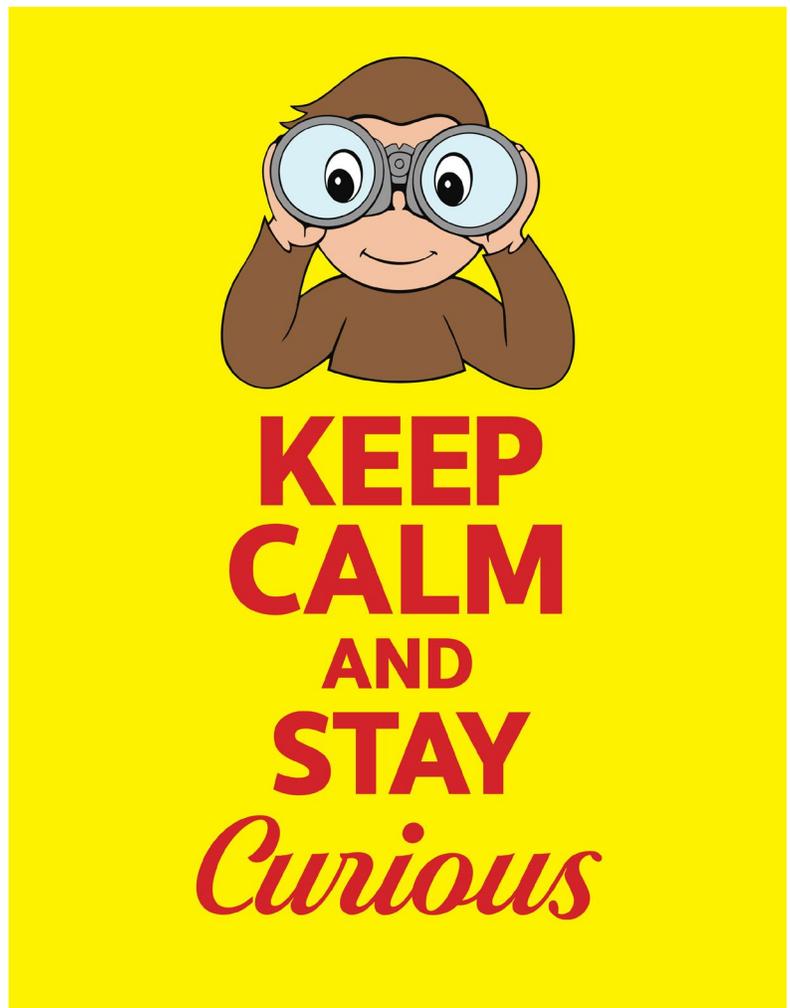


REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION | 2018
BRIEFING DOCUMENT



This document has been prepared in advance
of the visit by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
scheduled for November 26 and 27, 2018.

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Introduction

Central Ohio Technical College's journey toward institutional reaffirmation of accreditation began more than two years ago. Since that time, literally over one hundred faculty, staff and students across campus have been engaged in an inclusive effort to help prepare the college community for an accreditation visit scheduled for November 26 and 27, 2018. A review team representing the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), our regional accrediting body, will come to campus and, based upon reading our Assurance Argument report and the team's observations while on site, will determine the extent to which COTC meets expected standards for ongoing accreditation. In addition, HLC team members will provide suggestions for ways in which the college can improve its operations moving forward.

This briefing document is designed with two primary goals in mind. First, it offers to members of the COTC community a sense of institutional accreditation: why it is important, and what campus members can expect during the upcoming visit. The Frequently Asked Questions section of this document addresses many of these issues.

The second goal is to help the college community better understand the criteria for reaffirmation of accreditation and the evidence put forth in the Assurance Argument to help make the case for the ways in which we meet and exceed HLC expectations. To that end, the briefing document is organized to parallel each criterion chapter within the Assurance Argument, providing a synopsis that includes: (1) identification of HLC criterion core components and bullet points that identify related key evidence cited in the Assurance Argument and (2) a summary of the criterion chapter.

As a college, we could not have arrived at this moment without the deep and sincere commitment to this initiative from so many colleagues. As reaffirmation leaders, we would like to acknowledge and thank each and every individual who took time to contribute to this important undertaking.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jacqueline H. Parrill
Reaffirmation Coordinator
Vice President for Institutional Planning
and Human Resources

Dr. Lauri White
Reaffirmation Coordinator
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Higher Learning Commission (HLC)?

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is an independent corporation that was founded in 1895 as one of six regional institutional accreditors in the United States. The HLC accredits degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in the North Central region of the United States. Although most of the colleges and universities that the Higher Learning Commission accredits are in the upper Midwest, its geographical range extends from West Virginia to Arizona.

What is HLC accreditation? Why is it important?

While many academic agencies accredit particular programs of study (education, nursing, business, etc.), the Higher Learning Commission and other regional accrediting agencies are responsible for assuring that colleges and universities meet certain standards in terms of their missions, operations, and activities in teaching and student learning, discovery and promotion of knowledge, and service.

Accreditation is an assurance to the public that an institution is properly prepared to do its job. On a more practical level, the HLC and the other accrediting agencies have been designated as the "gatekeepers" for federal funds in higher education, including student financial aid. Unaccredited schools are not eligible for many kinds of federal support. For more information, [visit the HLC website](#).

Has COTC undergone accreditation before?

Yes, COTC has a long history of accreditation, dating back to 1972. The first campus visit for accreditation review took place in 1975. Since then, COTC has been re-accredited by HLC every ten years following a self-study and campus visit. The last 10-year comprehensive review was in 2008.

I know that COTC is preparing an Assurance Argument report as part of the accreditation process. What does this involve?

Preparing the Assurance Argument is a process during which faculty and staff take a very close look at the entire college, documenting its strengths and its challenges in a written report. At COTC, skunkworks teams, including over 100 faculty, staff, students, and community members, pulled together the necessary evidence to help us assure the commission that the college is meeting all of the criteria. This data was used to develop the college's Assurance Argument. For more information, visit our accreditation web site at <http://www.cotc.edu/Communities/Pages/Reaffirmation---HLC.aspx>. The Assurance Argument development process is a unique opportunity for the college to take stock of itself—celebrating its successes and discovering areas for continued improvement.

What does the HLC look for when it accredits colleges and universities?

The HLC has adopted a set of criteria for evaluation. The [five Criteria for Accreditation](#) are:

1. Mission
2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct
3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support
4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement
5. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

When will the HLC re-accreditation visit to COTC take place?

The campus will prepare the Assurance Argument report, based on the criteria, and submit it to the HLC in late October 2018. An evaluation team from the HLC is scheduled to come to campus on November 26 - 27, 2018.

How can I best prepare for the site visit?

By far, the best way to prepare for the visit is to read our Assurance Argument. If you do not have time to read the entire report, you can get a sense of the whole by reading the Briefing Document. If you have any specific questions, feel free to contact Jackie Parrill or Lauri White.

Who will be on the HLC team?

The college will be visited by a peer review team of administrators, staff people, and faculty who have been accepted to the Peer Review Corps by the HLC. All will have gone through training for such visits and will be familiar with the Criteria for Accreditation and other components of a Comprehensive Evaluation. Most of the team members will be experienced reviewers.

What will the HLC team do during the visit?

The team will already have received COTC's Assurance Argument, the Multi-campus report, the Federal Compliance report and other submitted materials. Both quality assurance and quality improvement are integrated into the comprehensive evaluation. The purposes of the campus visit are to validate claims made in the institution's Assurance Filing (Assurance Argument and Evidence File), to evaluate the required improvements made by the institution, and to compare those materials with what the HLC team finds during planned activities while on site. All comprehensive evaluations include a review of whether the institution meets the Federal Compliance Requirements. In addition, comprehensive evaluations include visits to the extended campuses.

The on-campus agenda will include meeting with the institution's leadership; meeting with those involved in preparing the Assurance Argument and the Evidence File; holding open forums for faculty, staff, and students; and meeting with key individuals and groups. After the visit, the team will make recommendations to HLC concerning continued accreditation.

What questions will site visitors ask? What information can—or should—be shared?

The peer reviewers will gather a broad array of perspectives about COTC from students, faculty, staff, and administrators. They may ask members of the college community to share their understanding of the school's mission and/or to describe COTC based on their own experiences. They may also ask questions about an area they consider being within the individual's area of expertise.

The visitors will be likely to ask questions rooted in the five criteria. So, they will ask things like:

- What is the mission of this program or unit? And how does it relate to the college's mission?
- Are you clear about COTC's mission and how you fit in?
- Where are you going, as you move into the future, as a college and as a program, department, office, or whatever?
- How do you know you are successful? How do you measure effectiveness?
- How do you relate to the public and to all the stakeholders who are outside the college?

When you are asked questions like this, you should answer them candidly and thoughtfully. We are proud of our college and, above all, its people. The interactions of the visitors with our faculty, staff and students will provide the best evidence of our fulfilling the accreditation criteria.

Why are we being visited for re-accreditation so soon? Didn't we just go through this?

Re-accreditation usually takes place in a ten-year cycle, which includes a mid-cycle evaluation. The last 10-year comprehensive evaluation visit from the HLC was in 2008. In 2014, COTC had a successful mid-cycle comprehensive visit. We are now coming due for our next full, 10-year comprehensive accreditation visit.

How will the findings be reported?

The HLC review team will write a report that addresses the Criteria for Accreditation and send a draft to the campus a few weeks after the visit. The team will note the Criteria Components that have been met, any that have not been, and any qualifications or concerns regarding them. After receiving the draft, **the president** will have a chance to correct factual errors, and the final report will be submitted to the HLC no more than nine weeks after the visit.

What kinds of recommendations might the team make?

The team may simply recommend continued accreditation with no recommended follow-up activities before the next scheduled visit in 2028. If an institution is in serious trouble, the team could recommend probation or even withdrawal of accreditation. In between there is a range of possible actions, including required progress reports on how the institution is dealing with particular issues, monitoring reports dealing with specific issues that require careful and ongoing attention, and contingency reports dealing with changes taking place that affect the mission or nature of the institution. HLC staff estimate that 85 percent of institutions will have some kind of activity required.

What will happen to the report when the visit is over?

COTC must review the report, both for the validation of the things that we are doing well and for advice about ways in which we can improve what we are doing. Particular issues may be referred to committees and/or departments for examination and action. If follow-up action is required by HLC, COTC must show that it is addressing the issues identified by the HLC peer review team.

What do we hope to learn from this process?

We hope, above all, that the visit will confirm that COTC is meeting its mission ***to meet the technical education and training needs of students and employers in the area*** in all meaningful ways. We also hope to receive good advice about ways in which we can better meet and advance our mission.

The HLC Site Visit Team



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Assurance Argument Overview

The Assurance Argument includes the institutional response to the five criterion identified by the Higher Learning Commission:

Criterion One: Mission

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

Criterion Two: Integrity – Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

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

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

Criterion Four – Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

Criterion Five – Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

Each criterion chapter in the assurance argument contains evidence demonstrating the ways in which the college meets and exceeds HLC standards. Evidence is provided for each of the three to five core components within each criterion (21 core components across the five criteria). It is worth noting that the core components are further broken down into subcomponents.

Each core component is identified in the summary that follows, along with key points of evidence used in the assurance argument. Each section concludes with the criterion chapter summary as presented within the Assurance Argument document.

Assurance Argument

CRITERION ONE - MISSION

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

CORE COMPONENT 1.A. The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

- The mission of COTC—to meet the technical education and training needs of students and employers in the area—has been the driving force behind the institution since its inception in 1971. The college routinely engages in rigorous and comprehensive reviews of its mission documents, and the Board of Trustees approved the current strategic plan at their November 2013, meeting.
- COTC's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission. The foundational commitment to serving the local workforce continues to be what fuels growth and propels the institution toward the future.
- The college's budget process requires direct linkages to the strategic plan, ensuring that COTC's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the institution's mission.

CORE COMPONENT 1.B. The mission is articulated publicly.

- The college employs a broad range of methods and tools to communicate its mission clearly to the public using both digital and print, ensuring that the mission is communicated to every constituent group in all geographic areas served by the college.
- The college launched its current strategic plan in January 2014. The plan clearly explains the college's commitment to technical education, and highlights its priorities of providing job-focused, career-driven academic programming and strengthening community connections.
- Since its founding, COTC's purpose has and continues to be providing students with technical skills and professional training designed to meet the immediate and emerging employment needs of new and existing businesses.

CORE COMPONENT 1.C. The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

- The college articulates its role in a multicultural society through its guiding documents. It places importance on creating an inclusive community that supports and appreciates mutual respect and diversity.
- COTC provides a wide variety of educational opportunities for its diverse population. All departments and offices are expected to promote and develop an awareness of and sensitivity to multicultural and diversity issues in order to enrich the educational and work experience of students and employees.

CORE COMPONENT 1.D. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

- COTC's mission clearly articulates that the high-quality education that the institution provides is a benefit to both students and local employers. The Board of Trustees ascribes to the objective that technical education

should prepare students to assume their roles as intelligent, active and informed citizens. In addition to academic programming, the college maintains devotion to the continued development of student social awareness through volunteerism and civic engagement.

- COTC is first and foremost an educational institution, with policies and instruments in place to ensure that the college remains a nonprofit organization focused on the institution's mission.
- The college actively engages with a broad range of community partners who share in our mission.

CRITERION 1 - SUMMARY

The mission of COTC—to meet the technical education and training needs of students and employers in the area—has been the driving force behind the institution since its inception in 1971. The Board of Trustees reconfirmed its commitment to technical education and to the mission statement in 2013, thereby setting the foundation for the development of the college's current strategic plan.

The college employs a broad range of methods and tools to communicate its mission clearly to the public using both digital and print. This insures that the mission is communicated to every constituent group in all geographic areas served by the college.

COTC provides a wide variety of educational opportunities for its diverse population, recognizes outstanding contributions to diversity through several avenues, and continually assesses its progress towards meeting the goal of providing an inclusive and respectful college community. Numerous policies involving recruitment, selection and hiring practices are also indicative of the college's commitment to diversity.

In an effort to demonstrate a commitment to the public good, COTC's mission clearly articulates that the high-quality education that the institution provides is a benefit to both students and local employers. Additionally, through avenues such as volunteerism and civic engagement, the college maintains devotion to the continued development of social awareness.

CRITERION TWO - INTEGRITY: ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

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

CORE COMPONENT 2.A. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

- COTC's Office of Business and Finance operates in an ethical and responsible fashion across all functions. Internal policies as well as internal and external audits ensure compliance on all levels.
- The college has established policies and/or rules publically available on the institution's website designed specifically for faculty, staff and students as well as our Board of Trustees.
- COTC regularly reviews operations and routinely meets with service providers to ensure ethical and responsible behavior in auxiliary functions.

CORE COMPONENT 2.B. The institution 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.

- COTC strives to ensure that information provided to students and the public is helpful and easily accessible, most prominently through the institution's website.
- Information related to academic programs and associated requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, and accreditation relationships is clear, accurate/current and presented in an easily understandable fashion.

CORE COMPONENT 2.C. The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

- The board's deliberations are guided by the strategic plan, the Newark campus Framework Plan and the annual budget. These key institutional documents are board approved, and they set forth the college's priorities, plan for resource allocation, and plan for supporting the college infrastructure to meet current and future needs.
- The Board of Trustees looks both within and outside the institution to help ensure decisions are informed and made in the best interest of the college.
- The president is designated by the board as the chief executive officer of the college with responsibility for the entire administration of the college. Through the *Agreement Between the Central Ohio Technical College and The United Faculty/Central Ohio Technical College, AFT/OFT*, the board and faculty have agreed to the faculty advisory responsibility for fundamental academic matters.

CORE COMPONENT 2.D. The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

- COTC's Code of Student Conduct explicitly states that "Central Ohio Technical College welcomes diverse beliefs and values academic freedom and the open exchange and expression of thoughts, opinions and ideas," demonstrating its commitment to freedom of expression.

CORE COMPONENT 2.E. The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

- The college values integrity as demonstrated by human resources, student and fiscal accountability policies and procedures.
- The security, reliability and ethical use of campus resources is critical to the college's continued success, while policies regarding academic honesty and integrity foster and protect the core values of the college.

CRITERION 2 - SUMMARY

COTC has a long history of operating with integrity in financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions, and has implemented several safeguards to maintain its ethical and responsible conduct. These safeguards shape the operations of the college and its culture as a whole.

To demonstrate its commitment to transparency to both students and the public, COTC employs a variety of digital, mobile and print communication methods. These methods offer all constituent groups access to information regarding programs, requirements, faculty and staff, educational costs and accreditation relationships.

COTC's governing body has the autonomy it needs to make decisions in the best interest of the college and to ensure its integrity. Additionally, the board routinely receives and discusses important metrics and statistics that guide its decision making.

COTC employs several policies and procedures that emphasize the importance of integrity in all pursuits by all faculty, staff and students. The security, reliability and ethical use of campus resources is critical to the college's continued success, while policies regarding academic honesty and integrity foster and protect the core values of the college.

CRITERION THREE - TEACHING AND LEARNING: QUALITY, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT

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

CORE COMPONENT 3.A. The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

- COTC takes measures to ensure curricula are relevant and rigorous, educating students so they can succeed in the world.
- Learning outcomes are explicitly identified for all programs and certificate offerings.
- The college strives to ensure that the rigorous nature of courses and programs delivered in the campus classroom is replicated through e-learning as well as through off-campus and partnership programs.

CORE COMPONENT 3.B. The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

- COTC has a defined general education program made up of a collection of courses that provide a strong foundation for student success in all degree offerings. Each technology program includes general education courses that it regards as essential for every college-educated person.
- COTC students participate in academic programs that foster relevant skills in thoughtful inquiry, communication, critical thinking and cultural awareness, which are valuable for addressing the needs of and contributing to modern society.
- COTC offers curricular and co-curricular programs and opportunities that promote awareness of diversity and appreciation of living in a multicultural world.

CORE COMPONENT 3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

- The institution maintains sufficient faculty levels to ensure quality delivery of education to its students, including work both in and outside of the classroom.
- Faculty at the college meet clearly established requirements for academic credentialing, consistent with HLC guidelines.
- In accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement and college protocols, performance of all faculty is evaluated regularly. Professional development opportunities are routinely provided and supported.

- Across the spectrum of student support services, staff are recruited on the basis of solid credentials and stay current in their fields of expertise.

CORE COMPONENT 3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

- The college has procedures, programs and services to help ensure students are appropriately prepared to succeed at COTC.
- Students and instructors have access to physical resources that facilitate excellence in teaching and learning.
- Students are provided training in the effective use of research and information resources in a variety of ways, primarily through the Warner Library, which is a shared service in partnership with The Ohio State University.

CORE COMPONENT 3.E. The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

- COTC's co-curricular programs support the overall educational experience and focus on critical thinking, effective communication, global citizenship and service to others, marketing informed skills literacy, and self-authorship and ethical reasoning.
- COTC broadens and enriches the student educational experience by connecting academics with external communities to help students develop the knowledge and skills that will better enable them to succeed in a diverse workplace and society.

CRITERION 3 - SUMMARY

COTC employs a variety of internal and external methods to ensure that courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded. All courses follow consistent syllabus template with information provided by the full-time faculty of the respective departments/divisions.

The College's general education requirements provide an educational foundation for all degree-seeking students while also satisfying the guidelines published by the Ohio Department of Higher Education for two-year programs. These requirements demonstrate a commitment to empowering students with education in both the arts and sciences, thereby arming them with the tools necessary for lifelong learning.

COTC maintains a generous student-to-faculty ratio which allows for academic support and relationship building. Longevity of faculty members provides stability and continuity so that classroom and non-classroom functions remain consistent. All faculty meet credential requirements and all staff members working in a role of student support have the appropriate education and training as outlined in their specific job description.

Infrastructure and resources necessary to support both students and faculty in their learning and teaching endeavors are provided by the College. Available support services for students include admissions, financial aid, tutoring, academic placement and career services, among others. A few examples of support provided to faculty include technology, laboratories and teaching space, and professional development.

Beyond academics, COTC offers students a large array of co-curricular opportunities including but not limited to student activities, service learning, internships and practicums, and student employment. COTC students also have access to on-campus housing due to the College's cost-shared partnership with Ohio State Newark.

CRITERION 4 - TEACHING AND LEARNING: EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

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

CORE COMPONENT 4.A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

- Program review at COTC is critical for both ensuring quality and relevance of academic offerings and informing decisions about future programmatic direction and resource allocation that impact student learning.
- COTC adheres to established policies for assessing acceptability and quality of transfer credit and has tools in place to help students know which credit may be applied at the college.
- COTC responsibly oversees all aspects of academic programs, including course prerequisites, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications, including College Credit Plus.
- COTC takes great pride in seeking, acquiring and maintaining specialized accreditation for its academic programs.

CORE COMPONENT 4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

- COTC implements an assessment system that includes identifying student learning outcomes and facilitating processes in order to conduct meaningful, manageable, sustainable and impactful assessment.
- COTC regularly assesses learning outcomes.
- COTC's assessment culture incorporates recognized "good practices" in evaluating student learning.

CORE COMPONENT 4.C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

- The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion in both the strategic plan and the college's Completion Plan that is required by the Ohio legislature. COTC regularly collects and analyzes extensive data on student retention, persistence and completion in its degree and certificate programs.
- Programmatic adjustments are made to facilitate educational improvement as identified through the review of data.

CRITERION 4 - SUMMARY

COTC demonstrates a responsibility for the quality of its educational programs through the vast number of programs accredited by their respective profession. Further demonstration of quality is in the program review process that showcases program / department assessment plans.

COTC has defined policies on the evaluation and transcription of all transfer credit, non-traditional credit and other forms of credit for prior learning. To measure the success of its graduates, the college tracks job placement and evaluates whether alumni are employed full-time or part-time and in a field that directly or somewhat directly relates to their COTC education.

The Student Learning Assessment Steering Committee (SLASC) and the college have created an integrated, college-wide approach to learning outcome data collection and assessment processes. Learning outcomes are evaluated at the program and course level. Information gained through assessment is used to continually improve student learning.

Student success is the college's number one priority as demonstrated by the development and implementation of the college completion plan which embeds recruitment, retention and completion. The college has a number of specific programs and resources in place to effectively promote and ensure student retention, persistence, and completion.

CRITERION 5 - RESOURCES, PLANNING, AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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

CORE COMPONENT 5.A. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

- The college and its faculty, staff, students and constituents benefit from the cost-sharing and co-location with Ohio State Newark. Shared personnel, operations and capital facility and equipment expenses reduce costs and improve management efficiency and effectiveness. The recent Agreement with Ohio State's Office of the Chief Information Officer deepened the partnership and provides a wider breadth of technical services for the college.
- COTC's budgetary and planning processes are linked to ensure that resources are allocated to maintain and strengthen the institution's educational programs and enhance student learning.
- As part of the current strategic plan, the college has identified four mission-driven priorities. The majority of COTC employees believe these priorities are realistic and appropriate in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
- From hiring practices to performance management and professional development opportunities, COTC seeks to ensure that all employees are appropriately qualified and trained.
- COTC has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

CORE COMPONENT 5.B. The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

- Through regular, special and committee meetings, members of the Board of Trustees understand the college as an institution and, therefore, responsibly oversee the institution's governance.
- COTC clearly articulates rules, policies and procedures that help guide and engage internal constituencies in the institution's governance.
- COTC has a well-defined organizational structure demonstrating clear lines of authority, reporting and formal relationships from the Board of Trustees to front-line employees. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are afforded opportunities through structured committees and groups to become involved in defining the college's strategic direction and assisting in setting policy.

CORE COMPONENT 5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

- COTC's mission guides college decisions related to resource allocation; student, faculty and staff are engaged in the college's planning process.
- COTC has a continuous assessment, evaluation and improvement cycle that is linked to planning and budgeting.
- COTC has established infrastructures and processes in place that closely monitor the institution's capacity vis-à-vis revenue-related factors such as enrollment and the economy and formally address emerging factors.

CORE COMPONENT 5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

- From surveys and monitoring, to program review and benchmarking, COTC purposefully documents and examines institutional operations throughout the institution.
- COTC learns from operational experiences, exploring and implementing ways to improve how the college carries out the mission.

CRITERION 5 - SUMMARY

By design, COTC's budgetary and planning processes ensure that resources are allocated to maintain and strengthen the institution's educational programs and enhance student learning. In addition to three extended campuses, the college shares a 175-acre campus with The Ohio State University at Newark. This cost-shared partnership not only significantly increases the range of facilities and programs that the community and COTC students, faculty and staff can access and use, but also produces a multitude of operational and financial efficiencies.

During the college's most recent strategic planning process, four mission-driven priorities were identified that the majority of COTC employees believe are realistic and appropriate in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities. The college's hiring practice, recruitment and selection policy, and emphasis on continued professional development ensure the qualified faculty and staff base necessary for the college to maintain its focus on these priorities.

COTC has a well-defined organizational structure demonstrating clear lines of authority, reporting and formal relationships from the Board of Trustees to front-line employees. Board members, faculty, staff and students also have several opportunities to become involved in defining the college's strategic direction and to assist in setting policy.

In an effort to ensure that all planning and resource allocation activities throughout every level of the institution are effectively linked and coordinated, and driven by the institution's vision, mission, and priorities, COTC utilizes three types of planning that identify and evaluate both short- and long-term objectives. Because the college strives for quality and continuous improvement in processes, services and programs, it employs several data collection methods to guide continuous improvement in its effectiveness, capabilities and sustainability.

COTC Preparations



Planning for COTC's 2018-2019 HLC reaffirmation of accreditation visit began in the fall of 2015. Specific milestones and points of interest are highlighted below:

FY2015-2016

In November 2015, President Coe charged Jackie Parrill, Ed.D., Vice President for Institutional Planning and Human Resources, and Lauri White, Ed.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs, as the institutions reaffirmation coordinators. The coordinators held a planning retreat and began the development of the reaffirmation plan of work.

The reaffirmation plan of work document, *Reaffirm 2018-19*, was reviewed by the president in February 2016, and was subsequently approved by the college's HLC liaison in March 2016. *Be Curious* was identified as the theme for the development of the Assurance Argument and Curious George was the mascot.

The work plan identified the structure to include a number of subcommittees to conduct the work necessary to draft the Assurance Argument and prepare for the visit. The reaffirmation coordinators serves as the criteria leads and established skunkworks teams to address the various core and sub-components of each of the criteria. The designation "skunkworks" is widely used in business, engineering, and technical fields to describe a small, loosely structured group of people within an organization given a high degree of autonomy and unhampered by bureaucracy, tasked with working on advanced projects. Dr. Parrill was identified as the lead for Criteria 1, 2, and 5, and Dr. White led the teams for Criteria 3 and 4.

In April 2016, the subcommittee leads were charged with their new roles. Joe Argiro, Resource Planning Analyst, was charged as the Evidence File lead; Kim Manno, Director of Development, and Kim Sibert, Director of Purchasing and Auxiliary Services, as the editing team; Chris Doll, Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, as the Federal Compliance work group lead; Suzanne Bressoud, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, as the Communications Support Team lead; and Brian Boehmer, Superintendent of Facilities, as the Visit Preparation Team lead. Jackie Parrill also was charged as the lead for the development of the Multi-campus report (regarding our extended campuses).

In Spring/Summer 2016, editorial guidelines were developed for use in drafting the Assurance Argument.

FY2016-2017

At the beginning of the autumn semester, presentations were made across campus to provide an overview of the process to all college faculty and staff. The COTC reaffirmation of accreditation website was launched and the criterion skunkworks teams began to convene. Skunkworks sessions and work on the criterion chapters continued through spring 2017, and work began on the Federal Compliance report. In April/May 2017, the skunkworks teams completed their review and analysis of the criterion core components and a preliminary draft was provided to the Executive Leadership Team for review. Over 40 skunkworks meetings and over 110 of our people participated in the process.

FY2017-2018

In the summer of 2017, the Assurance Argument was reviewed by the editors. That fall, the reaffirmation coordinators worked to fill gaps, address issues and finalize the document. Additionally, the work to begin building the evidence file was initiated. The evidence file serves as an online library for the site visitors and includes documentation and evidence that substantiates all of the claims stated in the Assurance Argument.

Also in fall 2017, an accreditation update was provided as part of the agenda for all of the academic advisory committees and to the Alumni Council. Additionally, an accreditation update was given to the board at their October meeting.

During the spring 2018 semester, the entire campus was provided the opportunity to review the draft Assurance Argument and provide feedback. After edits and reviews were made, the Assurance Argument went back to the Executive Leadership Team for review in summer 2018. The final version was submitted to the Board of Trustees and was endorsed by the board for submission at their September 2018 meeting.

FY2018-2019

As part of the process, the College was required to solicit third party comments to be submitted directly to the HLC. The college placed ads in local newspapers to solicit those comments.

The start the 2018 fall semester included a renewed emphasis on the upcoming visit and communications with all of the established groups on campus to raise awareness and prepare them for the visit. Our communications strategy included presentations to standing committees and groups, information in *Profiles* and *On The Same Page*, and email communications. Additionally, we communicated with the extended campus advisory boards, Alumni Council, and the Board of Trustees. To prepare the campus constituents for the visit, we prepared this briefing document.

Also, the new academic year started with special attention towards housekeeping. All employees were encouraged to look carefully at their spaces, including virtual spaces, and to spruce up wherever possible.

Additionally, we were required to distribute the HLC's Student Opinion Survey to our students. That survey was distributed in early September 2018.

The visit is scheduled for **November 26 and 27, 2018**.

Selected Comparisons: A Statistical Summary of Then and Now

Students	1998	2007	2018 ¹
Total Enrollment	1,716	3,105	3,433
% Full Time	37.82%	47.09%	21.56%
% Part Time	62.18%	52.91%	78.44%
% High School	NA	3.00%	37.69%
Avg. Age	28	27	23
Median Age	25	24	20
<i>By Campus</i>			
Newark	1,571	2,021	2,279
Coshocton	45	427	196
Knox	80	345	340
Pataskala	20	312	618
<i>Diversity(%)</i>			
Men	35.26%	26.70%	32.92%
Women	64.74%	73.30%	67.08%
% Black	3.50%	6.73%	8.93%
% Amer. In./Ak Nat	0.64%	0.64%	0.18%
% Asian/Pac. Isl.	0.82%	1.22%	2.45%
% Hispanic	1.57%	0.90%	2.18%
% Total Minority ²	6.53%	9.49%	13.74%
Faculty and Staff (HC)³			
Regular Faculty	45	60	50
Part-time Faculty	96	168	196
Exec/Admin/Mgr	17	24	34
Other Professionals	37	57	56
Clerical & Secretarial	26	41	24
Service&Maintenance ⁴	6	4	12
Financial			
<i>Budget</i>			
Total Revenue	\$7,442,819	\$19,711,348	\$24,319,759
State Appropriations as % of Revenue	51.50%	38.90%	46.10%
Total Expenditures	\$7,431,008	\$19,705,783	\$24,819,759
Tuition and Fees	\$3,177,000	\$10,390,401	\$11,551,693

Facilities

Classroom Space (in square feet)

Newark	14,183	19,779	27,201
Coshocton	NA	7,689	7,292
Knox	NA	3,150	6,541
Pataskala	NA	NA	5,810

Laboratory Space (in square feet)

Newark	31,385	30,117	24,351
Coshocton	NA	378	6,378
Knox	NA	866	6,521
Pataskala	NA	NA	1,008

- 1) 2018 enrollment data reflect 18AU 15th day enrollment as of 9/28/18
- 2) Does not include white, unknown, or students with 2 or more races or ethnicities
- 3) Faculty and Staff statistics are based on Autumn 1999, 2006, and 2017 IPEDS data
- 4) Most Newark campus service and maintenance employees are cost-shared and are paid by The Ohio State University. They are not included in COTC IPEDS reports.