

# Iowa State Board of Education

## Executive Summary

March 20, 2025



**Agenda Item:** Hawkeye Community College Interim Accreditation Report

**State Board Priority:** Goal 4

**State Board Role/Authority:** Iowa Code section 260C.47(3) grants authority to the State Board of Education to determine whether the programs of a community college shall remain accredited.

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**Attachments:** One

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the State Board grant continued accreditation for Hawkeye Community College (HCC). A state comprehensive visit will be conducted in the academic year 2029-2030.

**Background:** Attached is a report of the evaluation of HCC for continued state accreditation as an associate degree-granting institution. The Iowa Department of Education conducted the interview portion of the evaluation on November 13-14, 2024. This report reflects the Department team's observations and determinations made

during HCC's interim visit. As mandated by Iowa Code section 260C.47, the accreditation team, including two external peer reviewers, assessed HCC's compliance with eight Iowa State Accreditation Standards via a structured process of document review and interviews. The team also reviewed the most recent Higher Learning Commission (HLC) institutional accreditation report to ensure that any findings have been addressed. Iowa's process has been designed to complement rather than duplicate the HLC accreditation process.



Department of Education

# Accreditation Report Interim State Evaluation

Hawkeye Community College  
November 13-14, 2024

Fiscal Year 2025

State of Iowa  
 Department of Education  
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## Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this review was a scheduled accreditation evaluation of Hawkeye Community College (HCC) by the Iowa Department of Education (Department) as mandated by Iowa Code section 260C.47.

## Institutional Overview

### College History

Hawkeye Community College (HCC) is a not-for-profit, publicly supported institution governed by an elected Board of nine trustees. The college, founded in 1965, was originally named Hawkeye Institute of Technology and the new institute was focused on providing vocational-technical training for the northeast region of Iowa. Hawkeye gained national recognition as a leader in technical education, but by the mid-1980s sweeping economic and structural changes resulted in a national recession that had a profound and prolonged impact on Iowa's economy. The local industrial workforce was downsized, and individuals and families left the state to find work elsewhere. By the end of the decade, enrollment at the college began to decline sharply and the Board of Trustees commissioned a community study to determine support for an expansion of the college's mission to include arts and sciences transfer components. The study results demonstrated strong support for a change in mission. The college sought and received approval for the mission change from the Iowa State Department of Education in 1992. Hawkeye Institute of Technology became the last community college in Iowa to embrace the mission of a comprehensive community college.

Since Hawkeye opened its doors in 1966, it has focused on meeting the needs of the community, providing quality, affordable training for learners at all stages of life. Today, HCC serves more than 25,000 individuals and awards almost 1,500 diplomas and degrees annually. Hawkeye has a community impact of \$106 million and 1,400 jobs. Since 1966, the college has graduated more than 50,000 students, with 94 percent staying in Iowa.

### Institutional Profile

Today, HCC ranks as the sixth largest community college in Iowa with 6,495 students enrolled in credit programming. The college offers more than 70 credit technical programs and transfer education in face-to-face, accelerated, hybrid and online learning formats, including offering a full Associate of Arts degree online. The college ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in online student enrollment. Classes for high school students offer early college credit. The college ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the percentage of students concurrently enrolled in high school (up from 12<sup>th</sup> at the last visit). Credit awards include certificates, diplomas, Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Arts and Associate of Applied Science degrees. The college ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in credit degrees awarded and 8<sup>th</sup> in success rate, which is a combination of transfer plus graduation. In addition, the college offers adult basic education (ABE), high school equivalency diplomas (HiSET), high school credit awards through an adult high school program, English Language Learner (ELL) classes and U.S. citizenship preparation. The college ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in non-credit student enrollment and 2<sup>nd</sup> in non-credit contact hours.

The Business and Community Education (BCE) division offers credit and non-credit educational offerings distinguished by the nature of the business-college contract process that specifies method of delivery, time and location as well as professional certifications and licenses. Last year, BCE served over 80 businesses and provided educational opportunities to nearly 18,000 students.

In 2015, the College launched intercollegiate athletics with a strategic initiative to have 13 programs implemented by the fall of 2019. Today, program offerings include: sports shooting, men's and women's soccer, men's and women's cross country, men's and women's track and field, men's golf, women's volleyball, men's and women's bowling, dance and Esports. The College is a member of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and the Iowa Community College Athletic Conference (ICCAC), competing at a Division II level.

The service district includes all or parts of ten counties located in a 2,742 square-mile area of northeast Iowa. Nine of ten counties are classified as rural, and the region has a population of around 205,000. The main campus is situated on 320 acres in Waterloo, Iowa, and includes 13 major classroom and administrative buildings, including a farm, its agricultural buildings and 97 acres adjacent to the College.

In addition, the College also has eight learning centers located in urban and rural settings throughout its ten-county service area that offer a variety of educational and support services to individuals of all ages. Other key resources for students include the following: full-service health clinic, wellness center, student activity center/cafeteria, childcare center, career placement center, library and academic support and tutoring lab.

*Note: Information in this section was obtained from the HCC website and 2023 HCC Community College Profile Report.*

## Visit Overview

Staff from the Department's Bureau of Community Colleges performed an interim accreditation review and site visit of HCC on November 13-14, 2024. During the visit, the accreditation team was impressed with many aspects of the institution. The college maintains a strong focus on student support which has resulted in higher graduation and retention rates. This was evident in advising relationships with students, faculty praising the work of support services and students indicating their appreciation for the support they had received. Students also indicated the college takes their safety and security seriously through responsive security staff, required safety training sessions and content presented in the college experience class related to the annual campus safety report. Collaboration between credit, non-credit and student support services is a hallmark of the college's approach to student success. The longevity of faculty and staff indicates a general sense of pride and commitment to the college. College leadership has also focused on allocating resources to upgrading facilities to improve student learning and access to current technology.

## Assurance Summary State Standards

At HCC's last comprehensive state accreditation visit in 2020, the college had one finding in the area of special needs related to the annual and continuous nondiscrimination statements. The Department team found that the college has addressed the finding from 2020, however additional issues related to the nondiscrimination statements were found during this accreditation visit. Recommendations are identified in the Special Needs section below.

## Compliance with Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Criteria

The Department accreditation team reviewed the most recent HLC report and information available at the time of this evaluation. HCC's June 2021 Mid-Cycle Review generated a positive report with no concerns. The report recognized HCC had made "considerable progress" toward effective assessment of student learning since submitting a 2019 interim report on the core component. The report also noted that under the new president's leadership, the college had revised its mission and vision statements, and had developed a new strategic plan through engaging internal and external stakeholders. The HLC review team made two recommendations in the areas of co-curricular assessment and linking assessment processes with planning and resource allocation processes. The college identified co-curricular assessment as its Quality Initiative, which HLC approved in 2024. The college's next Reaffirmation of Accreditation is during the 2026-2027 cycle.

**Finding:** No accreditation compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

## Faculty Qualifications

All community college-employed instructors who are under contract as of July 1, 2011, who teach in career and technical education (CTE) or arts and sciences (including adjuncts) are required to meet minimum faculty standards (Iowa Code, Section 260C.48).

To ensure compliance with the standard, the Department team provided HCC a random list of 25 faculty members who taught credit courses the previous year. The college submitted documentation of qualifications for these faculty, including supporting documentation such as college transcripts, employment applications, to illustrate related work experience and third-party licensure/certification, if applicable. The Department team examined the files to determine whether the qualifications of each faculty member complied with Iowa Code for the courses they taught during the 2022-2023 academic year.

During the site visit, the Department team met with the vice president of academic affairs, dean of health sciences, dean of industrial technology, dean of business and information technology, interim dean of liberal arts, and executive director of human resources to learn more about the college's faculty qualification review process and to discuss a few concerns raised during the review. The majority of



files showed HCC faculty were properly qualified for the courses being taught, however, in some cases the process for qualifying faculty had been inconsistently applied and documentation of the courses faculty were qualified to teach was incomplete.

**Recommendations:** The Department team **recommends** that when qualifying arts and science faculty for courses for which the individual does not have the required master's degree, the college should document which transcript courses are being used to meet the teaching qualifications for each qualifying discipline and clearly note this on their qualifications form.

**Finding:** In the college's previous accreditation report, it was recommended that the college take some time to review longtime faculty hires to make sure that they meet the qualifications for the courses they teach and document clearly. Based on interviews with academic leadership and HR, the process for accurately documenting faculty qualifications remains inconsistent. Two faculty were determined to be unqualified, with a third faculty member missing transcripts to verify qualifications.

If the college would like to continue using these faculty members to teach these prefix courses, HCC should provide a plan to the Department, on or before November 2025, demonstrating how they plan to get these faculty members adequately qualified for the prefixes they teach.

To verify state standard compliance, the Department team will review, on or before November 2025, an additional 25 randomly selected files to ensure faculty meet teaching qualifications and that faculty qualification documentation is adequate and consistent.

### Faculty Teaching Load

The teaching loads of full-time instructors must not exceed the faculty load limits set forth in Iowa Code. This is the case for CTE instructors, as well as for arts and sciences instructors (Iowa Code section 260C.48).

To confirm compliance with this standard, the Department team reviewed the instructional loads of a random sample of 25 faculty members for whom HCC provided documentation of their AY 22-23 teaching assignments. The college reported that deans monitor faculty load through workload reports as most faculty want to be assigned overload courses. Both the dean and the faculty member acknowledge mutual consent for overload by signing the workload document.

**Finding:** One faculty member was identified as exceeding the state code maximum teaching load of 22 credits hours per semester with 29 credits in the fall and 23 credits in the spring semesters. The college confirmed this assignment has been a consistent practice. Moving forward, the college should ensure all faculty members are teaching below the 22 credit hour per semester maximum limit as outlined in Iowa Code 260C.48.

To verify state standard compliance, the Department team will review, on or before November 2025, an additional 25 randomly selected files to ensure faculty load meets the maximum credit hour teaching load standard.

### Special Needs and Protected Classes

Community colleges shall provide equal access to the full range of program offerings and services including, but not limited to, recruitment, enrollment and placement activities for students with special education needs or protected by state or federal civil rights regulation. Students with disabilities shall be given access to the full range of program offerings at a college through reasonable accommodations (Iowa Administrative Code 281 chapter 24.5(3)), with information regarding how to access such accommodations provided in a disability statement. In addition, community colleges shall have continuous and annual nondiscrimination statements ensuring access to educational programs and employment for state and federally protected classes. This nondiscrimination statement must list all

state and federally protected classes; provide the name/title and contact information of the person(s) designated to coordinate equity, Title IX and Section 504 compliance and provide contact information for the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in Chicago, Illinois. The nondiscrimination and disability statements may be separate or the college may choose to combine them.

The Department team conducted a desk review prior to the onsite visit to review HCC's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and nondiscrimination policies, statements, and practices in marketing and recruitment publications, handbooks, the college catalog, the college website and sample course syllabi. During the site visit, the team reviewed additional documentation and conducted interviews with faculty, students, and staff associated with student special needs and disabilities services to ensure compliance with this standard. While on site, the Department team saw evidence of numerous collegewide efforts to create a welcoming environment for all students, provide accommodations for students with special needs and provide opportunities for underrepresented students in particular programs of study. The Department team commends HCC's commitment to the success of all students. A sample of evidence includes:

- Opening a support center to accommodate student success needs for all students that includes staffing on weekends.
- Adding a Student Care Coordinator position to provide needed student services and social work to students.
- Having a Care Team to resolve faculty-referred student issues related to basic needs such as transportation, gas money and winter clothing.
- Two food pantries for students that are also open to the public.
- Offering supplemental instruction to provide support outside of class time for more difficult courses.
- Providing multiple student supports to increase retention that include "Redtail Leads", mental health counseling services, online tutoring via Brainfuse, improved intentional advising, student scholarships and assistive technology.
- The HCC annual statement includes program links for all CTE programs not only those with program-specific admissions criteria, which is the minimum statement expectation.

During the desk review and site visit, the Department saw improvement in HCC's annual and continuous nondiscrimination notices since the last accreditation visit, with the continuous statement included in most required locations. However, the team did notice the following instances where improvement is still needed in both the annual and continuous nondiscrimination notices:

- The annual statement of nondiscrimination was missing the specific names, titles, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses of the person(s) designated to coordinate Title IX and Section 504 compliance.
- The annual statement was missing content related to the expectation that English language skills are not a barrier to admission and participation in programs.
- The continuous statement was either missing, not prominently placed, or not consistent on the college's website, major publications and student recruiting materials. For example, the statement was missing from spring general invitations, advanced manufacturing information sessions brochure, health career flyer and several print handouts on campus. The veteran's services document had the continuous statement, but the font color made it difficult to read.
- Not all instances of the continuous notice had updated the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Chicago address, which caused inconsistencies. While it is optional to include the OCR contact information, it should be correct and consistent wherever it is published.

The Department team also noted during the site visit that there was confusion among students related to HCC's complaint process. Comments received during interviews indicated inconsistencies and

extended response times in final resolutions to complaints including what, if any, follow-up actions would be taken.

**Recommendations:** During equity visits grievance processes are reviewed closely, so HCC is **strongly recommended** to review the complaint and grievance processes to ensure they are clearly articulated to students and staff and there is a consistent approach to closing the loop on student complaints in a timely manner that includes the result and any needed follow-up actions.

The continuous nondiscrimination statement must be prominent, complete and consistent on the college's website and in major publications, while the annual nondiscrimination statement needs to be complete and published at least on the college's website. Therefore, it is **strongly recommended** that HCC:

- Review all recruitment and written materials provided to students to ensure the continuous notice is included and in a readable font size and color with the correct OCR address where listed, and review placement in handbooks and other publications to ensure it is prominently placed within the document.
- Add the missing information from the annual notice that is listed above to the existing annual statement on the website, and add some indication as to which specific programs have entrance requirements different from the general college admissions criteria while keeping all links to program pages active.

**Finding:** No accreditation compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

### CTE Program Evaluation and Review

Iowa Code chapter 258, Iowa Administrative Code chapter 281-46.6(4) and Iowa Administrative Code 281-21 include a variety of state standards related to the offering of career and technical education (CTE) programs. These standards include numerous requirements related to program and award length, program content, labor market demand, articulation, advisory committees and more. All CTE programs (including new programs and changes to existing programs) must be approved by the Department. Standards for CTE programs are included in the "Program Approval: Guidelines for Iowa Community Colleges" guide and in the "State Accreditation Guide," both of which are posted on the Department website.

Community colleges are required to review at least 20 percent of their CTE programs annually, standards for which are provided in the aforementioned program approval guidelines. The Department team reviewed HCC's CTE program review process, schedule and a random sample of recent CTE program reviews to ensure compliance with the CTE program review standards. For the standards regarding program advisory committees' composition, roles and responsibilities, the Department team reviewed a random sample of CTE advisory committee membership lists and meeting minutes to ensure compliance.

Based on the documents submitted for the desk review, HCC follows a five-year cycle to review all CTE programs. To prepare for the program review process, faculty members are provided admissions, retention, grades and surveys from employers and students. They also receive retention data by cohort that is disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender. Additionally, the college uses Proview 2 software to facilitate the review of each program. This software generates a report that is reviewed by assessment committee co-chairs, the program dean and the Academic Affairs Vice President (AAVP). After the report is reviewed, the AAVP shares recommendations for improvement with the program dean and faculty members, who are then charged with implementing these recommendations within the next year. Other cabinet members, such as the Vice President for Finance and the Marketing Director, are invited to these discussions.

The Department team was impressed with the additional following practices related to program review at HCC:

- The program review process incorporates the assessment of student learning by evaluating the extent to which competencies in each program, which are often aligned to industry standards, are being mastered. Program outcomes are also listed in the program review documentation.
- Faculty members develop two to three strategies to improve programs and address challenges. They reflect on action steps related to these strategies annually. Some examples of changes that were made to programs based on the review process include improvements made to faculty onboarding, the purchasing of key pieces of equipment, upgrades to the advising structure and changes to coursework in program curricula.
- Faculty members reflect on and make program changes based on various survey data, including advisory committee surveys, graduate exit surveys, graduate employment surveys and employer satisfaction surveys.
- The college is very intentional about incorporating career and technical student organizations (CTSOs) and other co-curricular opportunities into programs.
- HCC's program review process ensures that collaboration takes place between high schools and the college on CTE programming. For example, program faculty are invited to serve on high school advisory committees, where they are able to help review competencies in high school programs of study in relation to those in HCC's programs. Faculty members are also invited to Regional Planning Partnership (RPP) meetings.

The Department team was impressed with how HCC staff and faculty recruit members to its advisory committees, including reaching out via text messages, phone calls and career fairs. Based on these efforts, the college has been able to recruit members from underrepresented populations and people from different industry roles to their advisory committees. A substantial section of the program review is dedicated to advisory committees and asks faculty to discuss the most significant outcomes from working with advisory committees, illustrating that the advice received from advisory committee members, who represent business and community, is taken very seriously. The college also uses a template for advisory committee minutes and completes a "Recommendation Summary Form" and a "Recommendation Update Form" after advisory committee meetings, ensuring that program recommendations are captured.

**Recommendations:** The Department team suggests recommendations related to the program review process. Iowa Administrative Code chapter 281-46 requires that CTE program review include specific components, including assessing how program costs are proportionate to educational benefits received. During the accreditation visit Department the team learned how the program review process expects faculty to ask questions and discuss topics including program finances, average salary/wage of employees, cost effectiveness for students and data related to the program's "Revenue Over (Under) Direct Expense" graph, it does not specifically require program faculty members to reflect upon this standard. Thus, it is **recommended** that the college formalize how program costs are proportionate to educational benefits received (i.e. return on investment) by rephrasing the question in their program review template to connect finance and salary/employment outlook with the cost effectiveness of the program. The Department team also **recommends** that the college ask more questions analyzing disaggregated student outcome data and how to close achievement gaps in the different demographic groups. It is also **recommended** that HCC formalizes how the program review process ties to budgeting and strategic planning. Additionally, it may be helpful if HCC cross-walked the questions in their program review to the CTE program review standards.

**Finding:** No accreditation compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

### STICS Curriculum Review

The Department utilizes the State of Iowa Curriculum System (STICS) web-based platform for its program approval process, and maintains a database of approved programs and courses. STICS performs compliance checks on all programs offered by each college. The Department's Education Program Consultant for Program Quality and Faculty Support conducted a compliance check of HCC's

programs to ensure they meet state standards. Additionally, the consultant compared HCC's approved academic programs in the state's database with those provided in the college catalog.

The Department team discussed minimal misalignments between the college catalog and STICS. There were no instances of any programs being out of compliance in regards to technical core, general education or credit hour requirements. The college has agreed to make the edits and the team anticipates completion in a timely manner.

Additionally, the Department administered a survey to appropriate campus stakeholders involved in the curriculum process. It was apparent from the survey results that HCC has sound, robust curriculum practices in place. All curriculum proposals originate within the department or discipline. They are entered into the CurriQunet System, where they are reviewed by individuals with key roles in the approval process. Once all approvals have been obtained, proposals are placed on the curriculum committee agenda and approved. Once the changes are approved by the curriculum committee the new program or program changes are submitted to the state for approval.

**Finding:** No accreditation compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

### Strategic Plan

Community colleges are required to update their strategic plans at least every five years as a guide for the community and its decision making (Iowa Code section 256.31(4)(a)).

The Department team reviewed HCC's most recent strategic plan and interviewed selected staff to ensure compliance with this standard. A number of strengths were noted as it relates to HCC's 2021-2025 strategic plan and the college's overall strategic planning process including:

- The plan was informed by feedback from multiple stakeholders: students, faculty and staff, community members and community leaders, including surveys of over 250 students and several months of engagement sessions.
- The new mission and vision for the college inform strategies related to college priorities led by vice presidents coordinating cross-college steering committees for each strategy.
- The plan includes a focus on institutional effectiveness, with steady increases in awards, enrollment and retention over recent years. There's also growth in high school enrollment and a desire for better retention and preparedness among these students.
- External stakeholders, including businesses and community members, contributed to the strategic planning process, with insights incorporated back into the committee's work.
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) are tracked in five areas, updated annually, and made available on an internal shared drive. Metrics are assessed to determine if goals need to be increased.
- Budget planning involves vice presidents identifying needs to achieve strategic plan goals and discussing priorities with cabinet members, ensuring alignment with the plan and mission.

**Finding:** No accreditation compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

### Physical Plant and Facilities

Each community college must present evidence of adequate planning to the Department team, including a board-approved facilities plan. The community college's plan must meet state and federal requirements as outlined in the state accreditation guide.

The Department team reviewed HCC's most recent facilities plan and interviewed the executive director of facilities and operations, executive director for risk management and title IX, ADA/504 and equity coordinator, executive director of computer information systems, director of accessibility services, accessibility services coordinator and other personnel regarding the college's facility planning process and decision-making structure to ensure compliance with this standard.



HCC's Master Facilities Plan focuses on ADA compliance when planning new structures, and they ensure updates and remodels meet present ADA requirements. Maintenance and repairs are on a rotation schedule while technology follows a four-year recycle plan. While the safety plan is currently being updated, students, faculty and staff reported feeling safe on campus. They are provided escorts if requested, have various safety training programs throughout the year and know how to find contact information in the event of an emergency.

HCC has strength in many areas and the Department team recognizes those efforts:

- HCC's library staff are exceptional in their efforts to provide space and accessibility to their student body. The library is open six days a week, and they offer informational sessions for all students. The system they utilize is shared with regent universities and Grinnell College giving students access to their collections. HCC is also implementing open educational resources, which remove barriers and improve retention and completion of students.
- The college has invested in infrastructure improvements over the past several years. New or renovated facilities are both attractive and educational. Grundy Hall's Science and Health Sciences Center includes state-of-the-art technology providing students with up-to-date simulation labs that improve learning outcomes as well as prepare students for the technology and real-world issues they will encounter in the workplace. Additionally, the Automation and Robotics Center partners businesses and students for workforce development opportunities, while also creating a smooth transition path between credit and non-credit education.
- HCC has developed strong community support, passing a bond referendum in 2023 with 75% approval, allowing for improved campus and educational opportunities in alignment with the college's "Bright Minds, Bold Futures" capital campaign.

**Recommendation:** The college did not initially realize that board approval of the institutional facilities plan was required by Iowa Administrative Code (281 IAC 21.62(5)). Thus, at the time of the team's desk review, while HCC's board had reviewed the facilities plan, the plan did not have formal board approval. Upon realizing board approval was required, HCC leadership immediately sought approval, and approval was in place prior to the team's visit in November. The Department team appreciates HCC's efforts to obtain this approval so quickly and **recommends** the board incorporate timelines for formal approval of the Master Facilities Plan when it is updated to maintain compliance with Iowa code requirements.

**Finding:** No accreditation compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

### Quality Faculty Plans

Iowa law mandates that community colleges plan for faculty hiring and professional development, with institutional Quality Faculty Plans (QFPs) needing to meet the standards outlined in Iowa Administrative Code 281 Chapter 24.5(5).

The Department team reviewed HCC's QFP and conducted interviews with members of the college's QFP Committee to ensure compliance with these standards. The team also reviewed QFP plan documentation for a random sample of 25 faculty members.

The faculty development and QFP committees are combined into one committee. The QFP plan is updated annually in the spring, with a separate group meeting throughout the year to discuss faculty development and in-service activities. The board reviews and approves the QFP each year, typically in August or September. The college has provided minutes from the past three years confirming the board's annual review and approval of the QFP, ensuring compliance with this process.

HCC has a comprehensive onboarding and mentoring program for new faculty that includes a certificate for the completion of the induction course. Professional development requirements are differentiated for full-time and adjunct faculty. Full-time faculty must meet all three professional development areas, while adjuncts are required to meet one. Adjuncts participate in fall and spring in-

service sessions (with spring conducted via Zoom), and they also have access to a Canvas shell to track their professional development. Concurrent enrollment faculty also have professional development obligations and are required to participate in campus events, with 100% participation expected. Faculty submit professional development requests via a Google form, which requires dean approval, and a master spreadsheet tracks full-time faculty activity. The NACEP coordinator tracks professional development for concurrent enrollment faculty, and general professional development is recorded in Google site portfolios.

The annual review process involves faculty setting goals, completing professional development to achieve those goals and setting new objectives for the following year. If a faculty member fails to meet professional development requirements, the dean discusses the issue during the QFP evaluation. New faculty members are required to take specific courses for certification and participate in an induction and mentoring process. They are observed each semester, and adjuncts receive their first observation in the initial semester. Online faculty have a specific observation form and follow-up meetings. Professional development is not directly linked to instructional competencies but is instead based on the goals faculty set for their professional growth.

**Recommendations:** The Department team **recommends** that HCC note gender on the membership list and continue to work on gender balance as well as balance of arts and science and CTE faculty.

**Finding:** No accreditation compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

### Promising Practice Profile

*The Department team identified a promising practice within the Quality Faculty Plan standard related to HCC's relationship with its adjunct faculty. These noteworthy methods for enhancing adjunct faculty engagement and professional development could be beneficial for community colleges across the state to emulate. Examples of promising practices include an adjunct faculty onboarding and orientation process to ensure they are well-prepared for their roles; a Canvas shell which is used to organize and track adjunct faculty training and professional development activities; offering optional (but well attended) adjunct faculty in-service sessions in the spring semester; and a new adjunct academy offering focused professional development that includes a minimum of two hours annually and reflective documentation of training. HCC also established a new position, Adjunct Faculty Liaison, focused on organizing and streamlining the college's adjunct faculty engagement and professional development processes. As many colleges employ adjunct faculty to teach courses, implementing an adjunct faculty liaison position is a promising practice to ensure high quality instruction.*

### Senior Year Plus Programs

There are a variety of requirements for Senior Year Plus (SYP) programs offered to high school students jointly enrolled in Iowa's community colleges. These requirements are included in Iowa Code section 261E. Currently, the Department utilizes the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) accreditation process to ensure compliance with many statutory requirements, as required by the Department.

The Department team reviewed HCC's accreditation status with NACEP, interviewed selected staff and reviewed documentation to ensure compliance with this standard. HCC is NACEP accredited through AY 25-26. In 2019, NACEP had two recommendations for the college to address. First, tracking and evaluating onboarding and professional development for faculty should be improved. Second, a clear method of evaluation for final grades by faculty should be established. A follow-up report was sent to NACEP December 2019, addressing modifications to HCC's processes and procedures to meet NACEP's recommendations. HCC implemented Dual Enroll software for enrollment and capturing data and has purchased a curriculum alignment module to track everything required for NACEP. HCC is

collaborating with colleagues across the state, and will host a NACEP Accreditation Institute in March 2025 to prepare for and assist others with their accreditations.

HCC's concurrent enrollment program, High School Partnerships, serves 25 school districts. Support services, including for students requiring accommodations, are discussed with concurrent enrollment students at orientation. Early outreach efforts allowing faculty to send alerts to HCC staff are in place to identify issues and support students. HCC offers students the opportunity to check-out laptops and/or hotspots to participate in the state's Summer College Credit Program to make concurrent enrollment courses available to students during the summer. HCC is currently looking at barriers that may prevent participation in concurrent enrollment for various student groups.

Overall, the Department team saw substantial evidence that the college's course prerequisites and admissions policies, add/drop policies, grading policies and course accommodations do not place undue restrictions on concurrent enrollment students. The team was particularly impressed with the following elements of HCC's concurrent enrollment program:

- HCC's application for The Challenger Center, which offers hands-on simulated experiences with space and STEM experiences for middle and high school students, has been approved, and they are now working on a business plan. Students will participate in simulated missions as astronauts.
- Through Dual Enroll, an explanation is required for registrations that have been declined by the district. HCC follows up with districts to ensure allowable access is not being restricted.
- Professional development is required and provided for all concurrent enrollment faculty annually with 100% attendance required. Separate training is offered for CTE and arts and science disciplines. HCC ensures the proper resources and training is available to each concurrent enrollment faculty member.
- Site visits are required for every course. For new faculty, a site visit is scheduled within the first semester and every three years thereafter.

**Recommendations:** The Department team identified areas that could be strengthened to improve Senior Year Plus programming. It is **recommended** that, in an effort to improve participation and access throughout the service area, HCC considers collecting disaggregated concurrent enrollment data for each school district and disseminating it to district stakeholders so they can identify opportunities to improve access to concurrent enrollment programs for all students. The Department team **recommends** adding statements regarding background checks and exclusion of faculty under suspension or revocation of licensure to contracts and faculty handbooks. The contract could also include school district and community college responsibilities for managing repercussions for revoked licenses. The Department team further **recommends** adding more detailed information to the student handbook and college website related to the financial responsibilities with regard to textbooks, fees, materials and supplies for students in Senior Year Plus programming. Ensuring clear communication related to expectations that students are not responsible for the cost of tuition or books for concurrent enrollment courses will help minimize confusion between the college, school district and students and their families.

**Finding:** No accreditation compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

### **Compliance with Non-Accreditation State or Federal Requirements**

**Finding:** No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

### **Department Team Recommendation**

The Department of Education community college accreditation team recommends continued accreditation for Hawkeye Community College.

A state comprehensive accreditation evaluation is scheduled for AY 2029-2030.



