial assistance is an integral part of the formula for college success for many students. The financial aid office assists students by providing information regarding available resources, qualifications, and filing procedures. As each year more than 70 percent of degree-seeking students receive a form of financial assistance, RMCC provides financial information on the website, at regional workshops, at College Orientation, and during personal counseling sessions. The office also provides training to faculty and staff to answer student questions that arise during the advising process. Financial literacy is addressed in College Orientation, and attendance qualifications are discussed in classes.

Table 3.D.1-3 RMCC Students Receiving Financial Aid	Percentage
Fall 2013	76%
Fall 2012	77%
Fall 2011	79%
Fall 2010	72%
Fall 2009	76%

Outreach Center and Off-Campus Site: RMCC offers classes at locations outside the Mena campus. The outreach center in Mount Ida, and the off-campus site in Waldron provide admissions, academic advising, financial aid information, registration, instruction, and tutoring. Computer lab assistance is also available. These locations are the primary recipients of CIV broadcasts.

College Orientation: College Orientation is required of new students and is offered each semester prior to the start of class. An online option is available if a student is strictly enrolled online. Topics in the orientation include but are not limited to college procedures, timelines and due dates, financial aid, study skills, and time management. Students are counseled heavily with regard to financial literacy and social responsibility. Students meet faculty as they facilitate a computer session where students activate email accounts and the student portal. Student ambassadors from Phi Theta Kappa provide campus tours. A student must attend an orientation session, complete financial literacy computer modules, attend a financial literacy seminar, and complete six hours of community service learning to pass College Orientation.

Safety/Resource Officer: As per Act 226 of the 2013 Arkansas General Assembly (ID 412), each year Arkansas colleges must adopt a policy on whether to allow faculty and staff who are duly licensed,

concealed-carry firearm permit-holders to carry concealed handguns on campus. The RMCC Board of Trustees has voted not to allow concealed handguns. In the alternative, the Board approved an agreement between the Polk County Sheriff's Office to provide a full-time licensed and armed officer for safety and security needs (ID 413). This officer provides services to students as needed.

Transfer Counseling: Many students attend RMCC as the college of first resort for financial, family, or program choice. Recognizing that many students intend to transfer to other institutions, RMCC has a designated transfer counselor to assure continuity and expertise. The counselor works closely with four-year institutions to provide up-to-date, accurate information to students regarding transfer requirements. Student Support Services (SSS) also provides transfer visits for students considering a particular college or university.

Lifelong Learning/Workforce Training: The Office of Lifelong Learning (LLL) is charged with providing enrichment courses for the College. Courses vary from those provided for high school students preparing for the ACT to resources for healthy aging. Enrichment programming is an integral part of the College mission, and LLL continually changes to address community needs.

Veterans are a special population within RMCC, as are students with disabilities. The Associate Vice President for Student Affairs is the advisor for these two student populations, providing admissions, academic advising, and counseling as appropriate. RMCC is ADA compliant and makes reasonable accommodations for students needing such services.

Table 3.D.1-4 Quality of Relationships – 2014 CCSSE What number best represents the quality of your relationships with people at this college? (Scale 1-7, with 7 being "Available, helpful and sympathetic")			
	RMCC	Peer Colleges	ACC Colleges
Instructors	5.99	5.95	5.70
Administration personnel and offices	5.78	5.62	5.03

Students are questioned on the CCSSE instrument and the Graduation Survey about the quality of relationships and services at RMCC. A review of CCSSE results and peer comparisons reveal a favorable significant difference in the means of RMCC and its peers.

3.D.2. RMCC 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 students are adequately prepared.

RMCC recognizes the need to meet students at their level of preparedness. To this end, Adult Basic Education (ABE) is housed on the RMCC campus. In addition, there are ABE locations in Waldron, Mount Ida, at the Department of Community Corrections in Mena, Wickes, Delight, and Glenwood. Adult Education assists students with obtaining their General Education Diploma (GED), improving basic skills, preparing for college, resume writing, employment opportunities, English as a Second Language

(ESL), and testing of Adult Basic Skills (TABE). There are two full-time non classified staff professional staff and one full-time classified administrative assistant on the Mena campus. Off-campus instructional needs are covered by qualified adjunct faculty (ID 31).

For students needing to refresh basic skills, remedial courses are offered in English, which includes Reading and mathematics. As per Arkansas law, referenced in Criterion 4, all students are required to take placement tests upon entering a program of higher education in Arkansas. These tests can be the ASSET, COMPASS, ACT, or SAT. An ACT score of 19 or higher in math, reading, and English exclude a student from taking developmental courses.

Table 3.D.2-1
Placement Score Sheet

	COMPASS	ASSET	ACT	SAT	ENROLL IN
Writing Skills	80+	45+	19+	470+	English Composition I
	74-79	43-44	18	430-440	English Comp with CLI
					required supplemental
	67-73	42	17	410-420	instruction lab
_____	0-66	0-41	0-16	0-400	College Literacy
	30	37	12	330	*Technical Cut Score
Reading Skills	83+	43+	19+	470+	No Requirement
	80-82	42	18	450-460	English Comp with CLI
					required supplemental
	77-79	40-41	17	440	instruction lab
_____	0-76	0-39	0-16	0-430	College Literacy
	60	35	13	350	*Technical Cut Score
Pre-Algebra (COMPASS)	42+	38+	17	470	Beginning Algebra
Numerical Skills (Asset)	0-41	0-37	0-16	0-440	Basic Math
	42	38	17	470	*Industrial Cut Score
_____	39	36	16	440	** Technical Cut Scores
Algebra (COMPASS)	31-40	39 +	18	480-490	Intermediate Algebra
Elem Algebra (Asset)	26-30	35-38	17	470	Beginning Algebra
	0-25	0-34	0-16	0-440	Use PreAlg/NS score
_____	26	35	17	470	*Industrial Cut Scores
	21	31	16	440	**Technical Cut Scores
Algebra (COMPASS)	41+	39+	19+	500+	College Algebra
Intermed Algebra (Asset) _____		0-38			Use Elem Alg score for ASSET

PLA (Prior Learning Assessment) Score _____ Computer Literacy Assessment _____
*Industrial Programs: Aviation, Machine Tool, Industrial Maintenance, and Welding (PLA required)
** Technical Programs: Cosmetology, EMT, Culinary, and Medical Coding and Billing

For students not taking the ACT exam prior to entering, RMCC tests using the ACT COMPASS placement test at the time of registration. Advisors receive scores to aid students with the advising and registration process. Students needing remediation are encouraged to take those courses immediately. Faculty frequently review developmental courses to evaluate the efficacy of programming. In accordance with the PACE grant (ID 156), courses in English and math were revised and topics consolidated so students could accelerate quickly through refresher topics. Qualifying scores are presented above.

In 2011, the faculty merged developmental reading and English classes into one College Literacy course. Instructors use a blended model of instruction and computer technology that allows students to advance more quickly without attending class. The Accelerated Learning Path (ALP) was also developed through PACE. ALP allows students who test within two points of college-level English to enroll in English Composition I and a companion Supplemental English Instruction class, saving a semester in developmental College Literacy. Roughly 82% of students enrolled in ALP successfully completed English Composition I. Results were similar for Fall 2013 with 78% student success. The RMCC campus has a dedicated English lab to assure student access to technology.

Students may advance through remedial course work in mathematics at an accelerated pace as well, completing as many as three developmental courses in a semester. Faculty changed the developmental math courses in 2006 to computer-aided instruction with a math lab tutor/instructor. Students may access the online, self-paced mastery learning math program from any location as well as the Math Lab. Students may attend any scheduled math lab class Monday through Thursday. This allows students to accelerate instruction, though a class cannot be extended to another semester.

3.D.3. RMCC provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

Full-time faculty advisors, TRIO program advisors, and the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs conduct academic advising appropriate to RMCC programs and student needs. Career Pathways staff and others assist when appropriate. Advisors assist students with defining career goals, selecting a course of study, mapping the course sequence, and registering for class. New students are assigned an advisor based on information provided to the Admissions Office. All full-time faculty are assigned advisees based on the student's program interest. Students changing programs are reassigned an appropriate advisor. Returning students receive priority in the registration process, and faculty advisors specifically address the following:

- Career planning and course of study options
- Placement test scores and implications
- Course prerequisites
- Course counseling, course times, and other time commitments
- Registration – initial and drop/add
- Program progress

Students indicate overall satisfaction with advising. Academic advising has a favorable response of 88% in the most recent graduation survey. The CCSSE has favorable response at 76%. Satisfaction does not yet match the level of importance assigned to it by students, indicating this may be improved. There is an online comprehensive advising module to assist students in the advising process.

Table 3.D.3-1 Student Satisfaction with Advising				
Item	Response 2014		Response 2012	
Graduation Survey: Quality of academic advising	Satisfied	28%	Satisfied	34%
	Very Satisfied	61%	Very Satisfied	51%
CCSSE Survey: How satisfied are you with academic advising/planning at this college?	Somewhat	35%	Somewhat	37%
	Very	41%	Very	44%
CCSSE Survey: How important is academic advising/planning to you at this college?	Somewhat	27%	Somewhat	29%
	Very	60%	Very	62%

3.D.4. RMCC provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning, as appropriate to the College's offerings.

RMCC supports effective teaching through providing resources in sufficient amounts so learning is more easily accomplished. The College employs three full-time technical staff for computing and audio-visual needs of faculty and staff. Technical support for teaching is achieved through the following equipment and services:

- Server and network administration
- Printers, desktop computers, ceiling projectors, laptops and iPads
- Audio-Visual equipment including high definition compressed video at multiple locations
- Campus-wide wireless access
- Television and radio capability
- Software systems and administration
- Website maintenance
- Institutional research and reporting
- Selection and purchase responsibility for IT equipment
- Maintenance of the online course management system
- Computer labs in Waldron and Mount Ida
- Multiple labs and classrooms in Mena
- Computers on Wheels, mobile computer technology using wireless technology, providing 18 laptop computers to any classroom. There are two units available in Mena, one in Waldron, one in Mount Ida
- Stationary classroom teaching stations with desktop computers, document cameras, projectors, DVD/VCR players, and sound
- Mobile teaching stations with a computer, projector, DVD/VCR, and amplified speaker

Culinary
The Culinary Arts department has a facility designed for instruction, food preparation, and restaurant simulation. The equipment in the kitchen is sufficient for small scale food production and includes:
- Two double-stacked convection ovens
- Eight-burner commercial gas stove

- Standing Hobart large-capacity mixer
- Double-sided refrigerator and freezer
- Complete dining sets for 30
- Culinary tools and devices including blenders and hand tools

Math

The mathematics department on the Mena campus has 24 stations within the math lab, one of which is large screen for ADA purposes. After six (6) years of using the I Can Learn software, it was upgraded to Hawkes in 2013. Faculty were duly trained on this new software. Additionally, software is used specifically for the Texas Instrument 84 graphing calculators. The computer labs in Waldron and Mount Ida have the same software capabilities.

Reading/Writing Lab

The English department has a dedicated classroom for computer-aided instruction in Computer Literacy. These 18 computers are used to assist students on homework and lab class assignments.

Science

The science labs on the Mena campus are sufficient for the course offerings. However, the design of the labs does not lend itself to instruction in both classrooms. This creates scheduling issues each semester. Renovating this teaching space is a priority. Materials are sufficient for quality instruction.

There are no RMCC lab facilities in Mount Ida or Waldron. Contractual agreements with the public school districts allows RMCC to use those facilities, and RMCC brings the appropriate science supplies.

Cosmetology

Cosmetology has the advantage of being the newest and, therefore, the most current instructional lab setting. With enough stations for 25 students, the cosmetology lab can accommodate multiple clients simultaneously, providing myriad opportunities for instruction. Also included in the lab are
- Three manicure stations
- Two pedicure stations
- Two facial stations
- Four shampoo bowls
- Stylist equipment and supplies
- Cash register and appointment books

Johnson Learning Commons

As mentioned previously in this Criterion, the Johnson Learning Commons (JLC) provides access to an online catalog and approximately 56 online databases and journals in addition to access to the Arkansas State Library System and the University of Arkansas libraries. Interlibrary book loans are available as well. The library has a two-person staff, in addition to those provided through other programs housed in the JLC. Most library databases are accessible at remote locations for RMCC students, faculty, and staff.

Nursing

Nursing faculty have classroom and simulated nursing spaces available on the RMCC campus. However, the majority of instruction comes through clinical practicum. The College contracts with local care

providers to allow for authentic clinical experiences after students complete classroom instruction. Materials for instruction include
- A simulated man and simulated infant patient
- Medical supplies
- Simulated nursing space in the classroom
- Nursing mannequins

Emergency Medical Technician

Emergency Medical Technician has a dedicated space and appropriate training aids. This includes
- A patient simulator (Rescue Randy)
- Backboards
- Oxygen
- Medical supplies
- Use of an ambulance for practical simulations

Welding

The welding equipment includes
- Seven welding stations with MIG and TIG welders
- Air circulator
- Plasma cutter
- Appropriate safety equipment
- Appropriate space

Machine Tool Technology/Industrial Maintenance

Appropriate equipment is available for instruction and includes
- Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machines
- CNC lathes
- CNC plasma torch
- Drill press
- Band saw
- Hand tools
- Machining bits
- Computer stations for computer aided drafting

Radio/Television

Efforts are made to the maintain state-of-the-art equipment. The lab facility includes
- Standard and digital cameras
- Editing equipment and software
- Computer stations for digital editing
- Broadcast equipment
- 200' broadcast tower
- Studio space for live performance
- Broadcast van for remote recording and live broadcast

3.D.5. RMCC provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

RMCC library staff provide access and instruction to students seeking information. . The librarian conducts classroom tutorial sessions to help students understand the depth of resources available and how to use them effectively. In cooperation with faculty, the library is open extended hours for special projects. Students expressed satisfaction with library services the last two years.

Table 3.D.5-1 Graduation Survey Satisfaction with Library/Learning Resources		
Level of Satisfaction	2014	2013
Very Satisfied	58.5%	58.7%
Satisfied	30.0%	31.6%
Total Satisfied	88.5%	90.2%

Classroom instructors encourage the use of internet resources, database technologies, and reference material to produce quality student projects. Courses expressly requiring library services include those in English, History, Business Administration, and the Humanities. Examples of classroom assignments are listed here:

Business Communication
- Students are required to use software to learn some foreign language phrases applicable in a business setting outside the U.S.

Money and Banking
- Students are required to access information on the Federal Reserve Bank website and report various information throughout the semester.

English Composition
- Students are required to use Noodletools through the library database to create an annotated bibliography and note cards for research projects.
- One instructor created "Jings" tutorials for online students to assist with research.
- Students are encouraged to use the Grammarly subscription to edit research papers
- Students are required to use RMCC databases as research sources.

English Composition II
- Students are expected to find at least two articles on literary criticism of the novel Dracula and compare them in an essay.

History
- After watching an historical movie in class, students must research the historical accuracy of the piece. Students complete research papers.

Art, Music, Theatre
- Students may do a 1,500 word research paper that requires books, e-books, EBSCO, and interlibrary loan services.
- The Theater class requires a one-page research paper on American Theater using EBSCO to find the journal article.

Philosophy
- Students must complete a six-page paper and use the books and scholarly journals as the research works cited.

Speech
- Students complete a 75-question library scavenger hunt to locate different types of sources.
- Students must use referenced journals for speech citations.

3.E. Rich Mountain Community College fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

RMCC makes a conscious and intentional effort to enrich lives in the Ouachita region. The College offers courses and programs ranging from Kids College to Double Nickel 55+ field trip excursions that discover regional history. There are classes that address employer training needs and seminars for cultural enrichment   Planning for these events is extensive, and the execution takes the support of all faculty and staff. Limited employee numbers do not limit the impact the institution makes on the community.

3.E.1. Co-Curricular programs are suited to RMCC's mission and contribute to the educational experiences of its students.

RMCC offers co-curricular programs tied to the mission, providing high quality educational opportunities accessible to all, focused on student success. Co-curricular programs are designed to contribute to the diverse needs of RMCC students. Moving knowledge and intellectual inquiry beyond the classroom and curriculum is an important part of RMCC Strategic Goals (ID 193). Established programs and activities help the College to support inquiry, practice, creativity, and social responsibility.

Student Campus Center (Union)
The campus Student Union allows students, faculty, and staff a location to relax and build community. As a commuter campus, this facility is a gathering place that includes television, lounge areas, the Mountain Range Grill, and convenience store, as well as the bookstore. Students regularly congregate in this space. It is also home to the quarterly Variety Show.

Phi Theta Kappa
The Beta Eta Upsilon chapter of Phi Theta Kappa was founded at RMCC in 1998 (ID 331). Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) is the oldest and most prestigious honor society serving two-year colleges. Its purpose is to recognize and encourage academic excellence among students in two-year colleges. The organization promotes individual growth through programs that provide leadership training, scholarship, fellowship, and service to the community. PTK members organize a spring Egg Hunt for Literacy on the lawn of the campus, providing prizes and books for pre-school children (ID 77). They are also involved in an annual

Constitution Day scavenger hunt, serve as tour ambassadors during College Orientation, and read with elementary age children at local schools and the Polk County Library.

Student Government

In Fall 2000, the RMCC Student Council was restructured in the Student Government Association (ID 327). The SGA provides a means for student leadership and input into the College, as well as cultivates a sense of community responsibility. The SGA Constitution states its purpose, "to represent, lead, and unify the student body, to decide and recommend for students upon any matter involving student interests, and to promote common understanding among students, faculty, and administration" (ID 217). Recent activities sponsored by SGA include

- Welcome Back Day (ID 284): Providing activities and events for students at the first of the fall each semester
- Halloween/Fall (ID 335) (ID 340): Hosting carnival games and activities during October
- Christmas Good Drive: Gathering food items for local food band distribution
- Toys for Tots (ID 354): Coordinating toy donations and participating in a live U.S. Marine Corp sponsored Toys for Tots telethon featured on RMCC television
- Junior Day: Assisting RMCC staff by providing tours and information to service area high school juniors
- Honors Night: Helping prepare and assist faculty and staff during the annual Honors Night
- Activities (ID 343) (ID 350): Helping plan and present a movie night, luau, bowling night, a March Madness contest, and Super Bowl watch parties
- Intramural Sports: Offering volleyball and basketball as intermural sports activities for students

Actors Guild

The Actors Guild produces plays on campus and actively participates in theater-related off-campus events. It provides an artistic outlet for students on the campus and for community members interested in theater. The Guild presents a Variety Show each quarter featuring live performances of singing, instrumental music, dance, poetry, stand-up comedy, juggling, and other acts. Nine such shows have been produced since its inception (ID 260) (ID 361) (ID 365). Proceeds from the Variety Show support the RMCC Foundation Theatre Arts Scholarship. This scholarship assists students in the arts program with tuition, fees, and books (ID 366). The Actors Guild has produced several theatrical productions, including *Graceland*, *Killers Head*, *The Hitchhiker*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Zoo Story*, *Winnie the Pooh*, and *Simply Shakespeare*. The American College Theater Festival regional division invited *Zoo Story* to perform in February 2012, the only two-year college at the festival. The College provides funding for theater students to travel to productions at the Arkansas Repertory Theater among others (ID 146).

Rich Mountain Video Team

As mentioned earlier in this Criterion, the RMVT is an organization of students interested in video production. Members video local community events and prepare them for presentation on the local cable channel, RMCC Channel 19 (ID 288). This organization provides enriching opportunities for students to gain valuable experience outside the classroom. Students also compete annually at the SkillsUSA State Competition (ID 373) and have received several awards. Teams have advanced to the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference. This competition strives to "reward students for excellence, involve industry in directly evaluating student performances, and to keep training relevant to employer needs."

Math Club

The RMCC Math Club was formed as a venue for students who enjoy the challenges faced in typical math courses to assist others. The main focus is community service by providing tutoring services to local high school and home school students. The math club averages 120 hours of tutoring per week.

Science Club

The Science Club was formed to provide an opportunity for science students to engage in public service and awareness of science-related topics. The Fall 2014 project is recycling awareness. The group has advertised extensively and is providing containers, and emptying and delivering recyclable materials to a local recycler.

Voices of the Ouachitas

Founded in 2014, the chorale group, Voices of the Ouachitas, is for students interested in voice performance. Originally part of the Variety Show, this group expanded its reach and performs at College functions when appropriate.

Service Learning

In Fall 2013, RMCC initiated service learning projects as part of College Orientation. RMCC requires new students to volunteer time at a nonprofit agency of their choice to promote a sense of civic responsibility and community among students. This project addresses community needs, provides experiential learning for students, and promotes cooperation with peers. By participating in service learning projects, students acquire a deeper understanding of themselves, and their community (ID 386). It is also intended that these projects foster greater engagement on campus. The projects are being modified in Spring 2015 to service learning projects sponsored by faculty.

Baptist Campus Ministry

The Baptist Campus Ministry is the sole organization on campus devoted to a spiritual purpose. It provides students with opportunities for Bible study, Christian fellowship, and leadership skill development. The BCM has an annual mission trip where students travel to less fortunate U.S. neighborhoods and assist with programs, churches, and families. BCM sponsors weekly lunches and the annual "See You at the Pole" event where students gather by the national flag for prayer (ID 79).

3.E.2. RMCC demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its student's educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

The College's mission is to provide all residents of the Ouachita Mountain Region with exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities to improve quality of life and standard of living. RMCC provides students with educational and enriching opportunities through both credit and noncredit offerings, from seminars to courses that span a semester. RMCC is committed to the students it serves and the mission of the College. This commitment is evident in the level of community participation exhibited by the students, faculty, and staff of the College, by program and course offerings and campus locations. Community members are actively involved as advisory board members and on the Board of Trustees. Course offerings are in all the local high schools, and elementary children are brought to campus for children's theater and Kid's College. The 55+ program engages those making life transitions, enriching their lives with cultural events and new skill sets.

The office of Lifelong Learning/Workforce Training offers programming specific to enrichment opportunities. This office offers community education, customized training, and workforce development training for local employers.

College course offerings and programming allow the college to be engaged in the community. Cosmetology and nursing instruction offer unique situations that allow students an immediate opportunity to use class skills in a daily lab setting. Students interact with patients and clients first as observers and then practitioners. These clinical settings provide students with experience far beyond textbook knowledge. Situations encountered in a classroom salon or clinical site teach students to acknowledge and appreciate what is needed once they have passed licensing exams. It also allows them to engage the public, and the community at large as they train for employment. The cosmetology program serves between 25 and 40 clients per day, interacting with the community in a visible, positive way. In Fall 2014 the local elementary parent/teacher group visited the school for "Mother/Daughter Day" where the youngest received pedicures. After observing students first hand, several mothers collected information on becoming students.

Criterion Three Summary

Rich Mountain Community College is committed to quality teaching and effective student learning. It provides quality instruction, support services, and appropriate resources to accomplish its mission. Courses and programs are appropriate to higher education and require levels of performance appropriate to the degrees and certificates awarded. Due diligence is performed to keep programs relevant for transfer or employment. General education is provided across the curriculum to help students to think critically, communicate effectively, research thoroughly, and use technology. Expected learning outcomes are presented to students in a clear manner, and faculty expectations remain constant across teaching modalities. Cultural diversity is a continuing challenge as the College's isolated location makes this more difficult. Faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and discovery of knowledge to the extent possible.

After reviewing the practices of faculty, effort of students, and support staff services, the College recognizes the following strengths and areas for improvement.

Criterion Three Strengths

- The 2014 CCSSE report, recent graduation survey results, and the Self-Study reveal the following strengths
  - Active Collaborative Learning - Tutoring of peers
  - Student-Faculty Interaction - Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework
  - Support for Learners - Helping to cope with nonacademic responsibilities
  - Student Effort - Preparing for class and frequency of tutoring
- RMCC faculty and support staff are properly credentialed and receive ongoing professional development.
- Appropriate faculty and staff development is budgeted and expected.
- Technology is current and appropriate to the mission of educating students consistently across all modalities.
- Evaluation of faculty is consistent regardless of teaching modality.
- Results of faculty assessment is used appropriately.
- Quality tutoring services are readily available to students.

- Students have access to faculty for advising and assignment questions

Criterion Three Challenges

- The 2014 CCSSE report, the graduation survey results, and the Self-Study reveal areas needing improvement. These are
    o Active/Collaborative Learning - Make a class presentation
    o Student Effort - Prepare two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in
    o Student Effort - Work on a paper or project that requires integrating ideas or information from various sources
    o Student-Faculty Interaction - Used email to communicate with instructor
    o Academic Challenge - Number of written papers of any length
- RMCC is isolated but is challenged to do as much as possible to educate students on cultural diversity.
- Due to its small size, faculty and staff have more committee assignments than preferred.
- A need exists to pre-/post-test students on critical thinking and writing to better evaluate possible gains.

Criterion Four: Teaching and Learning – Evaluation and Improvement

Rich Mountain Community College demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services and evaluates their effectiveness to promote continuous improvement. Evidence is provided in the responses to the Core Components in this Criterion.

4.A. Rich Mountain Community College demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

4.A.1. RMCC maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

All RMCC academic, administrative, and support units undergo program review. The College Effectiveness Committee oversees the evaluation timeline. Programs follow the guidelines set forth in the Program Review Handbook (ID 623) published through the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. In academic departments, the program review is an intense evaluation of curriculum offerings, standards, and outcomes. Components within each academic self-study include, but are not limited to program need/demand, curriculum, faculty, resources, course delivery methods, evaluation, student outcomes, and recent/planned program improvements. Each evaluation is completed exclusively by faculty teaching within the program with guidance from the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs (VPASA). Completed reviews are on file in the VPASA office.

After completing the internal program review, academic program documents are sent for external review as per Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) guidelines. Results are forwarded back to RMCC within six weeks. Programs outside the academic departments follow program review standards set by the College or appropriate state or federal governing body. This currently includes several grants.

Arkansas Code §6-61-214 (ID 494) requires the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) to establish standards for the academic programs offered by Arkansas colleges and universities. It also requires a 7-10 year review cycle for all existing academic programs.

In 2008, AHECB directed the ADHE staff, in cooperation with public colleges and universities, to revise the existing program review process to "ensure quality academic programs that support Arkansas' economic development goals; to identify and remove nonviable programs from the AHECB approved program inventory; and to reduce barriers to graduation." As a public college, RMCC is a full participant in the program review process. The RMCC seven-year plan of program review (ID 688) is presented in the Table 4.A.1-1.

Table 4.A.1-1

CIP Code	Program Name	Award	Cycle
48.0507	Machine Tool Technology	CP	2011-12
48.0503	Machine Shop	TC	2011-12
51.3801	Nursing (LPN/LPNT to RN)*	AAS	2011-12
11.0401	Information Systems Technology	AAS	2013-14
52.1201	Computer Systems Technology	CP	2013-14
52.1201	Computer Systems Technology	TC	2013-14
11.1003	Computer Forensics	TC	2013-14
52.0407	Database Applications	TC	2013-14
52.1201	Computer Systems Technology	AAS	2013-14
24.0101	Liberal Arts	AA	2013-14
24.0102	General Studies	AGS	2013-14
51.1613	Practical Nursing*	TC	2013-14
52.1801	Business Administration	AAS	2015-16
52.0101	Business	AS	2015-16
52.0700	Small Business Development	CP	2015-16
52.0799	Small Business Development	TC	2015-16
51.0904	Emergency Medical Technician	CP	2016-17
51.1613	Practical Nursing*	TC	2016-17
51.3902	Nursing Assistant*	CP	2016-17
15.0612	Industrial Maintenance Multi-Craft	CP	2016-17
15.0612	Industrial Maintenance Multi-Craft	TC	2016-17
48.0508	Welding	CP	2016-17
48.0508	Welding	TC	2016-17
19.0706	Early Childhood Development	CP	2017-18
12.0401	Cosmetology	TC	2017-18
13.1206	Teaching	AAT	2017-18
30.9999	General Technology	AAS	2018-19
9.0404	Radio/TV Production	CP	2018-19
12.0500	Culinary Arts	CP	2018-19

As noted above and in Criterion 2.A., within the last three calendar years the Information Systems, Computer Systems (ID 622), offerings and degrees, Machine Tool Technology (ID 633) offerings and degrees, Nursing (ID 696), General Education offerings and the Associate of Arts and Associate of General Studies degrees (ID 697) were evaluated within the last three years. Copies of these evaluation documents are available at the respective links.

Co-curricular programming and student support are evaluated on a consistent basis. Specific review facts are provided here.

TRIO programs (Educational Opportunity Center, Student Support Services, Talent Search, Upward Bound-Classic, and Upward Bound-Math/Science) are required to file an Annual Performance Report (APR) to receive continued federal funding. These evaluations assess areas of impact on student learning and achievement. Suggestions for improvement are included in this report (ID 315). Program directors keep a copy on file of review results. In addition, a review of each TRIO program is conducted by an independent consultant every other year. Directors receive a copy of this evaluation. Further, a self-study review is conducted every other grant cycle (10 years) using Council for Advancement of Standards

(CAS) guidelines. All TRIO programs are now under review, with the final report to be concluded prior to January 2015. Program directors are directly involved in this review process.

Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative

The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (ID 329) (ID 624) (ID 262) provides a comprehensive set of academic and support services designed to foster low-income, low-skill individuals into high-demand high-wage industry jobs. Students receive assistance to acquire the required degrees and/or credentials to obtain and retain a job. It is funded with federal TANF dollars but is not limited to recipients of TANF cash assistance. Students are eligible if they are 1) adult caretakers of children less than 21 years of age, and 2) have incomes below 250% of the federal poverty line. Students receive tuition, fees, books, child care, transportation, and other support. Evaluation of this program takes place through annual program reviews that assess persistence and graduation (ID 266) (ID 267).

Arkansas Adult Basic Education

Adult Basic Education is part of Arkansas Career and Technical Education (ACTE). It exists on the RMCC campus to provide adult basic education for students completing the General Education Development (GED) test. This program is housed on the RMCC campus and is evaluated by the ACTE office. The curriculum is established at the state level. Reports, evaluations, and improvements take place on an annual basis.

ARNEC

The Arkansas Rural Nursing Education Consortium (ARNEC) (ID 490) is a 12-month program combining interactive video instruction and clinical experiences for nurses to transition from licensed practical nurse to registered nurse. This program is designed to meet the needs of working nurses and meets all the requirements of the Arkansas State Board of Nursing. This program is evaluated as part of RMCC's nursing program, and students take the NCLEX-RN examination for licensing.

Career Center

The Secondary Career Center is offered in cooperation with the Arkansas Department of Career Education, the DeQueen-Mena Educational Cooperative, and area high schools to provide on-campus concurrent education in the fields of medical profession education, machine tool technology, and radio/television production. This program is reviewed through the Career and Technical Education office on a five-year cycle. The most recent review was completed in November 2014 (ID 713).

Double Nickel (55+)

The Double Nickel program, as mentioned in Criterion 1, is designed for non-degree seeking students over age 55. As part of its mission, RMCC seeks to offer programing appropriate to all stages of life. Courses offered through the Double Nickel program are assessed on a course-by-course basis with end-of-course evaluations that cover content, methodologies, and instructor effectiveness. Suggestions for further course offerings are also gathered at this time.

Online Course Delivery

RMCC applied for a change of status with the Higher Learning Commission pertaining to online course offerings in 2012. Upon submitting the required information and site visits from ADHE and HLC, RMCC was approved for courses and programs to be delivered 100% online (ID 714) (ID 715).

PACE Grant

The Path to Accelerated Completion and Employment (ID 156) is part of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grants program. PACE participants are a consortium of 22 Arkansas two-year colleges, with Northwest Arkansas Community College as the point of contact for reporting purposes. The purpose of the grant was to improve student retention and accelerate completion for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) workers and students by changing the pathways to complete degrees. The PACE grant completed in the Spring 2014. This program was supervised through the consortium with data forwarded to the U. S. Department of Labor.

RAMP UP Grant

The next iteration of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grant is through the Southwest Arkansas Community College Consortium. Titled RAMP UP (Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnership: Unleashing Potential), the grant is for a consortium of seven community colleges and began in 2013. The focus of the grant is on advancing manufacturing and targets TAA-eligible workers, veterans, long-term unemployed individuals, and other adults in the southwest region. Courses and programs are developed and/or revised to meet industry needs. It is the intent that students receive not only college credit, but nationally recognized industry credentials as well. This grant is reviewed by reporting to the U.S. Department of Labor through the consortium. RMCC received an audit visit by the consortium in October 2014. A copy of the written review is available (ID 779).

Workforce Education

The Workforce Education (ID 138) program is conducted at the behest of employers. As needs are identified at regional businesses, courses are offered either to a specific employer or as a content-specific class open to all. This program is promoted at the College and through the Arkansas Regional Coalition of the Ouachitas (ARCO), as well as local Chambers of Commerce.

Courses offered through Workforce Education focus on meeting targeted business needs. These are evaluated through end-of-course assessments to determine if desired employer outcomes and/or student needs are met. The successful Operation Jump Start for Entrepreneurs (ID 694) funded through Winrock International was an outreach of Workforce Education.

4.A.2. RMCC evaluates all the credit it transcripts including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.

RMCC has a clear procedure for evaluating the credit it transcripts. Experiential learning is granted to veterans and military personnel at the discretion of the Registrar or Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. Students with military experience may be granted credit based upon the evaluation of an ACE (Sailor-Marine American Council on Education Registry) transcript provided by the student and issued by the appropriate branch of service.

Students may receive college credit by taking qualifying exams. The Advance Placement Exam Criteria is available in the student Catalog (ID 706). This exam allows students the opportunity to pursue college-level studies while in high school, and with an appropriate score on an advanced placement examination, to receive advance placement and/or credit upon entering the College. These exams are offered annually by area high schools. RMCC departments authorize credit and/or placement for students who present qualifying scores in the following courses. Credit is awarded after a student completes a minimum of 12 credit hours with a 2.00 GPA or better at RMCC.

Table 4.A.2-1

Advanced Placement Course	Score	RMCC Course
American National Government	3	PSI103
Biology	3	BIO104
Calculus AB	3	MTH245
Calculus BC	4	MTH245 and MTH255
Chemistry	3	CHM114
Chemistry	4	CHM114 and CHM124
Computer Science A	3	CST113
Computer Science AB	3	CST113 and CST elective
English Composition	3	ENG113
English Literature/Composition	3	ENG123
U.S. History	3	HIS213
Macroeconomics	3	ECN213
Microeconomics	3	ECN203
Physics B	3	PHS214
Physics C	3	PHS224
Psychology	3	PSY20
Spanish	3	SPN103
Spanish	4	SPN103 and SPN113

RMCC recognizes the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) of the College Board as a method of establishing credit by examination. A student may earn up to 30 semester credit hours of college credit through CLEP. However, to receive credit, a student must complete a minimum of 12 semester credit hours of course work at RMCC. The examination list, scores, equivalent courses, and credit are available in the Catalog and listed in Table 4.A.2-2.

Table 4.A.2-2			
Examination List	Score	Credit Hours	RMCC Course
Composition with essay	50	6	ENG113, ENG123
Freshman Humanities	50	6	Humanities Elective
College Algebra	50	3	MTH203
Biology	50	6	BIO104
Chemistry	50	6	CHM114, CHM124
Trigonometry	50	3	MTH213
Spanish	50	6	SPN103, SPN113
American Government	50	3	PSI103
Intro to History of the US			
Colonization to 1877	50	3	HIS213
1865 to Present	50	3	HIS223
Human Growth/Development	50	3	PSY213
Microeconomic Principles	50	3	ECN203
Macroeconomic Principles	50	3	ECN213
Psychology, Introduction	50	3	PSY203
Social Science and History	50	3	Social Science Elective
Sociology, Introduction	50	3	SOC103
Western Civilization			
Ancient Near East to 1648	50	3	HIS113
1648 to Present	50	3	HIS123
Introduction to Business Law	50	3	BUS223
Financial Accounting	50	3	ACC203
Information Systems/Computers	50	3	CST113
Marketing Principles	50	3	BUS253

As of Fall 2014, RMCC is developing two exams to assess prior learning. These exams are relevant to certificates and are in the areas of Industrial Maintenance and Medical Billing and Coding. While no final draft yet exists, it is anticipated that these tests can be developed with sufficient reliability and construct validity to accurately assess the extent of work experience and knowledge in these areas. At this time, the examinations are in beta testing.

4.A.3. RMCC has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

RMCC has stringent guidelines in place to assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer. These procedures are explained in the Transfer Student Admission section of the College Catalog which can be accessed through the website (ID 708). Requirements and conditions for transferring credit from other regionally accredited colleges or universities are as follows:

- RMCC will only accept transfer of college-level credits earned at a regionally accredited college or university. These courses will only be accepted with a grade of C (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) or higher. Students may be required to supply college catalogs with descriptions of courses being

transferred from out-of-state institutions. If questions remain, the student may be asked to provide a syllabus to determine eligibility for transfer.

- Transfer credit will be accepted only for college level courses for which RMCC offers equivalent courses. Transfer courses for which there is no equivalent courses will be evaluated by the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs to determine if courses may be used for general elective credit. Credits earned at other institutions will not be calculated in the grade point average used for graduation from RMCC.

Transfer credit for remedial courses will not be granted toward completing degree requirements but are used for placement. Students wishing to appeal acceptance of a transfer course may do so by completing the appropriate paperwork and submitting it to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs who has the final right of review.

Act 672 of 2005 (ID 625) directed the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board to implement a transfer curriculum for all public colleges and universities in the state, effective December 1, 2006. In 2004, 14 chief academic officers from two- and four-year institutions met to discuss developing a transfer system. The goals were to 1) identify and reduce barriers to student achievement, 2) comply with statutes to provide seamless transfer, 3) reduce the number of individual articulation agreements required at each institution, 4) establish a permanent ongoing process for course transferability, and 5) address course transfer issues identified by the Governor, legislators, institutions, and students. The Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS) is a result of this legislation (ID 289).

Act 672 of 2005 specifies that the criteria and content for course transferability be determined by faculty transfer teams according to the discipline. Twenty-two (22) faculty teams composed of two-year college and four-year university faculty met by discipline to determine transferable course criteria and minimum course outcomes. These faculty transfer teams established the course descriptions and common learning outcomes for each course.

RMCC is a full participant in the Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS). This system provides comparable course information to facilitate student transfer between Arkansas public colleges and universities. The ACTS database contains faculty-generated comparable course information for courses offered at public institutions in Arkansas. Students are guaranteed the transfer of applicable credits and equitable treatment in the application of credits for admissions and degree requirements for courses listed within this system. Students may complete specified general education courses anywhere in the public system as well as many courses in the degree/major that are pre-identified for transfer. At this time, RMCC has approximately 50 courses that may be transferred to/from other Arkansas public institutions.

4.A.4. RMCC maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

Strict attention is paid to prerequisites for all college work, not only to ensure continuity of learning outcomes, but to increase the likelihood of student success. As per Arkansas law, Act 1052 of 1987 (ID 684) students cannot enter courses without acceptable test scores that indicate prerequisite knowledge. RMCC does not waive prerequisites as a general practice except in cases where students test proficient enough to render such prerequisite redundant to the learning process. Testing is common in

developmental math courses, English, Reading, medical billing and coding, nursing, and anatomy and physiology. Students are not granted credit for these prerequisites, nor are degree requirements shortened. Students must take additional course work to complete degree requirements. Students are encouraged to take CLEP tests, if they believe their knowledge would warrant such testing for credit.

To maintain the integrity of course prerequisites, the registration system is programmed to notify the advisor should a student attempt to register for a course without the necessary prerequisite. An override of the system is necessary should a student qualify or test into the course, and the prerequisite is not transcripted. Approval from the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs is necessary for an override.

Rigor of RMCC courses is assured in various ways within the academic system. All courses are taught by qualified faculty, using textbooks, materials, teaching methods, and procedures appropriate to the discipline. Every instructor, regardless of discipline, location, or method of course delivery, outlines each course with a detailed syllabus (ID 639). These syllabi include specific course objectives and learning outcomes. In addition, each instructor meets regularly with department chairs and peers to discuss and assess changing student learning needs, appropriate outcomes, and methodologies to achieve student learning. Students are expected to adhere to stated course requirements to receive credit.

The introduction of new courses follows the procedure outlined by the Learning Assessment Committee and the Curriculum Committee. These committees are responsible for developing and maintaining curricular offerings in keeping with the philosophy, mission, and objectives of the College and identifying those components essential for implementing such offerings. The Curriculum Committee, formed with members from the Professional Association, reviews proposals from faculty members pertaining to curriculum changes, additions, or deletions. Recommendations concerning program additions, deletions, and/or changes are made to the Learning Assessment Committee, the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, and the College President. Recommendations pertaining to other curricular offerings are made to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. The full charge and membership of the curriculum committee are located in Governance Through Committees (ID 122).

RMCC does not differentiate any part of its curriculum for dual credit or concurrent enrollments. All concurrent faculty fully participate in activities and discussions, with attention to any special learning needs of their particular student populations. To assure interaction among all faculty within each discipline, RMCC fosters collegiality through planned meetings and opportunities to set common learning outcomes, discuss effective teaching strategies, and evaluate and revise courses as needed. Minimum expectations for all faculty include

1) Meeting as part of the discipline every semester one or more times with the entire department.
2) Using current teaching materials, published within the last three years.
3) Adhering to the common learning outcomes for transferable courses established by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.
4) Participating in developing, revising, and teaching the common departmental objectives and outcomes.
5) Using agreed upon common evaluation methods for some aspects of the campus General Educational Learning Outcomes.
6) Using common assessment techniques and measuring devices such as rubrics, scales, checklists, completed work projects, and/or task proficiencies as selected by departments.
7) Implementing agreed upon changes warranted from assessment data.
8) Participating in the RMCC Assessment Academy HLC project.

Faculty are not expected to use the same teaching methods, and innovation in delivery and activities is encouraged. They may expand and teach supplemental learning objectives aside from required common course outcomes.

All students receive instruction from faculty who are highly qualified in their field. Faculty credentials are on file in the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs office. All faculty are credentialed appropriately for the courses they teach. Technical program instructors are required to attain the minimum of an Associate's degree or be otherwise highly qualified through extensive documented and relevant work experience. Faculty teaching courses for transfer must have the minimum credential of a Master's degree and 18 hours of graduate credit within the discipline of instruction.

Students have access to multiple learning resources including the Learning Enrichment Advising Center (LEAC) and federally funded programs, including Student Support Services (SSS) if the student qualifies. Tutoring is provided through both resources. SSS students have low-income financial qualifications or other criteria that must be met to receive the tutoring service. LEAC is open to any student regardless of economic background and situation. SSS has four and a half full-time employees to assist students, two of which are the Computer Lab Coordinator and the Advisor/Professional Tutor. The program also hires peer tutors to help with homework assignments. LEAC is primarily staffed by student tutors hired through the office of the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs. Occasionally, professional tutors are hired to provide student support and academic assistance. Cooperation and coordination of these two resources occurs daily.

Students have access to the Johnson Learning Commons on campus as a resource to support projects and learning. Previously known as the St. John Library, the Learning Commons was renovated in 2013 to accommodate students in a relaxed, updated, and comfortable environment. Individual study rooms are available where students may reserve space for group study or private research. There are 10 computers available in the SSS lab, and 20 computers are available in the open library for student or community use. There is another lab with 10 stations located within the Abernathy building for Career Pathways participants. The entire campus has free Wi-Fi available for student access and research purposes. Students at RMCC locations in Waldron and Mount Ida have access to labs with 18 stations each and Wi-Fi access.

The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative program also provides learning resources such as books, calculators, and computers to qualified program participants. These materials are loaned and then returned at the end of each semester. Career Pathways is covered in more detail in 4.A.1.

4.A.5. RMCC maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

RMCC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission through the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. In addition, there are other agencies that review individual programs. Both the registered nursing program and the licensed practical nursing program are approved by the Arkansas State Board of Nursing (ID 626). The most recent review cycle took place in June, 2014, and the program was reapproved. There were no changes suggested relating to instruction, content, facilities or faculty. The nursing program is next scheduled for evaluation in 2019. A copy of the most recent report is available (ID 696).

The certified nursing assistant (CNA) program is monitored and reviewed through the Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Medical Services, Office of Long Term Care (ID 540). The program was last reviewed and approved December 2012 (ID 627).

The Arkansas Department of Health - Emergency Medical Services is the inspecting/review agency for the emergency medical technician (EMT) program (ID 630). The program began in 2007, and the most recent training center site visit was June 2014 (ID 819). In addition, EMT students test through the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians for certification.

The RMCC Cosmetology program is approved through the Arkansas Department of Health Systems Licensing and Regulation - Cosmetology (ID 631). This program was approved in Spring 2013 and began teaching students in Fall 2013. The cosmetology program is subject to surprise inspections by the Arkansas Department of Health. One such inspection was conducted in Fall 2014, and no health-related incidents were cited.

The Welding program was established in 2013. RMCC instructors initiated the accreditation application process with the American Welding Society in August 2014 and received acceptance in November 2014.

Pass rates and further information about the assessment of these programs are presented in the following section of this criterion.

4.A.6. RMCC evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, RMCC looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

RMCC is committed to the success of its graduates. It assures that degree and certificate programs prepare students for transfer or employment. All technical programs offered are advised by committees comprised of persons working in the requisite field. This ensures the course content is relevant, current, and flexible to changing employer needs. Current advisory committee members and meeting minutes are available for review (ID 24). Programs requiring licensing follow established state and national guidelines for curriculum and testing. Those programs not requiring a summative licensing examination use best practices in the respective field.

Employment

At this time, RMCC has comprehensive employment figures for students who participated in the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative. In 2009, the Arkansas Research Center (ARC) (ID 692) was founded by a grant from the Institute of Education Sciences to the Arkansas Department of Education. One of its goals is to develop and analyze a database for tracking employment of college graduates, similar to those available in surrounding states. RMCC was assured this database information was forthcoming and discontinued graduate employment surveys (ID 693). Response rates to these surveys were so low as to render analysis anecdotal and unreliable. The ARC was to eliminate this issue.

The ARC has been very helpful in providing data for a number of statewide initiatives, and the most recent analysis of education/employment status was published in February 2014 (ID 693). The center announced in Fall 2013 that it was ready for specific employment data requests with the caveat that employment numbers could be revealed only in the aggregate. Understanding these limitations, RMCC immediately requested data. Unfortunately, RMCC has detrimentally relied on the research center for this

employment information. After repeated, documented requests, as of October 22, 2014, and December, 2014, the data request is still "under review." The office has yet to comply or respond with further information. Local state legislators are attempting to resolve this issue. Employment data will be included as an addendum to this document when available. At this time, employment information is gathered through employers, advisory committee members, faculty/staff contact with employed graduates, or community contacts. While not comprehensive, there is evidence that RMCC graduates are gaining employment within their respective fields.

As mentioned earlier, there are several exceptions to this lack of data. One is information on Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative graduates. Employment data comes through the Initiative office and is forwarded to RMCC. Graduate and employment data for these participants for the last six years is presented in Table 4.A.6-1.

Table 4.A.6-1			
Fiscal Year	Initial Employment Goal (55%)	6-Month Employment Goal (80%)	12-Month Employment Goal (80%)
2009	59%	81%	91%
2010	64%	92%	87%
2011	62%	88%	89%
2012	76%	89%	91%
2013	77%	92%	Available 4/15
2014	Available 4/15		

Information provided is on students who completed degree plans and gained initial employment. The six-month and 12-month employment numbers represent continued employment of the initially employed cohort.

Another data exception is cosmetology graduates. As of Fall 2014, all graduates completing the cosmetology certificate are licensed and employed in the profession. As the first class graduated in the summer of 2014, information on these students is readily available from the cosmetology faculty. Other anecdotal employment data is available for students completing business, computer information systems, machine tool, nursing, EMT, and welding programs.

In addition, employment data is sought to determine if non-completing students are "stopping out" from their education. Many students in the Machine Tool program are stopping out indefinitely without completing a degree as they are employed full-time prior to program completion. While not considered a success in terms of IPEDs data, if full-time employment in the field is the goal, this is significant.

RMCC graduates are transferring to other institutions and completing degrees upon transfer. The following information is from ADHE (ID 636) for the period FY2008-2013 and compares RMCC to members of a cohort group of Arkansas community colleges with similar enrollments and financial resources. As RMCC is located in a rural area and consistently has the smallest headcount enrollment, no cohort is truly representative for comparison. The five college comparison cohort is Arkansas State University-Newport, Black River Technical College, Cossatot Community College of the University of Arkansas, East Arkansas Community College, and Ozarka College.

Table 4.A.6-2

Transfer Students with 12 or More Earned Credit Hours

Transfer undergraduates and undergraduate (UGT) credit hours only

Trans. Inst.	2009			2010			2011			2012			2013			All 5 Yr. Avg.			Last 3 Yr. Avg.			
	UGT	No. >= 12 CrHrs	%	UGT	No. >= 12 CrHrs	%	UGT	No. >= 12 CrHrs	%	UGT	No. >= 12 CrHrs	%	UGT	No. >= 12 CrHrs	%	UGT	No. >= 12 CrHrs	%	UGT	No. >= 12 CrHrs	%	Percent Change
ASUN	120	88	73.3%	136	92	67.6%	138	91	65.9%	167	117	70.1%	173	117	67.6%	147	101	68.8%	159	108	68.0%	-0.8%
BRTC	283	222	78.4%	276	212	76.8%	257	220	85.6%	295	250	84.7%	261	209	80.1%	274	223	81.1%	271	226	83.5%	2.4%
CCCUA	132	110	83.3%	122	98	80.3%	105	81	77.1%	131	108	82.4%	135	108	80.0%	125	101	80.8%	124	99	80.1%	-0.7%
EACC	235	177	75.3%	208	146	70.2%	213	156	73.2%	209	140	67.0%	191	151	79.1%	211	154	72.9%	204	149	72.9%	0.0%
OZC	169	129	76.3%	195	144	73.8%	172	126	73.3%	168	135	80.4%	173	140	80.9%	175	135	76.9%	171	134	78.2%	1.3%
RMCC	116	82	70.7%	137	104	75.9%	89	68	76.4%	101	85	84.2%	105	94	89.5%	110	87	79.0%	98	82	83.7%	4.7%
Cohort Average			77.3%			73.7%			75.0%			76.9%			77.6%			76.1%			76.5%	
AR Comm College Average			78.2%			76.5%			77.1%			79.5%			80.6%			78.4%			79.1%	

RMCC students are also transferring prior to completing their degrees at RMCC. Current federal financial aid guidelines require students to be degree-seeking in order to receive financial aid, though their final desired degree plan may not be offered at RMCC. As evidenced by the transfer data in Table 4.A.6-2, RMCC has a higher percentage of transferring students compared to the cohort group, especially when expressed as a percentage change comparison in the three-year versus five-year average.

4.B. Rich Mountain Community College demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

Stated within the mission is the strategic goal of improving residents' lives through allowing them to learn, either from orchestrated efforts or incidental experiences provided through RMCC. All programs within the College are designed, implemented, assessed, and evaluated with the purpose of student gain. Teaching, learning, assessment, and evaluation are a continuous four-step cycle that establishes learning goals, provides learning opportunities, assesses the level of student learning, and uses that information to change and improve the process.

4.B.1. RMCC has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

Outcome goals are an integral part of the planning process for course work, programs, and systems within RMCC. Goals are written based on student needs and program requirements to move students toward mastery learning of specific skill sets within courses, programs, and institutional degrees.

In November 2011, RMCC joined the HLC Assessment Academy (ID 725). The ongoing Academy project involves faculty teaching and assessing student learning across the curriculum in the following areas:
- Thinking critically
- Communicating effectively
- Using technology
- Conducting relevant research

Faculty developed, discussed, and adopted these general education learning outcomes (GELO) as part of the Academy. At first, faculty included elements of the GELOs in syllabi and classroom activities. However, coordinated assessment was an administrative function, with rules for compliance.

As RMCC has moved through the Academy, and with the guidance of HLC mentors, there is progress. Consistent professional development and administrative support, has improved the assessment process and participation.

As the start of the project, faculty and staff participated in numerous professional development opportunities outlining the differences between a teaching focus and a learning outcome. Our initial academy activities focused on documenting classroom assessments, assessing teaching, and meeting campus-compliance standards. The first reports from the HLC mentors tactfully mentioned needed changes of GELOs. RMCC was 100% compliant in completing forms and documents of assessment on an individual level, but it stopped there.

A shift took place in Fall 2013 as the English faculty took a lead role in defining learning outcomes across the English Composition I course. These faculty worked and developed common learning outcomes at the

course level that incorporate the campus general learning outcomes. They have since expanded this activity to other English courses working closely with all adjunct faculty, including concurrent instructors. Faculty is engaging at a different level on this project.

The math faculty have also shifted student learning outcomes present in the developmental math courses since advancing to computerized content delivery. Full reports of their findings, including pre-test and post-test data, are included as part of the annual campus assessment documents located in the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs office. They also enlist the adjunct in an active role. Students may now complete two or three developmental math courses in a semester when their assessment scores warrant progression. As a component of the PACE grant, these departments have been diligent in emphasizing an outcomes-based focus.

Aside from the General Education Learning Outcome (GELO) goals, objectives are in place for each department and course within each discipline. The academic departments of the College are Allied Health, Business and Computer Science, English and Humanities, Math and Science, Social Sciences, and Industrial Technologies. There is also a department of Lifelong Learning and Work Force Development. Each of these departments develops goals and mechanisms for evaluating student success in the achievement of its learning outcomes.

Desired outcomes are embedded within courses with defined course objectives and communicated to students through syllabi. Program goals may vary from acquiring skill set proficiency for employability after graduation to enrichment after retirement. Objectives set for each program are behavioral in nature and measurable, often with criterion standards of achievement.

Processes for assessment of student learning are in every course and program. These processes are fully documented through gathered course evidence, departmental meeting minutes, and assessment committee reports. These processes are known to be effective as students are achieving standards and passing licensing examinations in various programs such as, Allied Health and Cosmetology and passing rigorous end of course examinations in other departments.

All students completing 45 or more hours of course work are required to take the CAAP (ID 452) (Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency) examination to identify skills levels in writing, math, scientific inquiry, and critical thinking. While this test allows RMCC to measure and compare students' achievement levels with national norms, the nature of the test limits its usefulness. Students are encouraged to complete the CAAP exam and to put forth concerted effort. However, the self-reported effort aspect of the test leads to questions of validity in relying on the results. In so far as it is a comprehensive exam, it is considered as another way to measure student learning outcomes.

4.B.2. RMCC assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

RMCC assesses the achievement of its learning outcomes in its courses and programs. Expected student outcomes are to think critically, use technology, research effectively, and communicate their thoughts clearly in writing and speaking. These general learning outcomes are embedded in every credit course offered by the College. All faculty, including adjunct and concurrent instructors are full participants in quantifying and assessing the achievement of these learning and course outcomes. Evidence of how these skills are taught and assessed in each course is gathered every semester at the course and/or departmental level. Anecdotal evidence is continually submitted by faculty and staff that demonstrates not only successes in the classroom or support program, but also classroom and support failures and retrenching

strategies. Evidence is available for review in the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs office, faculty offices, student support program offices, department chair meeting minutes, and assessment reports.

Assessment Academy mentors provided feedback on the most recent report in the assessment cycle. The mentors praised RMCC's efforts regarding the assessment process and stated:

> "It is great that you all placed a specific emphasis on the ongoing assessment process during the faculty meetings, as well as consultations with the individual faculty members."

Another comment was,

> "Getting the English faculty involved in the assessment process and the integration of general learning outcomes into their departmental structure is key in shifting the assessment campus culture. The plan for them to share their experience and expertise with other departments allows faculty to not feel threatened."

The English department presented their process success and difficulties to the full-time faculty in the fall of 2014.

The math and English faculty are diligent in addressing common course and department outcomes that extend beyond the campus-wide GELOs. To further enhance learning and assessment, other departments and technical programs are charged with developing and standardizing relevant outcomes. Discussions began October 2014, and process is expected to complete by April 1, 2015. Faculty are charged to also include common assessment tools where applicable. These plans are outlined in the winter Assessment Academy Report.

Another of the Assessment Academy mentors said,

> "I love to get reports like this. You're recounting some real triumphs here, including the 100% alignment of GELOs with courses and the 80% cooperation with the request to provide documentation of the GELO's used in courses. [The other mentor] is right in suggesting that better understanding will bring you the other 20%."

Further evidence of achievement of learning outcomes is in the form of transfer rates, graduation rates, skill proficiency, licensing, and various completed classroom and program assessments. Reporting on graduation rates and further transfer data is presented in this criterion under section 4.C.2.

Specific program assessment scores and completion data are presented here for nursing, emergency medical technician, and cosmetology.

LPN – The National Council of State Boards of Nursing report data from 2009 through 2013 are in the Tables 4.B.2-1, 4.B.2-2, and 4.B.2-3. The report summaries are also available (ID 702) (ID 704).

Table 4.B.2-1

National Council of State Boards of Nursing - Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN)

Year	RMCC Exam Takers	# First-Time RMCC Testers Passing Exam	RMCC Pass Rate	State Pass Rate
2007-2008	24	22	83.3%	-
2008-2009	25	22	88%	90.5%
2009-2010	24	22	91.7%	92.6%
2010-2011	25	24	96%	91.8%
2011-2012	22	20	90.9%	88.1%
2012-2013	31	30	96.8%	91.5%

Table 4.B.2-2

Licensed Practical Nursing Program Results

Year	Started Program	Completed Program	Program Completion Rate	Passed First Time	Passed on Retake	RMCC Pass Rate
2007-2008	30	25	83.3%	22	3	100%
2008-2009	30	24	80.0	22	2	100
2009-2010	30	25	83.3	24	1	100
2010-2011	30	22	73.3	20	2	100
2011-2012	31	31	100.0	30	1	100
2012-2013	30	20	66.6	19	1	100

RN – The Registered Nursing program began at RMCC through the Arkansas Rural Nursing Education Consortium (ARNEC) in 2011. Due to licensing requirements, nursing students face a stringent attendance policy. Program completion rates reflect these policies. Prior to taking the NCLEX, students take a test to determine readiness for the licensing exam. The test provides a remediation component that identifies weak skills and offers computerized instruction for improvement if needed.

Table 4.B.2-3

National Council of State Boards of Nursing - Registered Nursing (RN)

Year	RMCC Exam Takers	# First-Time RMCC Testers Passing Exam	RMCC Pass Rate	State Pass Rate	Arkansas Nursing Consortium Pass Rate
2010-2011	9	8	88%	86.9%	95.5%
2011-2012	16	15	93.7	85.3	84.9
2012-2013	15	13	86.7	89.1	92.2

Certified Nursing Assistant – Students take the CNA exam at the completion of the eight-week course of study. Exams take place on the RMCC campus using the Prometric computer software system (ID 686), a subsidiary of the Educational Testing Service.

Table 4.B.2-4				
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)				
Year	RMCC Exam Takers	# First-Time RMCC Testers Passing Exam	RMCC Pass Rate	State Pass Rate
2008-2009	30	22	73.3%	Not Available
2009-2010	32	21	65.6%	
2010-2011	33	30	90.9%	
2011-2012	42	32	76.2%	
2012-2013	40	34	85.0%	

Cosmetology – The cosmetology program was approved in spring of 2013, and the inaugural class of students began in Fall 2013. This class completed the required course work and practical hours in the summer of 2014. Twenty-four (24) students were in the licensed cosmetology operator course, and one (1) was in the instructor course. Of the 25 who began program, 21 completed. The completion rate for the program for the first year was 84%. These students completed the State boards in July 2014, and licensing data is included in the following table.

All cosmetology students who completed the program passed the state licensing exams. Three students received a 98% on the practical examination, and two received the highest score possible of 99%. The average national pass rate for the theory portion is 76.4%. The average national pass rate for the practical portion is 93.3%. Comparative state rates from the Department of Health are not available.

Table 4.B.2-5						
Number Taking Cosmetology State Board	Theory Pass Score	RMCC Theory Average	Percentage Passing	Practical Pass Score	RMCC Practical Average	Percentage Passing
Cosmetology - 20 students	70	83.5	100	75	94.7%	100
Instructor - 1 student	70	77	100	75	84%	100

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) – Pass rate percentages for EMT are heavily impacted by the low number of students taking the examination. Students consistently take this course for work with rural fire department and emergency needs. These students do not typically take the national exam.

Table 4.B.2-6				
National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians - Paramedic Licensing Examination				
Year	RMCC Exam Takers	# First-Time RMCC Testers Passing Exam	RMCC Pass Rate	State Pass Rate
2009-2010	15	7	47	63%
2010-2011	10	5	50	57%
2011-2012	3	1	33	63%
2012-2013	4	2	50	63%

Culinary Arts – All students participating in the Culinary Arts program for college credit are required to complete a sanitation and safety course prior to beginning food preparation courses. Students are required to pass the national ServSafe certification test to continue in the culinary arts. RMCC students have a 100% pass rate since the program began (ID 695).

CAAP – RMCC CAAP scores are presented here. RMCC students scored slightly above the national average in writing, math, and reading. Scores are not statistically significantly different than the national mean in any tested category. Students may have scored slightly lower in science as not all RMCC degree programs require a science course to complete the degree, though previous years' test scores do not indicate this.

Table 4.B.2-7 2014 CAAP Test Results					
Content Area	Writing Skills	Mathematics	Reading	Critical Thinking	Science
RMCC Average	62.1	56.9	64.4	61.0	58.5
National Average	61.5	56.0	60.2	60.8	59.2

Co-curricular services are continually assessed to evaluate their impact on the learning process. Student services from federal programs such as TRIO to the admissions office and financial aid continually strive to not only to comply with required guidelines and federal standards, but to improve processes that foster student engagement and course/program completion. Government audits, as well as self-studies of these services, reveal compliance and concerted effort toward improvement. Details regarding these audits are located in Criterions 2 and 5.

4.B.3. RMCC uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

The purpose of assessment is to improve student learning success and minimize failure. Course methodologies and assessment techniques are constantly changing to meet student needs. Students are evaluated on every level of the learning taxonomy of cognitive skills. They are asked to identify, evaluate, synthesize, reason, and produce. As students are completing assignments, tasks, processes, and programs, their work is continually assessed. The purpose of that assessment is to gather information and use it to improve student learning.

Each faculty person is involved and documents assessment activity. Each teaching faculty is using those assessments to maintain or improve teaching strategies and student involvement in the learning process. As RMCC has changed delivery methods to include extensive online course offerings and Compressed Interactive Video (CIV), standards ensure quality outcomes. Programmatic and course changes have taken place that include analyzing the process and outcomes of assessments. Changes range from the fairly simple "reteach and retest" in an individual class to changing, improving, and coordinating the developmental math software program at all RMCC locations.

Academic departments are actively coordinating changes based upon assessment results and are continuously developing strategies to improve student learning. Common assessment tools are a part of these strategies. As a challenge to any assessment device, caution is needed to ensure the tools used reflect the constructs meant to be tested.

PACE

The PACE grant completely revamped course requirements for the Industrial Arts degree based on an understanding of required employment skills. The most recent report to the consortium detailed changes during the last year. Both developmental language arts and mathematics courses in the Industrial Arts program were totally restructured. New targeted programs in Welding and Industrial Maintenance were established. As the PACE grant ended, its results were coordinated with the RAMP-UP (TAACCT) grant to continue improvements to the programs developed under PACE. Employers continue to be involved in curricular development and advice on the use of resources. Lastly, a virtual career center and online advising module are now available on the RMCC website. The full progress report on this grant is available at the Northwest Arkansas Community College website (ID 705).

As mentioned in Criterion 4.A.1., several programs have undergone review in the last three years. Program-specific results and reviewer suggestions and comments are provided below.

Machine Tool

There were no discrepancies noted in the evaluation report (ID 634) and a two-part suggestion. This was to investigate the KeyTrain career readiness curriculum and the Work Keys Career Readiness Certificate as a curricular addition. The reviewer stated "Every graduate that I spoke with indicated that the training and education they had received were excellent, and they had very little stress upon entering the workforce."

Nursing

The Arkansas State Board of Nursing completed its program review in June 2014. The program passed all requirements with only one recommendation. The recommendation was that clinical site agreements develop a signature page to be sent out annually affirming participation by the sites. This suggestion will be implemented in Fall 2015. The RMCC Practical Nursing Program was granted full approval until 2019 (ID 696).

Computer Systems Technology

At the conclusion of the Computer Systems program review the external reviewer provided the following commendation.

> "Several CST alumni were interviewed over the quality and relevance of the program courses and overall effectiveness of preparing students for the technological work environment. The students accredited their educational pursuits at RMCC with supplying the knowledge, skills training through hands on labs, and instructor involvement and expertise with their successful internships and following employment opportunities."

Among other comments, a specific positive mention was made regarding an online course evaluation rubric. Recommendations were suggested regarding online identity verification and a caution not to teach computer technologies that are ahead of the local employer's hardware/software status. All program commendations and recommendations were forwarded to College Effectiveness for further discussion. (ID 698).

Associate of Arts/Associate of General Studies

The external evaluator for the Associate of Arts and Associate of General Studies (AA/AGS) program review in the summer of 2014 provided the following findings and recommendations (ID 635).

1) I commend the faculty and administration for their dedication to the specific educational goals, objectives, curriculum, and activities of the AA/AGS programs and overall General Education program. I find that the objectives of the two general education degrees – the establishment of a minimum core of general education courses required for baccalaureate degrees in Arkansas and greater flexibility in course selection for certificate programs and associate degrees – have been successfully met and continue to flourish.

2) The college has successfully developed and implemented a general education curriculum which provides the means for students to achieve the outcomes of communication, mathematical reasoning, scientific methodology, basic technological skills, and appreciation of the arts, humanities, and culture, methods of rational and empirical inquiry, and personal health and wellness.

3) The institution has a solid process for the introduction of new courses and internal curriculum review.

4) The faculty teaching in these two general education programs have sufficient academic preparation and experience to achieve the goals and objectives of the programs.

5) The institution provides sufficient support for faculty development in teaching, research, and service.

6) The college sufficiently provides available, adequate, and accessible campus resources for its student population. The college is especially adept at providing personalized treatment for its students due to its small size.

7) Rich Mountain Community College successfully implements policies regarding the establishment, organization, funding, and management of distance education and the infrastructure necessary to keep technology current.

8) I especially applaud the institution for its development of retention and graduation strategies included in its student success plan; particularly, its innovative approach to developmental education, its efforts to revamp mandatory orientation, its evaluation and assessment of student learning.

Finally, two recommendations were made regarding processes:

1) The process for Faculty evaluation/observation should be reviewed for effectiveness and bench marking with similar processes at other comparable institutions.

2) Efforts should be made to insure that a system is established for checking student qualifications for the next level of instruction where prerequisites are involved.

Both of these recommendations were referred to the College Effectiveness Committee, though recommendation two has already been addressed by the English faculty with the development of a common exit examination.

Lifelong Learning (Including Double Nickel 55+)

This program often serves as a proving ground for community interests, ranging from one-night seminars to courses running for several months. The most recent iteration of programming for Lifelong Learning (LLL) yielded a course in resources for healthy aging. This course was so well attended, initially, and in such high demand that the course became a credit offering. There is an extension of this course now

offered for Spring 2015. Often courses begin as ideas in LLL and become credit offerings. Every course in the LLL department is evaluated by students at the end of the course with changes made as appropriate.

Foundations of Excellence

Evaluation and improvement are continuous cycles at RMCC. Shortly after the conclusion of the 2005 HLC accreditation visit, RMCC participated in a two-year Foundations of Excellence (FoE) project funded through a Rockefeller grant. The purpose of this grant was to thoroughly evaluate the first-year experience and improve retention. There were 15 pages of recommendations (ID 685) from this self-study, itemized by focus and priority. Many of these recommendations became benchmarks in Enrollment Management, which is now the Student Success Committee.

Not all FoE recommendations were financially feasible, but the results were integrated into program changes and improvements when possible. Several changes were implemented as part of this process, not the least of which was an additional tutoring center (LEAC) and the appointment of a Director for Student Success Initiatives (now the AVPSA). Faculty and support staff continue to use various methods and interventions to effect change and improve student retention, persistence, and completion of RMCC programs. The Learning, Enrichment, and Advising Center (LEAC) was a result of the FoE study. Students reported that tutor availability was a problem, and the LEAC was created to help alleviate the issue. On average the LEAC serves 25-30 students per semester. Students who use the LEAC center have an average grade point of 2.95, as compared to the overall student population of 2.67 (in 2014).

Student Support Services

Assessment information for Student Support Services (SSS) for 2012-2013 is presented below. The program is funded to provide services to 220 qualified students. In order to receive full funding points, the program must meet its percent approved goals. Students who receive SSS assistance have 2014 a grade point average of 2.88, as compared to 2.67 of the overall student population. This program has been on the RMCC campus and continuously funded since 1988.

Table 4.B.3-1			
Category	Percent Approved (Standard)	Percent Attained	Points Available /Attained
Number Funded=220	100.00%	101.36%	3/3
Good Academic Standing	80.00	98.65	4/4
Persistence	60.00	84.75	4/4
Graduation	30.00	59.65	4/4
Transfer	20.00	21.05	4/4

College Success and Orientation

Since the last accreditation cycle, RMCC has been through several iterations of change related to a college success course. After recognizing the need for such a course, it was originally taught as a seminar with guest lectures. Upon evaluation, the course was moved to a one-hour credit course, with a dedicated instructor. This solution also showed no measurable improvements in student retention. After evaluation and discussion, the course became more intense, covering more topics, and a full-time instructor was

assigned all sections of College Success. In the next iteration, the course was changed to a three-hour credit offering. Further, due to personnel restructuring, the course is now a part of an extended College Orientation course. The Spring 2015 semester will provide the next version of this developmental noncredit course. An extended service learning component is planned to increase student engagement as well as more financial tutoring as many historically low-income students have difficulty managing money. Changes to this course offering reflect the continuous evaluation and improvement process related to meeting student needs.

Student Success Plan

The Student Success Plan (ID 518) was developed for the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) to address statewide issues in developmental education (ADHE policy 5.08.1) (ID 684). Elements of the plan were gleaned from the Foundations of Excellence project, the PACE grant, and various other measures aimed at student retention and success. These elements included initial enrollment diagnostic testing, intrusive academic advising and counseling, mandatory orientation, and academic support, which included a math lab tutor. The plan also included varying the approach to "borderline" testing students, allowing them into enroll in a credit English course, if they also took a supplemental (ALP) instruction course. Developmental standards were put in place requiring students to score at 70% proficiency to progress to the next level of course work. The developmental English and mathematics faculty have made modifications to the program since its inception. The software in math was changed to a more user friendly program. The English department moved to a hybrid method of online instruction and individual assignments for developmental English.

Students requiring remediation present a special challenge. Research shows that the longer students are in college and the further away those students' classes are from their ultimate goals, the less likely those students are to earn a degree (ID 600). In an attempt to improve student completion and time to degree yet still provide the foundational skills needed to succeed in college and in the workplace, RMCC participated in the Path to Accelerated Completion and Employment (PACE) initiative, a Department of Labor grant mentioned earlier in this Criterion (ID 156). PACE allowed RMCC to redesign its developmental programs by compressing instruction in math, reading, and writing.

In 2011, the College merged the developmental reading and English classes into one College Literacy class to provide personalized remediation. The increased use of technology in College Literacy enables instructors to use a blended model of instruction, thereby reducing classroom seat time. The developmental redesign not only helps students move more quickly through their developmental studies, it also helps them balance the demands of family, work, and college by spending less time in class. RMCC also implemented the Accelerated Learning Path (ALP) initiative (ID 531). ALP allows students who test within two points of college-level English to enroll in English Composition I and a companion Supplemental Instruction class thus allowing those students to stay on course by saving them a full semester of developmental English. During the Fall 2012 semester, 81.8% of the students enrolled in ALP successfully completed English Composition I, and 77.8% of the students enrolled in ALP during the Fall 2013 semester successfully completed English Composition I.

RMCC offers three levels of developmental math: Basic Math, Beginning Algebra, and Intermediate Algebra. RMCC's math department began using the I Can Learn computer-based math lab in the summer of 2005 and switched to the more versatile Hawkes Learning System in the fall of 2013. Hawkes is an online, self-paced, mastery-based math program. Students are able to access Hawkes from any location on campus, at home, and in the Math Lab. Because of open access and flexible lab hours, students are able to complete up to three subjects in one semester at no additional cost. Any student who wishes may attend

any or all scheduled Hawkes math lab classes Monday through Thursday. A live, 24-hour chat is available for students needing assistance at home.

In a further effort to help students complete their degrees on time without compromising the integrity of their education, RMCC accepts CLEP and high school AP scores and evaluates all military ACE transcripts for transferable classes. RMCC also offers a challenge exam in Math for Nurses and exempts practical nursing students from taking the Body Structure and Function class if they have taken Anatomy and Physiology. Additionally, a student with an ACT math score of 19 or a COMPASS score that places a student in College Algebra can receive credit for Technical Math if in an appropriate degree plan. Technical Math satisfies the math requirement in five degrees (ID 745).

Admissions Testing Diagnostics

Students are initially evaluated to determine the level of their knowledge before assigning them to classes. These assessments help with advising and focus on placing students in courses that allow them to succeed. Students cannot take college-level courses without the prerequisite knowledge including a qualifying English, Math, or Reading score. No exceptions are made for students seeking concurrent enrollment. Because of this, summer bridging courses were developed and offered for high school rising seniors wishing to test into fall concurrent courses. These courses were put into place after evaluating current practice.

CAAP Testing

Results of the CAAP test are used to determine if RMCC students meet or exceed national norms with regard to critical thinking, math, writing, and scientific inquiry. Additionally, this information is used to determine how well graduating students perform in relation to the campus General Education Learning Outcomes as they relate to Critical Thinking. As mentioned earlier, RMCC is at the national average in all testing areas for students taking this exam. The delimiters of this test were presented earlier in this criterion (ID 712).

CCSSE

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement is an assessment tool that allows students to self-report their community college engagement/experience. It is administered on a bi-annual basis at RMCC. The results of these findings are carefully reviewed by the Institutional Research office and the College Effectiveness Committee. It is also shared with faculty and staff at appropriate professional development opportunities. While this information is self-reported and cannot be used as a criterion reference, it is useful in providing qualitative data regarding student experiences. After reviewing the guidelines set forth by the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) report, A Matter of Degree: Practices to Pathways (2014), it was noted that RMCC already follows 11 of the 13 high impact practices recognized in the study as influencing student success. As a result of the most recent administration of the CCSSE instrument, the College Success/Orientation course is being changed to accommodate an extensive service learning project. This is an extension and enhancement of the service learning component currently required. During the Spring 2013 CCSSE iteration, faculty also completed the Faculty Assessment of Student Engagement (ID 501). Comparison of these results and findings were reported to the College Effectiveness Committee for review.

Committee Restructure

Keeping student learning at the forefront of the RMCC mission, faculty and staff were involved in a committee restructure in the spring/fall of 2014 to better address student and campus needs. After evaluating the previous committee structure and reporting process, several gaps required attention. Rather than assigning committees, in the new process each employee selected the committees on which to serve. These committees were formed, and each evaluated the current charge of the committee and asked to make changes if appropriate. They were then asked to create and address a minimum of three goals, complete with expected outcomes and timelines for the College Effectiveness Committee. Representatives from these committees serve on College Effectiveness.

Timelines, dates, and outcomes are integral parts of all committee goals. Each subcommittee reports progress toward goal achievement on a bi-weekly basis to the College Effectiveness Committee. A copy of each committee and working projects is available (ID 707). Many of these tasks are related to evaluating processes to improve student learning, persistence, and retention. For example, Distance Learning is currently adapting the SIRS II faculty evaluation for application to online courses. Minutes of the College Effectiveness committee meetings are available (ID 252). An administrative retreat involving all program directors and the Effectiveness Committee was held in the summer of 2014 to reaffirm the roles and functions of the new committee structure.

4.B.4. RMCC's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

The processes and methodologies to assess student learning are generated and implemented by faculty and instructional staff. While other employees have a vested interest in the success of students, RMCC programs, goals, processes, and methodologies for assessment are grounded at the faculty level.

With regard to good practice, every effort is made to make student assessment continuous, practical and meaningful. Faculty are responsible for assessment within their individual courses and conveying expected outcomes to students in a clear, understandable manner. Students are explicitly informed of what they are to learn, how to participate in that learning, and how their learning will be assessed. Methodologies and processes used vary with the curriculum or student support service. Departments and programs are responsible for bench marking standards and assessing student attainment of those standards. As previously described and documented in this criterion, assessment is valued as it provides feedback for change and improvement.

4.C. Rich Mountain Community College demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

As an institution of higher education committed to scientific inquiry, a working knowledge of statistical methods, data collection, and interpretation of grouped data is essential. Concerted effort is made to statistically evaluate and interpret how program and curricular changes impact student learning, retention, persistence and completion.

4.C.1. RMCC has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

As stated earlier in this report, a majority of the student population at RMCC is challenged by financial insecurity, lack of preparedness, and lack of previous academic success. This presents the faculty and staff with challenges related to poverty and the historically underprivileged. Community colleges in Arkansas are prohibited by law from operating residence facilities. As RMCC is located in a rural area, RMCC students also face the challenge of unreliable transportation.

After careful review and evaluation of statistical data, the President's Council, in conjunction with the College Effectiveness committee, set student retention and persistence goals "to consistently meet the Arkansas average for two-year schools with similar student populations and financial resources." The schools selected within the comparison cohort are Arkansas State University - Newport (ASUN), Black River Technical College (BRTC), Cossatot Community College of the University of Arkansas (CCCUA), East Arkansas Community College (EACC), and Ozarka College (OZC). RMCC recognizes that the student populations and financial resources of these schools do not comprehensively align with the RMCC service area, but these are the institutions most likely to face of the same challenges.

The U. S. Department of Education calculates 18% of students successfully complete their two-year degree within three years. Information on retention, persistence, and graduation for RMCC are presented in the following tables. Additionally, the five school cohort average is also displayed along with the Arkansas two-year college average for comparison. The RMCC graduation rate average for the last five years is 16.36%. The average success rate, as defined as persistence plus graduation, for RMCC in the last five years is 31.76% of the degree-seeking cohorts, while the five Arkansas community college cohort is 41.53%.

Table 4.C.1-1				
Five-Year Averages of First-Time Full-Time Degree-Seeking Cohort (2007-2012) After Three Years				
	Graduation	Associates Degree	Transfer	Retention
RMCC	16.36%	14.76%	12.52%	13.42%
AR College Cohort	19.92	12.1	10.13	21.46
AR 2-YR Colleges	19.0	12.84	10.44	22.66

Note that while graduation rates and retention rates are lower as a five-year average for RMCC, the percentage receiving an Associate's Degree is significantly higher. It appears that RMCC is losing graduates in the technical certificate or certificates of proficiency credential areas. Students are also leaving to attend other colleges at a higher rate than other institutions. This is an area for further investigation with regard to programming.

Table 4.C.1-2 includes graduation rates for 2013. The five-year average for RMCC is 17.4%.

Table 4.C.1-2				
Arkansas Department of Higher Education/IPEDS Graduation Rates for RMCC				
2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
19%	16%	15%	15%	22%

According to the Nation Student Clearinghouse, nearly a third of all students transfer at least once in five years and 17% at least twice. Seventy-two percent (72%) of community college graduates who transfer get a baccalaureate degree. Fifty-eight percent (76 students) of the Spring 2014 RMCC graduating class plans to transfer and continue their education. Fifty-six percent (56%) of students who transfer without first receiving their associate degree get a Bachelor's degree. Recognizing that transfer impacts a large number of students, multiple analytics are continuously performed to determine where and when students transfer from RMCC and the cause of such transfer if discernable. Results of some of these processes are mentioned near the beginning of this criterion.

Tables 4.C.1-3 through 4.C.1-9 on the following pages detail specific IPEDs data on retention and persistence at RMCC, the five Arkansas college cohort group, and Arkansas two-year colleges.

Table 4.C.1-3					
Retention: One-Year Rates: Freshman Cohort Students					
College	AY2008-09 2007-08	AY2009-10 2008-09	AY2010-11 2009-10	AY2011-12 2010-11	AY2012-13 2011-12
ASUN	41.3	43.7	44.0	31.5	38.0
BRTC	51.7	53.9	56.7	50.8	46.6
CCCUA	50.4	53.7	42.0	44.0	51.2
EACC	53.8	50.2	43.3	44.4	51.3
OZC	51.4	50.6	51.4	51.9	49.0
RMCC	43.1	43.0	41.1	48.6	41.0
Five (5) College Cohort	49.7	50.4	47.48	44.52	47.22
Retention: One-Year Rates: Remediated Students					
College	AY2008-09 2007-08	AY2009-10 2008-09	AY2010-11 2009-10	AY2011-12 2010-11	AY2012-13 2011-12
ASUN	35.2	38.5	33.9	31.6	38.1
BRTC	54.1	51.8	54.6	49.8	46.2
CCCUA	48.8	57.4	40.2	47.1	47.1
EACC	50.0	51.1	42.5	40.5	48.3
OZC	46.2	45.2	48.9	49.2	43.5
RMCC	38.8	41.9	39.1	36.8	30.9
Five (5) College Cohort	46.9	48.8	44.0	43.6	44.6

Table 4.C.1-4

Retention: Two-Year Rates: Freshman Cohort Students				
College	AY2008-AY2010 2007-2009	AY2009-AY2011 2008-2010	AY2010-AY2012 2009-2011	AY2011-AY2013 2010-2013
ASUN	21.5	20.1	15.2	13.3
BRTC	27.6	32.2	30.2	30.6
CCCUA	29.3	34.3	24.7	21.1
EACC	27.9	32.0	23.5	20.5
OZC	28.5	30.8	29.7	26.3
RMCC	20.9	22.3	23.4	19.4
Five (5) College Cohort	26.96	27.88	24.66	22.36
Retention: Two-Year Rates: Remediated Students				
College	AY2008-AY2010 2007-2009	AY2009-AY2011 2008-2010	AY2010-AY2012 2009-2011	AY2011-AY2013 2010-2013
ASUN	20.5	20.9	11.9	12.7
BRTC	28.1	36.0	33.7	29.9
CCCUA	32.8	39.6	25.9	23.9
EACC	25.5	33.5	23.6	18.9
OZC	24.7	33.3	27.5	27.2
RMCC	21.3	25.6	23.0	14.9
Five (5) College Cohort	26.32	32.66	24.52	22.52

Table 4.C.1-5

IPEDS/ADHE Graduation Rate Calculation After Three (3) years (from AY2006 through AY2008)

College	# in Cohort	Transfers		Associate		Technical Certificate		Certificate Proficiency		Graduates		Retained		Success	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
ASUN	107	-	5.6	10	9.3	12	11.2	-	-	22	20.6	21	19.6	43	40.2
BRTC	311	32	10.3	29	9.3	31	10.0	-	1.6	65	20.9	71	22.8	139	43.7
CCCUA	100	12	12.0	17	17.0	-	1.0	-	1.0	19	19.0	33	33.0	52	52.0
EACC	231	19	8.2	37	16.0	-	.4	-	-	38	16.5	50	21.6	88	38.1
OZC	182	15	8.2	19	10.4	-	.5	-	.5	21	11.5	35	19.2	56	30.8
RMCC	122	15	12.3	14	11.5	-	3.3	-	-	18	14.8	12	9.8	30	24.6
Five (5) College Cohort	931	84	8.86	112	12.4	-	5.28		1.03	165	17.7	210	22.6	378	40.82
AR Two-Year Colleges	6,179	684	11.1	698	11.3	303	4.9	53	0.9	1,054	17.1	1,346	21.8	2,400	38.8

Source: Arkansas Department of Higher Education. Comprehensive Annual Report (2013). Attachment 2-C.

http://www.adhe.edu/SiteCollectionDocuments/Section%204%20-%20Research%20and%20Planning%2013.pdf

TIME PERIOD CONSIDERATIONS:

CP Graduates are counted from these graduation dates = '092005' , '102005', '112005', '122005', '012006', '022006', '032006', '042006' , '052006', so this is essentially though the Spring term.

TC Graduates include 1 full academic year plus these graduation dates = '072006' , '082006', '092006', '102006', '112006', '122006', so this is through the next Fall term..

Associate Graduates include 3 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072008' , '082008', so this includes the next 2 months of July and August.

AC Graduates include 4 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072009' , '082009', '092009', '102009', '112009', '122009', so this is through the next Fall term.

Baccalaureate Graduates include 6 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072011' , '082011', so this includes the next 2 months of July and August.

All student counts of less than 10 are not shown due to FERPA.

Table 4.C.1-6

IPEDS/ADHE Graduation Rate Calculation
After Three (3) years (from AY2007 through AY2009)

College	#Cohort	Transfers		Associate		Technical Certificate		Certificate Proficiency		Graduates		Retained		Success	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
ASUN	127	17	13.4	24	18.9	-	7.1	-	-	33	26.0	25	19.7	58	45.7
BRTC	355	45	12.7	26	7.3	35	9.9	-	1.4	66	18.6	71	20.0	137	38.6
CCCUA	85	11	12.9	-	10.6	-	-	-	-	-	10.6	22	25.9	31	36.5
EACC	248	38	15.3	23	9.3	-	.8	-	-	25	10.1	49	19.8	74	29.8
OZC	156	17	10.9	31	19.9	-	-	-	2.6	35	22.4	28	17.9	63	40.4
RMCC	132	20	15.2	20	15.2	-	2.3	-	-	23	17.4	23	17.4	46	34.8
Five (5) College Cohort	971	128	13.1	113	11.6	-	5.9	-	2.0	168	17.3	195	20.0	363	37.4
AR Two-Year Colleges	5,831	689	11.8	703	12.1	265	4.5	75	1.3	1,043	17.9	1,269	21.8	2,312	39.7

NOTES: When a student received more than one award, only the highest award was counted.
TIME PERIOD CONSIDERATIONS:
CP Graduates are counted from these graduation dates = '092006' , '102006', '112006', '122006', '012007', '022007', '032007', '042007' , '052007', so this is essentially though the Spring term.
TC Graduates include 1 full academic year plus these graduation dates = '072007' , '082007', '092007', '102007', '112007', '122007', so this is through the next Fall term.
Associate Graduates include 3 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072009' , '082009', so this includes the next 2 months of July and August.
AC Graduates include 4 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072010' , '082010', '092010', '102010', '112010', '122010', so this is through the next Fall term.
Baccalaureate Graduates include 6 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072012' , '082012', so this includes the next 2 months of July and August.
All student counts of less than 10 are not shown due to FERPA.

Table 4.C.1-7

IPEDS/ADHE Graduation Rate Calculation
After Three (3) years (from AY2008 through AY2010)

College	#Cohort	Transfers		Associate		Technical Certificate		Certificate Proficiency		Graduates		Retained		Success	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
ASUN	121	16	13.2	16	13.2	12	9.9	-	-	28	23.1	21	17.4	49	40.5
BRTC	435	29	6.7	69	15.9	54	12.4	-	1.4	129	29.7	96	22.1	225	51.7
CCCUA	133	20	15.0	10	7.5	-	5.3	-	3.8	22	16.5	34	25.6	56	42.1
EACC	247	28	11.3	25	10.1	11	4.5	-	-	36	14.6	66	26.7	102	41.3
OZC	214	18	8.4	29	13.6	-	.5	-	2.8	36	16.8	51	23.8	87	40.7
RMCC	115	20	17.4	16	13.9	-	1.7	-	-	18	15.7	15	13.0	33	28.7
Five (5) College Cohort	1150	111	9.7	149	13.0	77	6.52	-	2.6	251	21.8	268	23.3	519	45.1
AR Two-Year Colleges	6,681	658	9.8	883	13.2	319	4.8	124	1.9	1,326	19.8	1,582	23.7	2,908	43.5

NOTES: When a student received more than one award, only the highest award was counted.
TIME PERIOD CONSIDERATIONS:
CP Graduates are counted from these graduation dates = '092007' , '102007', '112007', '122007', '012008', '022008', '032008', '042008' , '052008', so this is essentially though the Spring term.
TC Graduates include 1 full academic year plus these graduation dates = '072008' , '082008', '092008', '102008', '112008', '122008', so this is through the next Fall term.
Associate Graduates include 3 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072010' , '082010', so this includes the next 2 months of July and August..
AC Graduates include 4 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072011' , '082011', '092011', '102011', '112011', '122011', so this is through the next Fall term.
Baccalaureate Graduates include 6 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072013' , '082013', so this includes the next 2 months of July and August.
All counts of less than 10 are not shown due to FERPA

Table 4.C.1-8

IPEDS/ADHE Graduation Rate Calculation
After Three (3) years (from AY2009 through AY2011)

College	#Cohort	Transfers		Associate		Technical Certificate		Certificate Proficiency		Graduates		Retained		Success	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
ASUN	199	16	8.0	23	11.6	39	19.6	-	2.0	66	33.5	21	10.6	87	43.7
BRTC	345	42	12.2	40	11.6	31	9.0	-	1.2	75	21.7	77	22.3	152	44.1
CCCUA	134	-	5.2	13	9.7	-	4.5	-	6.0	27	20.1	38	28.4	65	48.5
EACC	241	24	10.0	30	12.4	13	5.4	-	.4	44	18.3	63	26.1	107	44.4
OZC	172	18	10.5	22	12.8	-	.6	-	1.7	26	15.1	45	26.2	71	41.3
RMCC	121	12	9.9	23	19	-	-	-	-	23	19	17	14	40	33.1
Five (5) College Cohort	1091	100	9.2	128	11.7	83	7.6	-	2.26	238	21.8	244	22.4	482	44.2
Two-Year Colleges	6,593	626	9.5	952	14.4	275	4.2	147	2.2	1,374	20.8	1,562	23.7	2,936	44.5

NOTES: When a student received more than one award, only the highest award was counted.
TIME PERIOD CONSIDERATIONS:
CP Graduates are counted from these graduation dates = '092008' , '102008', '112008', '122008', '012009', '022009', '032009', '042009' , '052009', so this is essentially though the Spring term.
TC Graduates include 1 full academic year plus these graduation dates = '072009' , '082009', '092009', '102009', '112009', '122009', so this is through the next Fall term.
Associate Graduates include 3 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072011' , '082011', so this includes the next 2 months of July and August.
AC Graduates include 4 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072012' , '082012', '092012', '102012', '112012', '122012', so this is through the next Fall term..
Baccalaureate Graduates include 6 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072014' , '082014', so this includes the next 2 months of July and August.
All counts of less than 10 are not shown due to FERPA

Table 4.C.1-9

IPEDS/ADHE Graduation Rate Calculation
After Three (3) years (from AY2010 through AY2012)

College	#Cohort	Transfers		Associate		Technical Certificate		Certificate Proficiency		Graduates		Retained		Success	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
ASUN	257	10	3.9	32	12.5	38	14.8	12	4.7	82	31.9	31	12.1	113	44.0
BRTC	496	53	10.7	62	12.5	35	7.1	-	1.2	103	20.8	108	21.8	211	42.5
CCCUA	150	20	13.3	19	12.7	-	4.0	-	4.7	32	21.3	27	18.0	59	39.3
EACC	293	37	2.6	20	6.8	22	7.5	-	0.3	43	41.7	58	19.8	101	34.5
OZC	222	19	8.6	35	15.8	-	-	-	1.8	39	17.6	46	20.7	85	38.3
RMCC	141	11	7.8	20	14.2	-	0.7	-	-	21	14.9	32	22.7	53	37.6
Five (5) College Cohort	1418	139	9.8	168	11.8	95	8.35	12	2.58	299	21.0	270	19.0	569	40.1
Two-Year Colleges	8,337	834	10.0	1,099	13.2	315	3.8	219	2.6	1,633	19.6	1,860	22.3	3,493	41.9

NOTES: When a student received more than one award, only the highest award was counted.
TIME PERIOD CONSIDERATIONS:.
CP Graduates are counted from these graduation dates = '092009' , '102009', '112009', '122009', '012010', '022010', '032010', '042010' , '052010', so this is essentially though the Spring term..
 TC Graduates include 1 full academic year plus these graduation dates = '072010' , '082010', '092010', '102010', '112010', '122010', so this is through the next Fall term
 Associate Graduates include 3 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072012' , '082012', so this includes the next 2 months of July and August.
AC Graduates include 4 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072013' , '082013', '092013', '102013', '112013', '122013', so this is through the next Fall term.
Baccalaureate Graduates include 6 full academic years plus these graduation dates = '072015' , '082015', so this includes the next 2 months of July and August.
All counts of less than 10 are not shown due to FERPA

4.C.2. Rich Mountain Community College collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

RMCC has extensive experience in data collection, review, and analysis, especially data related to student achievement, retention, and persistence. While imperative to the mission of the College, persistence, retention, and graduation rates are also reviewed in the political arena of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the State legislature, and local stakeholders with a view toward accountability and performance funding.

Over the last eight years, RMCC has used data gathered on these metrics to effect changes in curriculum, department procedures, job duties, committee structure, and measures of effectiveness. Retention, persistence, and program completion concerns are pervasive in discussions. At least once each year, faculty and staff participate in professional development specifically related to trends and internal analysis of gathered data on recruiting, enrollment management, survey results, and program efficacy. This staff development takes approximately three hours and revolve around reviewing and discussing various aspects of reports and studies. These reports and associated data sets come from the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the Community College Student Engagement instrument, the CAAP test, academic program reviews, and support program evaluations. Working groups are formed in these sessions for issue discussion. Notes and recommendations are submitted to the College Effectiveness Committee. Often these discussions yield the need for further statistical comparisons or research questions.

The College Effectiveness Committee is responsible for assigning tasks and issues arising from these data meetings (ID 252). The next data review is scheduled for January 2015.

RMCC makes a consistent and coordinated effort to gather, analyze, and report pertinent data to its constituencies. Processes included in the analysis are both qualitative <u>and</u> quantitative, with a fundamental shift toward quantitative methods in the current administration. Anecdotal evidence is also gathered and considered, though conscious effort is made not to base decisions for change on such data. The following is a list of analyses performed since 2012 related to retention, persistence, and completion. Results of these inquiries are shared with appropriate stakeholders. Information and statistical analysis specifics are available in the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Office.

- Analysis of student demographics and preparedness for college.
- Review of exit survey data for withdrawing students.
- Analysis of results of RMCC graduate survey.
- Correlation study between the number of required developmental courses and program completion.
- Analysis and usefulness of CAAP results.
- Analysis of online student retention.
- Analysis in differences in student reported faculty efficacy when faculty evaluated mid-semester versus end of semester.
- Review and analysis of 2014 CCSSE results and a comparison between said results and the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement during the same time frame.
- Analysis and comparison of transfer, retention, persistence, and completion data with five Arkansas two-year college cohort group.

- Analysis of CCSSE data comparison to four two-year college cohort group. (One college in cohort group did not participate in the CCSSE survey for comparison Spring 2014.)
- Correlation analysis of number of hours spent in tutoring and course completion.
- Analysis of transfer data to determine possible reason for transfer.
- Correlation analysis between time since last educational experience and success.
- Efficacy of changes to required orientation on student course completion.
- Analysis of non-returning students: Financial aid exclusion versus financial aid expulsion.

The following are institutional research questions or studies scheduled for review through December 2015:

- Is Arkansas Career Pathways effective due to cohort scheduling or monetary incentives?
- Multivariate study with factor analysis to determine high impact variables on student success.
- How many students who register late persist in class attendance after the first four weeks of class? Compare and evaluate the results of the graduate survey self-perception of critical thinking skills versus the CAAP critical thinking component. Use the results to inform the evaluation of this general education learning outcome.
- Pilot test cohort scheduling in two courses in general education for retention purposes.
- Pilot test cohort scheduling in a minimum of two courses in business administration for retention purposes.
- Correlation analysis between local employment data and enrollment numbers for last six years (to determine if loss of students was due to employment). This correlation to be completed upon data received from the Arkansas Research Center.
- Analysis of completion rates for online courses. (This is a continuing analysis.)
- Deliver and assess changes implemented in the College Orientation course related to service learning.
- Assess the efficacy of the Learning Enrichment and Advising Center on student retention and completion.
- Complete construct validity and reliability assessments on prior learning instruments in Medical Billing and Coding and the Industrial Maintenance programs.

4.C.3. RMCC uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

Much of the information on retention, persistence, and completion inform the decision making in committees, meetings, and overall institutional effectiveness. Some specific program changes follow.

Demographics

The demographics of RMCC's student population reflect the three-county service area in terms of income, education, and financial stability. Students are predominately women who are financially insecure. Many are head of household with multiple dependents. The majority of these students also lack the requisite background education needed to be immediately successful. In 2012, roughly 68% of students required developmental course remediation. After analysis of the poverty data of RMCC students, the college committed to educating faculty and staff on the culture of poverty. Staff development in recent years included a three-hour poverty simulation, a seminar on Ruby Payne's *Framework for Understanding Poverty*, and in Fall 2014, the documentary, *Paycheck to Paycheck*. Full-

time faculty and staff participated in these activities. Faculty have also received staff development on teaching strategies for unprepared students.

Graduate Survey

Intense effort is made to ensure graduates complete the online graduate survey. (Students receive graduation regalia at its completion). In addition to important demographic information, the survey also gathers information specific to the General Education Learning Outcomes discussed earlier in this criterion. Students are asked the importance of these outcomes and their perception of how well those outcomes were achieved. This survey provides valuable information with regard to characteristics of successful graduates (ID 312) (ID 497) (ID 453).

CAAP Test

CAAP test results are used to compare RMCC graduates with national norms. The limitations of these results were discussed in previous sections. However, recognizing that students at other institutions take this test with the same parameters (as is cautiously assumed in a standardized test), comparisons were made. RMCC graduates test scores are not statistically different from national norms (ID 712).

Late Registration

Analysis of late registration data revealed that the students who register within two weeks of the beginning of the semester do not persist. In the last analysis, only 23% of students who registered just prior to the start of class persisted. Results of this analysis were forwarded to College Effectiveness in Fall 2014.

Orientation

Student success data reveal no significant difference in retention between students who completed orientation and those who did not. Further study is required to determine if there is a significant difference in retention and persistence related to the loss of the College Success Course. During 2012-2014, members of the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges (now Arkansas Community Colleges) worked to develop common learning outcomes for a college success course and/or first-year experience. RMCC participated in these meetings and, based on these and the CCSSE Pathways study, changed orientation and subsequent course activities to extend and enhance student involvement.

Online Student Retention

Online courses are challenging for students prepared for college level work. Analysis of this data showed that students who are low in reading and English scores complete online courses at rates lower than the prepared population. While it is documented that students needing developmental courses complete at lower rates than prepared students for all courses, this effect was higher for online offerings. Analysis was forwarded to College Effectiveness to consider guidelines for policy changes. At this time, students who test into remedial courses are strongly discouraged from taking online courses.

4.C.4. Rich Mountain processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice.

Every effort is made to ensure that the data collected, analyzed, and reported is accurate. Reports generated by RMCC are delivered according to the highest level of ethical standards. All data submitted reflect adherence to reporting standards and guidelines. Reporting for financial aid, ADHE, and IPEDS is completed through the office of Institutional Research. Reports submitted to required agencies are complete and on time. Institutional research staff attends professional development to remain current on best practices and reporting changes.

Departments and programs may request data for use in evaluation at any time as the process is often an email or phone request. Data requests are filled in an extremely timely manner, except in cases where the Arkansas Research Center is a part of the request. As previously mentioned in this Criterion, requests for data from that office are delayed or postponed indefinitely.

Institutional Research also coordinates with the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Office of Planning and Accountability for specific data requests. These requests are usually fulfilled within a 48-hour period.

Criterion Four Summary

Rich Mountain Community College, through the work of teaching faculty, professional support staff, and committed administration, strives to continually and consistently assess the efficacy of its programs to fulfill its mission. Programs and courses are student focused and learning centered. At the completion of work, whether at the course, department, or program level, assessment is an integral part of the process. The goal of this continual assessment is always to improve the process, improve the learning, improve the outcome, and ultimately student success. RMCC faculty and staff take full responsibility for student learning and the value of programming they provide. Follow up and follow through in committee and classroom are expected and take place. In addition, assessments with results and outcomes are reported to relevant stakeholders in a timely manner.

Criterion Four Strengths

- RMCC is fully compliant with program guidelines and standards for each of its program offerings. Reviews of all recent programs found no substantive issues needing attention, and credit transfer policies are well established and consistent. Faculty and staff are following best practices set forth in their respective departments.
- Assessment Academy progress – Students in programs with licensing requirements are very successful in completing their programs, testing proficient for licensing, and acquiring employment. Student support programs also have documented evidence of success in retention and completion of their participating students. Students graduating and transferring to other institutions are successful.
- Co-curricular programs are evaluated on a regular basis. The information gained from these evaluations is used in a timely manner to improve the learning process for students.
- RMCC has procedures in place that follow best practices in student retention and communication with students is a priority.
- RMCC recognizes the value of accurate data and fully embraces decisions informed by such data. While few education decisions are based solely on numbers, RMCC recognizes the value of this

pragmatic approach. As an organization with limited resources and personnel, knowing and using the background numbers is necessary and prudent.
- Effort is made to report accurate data to government agencies regarding enrollment, retention, and persistence. Further, Institutional Research and the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs work closely together to gather, analyze, and evaluate the data that is generated through various reports into information used by the institution. This information is a driver of college effectiveness and decision making within Rich Mountain Community College.

Criterion Four Challenges

There are several challenges facing RMCC with regard to evaluation and improvement of student learning.
- Employment Data - No consistent mechanism is currently in place to provide substantial information about RMCC students after graduation, other than transfer data at other Arkansas public institutions of higher education. Knowing if students are working and, perhaps more importantly, if they are working in the field in which they received a degree or certificate, would validate program teaching and student learning goals. Working with advisory committees and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and following program guidelines are extremely helpful, but do not provide complete answers to questions of applicability and relevance in employment.
- Common Learning Outcomes - Another continuing challenge is moving departments housed at multiple campuses in the same direction toward common learning outcomes and assessments. Some departments have wholly embraced the process, while others are still simply compliant. While faculty recognize the need and complete assessment tasks, this could be improved but must happen at the faculty level. Included within faculty assessment challenges is making sure departmental assessments are valid and reliable. While not granting credit based solely on tests, it is imperative faculty are awarding credit that is based on instruments with the correct constructs.
- Programming Challenges - Enrollment numbers, persistence, and retention are at the forefront of an institution of RMCC's size and location. While other colleges may have an abundant pool of potential students, RMCC is bound by its rural location and regional population size. It is essential that programming meets employer needs and student interests to keep RMCC a viable entity.
- Continuous Analysis/Valid Assessments - Close evaluation and analysis of student trends and reasons for non-persistence are required. Faculty and staff are continuously involved in this evaluation process with the goal of raising student engagement, participation in programming, and completion or graduation rates.
- Assessment Coordinator - While IR and the AVPAA analyze data on a consistent basis, it would benefit the organization to employ a full-time assessment coordinator. This coordinator, working closely with IR, could more quickly analyze and provide statistical information to various departments and committees. In keeping with institutional size considerations, budget constraints do not make this an option at this time.

Criterion Five: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

Rich Mountain Community College's resources are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Rich Mountain Community College continuously plans, acts, evaluates, and improves, folding those enhancements into its plans to reach its goals. RMCC has had significant growth and development since the last accreditation reaffirmation by the Higher Learning Commission. The institution strategically aligned physical, human, and financial resources to accomplish this feat. RMCC carefully prioritizes and allocates resources to continue the advance towards the goals discussed in Criterion 1.

This chapter sketches how resource and planning processes at RMCC were integrated to lead the College over the past decade. Further, it outlines future support to enhance RMCC's transformation.

5.A. Rich Mountain Community College's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

RMCC has the resources, structures, and processes in place to deliver education of the highest quality to students. Financial audits, college and program reviews, as well as low faculty-to-student ratios all demonstrate that RMCC has the financial and personnel resources to fulfill its mission and support its educational program. The college also has the physical and technological infrastructure required to maintain and improve operations, as evidenced by the Master Plan (ID 420) and the Equipment Outlay (ID 421).

5.A.1. RMCC has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Fiscal Resources

RMCC is currently able to meet its financial obligations and has future financial projections to address its long-term financial sustainability. Legislative Audits and financial statements (ID 117) are evidence that the College has a strong and sound financial position. Over the past decade, RMCC has been extremely proactive in the development of multiple funding streams rather than relying on unpredictable sources, such as state appropriations. Total funding for the College is now derived from a number of pools: state appropriations, partnerships, revolving funds, federal grants, state grants, local grants, auxiliary operations, and capital funds.

State Appropriations

As a member institution of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) since 1983, RMCC is provided state-appropriated funding through the Arkansas General Assembly (ID 422). As evidenced in the ADHE General Revenue Forecast (ID 423), out of the 22 community colleges in Arkansas, RMCC receives the least amount of total state funding. This is not surprising as RMCC has the smallest enrollment in the state. However, with the many changes in the higher education funding equation during the last several years, the state investment in RMCC has steadily declined. The college received approximately 57% of its unrestricted budget needs through allocations from the state in FY2014, compared to the 70% received in FY2009, as evidenced by Table 5.A.1-1.

Table 5.A.1-1			
	Total Unrestricted Budget	Total General Revenues*	Percentage of Budget covered by State Funding
FY2009	$4,749,076	$3,379,458	71.16%
FY2010	$5,056,430	$3,314,431	65.55%
FY2011	$5,099,819	$3,384,422	66.36%
FY2012	$5,262,232	$3,419,757	64.99%
FY2013	$5,345,011	$3,397,250	63.56%
FY2014	$5,903,975	$3,404,968	57.67%
FY2015**	$5,824,721	$3,409,713	58.54%
*Source: General Revenue Forecast (ID 423)			
**FY2015 General Revenue amount is only an estimate			

Faced with constricting budgets, RMCC responded to these decreases with careful planning and a renewed focus on other funding streams. As a result, the College has developed new techniques to cultivate and monitor its resources as described below.

Partnerships

One of RMCC's first responses to seeking out additional funding sources was to approach the community with collaborative partnerships. One example of this effort is evidenced by the growth of the RMCC Foundation. The Foundation provides funding to the College through several avenues. This assistance ranges from providing scholarships to students, and supporting the innovation of programs and operations, to raising funds for the development of physical and technological infrastructure.

The total assets of the foundation have more than doubled since the 2005 self-study and as of June 2013, have a carrying value of over three million dollars (ID 275). The Foundation has grown to include over forty funds, including endowed scholarships, which provide awards or assistance for students from all three counties in the service area. This equates to an additional $48,000 per year in scholarships for the RMCC service area. This advancement helps to facilitate the RMCC mission of reaching out to all residents of the Ouachita Mountain Region. The Foundation also leases the Mount Ida outreach center building to the College. Other fiscal support from the foundation includes a fund carrying over half of a million dollars designated by the College for buildings and structure maintenance.

Revolving Funds

Another response to the reduction in state appropriations was to stabilize the resource base through increased tuition. Tuition, fees, and charges for various services make up the bulk of the revolving fund

income. Unexpended balances are carried forward as reserve funds and may be added to the budget as needed in subsequent years. While raising tuition is never an easy or complete solution, the College strives to balance tuition rates with student financial aid resources. As a result, RMCC is still able to maintain one of the lowest tuition rates in the state, as evidenced in the ADHE Annual Tuition and Fees publications (ID 425).

The economic and growth challenges faced by the tri-county service area are persistently a concern for RMCC. Increases in tuition and fees cannot completely compensate for revenue declines. In response to this more arid fiscal environment, the College continues to diversify its revenue streams; to think broadly, creatively, and entrepreneurially about how to generate income. This plan has evolved into an enterprise approach, a method where growth and retention results from institutional action and performance – a similar approach that is used in private business sectors.

This re-envisioning of potential revenue streams began in 2009 when the College started a new campaign for workforce and community service classes. Eventually renamed the Department of Lifelong Learning (LLL), this sector began better organizing advisory committees (ID 24) and conducting surveys based on employer needs (ID 104). By researching which specialized skills are needed by local employers, the College offers courses specifically geared to these needs. Employers responded by offering tuition reimbursement to help subsidize some, or all associated program costs. RMCC's LLL department has currently expanded its course offerings into several growing industries, including health, industrial maintenance, welding, aircraft maintenance, culinary, social media, entrepreneurism, the arts, digital literacy, and cosmetology. These changes have produced a steady increase in college revenue since the 2009 campaign began. A varied percentage of this revenue is reinvested in the department either to create new programs or expand an existing one.

In addition to the revenues brought in by this department, the programming is also a useful tool in recruiting new students. Once community members are introduced to some of the recreational courses, they also become familiar with other educational opportunities that RMCC has to offer. For example, several students who registered for recreational cooking classes went on to obtain a Certificate of Proficiency in the Culinary Arts.

By simply investing in itself, the College has control and responsibility for its future. RMCC can confidently assert that its planning aligns with its goals to continually strengthen institutional quality.

Federal Grants

While RMCC has been very successful with its enterprise approach, the bulk of its fiscal support comes from federal grant opportunities. Based on the FY2013 Financial Audit (ID 30), RMCC received over $3.9 million in federal grant revenues. This is an increase of 25% compared to the FY2007 audit (ID 512). Table 5.A.1-2 contains the names of recent federal grants, years in which the grants are active, and the monetary amount received from the grant. These resources provide the academic, career, financial, and admissions advising services to all communities within the service area.

Table 5.A.1-2		
Name of Federal Grant	Award Years	Grant Amount
Adult Basic Education**	2013-2014	$42,928
Aerospace Community Based Job Training Grant (Aviation)*	2009-2013	$277,800
Arkansas Energy Sector Partnership (AESP)*	2011-2013	$100,000
Arkansas Partnership for Nursing's Future (APNF)*	2013-2014	$57,726
Career Pathways*	2013-2014	$192,790
Carl D. Perkins*	2013-2014	$25,806
Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS)	2013-2017	$100,320
Education Opportunities Center	2011-2016	$1,935,940
Educational Talent Search	2011-2016	$1,533,650
Path to Accelerated Completion and Employment (PACE)	2011-2014	$516,407
Student Support Services	2010-2015	$1,594,778
Title III	2005-2009	$1,827,252
Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College & Career Training	2013-2017	$300,000
Upward Bound Classic	2012-2017	$1,696,905
Upward Bound Math and Science	2012-2017	$1,250,000

*Federal grants are passed through the State, and thus awarded based on the State's provisions.
**The Adult Basic Education Grant is partially funded via a federal grant, but the majority of funds are provided by the State (see Table 5.4).

Other federal grants include those awarded directly to students in the form of student financial aid. Due to the poverty of the College's tri-county area, these grants are paramount to student recruitment and success. RMCC recognizes how important financial aid opportunities are to the student population. Table 5.A.1-3 outlines the federal financial aid scholarships awarded to students in FY2014.

Table 5.A.1-3	
Name of Federal Financial Aid Grant	FY2014 Total Amount Awarded
Federal Pell Grants	$1,729,148
Federal SEOG Grants	$19,486
Workforce Improvement Grants	$26,307
Veteran's Affairs Tuition Assistance Grants	$20,279
North American Free Trade Agreement Educational Grants (NAFTA)	$23,529

While other institutions offer student loans, RMCC does not perceive this as an option to best serve the student population. Student loan default rates impact the ability to offer all federal financial aid, a risk not currently advisable. It is not prudent to put all aid in jeopardy to finance a small number of students.

State Grants

Based on the FY2013 Financial Audit (ID 30), RMCC received approximately $598,000 in state grant revenue, an increase of 41% compared to the FY2007 audit (ID 512). State grant opportunities have enabled the institution to offer services in adult education as well as in Career Center areas. The

institution works closely with service area public schools to enable students to take advantage of these programs and academic dual-credit programs. The various state grants also provide direct student financial aid in the form of scholarships. Table 5.A.1-4 contains the names and amounts of state grants awarded in FY2014.

Table 5.A.1-4	
Name of State Grant	FY2014 Total Amount Awarded
Adult Basic Education*	$236,406
Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarships	$179,125
Workforce Improvement Grants	$26,307
Veteran's Affairs Tuition Assistance Grants	$20,279
North American Free Trade Agreement Educational Grants (NAFTA)	$23,529
*The Adult Basic Education Grant is partially funded via a federal grant, but the majority of funds are provided by the state (see Table 5.2).	

As evidenced in Table 5.A.1-2, it is important to note that some of the federal grant funds received by RMCC are actually passed through Arkansas agencies. In this case, the award amount is allocated to RMCC is based on state regulations and performance factors. Thus, the College commonly refers to these grants throughout the self-study as being "state grants."

One example of the state's influence on a federal pass-through grant is in the Career Pathway's Initiative (CPI) program (ID 513). Ass described extensively in earlier Criterions, this grant provides immense support to the institution and its students. The program not only covers the tuition and textbook costs of career training and college classes, but also helps qualified students overcome other barriers such as childcare and transportation expenses. Since its inception in 2007, CPI has passed all required audits (ID 266) and performed so well that it is continually rewarded by the state with additional "incentive" funds for the program's continued success and operations (ID 508). Unfortunately in FY2014, despite the program's success rate, CPI witnessed drastic program cutbacks when the state received less federal money due to the sequester. RMCC's funding was cut by 37%, a reduction of $114,500. Another effect of this decrease in funding is each CPI program within the state no longer receives incentive funds, but instead receives funding based on achieving performance goals. While the state did not receive additional federal funding in FY2015, RMCC did receive an increase due to the successful achievement of FY2014 goals.

Auxiliary Operations

Since its inception in 1983, RMCC has provided a Bookstore for books and classroom supplies. However, in 2013 the Bookstore expanded to form the RMCC Student Union to better address student needs. The Student Union, which still houses the Bookstore, now also includes a convenience store and the Mountain Range Grill.

The Mountain Range, open until 2 p.m. daily, provides a new form of revenue stream for the College. In prior years, food service was managed by a third-party provider, such as Subway. However, with the addition of the Culinary Arts Program and the new Food Services Coordinator/Instructor position, RMCC recognized the opportunity to manage this auxiliary service itself and provide a new stream of revenue. A future goal is for the Mountain Range to collaborate with the Culinary Arts Program for a more diverse menu to introduce students to foods from different cultures. This would give culinary students an

opportunity to work in the food industry as part of the training process and provide an a multi-cultural experience.

The College also built a convenience store within its new Student Union Center. In prior years, vending machines were managed by third-party providers, and a 1% commission fee went to the College. After analyzing the commissions that RMCC was receiving from vending sales, the College recognized another potential area for new revenues. RMCC now provides these grab-and-go services for students, and the convenience store is open for extended hours.

RMCC opened the School of Cosmetology in Fall 2013. The program requires students to receive and document "on the floor" salon simulations; thus, RMCC opened cosmetology services to the general public. The School offers a variety of services to patrons to help students complete their training, including hair care, nail care, skin care, waxing, and hair-care products. While it is too soon for the College to have a strong analysis of revenues from these services, in the past two semesters alone the benefits are promising. The focus of this program remains on the quality of student training and instruction, but RMCC hopes to reap a steady, if small, revenue stream.

Capital Funds

In the past five years, RMCC has received capital funding from several sources, including funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). These federal funds were passed through from the State of Arkansas. One ARRA grant provided RMCC with $645,000 in capital funding (ID 507). The College used these monies to update items in the Business Continuity Plan (ID 776), which included purchasing a new 100kw Generator to provide backup for the College's main campus as well as updating the fire alarm system. The College also upgraded its existing Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems to higher efficiency units. The ARRA grant provided funds to construct a greenhouse that allows students hands-on learning experiences for science courses. RMCC received a second ARRA grant in the amount of $105,968 (ID 549) that was used to help pay for faculty and student computers, along with needed office machinery.

In 2009, RMCC suffered major losses from a tornado that struck Polk County. While insurance revenues were received to pay for damages, these funds were only meant to restore the Mena campus back to its condition prior to the tornado. RMCC took the opportunity to use additional capital funds to make the best renovations possible. Arkansas Higher Education Bond funds in the amount of $1,250,000 were used to pay for Maddox building improvements, modernized classroom furniture, improved a nursing classroom, updated science lab equipment, and upgraded campus signage (ID 514).

In June 2013, RMCC received $4,830,000 from general obligation bonds and additional funds from revenue bonds of $1,850,000 for various construction projects. These projects included renovating the existing St. John Library to create the Johnson Learning Commons. Additionally, the bond funds granted the opportunity to update the Bookstore and Student Center, merging the two facilities into a single Student Union Center. The bond money allowed for construction of the Ouachita Center, a facility that can house conventions and provide meeting spaces for groups of various sizes. There is no comparable large group meeting space in the tri-county area. Smaller meeting rooms in the area also lack the technology the Ouachita Center provides. RMCC hopes the Ouachita Center will encourage large organizations and agencies to hold conventions in Mena and help increase local tourism and boost the economy.

Human Resources

The financial and physical resources at RMCC support the daily functions of a dedicated workforce of faculty, administrators, and professional and classified staff. Each of these groups demonstrates tremendous adaptability and commitment to the College's mission despite economic challenges faced by the institution. Although few in number when compared to sister institutions in the state and the nation, RMCC faculty and staff are a resourceful and creative workforce. They conduct daily institutional operations, impart academic excellence, participate in shared governance, and provide outreach and ancillary services to service area counties.

During Fall 2013, RMCC employed 164 persons on a full-time or part-time basis as faculty, professional, or classified employees. This includes 21 full-time instructors, 48 part-time instructors, 3 administrators, 30 professional support staff, 20 classified support staff, and 42 part-time support staff (ID 551). All positions are appropriated from the state. All full-time employees of the College are employed under a year-to-year contract approved by the RMCC Board of Trustees. Adjunct faculty are employed via a contract for each course and are compensated on a combination of credit-hour and student head-count basis. If eligible, they may also receive certain benefits that full-time employees receive, such as tuition waivers and retirement matches (ID 552) (ID 553).

The primary responsibility of faculty is classroom teaching. Other duties include student advising, consulting, and committee service. Full-time instructors teach 15-16 credit hours per semester (ID 788). Faculty teaching fewer than 15 hours per semester are assigned other responsibilities such as administrative duties or program redevelopment. Teaching loads vary with each semester's enrollment, but patterns indicate that more than half of full-time teaching staff usually teach overload classes in addition to serving on a minimum of two institutional committees (ID 509). Similar workloads exist for other institutional staff. Regardless of teaching load, all full-time instructors maintain 15 office hours per week. Full-time instructors may also teach during the summer semesters. Summer classes are paid on a contract basis for each course.

Professional staff serve as department heads, directors of programs or auxiliary operations, and/or technical or program support personnel. The primary duties of this group involve tasks that play an integral part in the day-to-day operations of the College (ID 556). These members play a critical role in ensuring student success at RMCC and orienting and preparing residents for college studies.

Classified staff serve as administrative assistants, support specialists, technicians, clerks, or maintenance workers. Classified staff provide vital services to help meet student needs and also support faculty and administrative staff in an efficient, effective, and economical manner (ID 557).

Detailed in the Spring 2014 Fast Facts report (ID 561), of the 73 full-time faculty and staff members, 49 were employed with state-appropriated funds as compared to 25 with grant-based funds. Both institutionally funded and grant-funded staff work contracted hours and complete necessary committee work. All institutional faculty and staff are expected to contribute time and skills to a variety of committees, ensuring that governance and maintenance of the institution are shared among the administration, faculty, and staff. The institution operates with an adequate number of state-appropriated positions, but because of the volatility of state funds, the institution intentionally maintains vacancies in these approved positions.

Enrollments for the fall and spring semesters have an average headcount of 1,024 students (ID 561). While on average only 40% are full-time students, RMCC faculty and staff strive to provide all students with educational experiences of exemplary quality. The college offers a low 1 to 15 student-to-teacher ratio.

Physical Infrastructure

RMCC's Strategic Plan (ID 193) and Master Plan (ID 420) are evidence that the physical infrastructure is sufficient to support its current operations. Further, these plans consider future needs and anticipate growth prospects.

In late 2006, RMCC authorized the Benham Company, now known as Liedos, to create a master plan for the College. In early 2008, a plan was completed that identified future buildings sites, buildings, slope/drainage areas, and pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow. The most important factor derived from the RMCC Master Plan (ID 420) is identifying future building sites and utility connection readiness. The College periodically reviews the Master Building Plan in order to ensure that future construction projects are realistic and necessary to support operations.

Currently, several projects are being undertaken that are included on and outside of the Master Building Plan. Several issues impacted where the College is today with regard to construction projects and deviations from the Master Building Plan. These issues include the 2009 tornado, the availability of ARRA funding, and the location of construction obstructions.

The Maintenance and Operations (M&O) Department is responsible for maintaining a campus environment that supports RMCC's Strategic Plan (ID 193) and educational goals in general. The morale of faculty, staff, and students are directly affected by the surroundings in which they work, study, and congregate. Campus first impressions are a key recruiting factor for any institution. RMCC also believes that positive environments are a key retention factor, as well as a major influence on student engagement.

When the College's organizational chart (ID 152) was revamped in 2012, RMCC reconsidered the impact that the physical plant has on daily operations and achieving strategic goals. As a result, the Director of Physical Plant now reports directly to the President. The department consists of five full-time employees, three regular part-time employees, and seasonal part-time help as needed. The director is responsible for overseeing the day to day operations and maintenance of buildings and grounds.

The M&O Department consists of two divisions: maintenance and housekeeping. The maintenance division oversees the operations of the grounds, facilities, and the auto fleet. The housekeeping division provides cleaning and sanitation services for all facilities. Because the M&O Department is limited in man-power, the College uses outside contractors in areas where projects are beyond the scope of the RMCC staff, or where special construction skills are required. Outside architectural firms design major construction and renovation projects.

In 2013, RMCC completed major renovations across campus. The St. John Library was reconstructed, becoming part of the new Johnson Learning Commons. The Learning Commons is an outstanding resource for staff and students, providing 7,700 square feet of attractive and technologically advanced educational space. It features meeting rooms for students for group projects or collaborations. In addition to housing the TRIO SSS staff offices, tutoring spaces for both large and small groups are available. These tutoring spaces benefit from the added bonus of having all library resources readily available.

The new Student Union center was also completed in 2013 and provides 4,700 square feet of modern recreational and organizational space. RMCC provides this facility to its constituents as an opportunity for students to experience "campus life." The Student Union houses the Bookstore, the Mountain Range Grill, a convenience store, recreational furniture, a meeting space, and an exercise facility for student and community use. The Student Union has a collegiate "coffee house" environment that is popular with students and staff.

In August 2014, RMCC completed construction on the Ouachita Center, a convention center that contains various meeting/exhibit arrangements as well as audio/visual equipment. The new 13,300 square foot center houses the Carver Grand Hall, a large convention space that can be divided into smaller meeting areas with retractable wall partitions. It contains a catering kitchen to accommodate groups with long meetings or special events. The Ouachita Center facilitates multiple community needs and events but also positions the area to host conferences and larger regional meetings. RMCC believes this facility is a much needed asset in the College's vision for economic development tied back to Strategic Goal 4 (ID 710).

RMCC has 48 total classrooms (ID 561). This includes three classrooms in the Historic Armory building, eight classrooms at the Waldron off-campus site, and six classrooms at the Mount Ida outreach center. Both the Waldron site and the Mount Ida center were renovated in 2011 and 2012, respectively, to provide enhanced-technology rooms. Due to the demand for distance learning capabilities, RMCC also has four distance learning classrooms. Two of these rooms are on the Mena campus, and one each at Waldron and Mount Ida. RMCC added a distance learning classroom to the Cossatot River High School and Waldron High School campuses to strengthen concurrent and dual-credit course offerings.

Technological Infrastructure

RMCC is committed to providing the highest quality technology-based services and systems, in a cost-effective manner, to support its mission and goals as they apply to student learning, engagements and community service. The rapid changes in technology over the past decade have presented many challenges to a small, rural institution. However, RMCC remains competitive with providing state-of-the-art technology sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

The Information Technology Department (IT) provides technical support to all areas: students, faculty, and staff, as well as to all centers and locations. Led by the Director of Information Technology, who reports directly to the President, the IT department is limited to four full-time employees. Though expanded from the one staff member in 2005, campus technology demands require the department be efficient and proficient. The IT Department is continually reviewing and evaluating new trends and technological advances, though efforts are admittedly limited by financial constraints and geographical obstacles.

As seen in Table 5.A.1-5, RMCC's FY2014 financial investment in the IT Department amounts to over 7.6% of the College's unrestricted budget. IT was spared the budget reductions seen elsewhere in the institution in recent years due to the central role that technological infrastructure plays as a critical component in RMCC's ability to advance academic programs and operations.

Table 5.A.1-5				
Fiscal Year (FY)	Total Unrestricted Budget	Total IT Budget	IT Equipment Budget	IT ratio to overall Budget
FY2009	$4,749,076	$284,394	$5,300	5.99%
FY2010	$5,056,430	$373,114	$76,186	7.38%
FY2011	$5,099,819	$408,923	$30,000	8.02%
FY2012	$5,262,232	$449,214	$70,000	8.54%
FY2013*	$5,345,011	$470,263	$295,423	8.80%
FY2014*	$5,903,975	$449,214	$240,417	7.61%
*The Institutional Research (IR) department was separated from the IT department in FY13. This table includes both departments in order to provide an accurate comparison.				

The RMCC Strategic Plan targets the importance of technology in Goal 3: Quality Learning Environment (ID 722). One strategy for attaining this goal is to "continue developing distance learning course offerings to accommodate students who are unable or prefer not to come to campus." The college works diligently towards this goal, and offers a large variety of online classes to students including high school students seeking to obtain dual credit. In 2013, RMCC invested heavily in high-definition Compressed Interactive Video (CIV) equipment, which allows the use of today's technology to broadcast a class lecture live to other students in off-site locations. Teachers and students are able to see and speak to each other in real time. This method is cost effective for the College as only one instructor is needed to facilitate a class in multiple locations. It also provides additional options for students who reside in outlying regions. For example, a Mount Ida resident may now have the option of taking a CIV course at RMCC's Mount Ida facility rather than commuting to the Mena campus. In the fall of 2013, RMCC offered 27 online courses, 14 CIV courses, and five hybrid courses. This is an increase of 22 online courses since 2005.

Another RMCC strategy is to "maintain current instructional technology and consider adopting new emerging instructional technologies." RMCC technology has changed dramatically since the 2005 Self-Study and has infiltrated every aspect of campus life. The obligation for technology services, network connectivity, operating systems, and hardware develops at an ever increasing pace. Faculty, staff, and students require more socially oriented technological services and greater access to network and information resources. The following information provides a list of the technology capabilities of RMCC:

- Expanded the Mena campus' internet bandwidth from 3 Mbps to 30 Mbps, with the ability to increase to 100 Mbps if needed, via an ARE-ON (ID 563) connection. ARE-ON is a statewide high-speed Internet network connecting most public higher education institutions in the state to support and enhance education, research, public service, and economic development.
- Off-site bandwidths were expanded to support HD CIV capabilities. The Waldron site was expanded from 3 Mbps to 6 Mbps. The Mount Ida center was expanded from 3 Mbps to 10 Mbps.
- Wireless internet access available at all campus locations.
- Network upgrades at Mena campus now support a 10 Gb backbone and expanded wireless access.
- Off-site backups are performed regularly.
- Computers are continually maintained and are replaced every two years as funds become available.
- Software use and upgrades are driven by instructor and student needs and operational business requirements.
- Students, faculty, and staff use Moodle (ID 564), a learning platform that provides tools needed to communicate electronically and to easily access web-based instructional materials, distance learning facilities, and other college services.
- Faculty use the CAMS Enterprise Faculty Portal (ID 565), a single sign-on tool to all course-related services and activities. This tool enables instructors to send mass email to advisees, to email students enrolled in specific courses, and to submit midterm and final grades.
- Expanded use and methods of distance learning as a way of reaching students who, because of time and place, are not able to participate in on-campus instruction.
- Installed and implemented Microsoft SharePoint (ID 566) for committee and departmental collaboration.

5.A.2. RMCC's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

Resource allocation at RMCC is an institution-wide initiative. It begins during the budget process and is monitored and reviewed throughout the year. While all areas of the College are responsible for monitoring their budgets, the Vice President of Administration (VPA) formed a committee to assist with the process. This committee sets priorities, recommends changes to tuition and fees, estimates enrollments, and establishes parameters for the budget. Decisions are based on the RMCC Mission, the Strategic Plan, economic conditions, anticipated state funding, and current student or community needs. The committee includes the President, the VPA, the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and the Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources. Once the budget is completed, it is presented to the Board of Trustees for approval (ID 567).

RMCC has no subordinate entities that may influence resource allocations. As a public institution, there are no stockholders or monies distributed through profit-sharing. Resource allocation is guided by the duly elected Board of Trustees.

5.A.3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of RMCC's organization, resources, and opportunities.

The mission statement and the goals incorporated into the mission statement are reviewed and developed as part of the College's strategic planning processes. Plans for resource allocation encompass both short-term and long-range objectives. All departments and academic divisions participate in long-range planning through development of the institution's five-year plan, also known as the Strategic Plan (ID 193). During the review and development of these Strategic Goals, the College considers the organization, the resources available, and feasible growth opportunities.

Evidence throughout this Self-Study report, specifically the Board of Trustee's Policy Manual (ID 546) and the Governance Through Committees (ID 122) publications, verifies that RMCC is well organized to achieve its purposes. Annual Accomplishments (ID 632) reports provide numerous examples of achieving the goals identified in the College Mission Statement.

The Fiscal Operating Budgets (ID 40) confirm that resources are conservatively assigned to line items within departments to generate their most effective use. All resources are budgeted and aligned with the institution's mission. Additionally, the Budget Committee aligns resource allocations to departmental goals. Faculty and staff present budget requests and explain opportunities and concerns prior to budget meetings.

Fiscal operating budgets are also built with flexibility. The institution moves forward with new initiatives and personnel when increased resources are realized or when these additions fit within the institution's strategic plan. Due to unforeseen events, current resources may need to be realigned. This is done through a Budget Transfer Request (ID 443) for approved by the President and area Vice President. A contingency line item is also budgeted for unforeseen expenses or revenue shortfalls.

RMCC's opportunities for growth are somewhat limited. Economic and geographic obstacles are a persistent challenge to the College. However, opportunities for new programs and improved learning environments are continuously researched. Outside revenue sources, such as the Title III grant, are regularly sought to enhance the ability to offer the highest quality instruction. As of Fall 2014, classrooms

across all RMCC sites have received substantial upgrades in technology. Meetings and partnerships with local employers help to spur the creation and growth of Industrial Technology programs, such as Machine Tool Technology and Welding.

The College openly recognizes the challenges of living in a rural, high -poverty area. Faculty and staff continuously seek opportunities that align with the Mission and the Strategic Goals within the mission. Integrating goals with human, physical, technological, and monetary resources indicates that the current Strategic Plan, although visionary, is realistic and reasonable in scope.

5.A.4. RMCC's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.

RMCC's hiring and new employee practices for faculty and staff members, also discussed in Criterion 2 and Criterion 3, ensure that staff members are appropriately qualified for the jobs to which they are assigned. During the hiring process, essential job qualifications are identified. Only applicants meeting those qualifications are considered. After hire, RMCC requires faculty and staff members to maintain the qualifications and upgrade skills necessary to continue employment. Annual performance reviews (ID 325) assure that employees remain current with needed skills and provide avenues for improvement.

The College's dedication to highly qualified personnel is apparent in its commitment to furthering employee education through ongoing training and continuing education. For example, RMCC supports employees in expanding their education base by granting tuition waivers for classes taken at RMCC (ID 553). Professional development is a key resource to expand personnel skills and qualifications in the most efficient manner possible. Until December 2010, all faculty and non-classified professional staff were required to maintain a minimum of 20 hours of professional development activities each academic year (ID 568). However, with Phase 1 of Policy Revision, this policy was amended to eliminate the minimum hour requirement in order to allow for more flexibility among employees. This change does not negate the importance of professional development. RMCC strongly encourages staff and faculty to attend worthwhile meetings and workshops. Professional development hours are earned in a variety of ways, including attendance of on-campus workshops, professional association conferences, teleconferences, webinars, and other approved methods. Faculty are encouraged to join professional organizations in their respective disciplines so that new ideas and teaching methodologies can be exchanged and integrated into current classroom strategies. Each faculty member is budgeted funds each year for travel and professional development. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs holds additional professional development funds in the budget that faculty may petition if unanticipated training opportunities arise. Professional staff are also encouraged to join appropriate organizations. The institution encourages such participation, recognizing that the breadth of knowledge gained in these organizations validates and expands current RMCC services. Professional Leave requests are submitted for approval prior to attending a training session. This allows the College to track professional development activity and certify the required training hours are met. A list of all professional development is reported to the Board each month in the President's Report section (ID 235) (ID 32).

5.A.5. RMCC has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

RMCC uses a well-defined, continuously-updated budget development and monitoring process. The overall institutional budget is aligned with the College's Legislative Biennium Plan (ID 442) and Strategic Plan (ID 193), with a highly detailed focus on the current and upcoming fiscal years. It is also maintained with constant awareness of resource requirements and likely resource availability for the remaining years in the five-year planning cycle.

The Budget Committee oversees the budget process. This committee is composed of a representative from each institutional area: President, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, Vice President of Administration, and Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources.

This structure ensures that budget planning is done by those most knowledgeable regarding academic unit requirements, administrative support functions, and longer-term planning issues. Each administrator is responsible for regular contact with leaders in the respective areas (assistant vice presidents, directors, department chairs, and others). Therefore, they are in a position to identify resource needs and balance priorities to meet RMCC's larger goals.

The resource allocation process begins in January of each academic year (ID 515). Faculty and staff working directly with students are best able to identify budget needs to improve educational experiences. Faculty and staff discuss needs and set priories with the leader in their area. By mid-February, leaders submit their departments' recommendations and requests to the Budget Committee for review. Justification is required when additional department funding is requested. After compiling all requests, the committee meets in late-February to review the documents. The group discusses each department's needs to determine how to fulfill funding priorities.

Based on recommendations and input from meetings with supervisors and division chairs, the Budget Committee allocates funds. Historical budgets and expenditures, along with future projections, are considered when these allocations are made. They also consider where spending will most directly impact students' educational experiences. RMCC also takes into consideration emergency funding needs during this process. A contingency plan is developed and budgeted for each year to combat any unforeseen issues.

Once all requests have been reviewed and approved, the Budget Committee develops a formal budget book. This Proposed Revenue and Expenditures Budget Book is presented to the Board of Trustee's Finance Committee between April and May for review, approval, and recommendation to the full Board (ID 32). Upon recommendation, the Board approves the final budget between May and June, depending on how soon the State General Revenue forecast (ID 423) is released.

Expenses are monitored monthly by area supervisors. Expense versus Budget data are available for supervisors to review on the RMCC Intranet via the General Ledger Inquiry. In addition, the President, Vice President of Administration, and the Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources review monthly financial reports to monitor expenses. These reports are generated through the Microsoft FRx software. The Business Office can also prepare ad hoc tailored reports through the Microsoft Great Plains software for additional analysis and trend reporting.

An electronic requisition (e-req) (ID 731) process is in place requiring all requests for purchases be approved through a chain of supervisors. The e-req is first approved by the area supervisor and is then sent for approval to the area vice president. The President must also approve the e-req if the amount exceeds a preset monetary threshold. Lastly, the Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources reviews the e-req to confirm the correct general ledger coding was used to track expenses appropriately.

5.B. Rich Mountain Community College's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

RMCC seeks to use collaborative, shared governance structures to promote sound decision-making supportive of RMCC's mission. Within this shared governance, participation and consultation are present for all constituent groups including administrators, faculty, staff, students, and residents of the Ouachita Mountain Region. RMCC is governed by a public body, an elected Board of Trustees. The Board is kept informed by the President and college administration, which is organized into five service areas: academic affairs, student support, institutional support, auxiliary operations, and physical operations. Departments within these areas work in unison to fulfill the RMCC mission. The administration is advised by various councils and committees, representative of all employee groups and campus departments (ID 122). The college also relies on advisory councils throughout the Ouachita Mountain Region for input and improvements regarding academic programs, as evidenced in the Advisory Committee Meeting minutes (ID 24). The Board, administrators, and various representative groups review policies and procedures, and make changes when necessary for improvement, future planning, and student success. This is evidenced in the meeting minutes of the respective groups and committees.

Core Component 5.B. focuses on the effectiveness of this governance and the administrative structures used in promoting leadership and collaboration throughout the institution.

5.B.1. RMCC has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.

RMCC has policies and procedures to engage all internal constituencies in governance, including the Board, administration, Professional Association, and Student Government Association. These structures allow for meaningful information exchanges among constituency groups. RMCC has extensive and comprehensive policies and procedures addressing various issues across the institution. The priority structure of policy governing RMCC, in order of precedence, is as follows:

I.	Federal and State Law
II.	Board Policy
III.	Administrative Procedure
IV.	Area Procedure
V.	Committees

The discussion in previous chapters has provided illustrations of how the governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students share the critical tasks of continuously improving the educational experience. In this section, details of the policies and procedures used to engage each of these various constituencies are provided.

Board of Trustees

At the helm of the RMCC governance structure is the institution's Board. This local board is composed of nine members who are Polk County residents and qualified electors of the community college district. The RMCC Board has full authority over all aspects of the College and final responsibility for its proper operation, subject only to higher authority. The specific powers and duties are outlined in Board Policy 1.01.02 (ID 643).

Per Arkansas Code § 6-61-202 (ID 428), in order to promote a coordinated system of higher education in Arkansas, each Board member receives a minimum of eight hours of instruction and training each year on higher education issues, policies, laws, and the duties and responsibilities associated with the position of board member. To help facilitate this training and engage the Board, RMCC maintains an active membership with the Association of Community College Trustees (ID 429). This organization provides a quarterly newsletter, sends frequent emails about related topics, and initiated a webinar series in 2013 that makes professional development more affordable (as no travel is required). RMCC also advocates for all Board members to attend the Annual Trustee Conference (ID 430), sponsored by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. This conference assists institutions in providing the mandatory training for the trustees of public higher education institutions.

While Board members are given ample opportunities for training each year, the main mechanism for Board engagement is through the regular monthly Board meetings. The Board meets on the second Wednesday of the month to govern college business. Per Board Policy 1.03.04 (ID 571), the meeting agenda and Board Packet are delivered to the Board members at least three days prior to the meeting for their review. Board packets and agendas (ID 32) also are posted on the RMCC Intranet prior to each meeting for all employees to access. Furthermore, a copy of the board packets and agendas are also stored in the Johnson Learning Commons for external stakeholders to view.

All Board meetings are open to the public. Minutes (ID 32) of each meeting are available on the RMCC Intranet. The Board of Trustees' policies are also accessible to the public, as they are published on the RMCC website on the Board of Trustees webpage (ID 572). Departmental procedures (ID 239) (ID 313) (ID 573) (ID 23) are published on the RMCC intranet for employees to access.

RMCC Administration

While maintaining general overview and control, the Board entrusts the administration of the institution to the President of the College and subordinates per Board Policy 2.01.01 (ID 574). RMCC has several administrative, faculty, staff, and student leadership groups with various roles and responsibilities. The administrative leadership groups include the President's Cabinet and the President's Council.

The engagement of this administration is best summed up by Board Policy 7.02.02 (ID 575):

> "Community Understanding and Personnel Responsibilities:
> It is the responsibility of all personnel employed by the College to assist the Board in its efforts to create greater understanding between the college and the community. The President and the administrative staff shall provide the leadership in exploring methods for accomplishing this end."

To generate engagement among all internal constituents, the President's Cabinet meets directly with faculty, staff, and students using a variety of venues—including one-on-one meetings, informal "Lunch and Learns." and informal "Campus Update" potlucks. The Cabinet employs and encourages an open-door policy for employees and students.

President's Cabinet

The President's Cabinet consists of the President, the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and the Vice President of Administration (ID 576). As evidenced in the Governance through Committees

publications (ID 729), this senior leadership group meets when necessary, and exists with the following goals:

- Promote coordination and communication across campus.
- Develop programs and services that are fully coordinative among college units and that are supportive of excellence in fulfillment of the mission, vision, values, role and scope, and goals.
- Review administrative policies, procedures, and practices for effectiveness in meeting the mission of the College and to make changes as needed.
- Recommend colleges processes and be integral to planning and effectiveness review.
- Review recommendations submitted to the Board of Trustees.
- Provide leadership which unites all areas of the College.
- Provide assistance to one another for the attainment of the College Mission and Values.
- Outline, discuss, and resolve issues that impede the College in fulfilling its mission.

President's Council

The President's Council, created in November 2011, is an expanded group of the President's Cabinet that includes eight additional representatives (ID 729). The Council exists to provide the same objectives as President's Cabinet, but from a broader perspective. These additional constituents and their primary purpose for serving on the committee follows.

Council Representative	Primary Purpose for Serving on Committee
Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs	Report academic, scheduling, and assessment concerns and possible solutions.
Associate Vice President of Student Affairs	Present proposals for increasing student success, as well as present issues that may have an adverse effect on student success and engagement.
Director of Lifelong Learning and Program Development	Advise and recommend new program ideas and viability; report status on current program growth and engagement within the program.
Director of Information Technology	Advise and recommend technological resource needs and enhancements that promote instructional and operational effectiveness and efficiency.
Director of Development and Community Relations	Provide communication and coordination of RMCC and RMCC Foundation events, activities, and marketing projects.
Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources	Report concerns and present solutions for any fiscal and human resource related issues, specifically resource allocation and regulation compliance.
Director of Physical Plant	Report concerns and present solutions for physical resource issues and needs that help to promote a clean, safe, and effective learning environment.
Executive Assistant to the President	Increase channels of campus-wide communication and awareness of topics shared at the Council table.

The President leads this body, and meetings are usually held every other week. The President's Council works collaboratively with senior leadership to serve as a review, research, evaluation, and planning group, thereby assisting the President's Cabinet in formulating sound management decisions. Notes of the Council meetings (ID 431) are emailed to all RMCC employees for review. Employees are encouraged to speak to council representatives for further information on discussion items. Formal actions taken by the President's Council become recommendations to the President. Final college action is taken by the President and the Board of Trustees as appropriate.

Faculty, Staff, and Student Governance

RMCC involves college personnel in the governance of the institution through the organizational structure, student associations, and the Professional Association. Board Policy 2.02.03 (ID 577) is specific regarding management responsibilities and shared governance. Committees are organized and appointed in late spring or summer of each academic year and published in RMCC's annual Governance Through Committees (ID 122) document. To ensure ongoing and continuous involvement in governance and institutional effectiveness, committees are designated as standing or task force. Standing committees have defined ongoing responsibilities. Task force groups and ad hoc committees are charged with specific duties as needed such as sabbatical review, policy advisory, and employee hiring.

The main catalyst for shared governance among the faculty and staff is the Professional Association. The Student Government Association represents student interests.

Professional Association

The Professional Association (PA) was formed in 1998 and provides a forum for faculty and staff to participate in the governance of the College. The purpose of this organization is to assist in planning, implementing, and evaluating all aspects of the institution related to student learning and success. The PA is also charged with overseeing and protecting the welfare and development of its membership by participating in policy development. As outlined in the PA Constitution (ID 162), the functions of the PA are as follows:

- Make recommendations regarding the philosophy and objectives of this institution.
- Assist in formulating admission, progression, and graduation policies.
- Assist in planning, implementing, and evaluating all curricular offerings of the College.
- Make recommendations regarding facilities, equipment, and other resources essential for learning activities.
- Make recommendations regarding working conditions, including clerical assistance, office surroundings, and equipment.
- Participate in developing and implementing the long-range plans for the College.
- Participate in formulating and approving policy proposals and procedures related to the welfare and development of the membership.
- Make recommendations regarding services and activities available for students.
- Assist in planning and implementing professional development programs.

Initially, only full-time faculty and professional staff were represented in the PA. In 2009, the PA was restructured to be more inclusive by adding Classified Staff membership. This restructuring only enhanced the shared governance at RMCC and now provides a voice for all faculty and staff. The PA is now composed of three chambers:

Faculty Chamber	• Full-time instructional faculty members • Two adjunct faculty members (associate members appointed by Faculty Chamber President annually)
Professional Staff Chamber	• Full-time employees who fill non-classified positions at the institution.
Classified Staff Chamber	• Full-time employees who fill classified positions at the institution.

The PA also serves as a forum for discussion of issues affecting faculty and staff. The PA Executive Committee takes recommendations to the President's Cabinet for further consideration. A follow-up response, and any actions taken with rationale, are communicated back to the PA. It is important to acknowledge that since RMCC has an average of only 75 full-time employees, each PA chamber is limited in number. As a result, many issues or concerns are addressed in an informal manner, and a formal meeting or recommendation is not needed. Nonetheless, shared governance can be seen throughout the institution. The PA participated in the past two presidential searches (ID 777), providing input and feedback via group interviews and evaluation forms (ID 778). The PA also conducts Administrative Reviews (ID 455), a survey that allows PA members to review each RMCC administrator to improve administrative operations and provide feedback on leadership. The survey is presented to the Board for consideration prior to the annual Board review process of RMCC administration. The PA also recommends professional development opportunities (ID 785) to the administration and provides workshops as requested by its membership (ID 786).

Student Government Association

The SGA acts on behalf of the entire student body from all college locations and centers. The purpose of this organization, as stated in the SGA Constitution (ID 217) is as follows:
- To serve as the student governance vehicle.
- To represent, lead, and unify the student body.
- To aid the College in its large purposes of education.
- To make recommendations concerning student issues to the Rich Mountain Community College administration.
- To act as a means of preserving and attaining the well-being of the College community.
- To encourage enthusiastic school support.

SGA is led by a group of elected executive officers including a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Matters of student concern are brought before this group. Other groups are encouraged on campus and are guided by the AVPSA. Each student group requires a faculty or staff sponsor.

Examples of student clubs and organizations include: Actors' Guild, Phi Theta Kappa, Rich Mountain Video Team, Math Club, Voices of the Ouachitas, and Baptist Collegiate Ministry. Engagement and enthusiasm among the student body is best evidenced through planned activities. As mentioned in Criterion 3, some of the best examples are the activities sponsored by the Actors' Guild. The Actors' Guild organizes and presents plays on campus such as *Simply Shakespeare* and *Zoo Story*. The Actors' Guild also hosts Variety Shows (ID 260) throughout each school year, inviting all students, faculty, and staff to perform a variety of talents. This event is open to the public and encourages collaboration between students and college employees. Other events include a host of SGA sponsored activities (ID 723) (ID 284) (ID 335) (ID 343) (ID 354), PTK-sponsored Constitution Day Scavenger Hunt (ID 77), and BCM activities (ID 432).

5.B.2. RMCC's governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight for RMCC's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

RMCC Board's governance and oversight role requirements for the College are described in detail earlier in this Criterion. The Board also plays a key role in resource allocation deliberations and decisions. Per Board policy 1.04.05 (ID 578), the Board has three standing committees that help manage these responsibilities: the Finance Committee, the Planning Committee, and the Policy Committee. Each of these committees reports to the entire Board.

As evidenced in Board Policy Article III, specifically section 3.01 (ID 567), the Board's consideration and approval are required for key operational decisions and actions. Examples include planning and budget submissions to the State Board of Higher Education, authorizing new capital spending and new borrowing, establishing tuition and fee rates, creating new academic programs, and creating new institutional positions.

The Board encourages the input of faculty, students, and administrators, as well as the public. An examination of the Board's agendas and minutes (ID 32), covered in depth in Criterion 2, reflects the appropriate exercise of the Board's oversight and fulfillment of its legal and fiduciary responsibilities. The RMCC administrative structure ensures effective communication and reporting within the College. At monthly board meetings, the Board receives direct information from the President concerning academic programs, fiscal accountability, and construction priorities. Additionally, the College submits a monthly President's Report (ID 235) (ID 32), providing specific information concerning accomplishments and priorities of the College. Business is conducted in public sessions with opportunities for public comment. The meetings are also broadcast on Allegiance Cable Television via RMCC's Channel 19.

Board members often participate in campus life. For example, they are invited and attend major functions such as Honor's Night and Graduation, Open House, and Employee Appreciation luncheons where they meet and talk to faculty and staff. Such occasions provide informal opportunities to learn more about the operations and interests of the campus. Through both formal and informal means, the members of the Board gain understanding of the institution.

5.B.3. RMCC enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Evidence of the involvement of RMCC's internal constituents in setting policy and procedures has been described in detail in previous chapters and sections. Beyond these processes and requirements, the primary collaborative links between faculty members, staff members, students, and the administration were discussed above. Additional shared governance forums help further support the collaborative process at RMCC. In addition to those already described, several shared governance forums exist. These include

- The RMCC President conducts Convocation (ID 433) at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters to report on campus-wide issues and concerns, progress and improvements in service areas, and general updates and reminders of the RMCC Mission, goals, and purpose. Convocation also provides an opportunity for senior administration to respond to questions or concerns among the faculty and staff. All full-time employees are required to attend convocation each semester in efforts to reinforce engagement and shared governance.
- Faculty meetings with all faculty including adjunct and concurrent adjunct allow for expression of concerns or to provide suggestions. Faculty also break into academic departments to discuss concerns and improvements.
- The RMCC Policy Advisory Task Force (ID 716) includes employees from all service areas (academia, student support, fiscal operations, and human resources). In 2008, the Board Policy Committee worked with the College Policy Advisory Task Force to begin Phase 1 of policy review. The goal was to merge the Employee Handbook and Administrative Policies with existing Board Policy. The resulting recommendations of

Phase 1 were approved by the Board in December 2010. Phase 2 involved reviewing the remaining Employee Handbook and Administrative Policies (ID 434). The goal was to separate policy from procedure, and resulted in additional recommendations for placement into Board Policy. Procedures were returned to specific departments or were incorporated in the Governance Through Committees document (ID 122), as appropriate. Phase 2 was completed in September 2014. This was a significant accomplishment for the College and provides evidence of ongoing and continuous improvement. Departments within RMCC are currently in the process of updating their respective procedures manuals.

- The Academic Standards/Curriculum Committee (ID 726) as a subset of Learning Assessment is composed of 14 members and involves collaboration between all governance areas. The committee contains two Professional Staff Chamber Representatives, five Faculty Chamber Representatives, two Classified Chamber Representatives, and one non-voting student representative (appointed by the SGA). The committee minutes (ID 435) reflect the contribution and collaboration in setting academic requirements. All recommendations for policy changes are presented to the Faculty Chamber, the Learning Assessment Committee, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. Decisions regarding student appeals cases that deviate from stated policy are reported to the appropriate RMCC Vice President.

- The President's Office relies heavily on the President's Council meetings. This team brings together all areas of institutional operations and services to discuss RMCC initiatives and directions. This team generally meets on a biweekly basis. Notes (ID 431) of the meetings are emailed to all employees to keep them informed.

- The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs meets at least once each semester with Faculty Division Chairs and Faculty to discuss academic-related issues. The Faculty Meeting minutes (ID 462) reflect the contribution and collaboration of RMCC instructors to continually improve academic operations and provide students with an exemplary education.

- The College Effectiveness Committee meets every other week to coordinate, assess, and recommend improvements to the processes used for college development, responsiveness, and compliance with its mission (ID 252). This committee has representatives from all areas of the College, including President's Council members, the chairs of each standing committee, Program Directors, the Recruiter, the Institutional Research Coordinator, and each of the Professional Association (PA) chamber presidents. This committee layout is designed to allow each group on campus a voice in the effectiveness of the College.

5.C. Rich Mountain Community College engages in systematic and integrated planning.

RMCC can fulfill its mission only through careful, integrated planning. The College's planning process is a collaborative endeavor including constituents and is responsive to both internal and external trends. Institutional planning for the future, whether related to physical operations, fiscal matters, or human resource needs, follows RMCC's Strategic Plan (ID 193). Various committee and task force meeting minutes found throughout the self-study are evidence of systematic and integrated planning. Section 5.C. presents further evidence demonstrating RMCC's commitment to comprehensive strategic planning to effectively position the College for the future.

5.C.1. RMCC allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

RMCC's ability to effectively carry out its mission to provide "exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities to improve the quality of life and standard of living" is dependent on strategically planning for the future and carefully managing resources. The resource allocation processes involve constituencies from all areas to ensure that no aspect of the mission is overlooked. As discussed in Core Component 5.A., the allocation of resources is part of the budgeting process. As evidenced in Board Policy 3.01.01 (ID 510), the planning of resources must be meshed with budgeting and is allocated according to the Strategic Plan.

The current Strategic Plan, along with the related Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals, dictate future actions concerning all parts of institutional work. Future programming development, hiring, and fiscal planning coordinate with the vision and mission of the institution. Evidence of RMCC allocating resources in alignment with its mission and priorities include funding for the following:

Access to Higher Education
- Increased number of faculty members hired to teach developmental education courses.
- Upgraded developmental math labs to new software, Hawkes (ID 579), in FY2013 to improve learning.
- Distance-learning hardware/software budgeted and purchased in FY2013 and FY2014 increased the number of courses offered at off campus sites, including area high schools.

Student Success
- Qualified, dedicated faculty are recruited to foster student success. (See faculty credentials (ID 112) and faculty position descriptions (ID 555).)
- Unrestricted Educational and General Funds are allocated to the Student Activities department during the annual budget process. Department expenses are reviewed regularly. See RMCC Fiscal Operating Budgets (ID 40).
- Several tutoring services are available, including LEAC peer tutors and TRIO Student Support Services' (SSS) credentialed tutors (ID 732) (ID 733) (ID 328). LEAC tutors are paid with Educational and General Funds, while TRIO SSS tutor salaries are paid from the Restricted Budget.
- Student Union Center renovated to encourage student interaction, attendance, and retention.

Quality Learning Environment
- Funds are allocated for available for technical and occupational programs offered, specifically geared toward Ouachita Mountain residents' and industry needs (such as health and machine tool technology).
- Expenditures for up-to-date technology for all students, including high-speed wireless internet via the state ARE-ON network (ID 563).
- Purchase new computers as needed in labs. During Fall 2014, computer lab space was needed due to the increased use of technology in the classroom. Efforts are underway to allocate physical and fiscal resources for this need.
- Renovated the St. John Library into the Johnson Learning Commons to provide students with a modern, technology-enhanced learning and research environment.

Educational Partnerships
- Expanded efforts with area school districts to enhance K-12 education and college preparation. Examples include discounted tuition rates for dual-credit students (ID 670) and concurrent and Secondary Career Center course offerings (ID 780).
- TRIO SSS, in collaboration with Arkansas higher education schools, hosts College Transfer Day (ID 285) (ID 351) (ID 352) each semester to encourage graduating students to transfer to a four-year institution.
- Continued collaboration with local employers to provide customized training programs that meet identified needs. Examples include Medical Billing and Coding (ID 440) for the local hospital and a Structural Inspection and Repair Manual (ID 441) for local industry employers.

Development of Resources
- Responsible stewardship and sustained fiscal resources, as evidenced by favorable State Legislative Audit reports (ID 117) and Foundation Audit reports (ID 43).
- Revitalized the marketing campaign to promote public awareness and knowledge of RMCC programs and services. Recent campaign efforts include increased visibility at community wide events, hiring a Recruiter (ID 590), and renovating college facilities.
- Continued pursuit of grant funding opportunities appropriate for the RMCC Mission. Examples include the Title III grant (ID 525) to develop technological resources and the PACE grant (ID 156) (ID 705).
- Annual evaluation and recommendations regarding faculty and staff salaries and benefits.
- Support of employee professional development, as evidenced in the travel budget and President's Report (ID 235) (ID 32).

5.C.2. RMCC links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

RMCC has an inclusive budgeting process. Budget request forms are distributed to all faculty and staff during late January or early February. Faculty are asked to make budget requests based on their instructional needs. Requested amounts over the previous year's allocation requires justification. Data and conclusions from the assessment of student learning are used to justify appropriate budget requests. The VPASA takes department requests and justifications to budget meetings with the President, Vice President for Administration, and the Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources for consideration.

Professional development is funded separately. The travel budget for each full-time faculty member is $550, enough to attend a state meeting. For additional faculty professional development, $8,500 is placed into the VPASA's budget. Instructors may request to attend regional or national meetings to the VPASA. Money is allocated based on the instructor's justification and the perceived usefulness of the conference or meeting information. In addition, the College sets aside money for on-campus professional development for all faculty and staff. Assessment of student learning has been one of the many topics covered by subject matter experts brought to campus. Other topics include student engagement, students in poverty, use of technology in the classroom, and generational differences in community college students. Money is budgeted to provide professional development opportunities to adjunct instructors as well. The College holds a minimum of two faculty meetings per year. Adjunct faculty are given a small stipend to attend. The meetings always include departmental meetings and professional development. The professional development topics provided are similar to the ones provided to full-time faculty and staff. Also, small stipends for adjunct are allowed for additional departmental meetings during the year.

RMCC is a participant in the Higher Learning Commission's Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning. The money for the College to participate is set aside by the President and the VPASA. The administrative support of the College's participation in the academy is evident by the financial support provided. RMCC is the smallest community college in Arkansas with the smallest budget. Although $4,500 is a significant amount, participation has proven to be very beneficial. It has helped offset the need for a dedicated assessment coordinator for the campus by providing the necessary structure and guidance to establish a culture of assessment.

During the budgeting process, RMCC allocates money for testing services. The majority of the testing budget goes to paying for the COMPASS test. The COMPASS test is an ACT product which is used to determine if incoming students need developmental courses before starting college work in English and math.

RMCC uses a computer based course to deliver developmental math courses. Prior to 2013, the College used the "I Can Learn" system. The computer based system provided avenues to assess student learning in an efficient and useful manner. After analysis of student learning and review of other systems, it was determined to move to the Hawkes system in the fall of 2013. The Hawkes system provided more flexibility in structuring curriculum, remote access for students, and more diagnostic tools. In addition, it was more cost effective than the prior system. The savings acquired from changing systems allowed the College to promote the math lab coordinator to a full-time position. This position has proven to be integral to the success of the students in developmental math.

The College allocates money to gather student input into their educational experience. RMCC participates in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The CCSSE provides information on student engagement, a key indicator of learning. The use of the data provided by the CCSSE is discussed in other criterion. A graduation survey is given to all students applying to graduate. Like the CCSSE, it provides data on student engagement and student satisfaction with the educational experience at the College. RMCC uses the SIRII as the instrument of student evaluation of courses. The administration of the assessment and the use of the outcomes is discussed in criterions three and four.

RMCC allocates resources to maintain and update instructional technology on an annual basis. This is described in previous criteria. Due to a restricted RMCC continuously seeks alternative funding sources for this technology. RMCC has participated in several grants that have helped provide instructional technology to enhance student learning. The College was a recipient of a Title III grant, the PACE grant, and RAMP-UP. These grants provided resources for instructional technology, faculty professional development, and curriculum analysis and revision.

For the 2014-2015 fiscal year, academic salaries and instructional support comprised 42% of the total budget. This does not include the salary or operating budget of the chief academic officer. Student learning is the final goal in the processes of the college. Money is budgeted to provide quality education and assess the effectiveness of the process.

5.C.3. The planning process encompasses RMCC as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

RMCC places great emphasis on the involving all administrators, faculty, and staff in planning and evaluative processes. Various committee meetings allow for thoughtful, frank discussion of issues related to priorities, direction, and budget allocations. Suggestions from committees are incorporated into strategic planning when appropriate. Committees are charged with specific tasks each academic year related to the strategic plan.

In addition, constituents outside the institution participate in the planning process in the form of Advisory Committees (ID 24). Local business and industry, educational facilities, and local and state government agencies provide input. This input is used to reform and update the Strategic Plan, strengthen departmental services, and research new opportunities for the College.

5.C.4. RMCC plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. RMCC plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

RMCC's planning documents (ID 193) (ID 420) (ID 776) reflect an understanding of its current physical, financial, and human resources. Due to its small size and limited resources, RMCC must plan accordingly and realistically in alignment with its mission and goals.

The College plans are based on student needs and resource availability. Needs are prioritized and resources allocated accordingly. Items may be flagged for immediate attention.

The annual budgeting process described in Subcomponent 5.A.5 is well-developed and allows the institution to manage revenue fluctuations. Tuition revenues for each academic year are built upon conservative enrollment projections. Projections are informed by area demographics, high school graduation rates, and enrollment.

RMCC's budgeting process incorporates several contingent scenarios that incorporate state funding changes, enrollment changes, and tuition limitations. These measures allow the institution to make plans and adjust quickly if unexpected events occur. The institution budgets very conservatively and typically sets aside a 1% to 3% operating contingency fund for emergencies and unbudgeted initiatives. Allocations of contingency funds during the year are recommended by the area vice president, and reviewed by the President and, when necessary, the Board.

RMCC makes appropriate resource allocation adjustments for favorable variances in revenue or expenditure streams. For example, in FY2011 the Arkansas Legislature initiated a campaign for higher education institutions to contain costs (ID 591). By FY2013, revenues were noticeably exceeding expenditures due in part to these efforts. Staying true to the Strategic Plan (ID 193), specifically Goal Three (ID 722), the Budget Committee met with the Director of Information Technology and prioritized the need for distance learning equipment. This CIV equipment was purchased and installed at off-site locations, including area school districts. This equipment now provides residents with additional course options.

5.C.5. RMCC's planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

RMCC recognizes and understands the larger environment in which it operates. Leadership is aware of demographic and technological trends affecting the College and its role and function in the community.

The College seeks opportunities to offer optimal technology to students. As discussed in subcomponent 5.A.1., resources for technology are a significant portion of the operating budget. The Information Technology department works closely with faculty and student support to acquire cost-effective equipment to improve the learning environment. Rapid changes in technology and the complexity of its

interaction with other planning factors make forecasting and planning difficult. The College therefore plans with flexibility, responsiveness, and adaptability.

The College monitors and plans for demographic shifts but operates in an insulated rural environment. Without significant business investment, the College does not anticipate large area population shifts. Other demographic information is gathered for planning as needed.

While isolated from many global impacts, area manufacturing employment is influenced by globalization. Large plant manufacturing continues to downsize creating unemployment. Many former employees qualify for federal benefits under TAA (due to NAFTA) and become RMCC students. RMCC plans for plant closures and the necessity for retraining. RMCC meets this need and offers appropriate course work and/or programs.

Recognizing cultural shifts in the area, RMCC plans and implements programming to accommodate these shifts. Budget allocations reflect this with funds for retirees, enrichment courses, and facility use.

5.D. Rich Mountain Community College works systematically to improve its performance.

Student success, community needs, economic development trends, and financial forecasts are all valuable data to the College. As seen more specifically in this section, RMCC consistently addresses how to best gather, manage, and report the enormous amount of data available for improving operations.

The SIR II Course and Instruction evaluations (ID 183) along with RMCC Graduate Surveys (ID 312) (ID 520) provide important feedback from students regarding educational experiences. This feedback allows adjustments to be made to improve educational performance. A copy of the SIR II results are returned to each faculty member. This allows them to recognize strengths and identify areas for improvement. The SIR II has a Compendium of suggestions which includes practices that highly rated teachers use as well as research-based effective teaching practices. SIR II results are reviewed by department chairs, the Associate VP for Academic Affairs, and the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. Any deficiencies are discussed with the faculty member and a plan for improvement is formulated.

Ongoing program assessment is detailed in Criterion 4 and provides feedback to improve learning environments across academic departments. Assessment tools include course outcome analysis, informal and formal student satisfaction reports, and employee evaluations among other measures. Faculty members are evaluated with three different methods: Employee-Performance Reviews (ID 325), Classroom Evaluations (ID 448), and the SIR II (ID 183) student evaluations. All full-time employees are given an Employee Performance Review to help assess and improve performance. The review is conducted annually by respective area supervisors. Classroom Evaluations are also conducted at least annually by the VPASA, a department chair, or a peer to evaluate instructor performance and engagement in the classroom. Lastly, the SIR II survey is administered to students for each course. This survey evaluates both the instructor and the course content.

Students complete several satisfaction surveys throughout the year to solicit input on numerous areas of campus life. Examples of other informal student satisfaction assessments include the Student Union Survey (ID 450), academic and non-academic Graduation Surveys (ID 520) (ID 312), Post-event Evaluation Surveys for events such as Educational Talent Search activities (ID 608), and Student Support Services surveys.

Additionally, the College Effectiveness Committee (ID 717) is dedicated to defining, developing, and implementing systematic processes that yield institutional effectiveness consistent with college measures, state policies and laws, and accreditation requirements. The committee is also tasked with coordinating, assessing, and recommending improvements to the effectiveness process.

5.D.1. RMCC develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

RMCC uses a wide variety of assessments, surveys, and evaluations, both formal and informal. This data helps to determine how current curricula, programs, and personnel are meeting the needs of students and the residents of the Ouachita Mountains. This evidence of performance is listed below, and is also addressed in detail in the Criterion 4 chapter.

Formal Assessments/Evaluations/Surveys:
- ACT COMPASS (ID 459)
  This college placement test evaluates incoming students' skill levels in Reading, Writing, Math, and English as a Second Language and also helps to place students in appropriate courses.
- Administrative Reviews (ID 455)
  This survey is conducted by the Professional Association and allows members to review each RMCC Administrator to improve administrative operations. The survey is presented to the RMCC Board for consideration prior to the annual administration review process.
- Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) (ID 452)
  CAAP is a standardized, nationally normed assessment test given annually that enables RMCC to assess, evaluate, and enhance student learning outcomes and general education.
- Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (*CCFSSE*) (ID 454)
  The CCFSSE elicits information from faculty about perceptions regarding students' educational experiences, their teaching practices, and the ways they spend professional time—both in and out of the classroom. This survey is conducted every two years.
- Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) (ID 453)
  This survey assesses institutional practices and student behaviors correlated with student learning and student retention. The survey is administrated every two years.
- Employee Performance Reviews (ID 325)
  Each full-time employee is reviewed by the respective area supervisor. It is used to evaluate overall employee job performance, recognize personal growth and achievement, and identify areas for improvement.
- Faculty Classroom Evaluations (ID 448)
  Faculty classroom evaluations are conducted by the VPASA or a department chair to evaluate instructor performance and engagement in the classroom at least annually.
- Graduation Surveys (ID 520) (ID 312)
  Each graduating student completes the survey. It is used to identify how well RMCC meets expectations and fosters student success.
- Student Instructional Report II (SIR II) (ID 183)
  As previously mentioned, the Sir II is administered to students for each course. It is used to evaluate teaching effectiveness and learning quality.
- Withdrawing Student Survey (ID 460)
  Students received this survey prior to withdrawal. The intent is to gather data regarding reasons for such action.

Other Assessments/Evaluations/Surveys/Information:

- High School Superintendent's and Principle's Luncheon (ID 461)
  This annual gathering between public school administrators and RMCC is intended to garner information focused on improving and/or expanding services to area schools.
- Faculty Meetings (ID 462)
  These meetings among the VPASA, division chairs, and faculty are to discuss academic-related issues for improving academic operations.
- Post-event Evaluation Surveys (ID 608)
  These informal evaluations review the outcomes, both positive and negative, of events or activities sponsored by RMCC.
- Strategic Planning Retreat (ID 734)
  The purpose of this meeting for President's Council, College Effectiveness Committee, Program Directors, and Professional Association Presidents is to identify and discuss challenges, planned and implemented prior to the academic year, and the status of ongoing projects.
- Student Satisfaction Survey (ID 450)
  These informal surveys are conducted as needed to gauge student approval, to identify ways to increase student success, retention, and program awareness.

Other Tools for gathering data on performance of students/faculty/staff/college:

- Admissions data
- Annual State Legislative Audit reports
- Arkansas Department of Higher Education data and reports
- Arkansas Research Center
- CAMS software
- Census Data
- Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data and reports
- Microsoft Great Plains/FRx software
- Monthly budget-to-actual expense reports
- National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker

The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, along with the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, meets regularly with division chairs and faculty members to review assessments, evaluations, and surveys in order to determine which methods are working, which programs are not meeting expectations, and where improvements should be made. The VPASA meets with the President and cabinet members to discuss the results and determine the best plan of action.

Additionally, the College publishes an accomplishments (ID 632) report listing the achievements of each department for the fiscal year. Each accomplishment is tied back to a strategic goal within the RMCC Strategic Plan (ID 193). This report is presented to the RMCC Board and is available on the RMCC Intranet. Examples of accomplishments and the related strategic goal include the following from the 2013-2014 report (ID 543):

Strategic Goal(s) Met	Accomplishment
4	A superintendents and principals luncheon was held on campus. All area administrators were invited. Those in attendance were given a tour of the renovated areas. The discussion held during lunch emphasized possible partnerships.
5	The number of courses delivered through compressed video increased. Regular college and concurrent credit courses are originating from all three RMCC sites and being delivered to not only outreach centers but to area high schools as well. The goal for the spring [2014] semester is to offer night college courses to the Cossatot River High School site.
2, 3	Professional development offered to faculty and staff each semester during convocation is ongoing. In August, using technology in the classroom to reach/teach students was Rick Miller's topic. During the spring in-service, RMCC staff participated in a Poverty Simulation conducted by certified trainers from ADHE. The simulation experience is designed to help participants begin to understand what it might be like to live in a typical low-income family trying to survive from month to month. Participants were sensitized to the realities faced by the students that are served. The simulation was followed by a workshop conducted by Dr. Diann Gathright. Dr. Gathright presented key points of poverty and the important role that RMCC faculty and staff play in bringing people out of poverty.
1, 2, 4	At the April meeting, the RMCC Board of Trustees approved the Early College Partnership initiative. The Early College Partnership (ECP) program is designed to offer an accelerated degree completion path to high school students in the RMCC service area. Students participating in this program could cut almost two years off of the time needed to complete an Associate of Arts degree.
5	Legislative Audit for FY2012 was completed and reflected no audit findings for the second consecutive year.
2, 3, 5, 6	The servers were successfully migrated to the ARE-ON network in October [2013]. Moving the servers to the ARE-ON network provided better availability and access to institutional servers and resources.
2	[Admissions department] partnered with the Bookstore Manager and Student Government Association (SGA) to continue current on-campus events (welcome back cookout, blood drive, etc.) and develop new events (SGA NFL Challenge and Halloween Festival).
6	During the Spring 2014 semester, LEAC served 25 students on the main RMCC campus a total of 206 hours with an 88% success rate in class completion.
3	220+ students received over 2000 hours of tutoring, academic advising, transfer advising, career advising, financial aid advising, financial literacy training, and study skill advising [from TRIO SSS].

5.D.2. RMCC learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

RMCC responds to issues through innovating to improve its effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability. Based on information from various student surveys and other metrics (ID 114), the College responds by modifying operations, programming, priorities, and personnel. Change and progress is clear as evidences by these examples.

- Johnson Learning Commons
- Welding and Industrial Tool technical programs
- RMCC School of Cosmetology
- Improved distance learning technology (CIV, Hybrid courses, expanded online courses)
- Student Union Center (featuring the Bookstore, a recreational area, convenience store, exercise room, and Mountain Range grill)
- Double Nickel Program (to better serve the area senior population)

The College strives to be effective in fulfilling its mission for the constituencies it serves. Faculty, staff, and administrators continually address concerns from students, the Board, and other parties. Efforts are transparent and focused on improvement. Not all projects are successful, and employees make decisions on how to improve or abandon a poor practice. RMCC is flexible and innovative to accomplish goals set forth in various mission documents. Data are being used to better inform the decision making process.

RMCC, like many institutions, has a proliferation of data. Student satisfaction, community needs, global trends, and financial forecasts are valuable pieces of information. RMCC has only recently begun to address how to gather, manage, and report the enormous amount of data available for improving operations. Over the past two years, RMCC restructured its committees to place an emphasis on data review and college effectiveness. A component of restructuring is charging each committee with reviewing data germane to its purpose. After the appropriate committee analyzes the data, a report is made to the College Effectiveness Committee with concerns and recommendations

Criterion Five Summary

The evidence presented throughout this self-study document, but particularly in this chapter, demonstrates that RMCC has a strong system of planning that enables the College not only to support current operations but also to lay the groundwork for future success. Because of the College's planning and budgeting processes, coupled with the overall commitment to help students succeed, RMCC has overcome economic obstacles and continues to provide the fiscal, physical, human, and technological resource base needed to support its mission of enriching the lives of Ouachita Mountain Region residents. Throughout the period since the last accreditation review, the RMCC family has used collaborative, shared governance structures to help shape and expand the institution. Through the continuous and systematic use of strategic planning, a continued focus on mission success, and the use of evaluative processes that provide critical feedback, RMCC will continue to meet the challenges of providing exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities to improve the quality of life and standard of living to the residents of the Ouachita Mountain Region.

Criterion Five Strengths

- The College aligns its budgeting priorities and processes with the strategic plan to ensure that the College allocates its resources appropriately to meet its mission.
- Institutional effectiveness is regularly evaluated and assessed through the Program Review process and the College Effectiveness Committee.
- The College pursues a balanced budget process ensuring all planned expenses are covered by expected revenues for the fiscal year.
- Student learning is improved though continuously enhancing faculty teaching capabilities.
- Faculty is involved in the Professional Association and appropriate college committees.
- The College is committed to improving data collection, analysis, and use to understand operational strengths and weaknesses as the College plans for the future.
- Student Learning and assessment activities receive budget priority.

Criterion Five Challenges

- Economic fluctuations and an uncertain level of higher education funding by the State of Arkansas will be an ongoing challenge for the College. Efforts to minimize costs without sacrificing program integrity and operation efficiency are continually researched and assessed.

- Developing alternative revenue streams will require even more focus and commitment than previously required. The College has already implemented a new marketing campaign to spread program awareness, and the College Effectiveness Committee is working to target untapped demographics.
- Hiring skilled human resources and funding emergent technologies while maintaining a cost-effective tuition structure is an ongoing challenge for the College. New grants may help supplement institutional funding.
- The College continues to improve methods of gathering, analyzing, disseminating, communicating, and using the results of massive amounts of assessment data. The Institutional Research department and the Business Office work together to streamline data entry, dissemination, and communication.
- Geographical obstacles continue to hinder economic growth and technological progress. While much of this is beyond RMCC's control, the College must continue to innovate technology solutions.
- The College continues to promote use of qualitative and quantitative data tools for assessment, planning, and budgeting.

Appendix:

Institutional Snapshot

I. Student Demography Headcounts

I-A. Undergraduate enrollment by class levels

Enrollments by Level			
College Level	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
Freshman	394	351	358
Sophomore	246	205	174
High School	280	286	288
Non-degree	131	115	185
Total	**1051**	**957**	**1005**

Source: RMCC Census Reports

I-B. Undergraduate Students by Degree-Seeking and Non-Degree Seeking

Student Demographics						
Full and Part-time Students	Fall 2012		Fall 2013		Fall 2014	
	Degree	Non-Degree	Degree	Non-Degree	Degree	Non-Degree
Male						
Non Resident Alien	0	1	0	0	2	1
Hispanic	10	5	6	7	5	10
Amer. Indian/Alaskan Native	9	4	5	3	4	5
Asian	8	3	3	0	5	1
Black	0	1	0	0	1	0
Hawaiian	0	1	0	0	0	1
White	192	137	153	128	141	137
Two or More Races	4	0	8	4	6	2
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	0	0	3	2	0	0
Total Male	**223**	**152**	**178**	**144**	**164**	**157**
Female						
Non Resident Alien	2	1	2	1	3	2
Hispanic	15	20	16	4	16	10
Amer. Indian/Alaskan Native	15	6	10	5	9	6
Asian	4	6	4	1	1	0
Black	2	1	2	0	0	0
Hawaiian	1	1	2	0	1	0
White	363	231	333	236	330	295
Two or More Races	7	1	4	8	9	2
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	0	0	2	5	0	0
Total Female	**409**	**267**	**375**	**260**	**369**	**315**
Total Enrollment	**632**	**419**	**553**	**404**	**533**	**472**

Source: IPEDS Fall Enrollment/IR Office

I-C. Graduate/Professional Students by Degree-Seeking and Non-Degree Seeking

Because Rich Mountain Community College is a two-year institution, this category does not apply.

I-D. Age Range of Undergraduate Students

Age Range			
Age Range	**Fall 2012**	**Fall 2013**	**Fall 2014**
24 and Under	658	616	591
25 and Over	393	341	414
Unknown	0	0	0
Total	**1051**	**957**	**1005**

Source: RMCC Census Reports

I-E. Number of Credit-Seeking Students by Residency Status

Residency Status			
Residency	**Fall 2012**	**fall 2013**	**Fall 2014**
In-State/In-District	677	653	706
In-State/Out-District	355	288	277
In-State Total	**1032**	**941**	**983**
Out-State Total	15	13	16
Non-US Resident Total	4	3	6
Total Enrollment	**1051**	**957**	**1005**

Source: RMCC Census Reports

2. Student Demography Headcounts

2-A. Number of Application, Acceptances, and Matriculations for Each of the following Categories of Entering Students

Applications			
Application Type	**Fall 2012**	**Fall 2013**	**Fall 2014**
First-time Freshman	163	152	155
Transfer	66	49	35
Total			

Matriculations			
Matriculations Type	**Fall 2012**	**Fall 2013**	**Fall 2014**
First-time Freshman	163	152	155
Transfer	66	49	35
Total	**229**	**201**	**190**

Source: RMCC Census Reports
RMCC is an open admissions institution, all applicants are accepted.

2-B. Standardized test scores of admission: The instruments(s) required and the mean score for each

Because RMCC is an open admissions institution, standardized test scores are not required. If a student provides test scores, they are used for placement. COMPASS exams are administered during enrollment for those students with SAT or ACT scores.

3. Financial Assistance for Students

3-A. Percentage of Undergraduate Students who applied for any type of Financial Assistance

Applications			
Financial Aid	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Number Applied for Aid	746	712	644
Unduplicated Enrollment*	871	846	772
Percent Applied	**86%**	**84%**	**83%**

Source: FISAP
**Degree/Certificate Seeking Students*

3-B. Number of Undergraduate Students who received financial assistance of any type, the percentage of the total enrollment that received financial assistance of any type, and the percentages of total enrollment that received assistance in each of the following categories

Financial Assistance			
Financial Aid	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Students Receiving Any Aid	686	637	611
Unduplicated Enrollment*	871	846	772
Percent Receiving Any Aid	**79%**	**75%**	**79%**
Percentage by Category			
Loans	0%	0%	0%
Work-Study	1%	2%	1%
Scholarships/Grants	79%	75%	79%
Academic Based Merit Based Scholarships	14%	13%	13%

**Degree/Certificate Seeking Students*

3-C. Tuition discount rate (TDR) for undergraduate students based on the following formula: TDR = I/(I+P) as a percentage

Tuition Discount Rate			
	2011-2012	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Institutional Financial Aid Dollars	$ 2,647,501.86	$2,376,028.12	$ 2,363,001.41
Payments of Tuition Expected	$ 1,861,036.37	$1,904,418.28	$ 2,131,112.31
Tuition Discount Rate	**58.72%**	**55.51%**	**52.58%**

(Where: I = Institutional Financial Aid Dollars and P = Payments of Tuition Expected)
Source: Financial Aid Summary Report

4. Student Retention and Program Productivity

4-A. Percentage of all first-time, Full-Time entering students who return the following fall semester by race/ethnicity.

Retention Rate			
	Fall 2011	**Fall 2012**	**Fall 2013**
Number Entering	139	148	137
Number Graduated	7	10	17
Number Returning	55	70	42
Retention Rate	**42%**	**51%**	**35%**

Retention Rate by Race/Ethnicity			
	Fall 2011	**Fall 2012**	**Fall 2013**
Non Resident Alien	N/A	100%	N/A
Hispanic	78%	100%	57%
Amer. Indian/Alaskan Native	60%	20%	0%
Asian	100%	0%	N/A
Black	0%	N/A	0%
Hawaiian	N/A	100%	100%
White	37%	50%	31%
Two or More Races	50%	67%	40%
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: IR Office

4-B. Number of students earning graduate or professional degrees during the past year and their distribution by race/ethnicity

Because Rich Mountain Community College is a two-year institution, this category does not apply.

4-C. Number of graduates in the previous academic year by program as classified by appropriate Instructional Program (CIP) codes.

Completions			
Programs by CIP	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Agriculture/Natural Resources (1,3)	0	0	0
Architecture/Engineering/Engineering Technology (4,14,15)	0	0	0
Biological and Physical Science (26,40,41)	0	0	0
Business (52)	15	27	14
Communications/Communication Technology/Fine Arts (9,10,50)	0	6	1
Education/Library Science (13,21,25)	5	0	1
Humanities/Interdisciplinary (5,16,23,24,30,38,,39,54)	97	97	87
Health (51)	98	113	81
Law (22)	0	0	0
Mathematics/Computer Science (11,27)	3	11	8
Military Technology/Protective Services (29,43)	0	0	0
Personal Services/Consumer Services/Fitness (12,19,31)	4	37	10
Psychology/Social Sciences and Services (42,44,45)	0	0	0
Trades/Production/Transportation Health (46,47,48,49)	32	26	27
Total Graduates	**254**	**317**	**229**

Source: IR, ADHE Graduate File

4-D. Pass rates of undergraduate licensure exams by discipline and test name.

Year	RMCC Exam Takers	# of First-Time RMCC Testers Passing Exam	RMCC Pass Rate	State Pass Rate	ARNEC Pass Rate*
National Council of State Boards of Nursing – Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN)					
2007-2008	24	20	83.30%		
2008-2009	25	22	88.00%	90.50%	
2009-2010	24	22	91.70%	92.60%	
2010-2011	25	24	96.00%	91.80%	
2011-2012	22	20	90.90%	88.13%	
2012-2013	31	30	96.80%	91.50%	
National Council of State Boards of Nursing – Registered Nursing (RN)					
2007-2008	N/A	N/A	N/A		
2008-2009	N/A	N/A	N/A		
2009-2010	N/A	N/A	N/A		
2010-2011	9	8	72.00%	86.90%	95.5%
2011-2012	16	15	93.70%	85.30%	84.9%
2012-2013	15	13	86.7%	89.10%	92.20%
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)					
2007-2008					
2008-2009	30	22	73.30%		
2009-2010	32	21	65.60%		
2010-2011	33	30	90.90%		
2011-2012	42	32	76.20%		
2012-2013	40	34	85.00%		
National Registry of EMT – Paramedic Licensure Examination					
2007-2008	N/A				
2008-2009	N/A				
2009-2010	15	7	47%	63%	
2010-2011	10	5	50%	57%	
2011-2012	3	1	33%	63%	
2012-2013	4	2	50%	63%	
Cosmetology					
2013-2014	21	21	100%		

*ARNEC pass rates are only for the Registered Nursing (RN) Program. RMCC is a member of the Arkansas Rural Nursing Education Consortium.

5. Faculty Demography

5-A. Headcount of Faculty in full-time and part-time categories according to highest degree earned.

Highest Degree Earned						
Degree Level	**Fall 2012**		**Fall 2013**		**Fall 2014**	
	Full-Time	**Part-Time**	**Full-Time**	**Part-Time**	**Full-Time**	**Part-Time**
Doctorate	3	3	2	5	4	6
Master	11	44	13	32	10	28
Bachelor	2	9	2	6	4	5
Advanced Certificate	1	0	1	0	1	0
Associate	1	1	2	1	3	3
Certificate	2	2	3	2	0	2
Life Experiences	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	**20**	**59**	**23**	**46**	**22**	**45**

Source: ADHE Instructor Files

5-B. Headcount of Faculty in full-time and part-time categories according to race/ethnicity, gender, and rank

Faculty Demographics						
	Fall 2012		Fall 2013		Fall 2014	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
Male						
Non Resident Alien	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic	0	1	0	0	0	1
Amer. Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	0	1	0
Black	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hawaiian	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	6	18	8	22	8	19
Two or More Races	0	0	0	0	0	0
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	1	1	0	0	0	0
Total Male	**7**	**20**	**8**	**22**	**9**	**20**
Female						
Non Resident Alien	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0	0
Amer. Indian/Alaskan Native	0	1	0	0	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hawaiian	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	13	36	15	24	13	23
Two or More Races	0	0	0	0	0	1
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	0	2	0	0	0	0
Total Female	**13**	**39**	**15**	**24**	**13**	**25**
Total Faculty	**20**	**59**	**23**	**46**	**22**	**45**

Source: ADHE Instructor Files

5-C. Number of full-time and part-time faculty by program as classified by appropriate Instructional Program (CIP) Codes

Faculty by Program			
Instructional Program Codes	**Fall 2012**	**Fall 2013**	**Fall 2014**
Agriculture/Natural Resources (1,3)	0	0	0
Architecture/Engineering/Engineering Technology (4,14,15)	0	1	3
Biological and Physical Science (26,40,41)	8	6	6
Business (52)	11	11	15
Communications/Communication Technology/Fine Arts (9,10,50)	10	12	13
Education/Library Science (13,21,25)	2	3	3
Humanities/Interdisciplinary (5,16,23,24,30,38,39,54)	15	15	14
Health (51)	7	8	8
Law (22)	0	0	0
Mathematics/Computer Science (11,27)	12	15	16
Military Technology/Protective Services (29,43)	2	1	2
Personal Services/Consumer Services/Fitness (12,19,31)	5	9	9
Psychology/Social Sciences and Services (42,44,45)	10	9	9
Trades/Production/Transportation Health (46,47,48,49)	6	7	7
Total	**88**	**97**	**105**

Note: This is a duplicated headcount of faculty; Source: CAMS

6. Availability of Instructional Resources and Information Technology

6-A. Technology resources dedicated to supporting student learning

Mena, Waldron and Mt. Ida Facilities	
26	Classrooms equipped with instructor workstation, projector, VCR/DVD player, document camera system
3	Open computer labs (one at each facility)
8	Classrooms with computers for student use
4	Portable teacher's pet station (two at Mena Campus; one at Waldron; one at Mt. Ida)
6	Specialized labs with computers for student use
15	Computers in testing services
	Printers (available in all computer labs and classrooms with computers)

Source: Information Technology Department

7. Financial Data

7-A. Actual unrestricted revenues

Annual Unrestricted Revenues		
Revenue Source	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Tuition and Fees	$1,904,418.00	$ 2,131,112.00
State/Local Appropriations	$3,397,250.00	$ 3,404,968.00
Investment Income	$ 3,397.00	$ 5,820.00
Auxiliary	$ 315,646.00	$ 361,158.00
Other	$ 78,402.00	$ 147,204.00
Total Revenue	$5,699,113.00	$ 6,050,262.00

7-B. Actual unrestricted expense

Annual Unrestricted Expenses		
Expense Source	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Instructional	$2,085,658.00	$ 2,214,665.00
Student Services	$ 490,798.00	$ 549,398.00
Operation of Maintenance of Plant	$ 509,989.00	$ 652,570.00
Administration	$1,549,777.00	$ 1,499,539.00
Auxiliary	$ 257,141.00	$ 428,149.00
Other	$ 671,172.00	$ 683,745.00
Total Expenses	$5,564,535.00	$ 6,028,066.00

7-C. If either of the past two fiscal years results in more expenses than revenues, how did the institution cover the shortfall?

No shortfall was reported

Source: Budget Reports