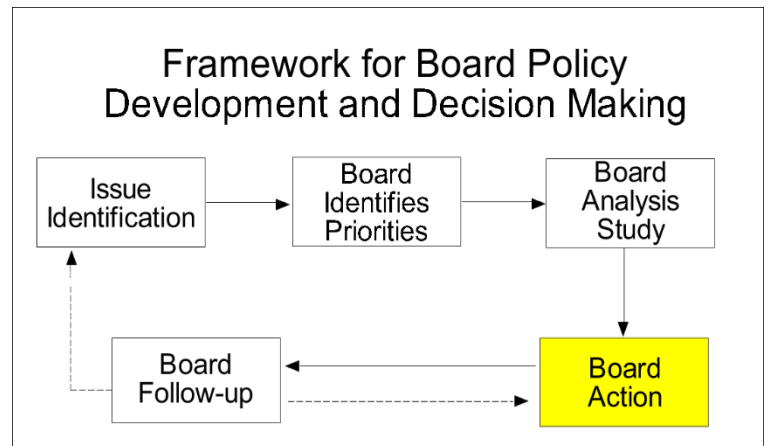


# Iowa State Board of Education

## Executive Summary

May 8, 2025



**Agenda Item:** Kirkwood 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.

**Presenters:** Robin Shaffer Lilienthal, Administrative Consultant  
Bureau of Community Colleges

Kristie Fisher, President  
Kirkwood Community College

Jennifer Bradley, Vice President of Academic Affairs  
Kirkwood Community College

**Attachments:** One

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

**Background:** Attached is a report of the evaluation of KCC for continued state accreditation as an associate degree-granting institution. The Iowa Department of Education conducted the interview portion of the evaluation on October 2-3, 2024. This report reflects the Department team's observations and determinations made

during KCC's interim visit. As mandated by Iowa Code section 260C.47, the accreditation team, including two external peer reviewers, assessed KCC'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**

Kirkwood Community College  
October 2-3, 2024

May 8, 2025

State of Iowa  
Department of Education  
Grimes State Office Building  
400 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
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## Purpose of the Evaluation

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

## Institutional Overview

### College History

KCC is a publicly-supported college that serves Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn and Washington counties in eastern Iowa. KCC is governed by a publicly-elected, nine-member board of trustees.

In January 1965, a steering committee conducted a study to establish a vocational school to serve parts of eastern Iowa, then known as Area X. Soon after this local study, the Iowa General Assembly approved legislation that created a system of community colleges throughout the state. On July 1, 1966, KCC was officially established as Area X Community College, and immediately assumed responsibility for the federally-funded career and technical education programs (CTE) the Cedar Rapids Community School District had provided since 1964. The college added the Arts and Sciences, Student Services, and Community Education divisions a year later. In 1969, the college board of trustees renamed the college as "Kirkwood Community College" to honor Samuel J. Kirkwood, Iowa's governor during the Civil War years.

In 1982, KCC became a board member of the League for Innovation in the Community College, a consortium of 20 of the nation's finest two-year colleges. Serving nearly 17,000 credit students annually, the college awards Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees that transfer to four-year colleges and universities. Graduates in Applied Science and Technology programs are prepared to enter specialized technical careers.

### Institutional Profile

KCC's main campus is located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a metropolitan area of approximately 150,000 residents. The main campus location features 1.85 million square feet of learning space, a working 400-acre farm, and one of the only full-service teaching hotels in the country. Each year the college's Cedar Rapids location provides close to 16,000 students with academic and career-focused advising, tutoring and writing help, mentoring and counseling services, an on-campus bookstore and library and more than 40 clubs, organizations, and groups. KCC has 135 CTE, transfer, certificate, and diploma award options and according to 2023 college profile data, ranks second in number of credit students (16,581 credit students) and first in number of non-credit students (28,095 non-credit students). The college is 7th in the credit and non-credit penetration rate of their regional population. Among its state community college peers, KCC ranks 13th in joint enrollment as a percent of total student enrollment, 10th in number of students who have taken one or more online courses, and 8th in the percentage of credit awards granted, which is up from 13th in the state at the Department's last visit.

In addition to the main campus in Cedar Rapids, KCC has locations in Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn and Washington counties. KCC Centers offer college credit courses, continuing education classes, and high school completion programs to students of all ages. Students can complete all the required courses to earn an associate of arts degree through local centers. Classes at each center are delivered through traditional face-to-face classroom and online instructional modalities. The local centers offer the same services available to students at the main campus, including placement testing, academic advising, tutoring, wireless computer access and more.

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

## Visit Overview

Staff from the Department's Bureau of Community Colleges performed an interim accreditation review and site visit of KCC on October 2-3, 2024. During the visit, the accreditation team was impressed with many aspects of the institution. College leadership is intentional about connecting the work of its staff and faculty to the mission, vision and values of the institution. KCC also has an innovative and data-driven culture with a true climate of continuous improvement. Despite being one of the larger community colleges in the state, review team members saw multiple examples of strong cross-campus collaboration. Perhaps most impressively, the college has a clear focus on what they refer to as "unavoidable" student services and success. Various student success strategies are integrated into the institution so that students cannot help but access them, thus resulting in a high level of responsiveness to student needs. Students expressed an appreciation of the many options available to them both inside and outside the classroom, and remarked that there was "something" for all students. They said they felt safe and secure on campus, and that even though KCC is a large institution, the campus felt small with a genuine care for students. Finally, students expressed an appreciation for the wide variety of services available to help them succeed.

## Assurance Summary State Standards

At KCC's last comprehensive state accreditation visit in 2020, KCC 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 improved its consistency and presence of these statements in required locations with recommendations but no accreditation findings in this area at this year's visit.

## 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. KCC's October 2023 Mid-Cycle Review generated a positive report with only one recommendation related to faculty governance and a suggestion to identify methods to capture student voices. The report recognized KCC's strong connection to its mission, student engagement, transfer pathways, increased faculty diversity, student outcomes, and connecting the community to its strategic plan. The college's next Reaffirmation of Accreditation is during the 2029-2030 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 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 KCC 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, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Executive Assistant of Academic Affairs and 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 KCC 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 review team **recommends** that when qualifying CTE faculty using recent and relevant work experience, the college include documentation to demonstrate how the individual's work experience applies to the discipline they are teaching. The Department also **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 transcribed courses are being used to meet the teaching qualifications for each qualifying discipline.

**Finding:** The previous state accreditation evaluation recommended that KCC list courses being used to qualify a faculty member including clear documentation for which courses are being used to qualify the faculty members. In some cases, the rationale provided was not in compliance with the qualification rules. For example, using work experience as part of the rationale to qualify an arts and science instructor. Two instructors were identified as not qualified for courses they were teaching so the college should establish a plan for reassigning the courses to qualified faculty or ensuring the faculty members meet the qualifications requirements.

If the college would like to continue using these faculty members to teach these prefix courses, KCC 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, on or before November 2025, the Department team will review 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 KCC provided documentation of their academic year (AY) 2022-2023 teaching assignments. While a few faculty members had overload assignments, there were no load issues found within the selected faculty, although it appeared that a few faculty members had overload assignments. The last accreditation report requested evidence from the college documenting its mutual consent process for overload assignments. The college is commended for addressing this finding by improving its mutual consent process.

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

## 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 KCC'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. A sample of evidence includes:

- A holistic needs-assessment used during the student onboarding process to collect student concerns in order to offer just-in-time resources.
- Using a standardized syllabus template to ensure consistency and inclusion of required content.
- Access to ALLY in Blackboard as a resource for students who are seeing or hearing impaired.
- The website online chat feature for financial aid questions has multiple languages available, which is in addition to a Google Translate link, so non-native speakers of English have access to information and can chat in their native language to get answers to their questions.
- KCC's Guided Pathways Steering Committee leads institution-wide initiatives such as clearly defined academic advising roles, program-specific orientation and clear program areas and maps in order to assist all students - especially those with special needs.
- English Language Acquisition staff collaborate with accommodation services staff in order to help students receive necessary services.
- A robust TRIO program in its 45th year of existence which has continually expanded service offerings including extending some services to high school students.
- An Advisor Case Management System that assists advisors to support students.
- Accommodation renewal events that resulted in 70 percent of students in need of accommodations having them in place by the first day of the semester.
- An online form for students to request a sign-language interpreter.
- An easy-to-navigate accommodations website where students can schedule an appointment online and access information, forms and resource.

The Department team commends KCC's commitment to the success of all students, specifically by having both autism and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) specialists on staff to assist neurodivergent students reach their academic goals. This is a best practice and a growing trend nationally as more colleges recognize and address the specific needs of neurodivergent students. Additionally, the college implemented a 20 percent proactive outreach program where faculty can submit student concerns earlier in the semester in order to connect students to resources sooner in an effort to increase retention.

During the desk review and site visit, the team noticed the continuous nondiscrimination statement was not in a prominent location in the faculty handbook, and was missing from printed materials located in the advising office area. Additionally, the annual nondiscrimination notice did not include full contact information for all Title IX and Section 504 Coordinators. Board policy 102.3 indicates that KCC has six equity coordinators, and the Title IX webpage has additional staff listed who are not included on the annual notice webpage.

**Recommendations:** KCC is advised to ensure the continuous notice of nondiscrimination is included on all publications and is located in a prominent place within documents. Further, the annual notice of nondiscrimination should be updated to include the required information for all Title IX and Section 504 Coordinators.

**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 chapter 281-21 include a variety of state standards related to the offering of 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” 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, using the statewide standards provided in the aforementioned Department guides. The Department team reviewed KCC’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, KCC follows a five-year plan to review all CTE programs. Additionally, every program completes a Program Annual Update (PAU) every year. During the PAU, the Curriculum Assessment Specialist and academic deans review faculty responses to questions, summarize their findings and give faculty members an opportunity to provide follow-up responses. During the five-year review, the college utilizes a program review committee, which is a faculty-led group with participation by some administrators. During this peer review, the committee evaluates program needs and assessment data, and determines action items for the program faculty to complete. Individual conversations around goal setting, key performance indicators (KPIs), professional development and mentoring to support the programs take place during the fall kick-off retreat the following academic year.

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

- KCC’s program review process is heavily tied to the assessment of student learning outcomes. All programs are required to include a program student learning outcomes assessment plan, a program curriculum map and a program strategic plan. During program strategic planning, faculty members review and set program goals.
- The use of the PAU leads to regular discussions and action plans on a yearly basis instead of having programs wait until the next five-year review. Since the PAU requires faculty members to provide detailed information, reflection and responsive information, it results in a continuous improvement approach to program review.
- KCC reviews all academic programs, not just CTE programs.
- KCC invites K-12 partners and area education agency (AEA) representatives to advisory committee meetings. Evidence was provided showing that these individuals ask questions about the curriculum and program offerings. They also observe spring capstone courses and suggest changes to programs based on their observations.

The Department team was impressed with how KCC staff and faculty recruit members to its advisory committees including using industry and business partners and their work-based learning (WBL) intermediary outreach coordinator and Career Services staff to help recruit advisory committee members. They use their current advisory committee to help recruit their replacement on the committee. Committee members serve a three-year term to ensure that membership represents a variety of businesses and industries. Additionally, the PAU form asks program faculty members to list recommendations to expand the recruitment pool for new advisory committee members if there are significant differences in composition when comparing diversity of advisory committees to student and

regional diversity data. The Advisory Committee Manual also has a section called “Diversity and Outreach Recruitment for Advisory Councils.”

The Department team found the college’s approach to circulating data noteworthy. As a result of KCC’s Guided Pathways initiative, there has been an increased focus on disseminating disaggregated data to program faculty members. As a result, a Program Profile, which contains information about enrollment, retention, persistence and completion, is provided to each program. The data is disaggregated by a variety of characteristics. Additionally, there is an interactive tool that enables faculty members to customize data reports. The college has recently incorporated more questions into the PAU to prompt faculty to reflect on the disaggregated data, asking them how underserved, minority and nontraditional students perform in comparison to other student groups. Student services staff have also been using the Program Profile to implement accommodations for students and make it easier for students to renew accommodations each semester. Next steps include incorporating employment data into the Program Profile.

**Recommendations:** The Department team suggests recommendations related to CTE advisory committees. Not all programs selected during the desk review had demographic information for advisory committee members. It is **recommended** that the college ensure that demographic information is collected. It was also noted that the minutes from some of the advisory committee meetings lacked detail, making it difficult to discern if there was substantial discussion around curriculum. It also appeared that the college was using two different templates for advisory committee minutes. It is **recommended** that the college develop one template to use for advisory committee minutes to help ensure meaningful and robust committee discussions. Lastly, the evidence provided during the desk review indicated that some programs were not meeting twice per year. It is **recommended** that KCC continue their efforts to schedule advisory committee meetings on an institutional calendar to ensure that these committees are meeting the required two times per year.

**Finding:** Iowa Administrative Code chapter 281-46 requires that CTE program review include specific key components. During the previous accreditation visit, the team noted that a number of state CTE standards were not being evaluated during CTE program review. During this accreditation visit, the team found that, although conversations were taking place around some of the CTE standards, a number of key state-required CTE program review standards were not included as part of KCC’s CTE program review process. Missing but required elements include: an assessment of how program costs are proportionate to educational benefits (i.e. return on investment) received, how the CTE curriculum is articulated and integrated with other curricular offerings required of all students and how the program provides opportunities for students to pursue other educational interests in a postsecondary setting. Additionally, articulation with other postsecondary institutions is not formally addressed during the program review.

To verify compliance with this state standard, the Department team will review a revised program review process no later than November 2025 to ensure assessment of all required criteria listed in Iowa Administrative Code chapter 281-46.

## 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 KCC’s programs to ensure they meet state standards. Additionally, the consultant compared KCC’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 KCC has sound curriculum practices. After deans meet with faculty members and advisory committees, they submit curriculum changes via the college's approval process, which also involves faculty members. Additionally, the Registrar's office ensures compliance during the approval process. 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 KCC'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 KCC's 2024-2027 strategic plan and the college's overall strategic planning process including:

- A comprehensive, three-year plan that includes both previous plan achievements as well as detailed key performance indicators.
- Unit-level action plans connected to the overall institutional plan, with quarterly progress reports.
- Data dashboards are available for key metrics such as persistence, retention and completion. Other key performance indicators are tracked and updated quarterly.
- The budget process includes a comprehensive budget book that explains baseline funding plus highlights the connection between new monies and the strategic initiatives.
- Strong engagement of internal stakeholders including robust feedback sessions with institutional constituent groups to refine mission/vision/values as well as campus-wide engagement with a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis.
- Excellent strategic alignment between the college's core values, mission and vision statements, priorities and goals, as well as action plans and key performance indicators.
- Strategic planning clearly drives institutional reform efforts with a number of examples of implemented changes flowing out of strategic planning including modifications to the college's advising model, changes to budgeting, and changes to assessment and classroom technology.

**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 accreditation 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 KCC's most recent facilities plan, approved by the board in October 2019, 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.

The Department team reviewed KCC's 2017-2022 master plan, and interviewed the campus supervisors of plant services, vice president of administrative services, associate director of human resources, chief information officer, campus deans and other staff regarding the college's facility planning process and decision-making structure, to ensure compliance with this standard. The Department team also toured the Cedar Rapids campus and audited recent Perkins equipment purchases. The team was impressed with KCC's physical plan including:

- A comprehensive asset collection of 5000+ assets have been tagged and cataloged along with a bold approach to the lifecycle of equipment and technology in which a one-for-one replacement plan has been put in place for instructional, information technology and facilities/operations equipment.
- Cybersecurity efforts, including training, are comprehensive and proactive. Utilization of NIST as a platform along with ProCircular to run a gap analysis to assist with developing projects and annual training, especially for those who work with sensitive information. Students learn through this process, specifically those active in the Cybersecurity Club.
- KCC has a strong commitment to safety and security. The campus employs unarmed public safety officers, access control for entries, RAVE, identification badges. Cameras, access control for doors, public safety officers, RAVE alert system, blue light phones in parking lots, and identification badges. Public safety is discussed during student orientations and Emergency Action Snapshots are posted in all classrooms.

**Finding:** The most recent Facilities Master Plan was not approved by the Board of Directors. The college should adjust its facilities planning processes to ensure compliance with the standard expectation of a five-year planning cycle that is approved by the board.

### 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 KCC'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 QFP Committee membership is balanced with both CTE and arts and science faculty and administrators. Faculty members are appointed by the faculty association and the committee strives for a gender balance. The QFP Committee meets two to three times per year. In the fall, they review Professional Preparation Plans (PPPs), and in the spring, they discuss updates or changes to the QFP.

The committee's primary responsibility is to review faculty PPPs. Faculty members incorporate competencies in teaching, service, and professional development into their plans. During the probationary period, faculty work closely with their deans to address goals and competencies and their PPPs are assessed annually. If expectations are not met, a developmental plan is implemented. The committee promotes a mentoring and cohort model to foster collaboration among faculty across departments, ensuring ongoing professional growth. After probation, faculty participate in a formal reflection process every three years, assessing progress and meeting with their dean.

KCC's onboarding and professional development system supports faculty growth and aligns with academic excellence. It is notable that new faculty participate in a structured, three-year onboarding program, which follows a cohort model and ensures all competencies are addressed through planned professional development. Faculty teaching in new modalities, such as hybrid or online courses, must complete specialized training, supported by instructional designers who assist with course development and quality assurance.

Mentorship plays a crucial role in the onboarding process, with new faculty paired with experienced mentors for guidance. Faculty are also trained in portfolio development, with deans assessing these portfolios using standardized rubrics. On the CTE side, lead faculty mentor adjunct instructors to maintain consistency and high teaching standards. Faculty can earn a \$1,100 pay increase for completing specific professional development activities, with additional funding available for professional development initiatives. Instructional design staff, including four specialists and the Dean

of Academic Innovation Strategy and Design (AISD), provide support in areas such as course development, LMS management, and specialized topics like accessibility and Artificial Intelligence.

**Recommendations:** The Department team **recommends** the following as it relates to the structure and clarity of the QFP plan and processes. First, the QFP membership list should include gender and strive to ensure gender balance. Second, the meeting minutes do not include enough detail to provide documentation of committee decisions, so using structured agendas would assist with standardizing meetings. Third, expectations for ongoing professional development in the QFP should be clarified to, include a mechanism for measuring attainment of plan provisions. The Department team also **recommends** integrating the QFP plan into the faculty handbook. It is noted that this suggestion, was also made during the previous accreditation cycle.

In addition, the tracking of faculty professional development is currently documented in multiple platforms, such as NeoEd and human resources, so the Department team **recommends** that information be centralized in one location, with clarification on which department is responsible for overseeing faculty professional development and the individual QFPs. Further, the Department team **recommends** adjunct faculty requirements for ongoing professional development should be formalized, similar to the process being implemented for concurrent adjunct faculty. This would include defining clear requirements, identifying who handles the onboarding process, and establishing expectations for adjunct professional development.

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

### 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 KCC's accreditation status with NACEP, interviewed selected staff and reviewed documentation to ensure compliance with this standard. The college's latest NACEP re-accreditation was approved with no major areas of improvement required. KCC is accredited through 2025-2026 so will go through reaccreditation in 2026-2027. KCC has two NACEP peer reviewers on staff allowing for a thorough understanding of practices and compliance.

KCC's concurrent enrollment program is called College Credit in High School (CCHS). Program staff coordinate and monitor programming within the KCC service area. This work ensures continuity of SYP program processes and procedures, and includes the use of faculty liaisons to make certain the rigor of programming offered within the area high schools is the same as that of courses taught on the college campus. CourseLeaf is the software utilized to ensure syllabus and course consistency.

KCC has an effective concurrent enrollment faculty onboarding process that utilizes a comprehensive checklist for documentation and provides a multitude of professional development opportunities for new and returning faculty. The college uses the TALON learning management system (LMS) shell to aid new faculty orientation and LMS training topics. All faculty follow the same process from reviews of applications, resumes, transcripts and work experience to professional development. All faculty are provided with leadership and instruction through orientations, annual professional development, required discipline-specific training and the faculty liaison handbook. Liaisons visit new faculty classrooms and follow up as needed once every three years. To continue quality programming and ensure rigor, KCC has an assessment process in which all concurrent enrollment faculty submit.

Overall, the Department team saw substantial evidence in the college's course prerequisites and admissions policies, add/drop policies, grading policies and course accommodations demonstrating

that the college does not place undue restrictions on concurrent enrollment students. The team was particularly impressed with the following elements of KCC's concurrent enrollment program:

- Policies and Procedure are thorough and defined for districts, students and parents through the Student Handbook, the Senior Year Plus FAQ, and in the CCHS Policy and Practice Guide. These documents define access for students and the restrictions that Iowa Code does not allow.
- Annual surveys are sent to partners and former students to better evaluate programs which are linked to their KPI.
- In an effort to help lower the costs per student, more Open Educational Resources (approximately 15-20 percent of courses) are being utilized instead of textbooks.
- KCC is working to reduce language barriers to increase concurrent enrollment opportunities for non-English proficient students.
- Access to orientation and training are available through TALON for students and faculty

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

### Promising Practice Profile

*The Department team identified a promising practice within Senior Year Plus that is an example of a noteworthy method for sharing data among key stakeholders, so could be beneficial for community colleges and school districts across the state to emulate. KCC has developed a disaggregated data dashboard (Report Card) that is sent to each of their participating school districts. The report provides a breakdown of concurrent enrollment students and how they compare to each district's general population. These reports provide valuable information to KCC and their partnering districts with regard to how students are performing through an equity lens. It identifies the disparity between students and allows for conversations on how to narrow the access gap for underrepresented populations. As conversation regarding intentional advising and access for all students is a subject for improvement, this data dashboard is a promising tool to begin narrowing that gap.*

### 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 KCC.

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