

Report to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students  
of  
**SALEM COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

by  
A Team Representing the  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared After a  
Visit to the Institution on:  
April 10 – 13, 2016

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## **I. CONTENT AND NATURE OF THE VISIT**

### **Institutional Overview:**

Salem Community College (SCC) is an accredited, co-educational, public two-year institution of higher education. SCC was established by the Salem County Board of Chosen Freeholders in 1972. It is authorized by the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education to grant associate degrees (transfer Associate degrees and applied Associate degrees) and certificates (30-36 credit and 29 or less credits for career certificates). The College is governed by a Board of Trustees, including the Executive Superintendent of Schools of Salem County, eight members appointed via the local legislators (Chosen Freeholders) two by the governor, and one alumni elected by the student body.

A signature program of Salem Community College is Scientific Glass Technology, Associate in Applied Science, and this program is housed at a site separate from the main campus. The team visited the impressive Glass Technology facility.

SCC has experienced declining enrollment and budgetary stress. The College exists in an economically disadvantaged area that is the least densely populated in New Jersey. So, it follows that enrollment and retention plans, student services, and alternative revenue are of vital concern in the current Strategic Plan. The local community is supportive of the College and also of the new president who joined SCC in August 2015.

The team thanks the SCC community for the honesty, warm hospitality and helpfulness extended us during all parts of our review and visit.

## **II. AFFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION UNDER REVIEW**

The College was first awarded accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in 1979, and was reaffirmed in 1984, 1990, 1995, and 2005. Middle States accepted SCC's Periodic Review Report (PRR) in 2010, which was approved by MSCHE with reaffirmation of accreditation. It should be noted that the visit was originally scheduled to occur in the spring of 2015. The College requested a one-year postponement due to a significant health issue at the highest level of leadership. The request was granted.

Based on a review of the self-study, interviews, the Certification Statement supplied by the institution and/or other institutional documents, the team affirms that the institution continues

to meet the fourteen standards included in the “Requirements of Affiliation in *Characteristics of Excellence*.”

### **III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS; ISSUES RELATIVE TO STATE REGULATORY OR OTHER ACCREDITING AGENCY REQUIREMENTS**

Based on the separate verification of compliance with accreditation-relevant provisions of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, and, as necessary, review of the self-study, certification by the institution, other institutional documents, and/or interviews, the team affirms that the institution does meet all relevant federal and state regulations and the requirements. The HEOA Compliance review determined that the institution is out of compliance on two counts: 1) proper and public posting of fees collected for various items including distance learning, and Prior Learning Assessment (PLA); 2) required scores for granting of credit equivalencies is not publically accessible for Advanced Placement, credit for educationally equivalent career experience, and possible other equivalencies.

The visitors followed up with interviews and verified that SCC is in compliance or no longer out of compliance with the HEOA issues as a result of corrections made post HEOA notification. Additionally, and to address the HEOA concern, the Nursing program is currently accredited via the ACEN but they are on warning status. The Nursing Department has made several significant changes in direct response to ACEN and in order to retain ACEN accreditation.

### **IV. EVALUATION OVERVIEW**

The evaluation team’s responsibility during this visit was to clarify, amplify, and verify the materials submitted to us as part of the Self-Study. In our process of verification and review of the Self-Study, the College readily made available any supporting documents, records, and other information requested by the team. The campus community as a whole, including staff, faculty, administrators, and trustees were readily forthcoming and candid in their interviews. As part of our review, we noted the following:

1. Over the past few years, SCC has undergone significant changes in leadership positions, including the appointment of a new college president following the resignation of the previous college president. The campus appears to have embraced the new leader, Dr. Gorman, and the campus tone is positive and enthusiastically supportive of the student-centered mission.

2. The Board of Trustees is informed of the new directions set by Dr. Gorman and they are supportive of his work. Strategic Planning is well underway and the process of reprioritizing resources to align with new initiatives is also in the works. As is common to many campuses, campus communication could be improved especially as the College moves through changes that often require duplication of information in order to effectively share meaning campus wide. The campus has fiscal challenges and has a plan for increasing enrollment that if effective will improve the fund balance of the College. Leadership will need to be proactive, however, in taking steps to align revenue with expenses in the event that funding from tuition, state, or county falls short, and leads to further reductions in cash reserves. At the time of this writing, the new Chief Financial Officer had been at the College for less than two weeks and he demonstrates a good grasp of the budget and financial situation of SCC.
3. The evaluation team commends the College for achieving a culture of academic and student learning assessment that relies upon data to inform decision making at the course, program, and institutional level. Considering the size of the full-time faculty, this focus on continuous quality improvement through assessment as one key element is impressive. The evaluators are concerned that sustaining and building upon current assessment success will be difficult without additional full-time faculty.

## **V. SUMMARY OF AND COMPLIANCE WITH ACCREDITATION STANDARDS**

### **Summary of Recommendations:**

1. Considering the reliance on adjuncts to teach 63% of the courses offered (Self-Study, pg. 63) the College needs to increase the number of adjunct friendly offices and work spaces. (Standard 3)
2. It is recommended that SCC develop an institutional mechanism and accountability process to address the need to improve administrative unit assessment that includes campus wide departmental functional area reviews. (Standard 7)
3. SCC has done exemplary work with program review, however, the College should develop a sustainable strategy to maintain the consistent review of program curriculum and courses that are low enrolled or taught solely by adjunct faculty. (Standard 11)

4. It is recommended that SCC develop strategies to improve engagement of part-time faculty in assessment activities in order to fully implement and communicate student learning assessment across all courses and programs. (Standard 14)

### **Commendations:**

1. The academic support lab has integrated data based assessment to monitor student usage and academic success, and to connect with the faculty who can apply helpful, intrusive student success strategies. (Standard 9)
2. The team commends the College's Continuing the Loop assessment strategy for general education outcomes. The lead faculty have generated an abundance of assessment data which informs decision making and it is clear that the data are used to inform the work of the Curriculum Review and Academic Program Review Committees. (Standard 12)
3. The College is commended for using research and data to redesign developmental English and Math courses along with the re-instatement of instructional aides to support student placement, success and retention. The "improve student success" initiative should be replicated for other programs at the College. (Standard 13)
4. The SLOA Handbook and the Academic Program Review (APR) are comprehensive guides for implementing effective student learning assessment. (Standard 14)

### **Compliance, Standards 1-14:**

This report will follow the Self-Study format of the institution and report on each on the 14 Standards of the *Characteristics of Excellence*.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF EXCELLENCE**

### **STANDARD 1: MISSION AND GOALS**

*The institution's mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher educational indicates who the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education, clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission. The mission and goals are developed and recognized by the institution with the participation of its members and its governing body and are used to develop and shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.*

**Summary of Evidence and Findings: In the evaluation team's judgement, Salem Community College meets Standard 1.**

- Salem Community College established in 1972 has a mission statement that “succinctly describes the focus on serving the community in two ways: offering affordable, quality postsecondary education and providing workforce development opportunities that meet the needs of local businesses and industry.” (Self-Study, Standard 1, Page 16)
- There is evidence that Salem Community College (SCC) has identified three institutional priorities; Improve Fiscal Stability, Improve Student Success, Improve the College's Image. In support of achieving these institutional priorities, SCC has developed a number of tactical objectives. (2013 – 2016 Salem Community College Strategic Plan – Strengthening the College)
- “The College proudly promotes its mission and strategic plan both internally and externally through multiple mechanisms. The mission and Strategic Planning goals are posted throughout the College and mentioned regularly by the President and administrators at all major gatherings including the fall and spring semester Opening Sessions.” This information is also readily available on the College's website and in the College Catalog – Handbook. (Self-Study, Standard 1, Page 16)
- There is evidence that the College administration developed its Strategic Plan in collaborative participation by engaging “the entire College community in the strategic planning process.” “An electronic survey that asked College employees to rate how strategically important each issue identified by the committee was to the future of the College”. In addition to the survey a number of focus group sessions were held. “These focus groups helped to elicit specific information, opinions, and perceptions about the College's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.” (Self-Study, Standard 1, Pages 17 & 18)
- There is evidence that the Office of institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (IRP&E) collects data on the progress being made toward divisional tactical objectives that are tied directly to priorities in the Strategic Plan. “The Office of IRP&E shares this information with the President and the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis and with faculty and staff biannually at Opening Session each fall and spring semester.” (Self-Study, Standard 1, Pages 18 & 19)
- “SCC's current mission statement, developed in 2012, succinctly describes the College's focus on serving the community in two ways: offering affordable, quality postsecondary

education and providing workforce development opportunities that meet the needs of local businesses and industry.” (Self–Study, Standard 1, Page 11)

- The current Mission Statement developed in fall 2012, was “approved by the Board of Trustees at its January 2013 meeting.” This latest version of the mission statement has served to streamline previous versions and “now reflects a commitment to strengthening the institution at its core.” (Self–Study, Standard 1, Page 16)
- There is evidence of a written public statement to the College’s Board of trustee members, faculty, staff, students and other constituents of the College. Dr. Gorman sent out a letter outlining his first one hundred days as President at SCC and what he saw as his vision and priorities for the College going forward. The document is quite extensive and speaks to the College’s Strategic Plan in great detail. (Introductory Addendum to the 2016 Salem Community College Self-Study)
- SCC is to be commended for the “First 100 Days” report that Dr. Gorman sent to the Board of Trustees and the campus community. This document was very informative and clearly laid out the President’s vision for the College.

Significant Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices: None

Non-binding Suggestions for Improvement: None

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

**The visitors’ judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with the standard.**

## **STANDARD 2: PLANNING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION, AND INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL**

*An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and goals, develops objectives to achieve them, and utilizes the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal. Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.*

**Summary of Evidence and Findings: In the evaluation team's judgement, Salem Community College meets Standard 2.**

- Salem Community College is regulated by N.J.S.A 18A:64A-17 for the development and approval process of its annual budget. "This statute requires each community college's board of trustees to prepare and deliver to the County Board of School Estimate an itemized statement of the amount of money estimated to be necessary for operation and capital outlay expenses for the ensuing year." (Self-Study, Standard 2, Page 22)
- "The College utilizes a comprehensive process for developing its annual budgets, which includes input from every department. The process begins with each department identifying specific goals to meet the priorities in the Strategic Plan and reviewing data related to these goals. Based on this, department heads then consider and document anticipated expenditures and submits an Account Budget Request form to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for review. (Self-Study, Standard 2, Page 22)
- There is evidence that SCC monitors the success of its Strategic Plan and uses the information obtained to inform its resource allocation and planning process. "For instance, during the AY 2013-14, in an effort to improve student success, the College funded the redesign of all developmental math courses. Around the same time, SCC also hired seven new part-time Instructional Aides (three for English courses and four for math courses) to assist at-risks students in developmental and certain gateway courses. " (Self-Study, Standard 2, Page 23)
- "The Strategic Plan is one of three major planning components the College uses to inform the direction of the College and measure its success. These three components (Strategic Plan, Administrative Outcomes Assessment Plan and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan), discussed in Standard 7, are developed with input from all stakeholders and have led to the implementation of a number of institutional improvements."(Self-Study, Standard 2 - Page 23, Strategic Plan- Appendix 1, Administrative Assessment Outcomes Plan-Exhibit 5.2, Student Learning Outcomes Assessment – Appendix 5)
- The assignment of responsibility for improvements and assurance of accountability falls to the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (IRP&E) which is responsible for monitoring and documenting the implementation of the priorities. "At the end of each quarter, the Office of IRP&E compiles completed action statements from each area to show progress made toward each tactical objective." (Self-Study, Standard 1, Page 18)



- There is evidence of environmental scans and other processes in place for evaluating the economic, political, and social climate in which the institution operates and expects to operate: Standard 1, Fall 2013 Faculty and Staff Survey-Exhibit 1.3, Standard 1, Salem County Educator Survey – Exhibit 1.9, Standard 7, SCC Graduate Student Survey 14/15 – Exhibit 7.2, Entering Student engagement Survey – Standard 7, Exhibit 7.1, Standard 8, Disability Support Services Survey – Exhibit 8.4, Standard 7, Student Questionnaire on Instruction – Exhibit 7.4. (Self-study, Page 124, List of above exhibits)
- There is evidence that SCC has an established structure “for measuring key performance learning indicators, assessing strategic planning priorities, working with the faculty-led committee on student learning outcomes, and providing support for the Academic Program Review (APR) process”. (Self-Study, Standard 7, Page 94)
- There is evidence that SCC has an established process to review resource allocation procedures and their relationship to planning, mission, goals, and objectives. “The process begins with each department identifying specific goals to meet the priorities in the Strategic Plan and reviewing data related to these goals.” (Self-Study, Standard 2, Page 22)

Significant Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices: None

Non-binding Suggestions for Improvement:

1. With increased fiscal stability being one of the College’s three strategic priorities, it is suggested that the College renew its’ commitment to researching and applying for external grants so as to increase the financial resources available to the institution in its efforts to meet its Strategic Plan goals.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

**The visitors’ judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with the standard.**

### **STANDARD 3: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES**

*The human, financial, technical, facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve an institution’s mission and goals are available and accessible. In the context of the institution’s*

*mission, the effective and efficient uses of the institution's resources are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment.*

**Summary of Evidence and Findings: In the evaluation team's judgement, Salem Community College meets Standard 3.**

- Salem Community College (SCC) has completed each of the past four fiscal years with a balanced budget using a small portion of unrestricted fund balance to do so each year. The College's current unrestricted net assets or financial reserve (2014) is 10.6 % of their annual operating expenses. This represents a 1.9% increase over the unrestricted assets for 2012. This has been achieved by being fiscally responsible concerning their operating budget and making the necessary cuts to the budget to insure that the institution's limited funds are used in support of the College's Strategic Plan and the students they serve. (Self-Study, Standards 2 and 3, Independent Audit reports for 2012 thru 2015)
- Independent Audit opinions from the past four years have all been positive as to internal controls and there have been no management letters issued concerning financial practices in this same time period. This is a strong indicator that the college has adequate institutional controls to deal with financial and administrative operations. (Self-Study, Standard 3, Independent Audit reports for fiscal years 2012 through 2015)
- SCC has developed a 2017-2019 budget projection using conservative funding and enrollment assumptions to assist with the development of short and long term priorities consistent with the various strategic plans of the College. (Standard 8, Exhibit 8.1, Fiscal Year 2017-2019 Three Year Budget & Enrollment Projection – Supporting Documents)
- Evidence exists that contract and grant funding has significantly declined in recent years from \$3,332,781.00 (2013 audited financial statements) to \$396,980.00 (2015 audited financial statements). "With a smaller staff, however, the College has had less ability to focus on researching and applying for external grants. As a result, external grant funding has substantially decreased and should be reevaluated." (Self-Study, Standard 2, Page 24, 2013 thru 2015 Audited Financial Statements)
- Evidence exists to validate that SCC "remains focused on maintaining the quality of its academic programs. Great care has been exercised to ensure that programs are supported and that programs deemed no longer viable are eliminated so that funds can be used for those that are needed." Actual Instructional expenditures for the past three fiscal years represents on average 29.16% of total operating expenses per fiscal year. On average an additional 9.5% and %14.37 per fiscal year has also been expended in Academic Support and

Student services respectively. (Self-Study, Standard 3, Page 28, Self-Study Supporting Documents - Independent Audit reports for fiscal years 2013 through 2015)

- Through conservative budgeting and sound fiscal management, the College has been able to avoid increasing tuition rates for the past four academic years. “In comparison to the 19 community colleges in New Jersey, SCC ranks among the top third for most affordable average net price of attendance for first-time, full-time students. SCC maintains a transparent website so students can tabulate the total cost of any academic program offered by SCC.” (Self-Study, Standard 1, Page 19)
- The 2011 Facilities Master Plan has been developed in direct support of the College’s mission and goals. (Standard 3, Exhibit 3.1, Salem Community College Master Plan Facility Study and Administrative Recommendations– Exhibit 3.1)
- The 2014-2016 Technology Plan has been developed in direct support of the College’s 2013-2016 Strategic Plan which calls for using “technology to enhance student support for both traditional and online delivery.” The Technology Plan includes upgrades to the school’s Learning Management System as well as SmartBoard and Sympodium technologies. (Self-Study, Standard 3, Exhibit 3.2, 2014-2016 Technology Master Plan, Self-Study, Standard 3, Page 29)
- Evidence exists that SCC has established cooperative agreements for inter-institutional collaboration and resource sharing with other community colleges in New Jersey. “In an attempt to provide students with as many opportunities as possible, the College has partnered with other local community colleges to provide students an increased number of program offerings.” “These no-cost partnerships, such as Culinary Arts AAS, Horticulture AAS, Respiratory Therapy AS and Paralegal Studies AS greatly expand opportunities for students.” (Self-Study, Standard 3, Page 28)
- “As shown in Figure 10.2, in the AY 2013-14, 63% of courses were taught by part-time faculty and 37% were taught by full-time faculty”. (Self-Study, Standard 10, Page 63, Table 10.2).

Significant Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices: None

Non-binding Suggestions for Improvement: None

Recommendations:

1. Considering the reliance of adjuncts to teach 63% of the courses offered (Self-Study, Standard 10, Page 63, Table 10.2) the college needs to increase the number of adjunct friendly offices and work spaces.

Requirements: None

**The visitors' judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with the standard.**

#### **STANDARD 4: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

*The institution's system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution.*

**Summary of Evidence and Findings: In the evaluation team's judgement, Salem Community College meets Standard 4.**

- The board structure is clear and in accordance with state statute: "The SCC Board of Trustees consists of eleven voting members and one member elected from the graduating class appointed in accordance with the laws of the State of New Jersey. The board meets monthly and agendas are posted for public view" ([http://www.salemcc.edu/sites/default/files/documents/bot/BOT\\_Bylaws\\_10-22-15.pdf](http://www.salemcc.edu/sites/default/files/documents/bot/BOT_Bylaws_10-22-15.pdf))
- The board conducts an on-going self-assessment on a three year cycle using a nationally recognized assessment tool. (Self-Study, Standard 4, p. 33)

**Significant Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

- The board consistently reviews and amends policy as appropriate. (Self-Study, Standard 4, Page 33). The board has appropriate policies in place including a conflict of interest policy (policy documents).
- Policies and actions are accessible on the SCC website.
- The board and the president demonstrate an understanding of appropriate roles and responsibilities; Appropriate board sub-committees exist and meet monthly (Self-Study,

Standard 4, Page 32; and evidence of notes of sub-committees meetings). The president's "The First 100 Days" report to the board provides evidence of deep understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges facing SCC. The document is instructive and strategic. The board is ideally accountable to fully digest the report and use it as a map of support for the president of SCC. (Self-Study, Appendix A1, Introductory Addendum to the 2016 Salem Community College Self-Study)

- A structure is in place to share information and to facilitate communication through the College Assembly, the College Coordinating Committee, the Academic Senate, the Curriculum Review Committee, the Academic Standards and Appeals Committee, and the Student Life Committee. Examples that committees are heard are provided. (Self-Study, Standard 4, Page 34).

Non-binding Suggestions for Improvement:

1. SCC has identified three recommendations that are reflective and appropriate. (Self-Study, Standard 4, page 35). It is also suggested that the Board clarifies the presidential evaluation procedure, including establishing a calendar and confidential assessment tools.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

**The visitors' judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with the standard.**

**STANDARD 5: ADMINISTRATION**

*The Institution's administrative structure and services facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement and support the institution's organization*

**Standard 5, Summary of Evidence and Findings: In the evaluation team's judgement, Salem Community College meets Standard 5.**

- College President - As illustrated in the governance chart, Figure 4.1, the College President, appointed by the Board, serves as the ultimate connection between the Board of Trustees and the rest of the College. (Self-Study, Standard 5, Page 33).

- With the arrival of Dr. Michael R. Gorman in August 2015 as the College's eighth President, many deliberate procedural and philosophical changes have been implemented or planned. These changes build on the solid foundation, set by both President Contini and President Baillie, to meet the mission of the College and continue to move the College forward. At the November 2015 College Assembly, Dr. Gorman presented his "First 100 Days" report (Appendix A1) to the entire College community. (Introductory Addendum to the Salem Community College Self-Study, Page 1 & Appendix A1)
- College Coordinating Committee - The College Coordinating Committee is responsible for facilitating the upward and downward flow of information to the College community regarding the status and final disposition of governance issues. The College Coordinating Committee represents all constituencies on campus and is made up of the committee chairs representing the four governance committees and the Deans of Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management. (Self-Study, Standard 4, Page 34)
- The Leadership Cabinet has been reconfigured to better represent the bottom-up leadership philosophy. To improve information sharing throughout campus, the Board of Trustee meeting agendas, minutes, and College policies are now accessible online to all College constituents. Additionally, a bi-weekly newsletter of campus happenings (Campus Chronicles, Exhibit A.1) and a monthly personal communication from the President (Sojourns, Exhibit A.2) are electronically sent to all faculty and staff. (Introductory Addendum to the Salem Community College Self-Study, Page 2 & Exhibits A.1 & A.2)
- Qualified Administrative Staff - The College recruits, hires and promotes administrative staff (executive team, executive staff, professional staff, and administrative staff) who are focused on meeting the mission and goals of the College. The President, in consultation with the Core Executive Team, aligns all staffing decisions to directly carry out the core mission of the College. Specifically, the President and Core Executive Team assess the staffing within each department, determine which areas are key to carry out the core mission of the College and which are not, and acts to outsource positions that do not directly impact the successful implementation of the mission. Currently, areas outsourced include custodial and cleaning services, purchasing, payroll, and grounds maintenance. (Self-Study, Standard 5, Page 38 & Table 5.1)
- Additionally, with the adoption of TK20 and its student survey component, leadership decided to postpone administering the Student Questionnaire on Instruction (College Student Survey/CSS), which is an external contracted survey. The current plan is to utilize the survey component in TK20 to customize instructional-centered questions during the spring

2016 semester to assess the quality of the classroom experience. (Introductory Addendum to the Salem Community College Self-Study, Page 5)

- Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely (SMART) action plans will be incorporated for each specific goal within the strategic plan. These plans will provide a clear pathway to achieve the strategic priorities. The framework for the SMART action plans is illustrated in Figure A-2. College leaders employed this model in developing the SMART action plans for their specific goals within the strategic plan. Initial SMART action plans were submitted to the President in December 2015. (Introductory Addendum to the Salem Community College Self-Study, Page 5 & Figure A-2)

Significant Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

- President Gorman's 100 Day Report

Non-binding Suggestions for Improvement:

1. Identify and implement improved communication practices to more widely and rapidly disseminate changes to organizational structure and position responsibilities.
2. Enhance the formalized orientation/mentoring process for new employees and improve employee retention efforts.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

**The visitors' judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with the standard.**

**STANDARD 6: INTEGRITY**

*In the conduct of its programs and activities involving the public and the constituencies it serves, the institution demonstrates adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for academic and intellectual freedom. Characteristic of Excellence: Standard 6: Integrity*

**Summary of Evidence and Findings: In the evaluation team's judgement, Salem Community College meets Standard 6.**

- Salem Community College maintains an electronic catalog and makes archived catalogs available on the college website from academic year 2006 to the present. (SCC website)

- The College demonstrates ethical practices in policies such as the faculty academic freedom and rights policy and faculty patent and copyright policy, Diversity Statement, and student code of conduct. (Faculty Association Collective Agreement; Student Handbook)
- Student grievance policies and procedures are published in the Student Handbook and the college strives to be consistent and equitable in its admissions policies and treatment of students. (Student Handbook)
- The College policies and procedures regarding employees are outlined in the Administrative Staff Guidelines, Faculty Association Collective Agreement, Faculty Handbook and Employee Code of Ethics and create fair hiring, evaluation and dismissal practices.
- The updated Employee Code of Ethics demonstrates the Colleges' commitment to the avoidance of conflict of interest, and ongoing assessment of institutional integrity. (Self-Study, Standard 6, Page 17; Code of Ethics)
- The College strives to be accurate in all of its electronic and print publications and information on MSCHE annual data reporting, licensure pass rates, and institutional assessment data and are made available on the college website. (SCC website)

Significant Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices: None

Non-binding Suggestions for Improvement:

1. We strongly suggest the College determine the number of course offerings linked to specific programs held at the Samuel H. Jones Glass Education Center and file any necessary forms with MSCHE related to substantive change if necessary.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

**The visitors' judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with the standard.**



## STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

*The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.*

### **Summary of Evidence and Findings: In the evaluation team's judgement, Salem Community College meets Standard 7.**

- Evidence exists that Salem Community College (SCC) has developed a sustainable approach to assessing its performance as it relates to the college's support for "the vision and mission of the College by assessing the strategic plan, and administrative and student clearing outcomes to ensure continual improvement." (Self-Study, Standard 7, Page 94)
- There is evidence that the College provides professional development opportunities and resources for faculty and staff to learn how to assess institutional effectiveness and how to use the data. "Four times per academic year, the College uses professional development time to focus on such items as General Education and Academic Program level assessment plan development, data analysis and continual improvement discussions with faculty. (Self-Study, Standard 7, Page 96 & Standard 14, Page 107, Table 14.1)
- The College has provided technological and financial support for institutional assessment as evidenced by the purchase and implementation of three new database systems to improve the accuracy, retrieval, and utilization of data campus-wide. In the last six years the College has implemented the following systems: Dynamics Great Plains, PowerFAids and ADP Workforce Now. (Self-Study, Standard 7, Page 95)
- All Academic Programs undergo a comprehensive program review every five years. Academic programs are also measured by an annual assessment of academic program outcomes. "Over the past ten years, the College has developed and implemented a systematic and sustainable, faculty driven process of assessment that began as part of the 2005 Middle States Self-Study. Currently the assessment process has progressed to a point that the development of assessment tools and collection of data has become institutionalized and sustained with strong faculty ownership." (Self-Study, Standard 7, Page 98)
- There is evidence that assessment results are shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and used in institutional planning, resource allocation and renewal to improve and gain efficiencies in programs, services and processes including activities specific to the institution's mission. "At the end of each quarter, IRP&E compiles completed action

statements from each area to show the progress made toward each tactical objective.” The Office of IRP&E shares this information with the President and the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis and with faculty and staff biannually at Opening Sessions each fall and spring semester. The College’s public website includes the mission and goals as does the SCC Student handbook. (Self-Study, Standard 1, Pages 16 & 18)

- There is evidence that the College conducts periodic evaluation of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the institution’s assessment process. A faculty and staff survey conducted in fall 2013 indicated “that nearly 80% of faculty and staff are aware of the mission statement. Most responded that they learned of the mission through the College website and at College meetings. Students, on the other hand, still express a lack of awareness of the College mission.” (Self-Study, Standard 1, Page 16)
- The SCC College Website (Exhibit 1.1) emphasizes “a more organized layout, improving usability for different audiences: prospective students, current students, faculty/staff, visitors and the community. The website includes the current strategic plan, changes to mission and vision statements, any federally mandated information as well as information regarding Middle States accreditation. Information pertaining to institution-wide assessment, including graduation, retention certification and licensing pass rates, tuition and fees, financial aid, health and safety, student outcomes, and gainful employment are available on the SCC College Website, under Student Consumer Information and on College Navigator. The College website also provides access to both the Self-Service Portal and SCC Catalog-Handbook.” (Self-Study, Standard 6, Page 43, Exhibit 1.1, Exhibit 1.2, Exhibit 1.7)
- There is evidence that the College used the results of assessment for institutional renewal when developing their latest Strategic Plan and considering how to proceed with the maintenance, and continued support of its academic programs and services. “As the College began planning for its next strategic plan, the environment changed and SCC was forced to confront a smaller enrollment, a dwindling reserve and fewer available resources. As a result, the Strategic Planning committee was charged by President Baillie with identifying the most important issues facing the College. Committee members were provided with the results of the environmental scan and asked to review various research articles to inform their understanding of the issues.” (Self-Study, Standard 1, Page 17, Figure 1.1 - Unappropriated and Appropriated Unrestricted Reserve Account Summary)
- There is evidence “the College uses several different methods to assess the success of the strategic plan. First the College uses a set of peer rankings and benchmark metrics that are tied to state and national data. For instance, the College uses the Post-Secondary Education

Data System (IPEDS) Data Feedback Report and Peer Ranking Analyses Tool to compare itself to a group of comparable institutions. The tool provides valuable peer comparisons on institutional characteristics, retention, graduation, and transfer rates, as well as human resources and finances.” (Self-Study, Standard 7, Page 97)

- To measure the success of administrative outcome goals, “the College uses both a formal and ad hoc process of administrative unit assessment.” Although the framework for this process has evolved and is currently in place in the IEP, an institutional mechanism and accountability process is needed for reporting and communicating administrative outcomes results annually along with professional development for all divisions. (Self-Study, Standard 7, Page 97)

Significant Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices: None

Non-binding Suggestions for Improvement: None

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the College develop an institutional mechanism and accountability process to address the need to improve administrative unit assessment that includes campus wide departmental functional area reviews.

Requirements: None

**The visitors’ judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with the standard.**

## **STANDARD 8: STUDENT ADMISSIONS AND RETENTION**

*The institution seeks to admit students whose interests, goals, and abilities are congruent with its mission and seeks to retain them through the pursuit of the students’ educational goals.*

**Summary of Evidence and Findings: In the evaluation team’s judgement, Salem Community College meets Standard 8.**

- SCC’s admissions policies and processes are well defined under the Admissions Policies on their website. Further detailed information regarding specific types of students (e.g. new, returning, readmitted and international) are also described. (2015-16 Catalog Page 12)

- SCC has done good work linking strategic priorities to drive decision making and for allocating resources—for example, in AY 2013-2014, the college funded the redesign for all developmental math courses and hired a Director of Retention.
- Support services are detailed for access. (2015-16 Catalog, Page 24 and SCC website)
- All programs and their descriptions are on the college website, with Selective-Admissions Programs are detailed in the Catalog. Placement testing is in both catalog and website under Admissions (Pages 16 & 17 of the Catalog and SCC website).
- Each SCC degree program has stated on their program sheets the following: “upon successfully completing this program, students should be able to...”
- Student Consumer Information is provided. (e.g. pass rate for programs, retention, graduation, and transfer information) (SCC website)
- Under Prospective Students on the website—Financial Aid is well defined with various links to FAFSA, scholarships, and a variety of federal and state grants. (Catalog, Pages 25-31 and SCC website)
- Transfer information is located in catalog. SCC participates in NJ Transfer a website that helps students transfer community college courses and programs within the state of NJ. Additionally, SCC has aligned its curriculum to specific programs at the 4-year colleges where our students most often transfer. (Catalog, Page 20)
- SCC’s Student Life Committee is continuing to do good work with activities around campus.
- SCC has done good work with partnering with colleges and universities for transferring purposes. Participating in the NJ Transfer should greatly benefit SCC students.
- The Student Life Committee needs to be commended for their Pop-Up Program—engaging the whole college community.

Significant Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices: None

Non-binding Suggestions for Improvement:

1. Create a Retention Plan.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

**The visitors' judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with the standard.**

## **STANDARD 9: STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

*The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution's goals for students.*

**Summary of Evidence and Findings: In the evaluation team's judgement, Salem Community College meets Standard Nine.**

- SCC's Catalog, in a variety of places, states services that are available. For example, academic advising and career advising, tutoring, and accommodations for students with disabilities. Tutoring is available in one-on-one and walk in formats. (Catalog, Page 24 and SCC website)
- Many services are primarily aimed at the entering students. Throughout the first year, students benefit from Instructional Aides in developmental and gateway courses. Students have access to an Academic Support Center and Academic and Intrusive Advising. (Self-Study, Page 53).
- In AY 2014-15, SCC opened a Career Center with a full-time director. The Center provides career advising to prospective students and their parents about the benefits of SCC's career and technical programs and provides a space on campus where students can access career information, and internship and job opportunities and access career software. (Self-Study, Page 59)
- Tutoring Lab is staffed with success coaches and tutors. As stated in Standard 8, a Director of Retention was hired.
- In Spring 2014, the College hired additional part-time tutors and began increasing its presence on campus, increasing signage and using instructional aides to promote and encourage students to use the resources. Additionally, after utilizing data demonstrating its success and failures, the College revised its Academic Alert process. In spring 2014,

Enrollment Management and Academic Affairs jointly implemented a new academic alert system and worked to encourage all instructors (full-time and part-time) to use the new system. (Self-Study, Page 55).

- A brief Academic Advising excerpt is located in the catalog—with the website containing additional information. The advisement center is staffed by two full time and several part-time college advisors. In addition, several staff members in Enrollment Management devote part of their time each week serving as college advisors. Additional support for specialized populations comes from Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) coordinators, and the LDT/504 coordinator. (Self-Study, Page 56, Catalog Page 35 and SCC website)
- The College's athletics program has been eliminated. To continue to provide recreational services, the College offers open-gym time. This new program allows students to use the indoor track for walking and running, and the court for basketball.
- The process for student complaints and/or grievances is detailed in the Catalog as well as on the website under Student Life. (Self-Study, Page 57)
- Student records are maintained in the Student Affairs file room and in electronic format in PowerCampus. (Self-Study, Page 58)
- FERPA information can be found in the Catalog. Students are informed of the law and complete the FERPA forms in Enrollment Management department. All forms/information are forwarded to the Manager of Academic Programs and uploaded onto PowerCampus. (Self-Study, Page 139)
- Based off results from past orientation programs, SCC has modified their New Student Packet. SCC hopes to gather more data through the orientation program.
- SCC has done a good job with using data—for example: developmental English now offers an accelerated course to help students get through their developmental course work in a more efficient manner. An additional example: updated advising process has resulted in quality improvements noted by current and graduating students. For the most recent, 2014-2015 Graduating Student Survey Results, (Exhibit 7.3) 97% of graduates (n=219) met with a faculty advisor and 75% of these students rated the quality of advising to be excellent to good (up from 68% in 2014).

- SCC previously had records of student complaints or grievances in various departments. Currently, SCC has a repository in the Office of Academic Affairs.

Significant Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

- SCC has done a good job with addressing developmental and gateway courses—adding appropriate resources where necessary. Additionally, SCC has showed great progress with utilizing data to help drive decisions (e.g. orientation and developmental English).
- The academic support lab has integrated data based assessment to monitor student usage and academic success, and connect with the faculty to use intrusive student success strategies, as evidenced by an overall retention rate of the general student population for the previous year which is 78%. The retention rate of students served by the academic support lab is 8% higher than the College average.

Non-binding Suggestions for Improvement:

1. SCC is now housing student complaints or grievances in the Office of Academic Affairs. We suggest that SCC continue with this course of action and to continually improve upon the process.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

**The visitors' judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with the standard**  
**STANDARD 10: FACULTY**

*The institution's instructional, research, and service programs are devised, developed, monitored, and supported by qualified professionals.*

**Summary of Evidence and Findings: In the evaluation team's judgement, Salem Community College meets Standard 10.**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the evaluation team developed the following conclusions relative to the standard:

- Faculty are appropriately prepared and qualified for the positions they hold, and the standards and procedures for all faculty such as appointment, promotion, tenure, grievance, discipline and dismissal are outlined in the Salem Community College Faculty Association Collective Agreement, with roles and responsibilities clearly defined in the Faculty Handbook 2015-16.
- Newly hired full-time and part-time faculty attend an orientation to the College and their roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated in College policies and publications.
- The College encourages informal mentoring between full-time faculty and adjuncts regarding course design and best practices.
- The institution encourages excellence in teaching through ongoing faculty self-evaluation, class observations, and student evaluations as outlined in the Faculty Association Collective Agreement. Additionally the administration awards an annual Academic Excellence Award for faculty and a National Institute for Staff and Institutional Development award for staff. Finally, although a small percentage of faculty actively participate, the College sponsors professional development workshops and invests in faculty development by offering reimbursement for graduate level courses.
- Faculty play a substantial role in college governance as indicated in their membership on governance committees such as the Academic Program Review Committee, the Outcomes Assessment Committee, and the Curriculum Review Committees. Adjunct faculty are invited to participate in curriculum and assessment processes.
- Criteria for the appointment, supervision, and review of teaching effectiveness for part-time faculty are consistent with the expectations for full-time faculty.
- The College adheres to the principles of academic freedom as described in the Faculty Association Collective Agreement.

Significant Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices: None

Non-binding Suggestions for Improvement:

1. Given the ratio of full-time faculty to adjunct instructors, it is suggested that the College implements a plan to encourage faculty excellence as evidenced by participation in professional development activities and graduate level courses for both full-time and part-time faculty.



2. Given the significant amount of adjuncts hired to teach core courses, the College should consider creating a more formal support network that includes formal mentoring.
3. Currently part-time faculty are observed and reviewed by the Outcomes Assessment Coordinator. The College should consider developing a formal mechanism for feedback to the Associate and Assistant Deans regarding the outcomes of adjunct evaluations.
4. The College makes an effort to attract, hire, and retain a diverse faculty that is representative of their student population and should continue to strive to improve their diversity profile.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

**The visitors' judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with the standard**

#### **STANDARD 11: EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS**

*The institution's educational offerings display academic content, rigor, and coherence appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings.*

**Summary of Evidence and Findings: In the evaluation team's judgement, Salem Community College meets Standard 11.**

- Salem Community College offers 24 A.A., A.S. and A.F.A. transfer programs, as well as 13 A.A.S. and 13 certificate career programs which support the college mission to "provide affordable, quality higher education for college transfer and workforce development". (Self-Study, Standard 11, Page 67, SCC website)
- All degree programs have clearly articulated program pathways that indicate the educational content, including appropriate general education requirements and program specific requirements and electives. (SCC website, SCC catalog)
- Curriculum development for new programs follows a well-delineated process that is aligned with the New Jersey state requirements and overseen by the Curriculum Review

Committee. The CRC reviews all program revisions and proposals to ensure that the course and program student learning outcomes are appropriate and of sufficient rigor. Articulation agreements with several public and private 4 year institutions also serve to validate the content and rigor of the college's academic programs. (Self-Study, Standard 8, Page 51, Self-Study, Standard 11, Pages 70 & 71)

- The learning outcomes and assessment measures for all courses are the same regardless of the mode of delivery to ensure that hybrid, accelerated, online and independent study courses are of comparable content and rigor. (Self-Study, Standard 11, Page 71)
- Salem Community College collaborates with several other community colleges to offer joint degrees. This allows them, while a small institution, to offer a greater variety of programs to their local community. (Self-Study, Standard 11, Page 67)
- The college has reviewed and revised its academic advisement processes to ensure that students can successfully reach their academic goals in a timely manner. Initiatives such as intrusive advising and faculty professional development have improved student perceptions of the advisement process. (Self-Study, Standard 8, Page 56)
- The Learning Resources available to students are appropriate to support the programs at the college. Information Literacy is a learning outcome in every program at Salem Community College, and faculty and librarians are collaborating to develop an effective process to assess information literacy skills. (Self-Study, Standard 11, Page 74)
- Salem Community College has transfer credit policies that are clearly articulated, published, and fairly administered. (Self-Study, Standard 11, Page 75, Catalog)
- A comprehensive Academic Review Process (APR) is used to inform planning and resource allocation decisions while strengthening the content and delivery of curriculum. The APR is conducted by faculty, administration, independent consultants, and community and transfer college representatives, and evaluates several dimension of the program efficacy, including enrollment and retention, transfer and employment data, and curriculum design. (Self-Study, Standard 11, Pages 72 & 73, SLOA website)
- SCC has instituted significant changes to the Nursing A.S. program, including a revised competency-based curriculum; simulation equipment in the Nursing Lab to improve nursing skills; the use of a new learning / assessment module; and additional full-time Nursing faculty. These changes will address the issues cited when the Accreditation Commission for Education

in Nursing (ACEN) placed SCC's Nursing program on warning, and will serve to improve the learning outcomes and nursing skills of the students. (Self-Study, Standard 11, Page 73)

- The Self-Study noted that course and program assessment is not conducted consistently in programs and courses that are low enrolled or taught solely by adjunct faculty. (Self-Study, Standard 11, Page 71)
- The instructional facilities and equipment at SCC are appropriate to support the college's educational programs. The Samuel H. Jones Glass Education Center is a state-of-the-art studio and lab that supports a Glass Art and unique Scientific Glass Technology program. (SCC website)
- Student learning outcomes assessment at the course and program level provides evidence that the program and course learning goals are being met. "Continuing the Loop" is an integral part of all student learning assessment and ensures that assessment results are used to improve teaching and learning. (SLOA Handbook; SLOA website)

Significant Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices: None

Non-binding Suggestions for Improvement: None

Recommendations:

1. SCC has done exemplary work with program review, however, the College should develop a sustainable strategy to maintain the consistent review of program curriculum and courses that are low enrolled or taught solely by adjunct faculty.

Requirements: None

**The visitors' judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with the standard.**

## **STANDARD 12: GENERAL EDUCATION**

*The institutions curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.*

**Summary of Evidence and Findings: In the evaluation team's judgement, Salem Community College meets Standard 12.**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the evaluation team developed the following conclusions relative to the standard:

- The College's general education program conforms to the seven core course categories designated by the New Jersey Administrative Code Title 9A, is of sufficient scope to enhance students' ability to communicate effectively and think analytically, critically, and creatively.
- As evidenced in Table 12.1: General Education Course/Credit Distribution for Degrees/Certificates, the courses offered within the general education requirements are sufficient in number to ensure students meet degree requirements with their degree timeline and are well aligned with the College's mission, philosophy, and values and are embedded in each program across the College.
- Data collected from the "continuing the loop" initiative demonstrates that institutional requirements assure that upon degree completion students are proficient in oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, and technological competency appropriate to the disciplines and programs offered by the College. Table 12.2 demonstrates that in all categories students are meeting or exceeding benchmarks for the general education learning goals.
- General education requirements are clearly and accurately described in the matrix of General Education Learning Goals and Objectives. (2015-16 College Catalog, Page 46)
- The College maintains an excellent assessment of the general education outcomes and uses the results to improve the curriculum. It is clear from the process detailed in the self-study report (pgs. 78-80) that the College's Phase V: Continuing the Loop-Using Assessment Data to Improve Teaching and Learning is used to improve college wide practices and policies, and that the process itself has evolved based on the data generated.

**Significant Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

- The team commends the College's Continuing the Loop assessment strategy for general education outcomes. The lead faculty have generated an abundance of assessment data

which informs decision making and it is clear that the data are used to inform the work of the Curriculum Review and Academic Program Review Committees.

Non-binding Suggestions for Improvement: None

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

**The visitors' judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with the standard.**

### **STANDARD 13: RELATED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

*The institution's programs or activities that are characterized by particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship meet appropriate standards.*

**Summary of Evidence and Findings: In the evaluation team's judgement, Salem Community College meets Standard 13.**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the evaluation team developed the following conclusions relative to the standard:

#### *Basic Skills:*

- Beginning the spring 2013 term, College faculty and staff embarked on the "improve student success" initiative focused on better identification of underprepared students, removing the barriers for at-risk students and to target programs and services to help them succeed. The four components of this initiative include revisions in the placement of underprepared students; the development of compressed formats in developmental English; the revision of developmental math courses that include instructional software; and the re-introduction of instructional aides in developmental and first term English and math courses. All revisions were based on data generated through the assessment system and a review of recent best practices literature.
- As a result of the aforementioned "improve student success" initiative, students are assessed for developmental needs in English utilizing high school GPA (3.0) and in Math based on either the Accuplacer test or high school GPA which has resulted in improved outcomes and retention.

- Ongoing assessment of the revisions of the developmental math courses to include instructional software has resulted in the termination of the pilot program. The use of MyMathLab in developmental and first year Math courses was recently eliminated resulting in cost savings for both students and the College.

*Certificate Programs:*

- The College offers 6 certificate programs and 5 career certificate programs that are consistent with the institutional mission, have clearly articulated program and learning goals, and are well integrated into the same student learning outcomes assessment process as the associate degree programs.
- All certificate program learning goals are consistent with professional standards and national criteria. Academic oversight assures the transferability of appropriate courses. All certificates are published on the College website and in the College catalog.

*Experiential Learning:*

- The College recognizes knowledge and skills obtained outside of the traditional higher education classroom. Students are awarded credit for educational experiences earned in military training through ACE; for training sponsored by non-collegiate organizations or apprenticeship education with the NJ PLACE program (up to 25 credits) and through the prior learning assessment institute at Thomas Edison State College. Additionally, the College accepts Advanced Placement scores, ACE and CLEP assessments and offers credit by exam opportunities for students.
- A review of the College catalog, the College website, and the standards used by the evaluators of experiential learning indicates that the College publishes policies and procedures in the catalog and on the website concerning the award of credit that describes the type of prior learning that will be considered, the level and amount of credit available and any program restrictions as applicable.

*Non-Credit Offerings:*

- SCC Energy Institute (Page 89)
- WE
- ESL/GED

*Other Instructional Sites:*

- Samuel H. Jones Glass Education Center

*Distance Education:*

- Leveraging data generated since summer, 2005, the College has used this data well to improve online course offerings and to support faculty and students using this learning modality. Employing a full time Instructional Technologist is evidence of the SCC's commitment to online instruction.
- Since 2009/10, the College has almost doubled the number of online course sections offered (Self-Study, Page 91, Table 13.7) and transitioned to the Canvas Learning Management System in May, 2013. SCC currently offers online courses that are directly affiliated with the College's academic programs and meets the same educational goals as face-to-face classroom coursework and hybrid coursework.
- All credit-bearing courses offered through distance learning modalities verify student identity through a secure login and passcode system that is sufficiently different from the system used by students to access student online services. The College also requires students to complete one meaningful course activity (e.g. tests, quizzes, course assignment) either at the College or an approved test center as additional verification of student identity.
- Students are notified about appropriate hardware, access to technology, and technological skills and competencies needed to succeed in online courses prior to enrollment.
- The College provides adequate support for students taking online courses which mirrors the types of support services provided to all students.
- The success rate of students taking online courses is comparable to students taking the same course in the traditional classroom environment as noted in the "Report on Distance Learning at Salem Community College, July, 2014."
- The College uses the Quality Matters Rubric for assessing the quality of distance learning courses demonstrating best practices is the assessment of online courses.

Significant Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

- The College is commended for using research and data to redesign developmental English and Math courses along with the re-instatement of instructional aides to support student placement, success and retention. The "improve student success" initiative should be replicated for other programs at the college.

Non-binding Suggestions for Improvement:

1. As the College seeks to increase online course sections, attention should be paid regarding course evaluation and to the quality and consistency of instruction.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

**The visitors' judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with the standard.**

**STANDARD 14: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING**

*Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.*

**Summary of Evidence and Findings: In the evaluation team's judgement, Salem Community College meets Standard 14.**

- Salem Community College has clearly articulated student learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional level. Course, program and general education goals are available to current and prospective students on the college website, and in the college catalog, course syllabi, and other appropriate documents. (SCC website)
- The SLOA Handbook outlines the structure and processes for student learning assessment at the course, program and institutional level; sets the schedule for each of the assessment processes in the annual assessment cycle; and provides guidance for implementing effective student learning assessment. (SLOA Handbook)
- Curriculum maps and other documents clearly indicate the manner in which general education, program and course learning outcomes are integrated. (SLOA Website)
- Multiple assessment measures provide evidence that students are achieving institutional, program and course learning outcomes. (SLOA Website)
- Salem Community College has provided resources appropriate for student learning assessment and the Office of Institutional Research Planning and Effectiveness provides



direction, data and support for student learning assessment activities. (Self-Study, Standard 14, Page 106)

- In order to create a culture of assessment across campus, the College has placed high priority on professional development activities that support faculty understanding and participation in the assessment of student learning. (Self-Study, Standard 14, Page 107)
- The College has put into place a sustainable Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP) that addresses the strategic plan goal to “Integrate a transparent process of assessment to communicate expectations for excellence and quality of educational outcomes for all students.” Implementation of the IEP has resulted in strengthened student outcomes assessment and program changes that serve to improve teaching and learning. (2010-2012 Strategic Plan—Final Progress Report)
- Full-time faculty are fully engaged in and committed to assessment of student learning through the Outcomes Assessment Committee, the Curriculum Review committee, and the assessment activities conducted throughout the academic year. Initiatives undertaken to involve part-time faculty in student learning assessment have increased participation in these activities, and the ratio of part-time to full-time faculty makes it important that these initiatives continue and expand. (Self-Study, Standard 14, Pages 106 & 107)
- The Outcomes Assessment Committee provides numerous opportunities for professional development in assessment to educate faculty on effective assessment practices. (Outcomes Assessment Committee Annual Report)
- The assessment tools and processes are reviewed and revised to insure that the assessment data is meaningful and accurate. (SLOA Website)
- The use of assessment data to improve teaching, learning and the assessment process is emphasized in the Student Learning Assessment Cycle, and “Continuing the Loop” is an important part of every level of student learning assessment. There is evidence that assessment results are being used for improvement. (Self-Study, Standard 14, Page 105)
- Student learning outcomes assessment is not fully implemented across all programs or general education goals. Programs with less than 15 students enrolled do not often have program goals assessed; and general education competencies that are not taught by full-time faculty are also sometimes not assessed. (Self-Study, Standard 14, Page 110)

Significant Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

- The SLOA Handbook is a comprehensive guide for implementing effective student learning assessment.

Non-binding Suggestions for Improvement: None

Recommendations:

1. Develop strategies to improve engagement of part-time faculty in assessment activities in order to fully implement and communicate student learning assessment across all courses and programs.

Requirements: None

**The visitors' judgment is that, at this time, the institution is in compliance with the standard.**

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The team again thanks the institution, and we hope that the institution will be open to the ideas contained in this report, all of which are being offered in the spirit of collegiality and peer review. As a reminder, the next steps in the evaluation process are as follows:

- The institution replies to the team report in a written response addressed to the Commission;
- The team chair submits a confidential brief to the Commission, summarizing the team report and conveying the team's proposal for accreditation action;
- The Commission Staff and the Commission's Committee on Evaluation Reports carefully review the institutional self-study document, the evaluation team report, the institution's formal response, and the chair's brief to formulate a proposed action to the Commission; and,
- The full Commission, after considering information gained in the preceding steps, takes formal accreditation action and notifies the institution.