

**Assurance Argument**  
**Rend Lake College - IL**

**8/23/2018**

# 1 - Mission

---

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

## 1.A - Core Component 1.A

---

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

## Argument

---

The Rend Lake College [mission](#) is: "Rend Lake College provides educational opportunities across cultural and economic boundaries to the diverse student population we serve. We are committed to our students' success in achieving their educational goals and to meeting our community-focused program objectives. With Rend Lake College, student journeys start here."

### 1A1

The [mission documents](#) are developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board. Prior to work commencing on the Assurance Argument in 2015, the mission documents were last significantly updated in 2007-2008, in preparation for the Self-Study and reaccreditation visit ([previous mission documents](#)). The third chapter of the [2008 Self-Study](#) includes history on the development of the mission statement prior to our last accreditation visit. In the years since, the mission documents changed slightly as the college changed, such as changing division names and removing instructor headcounts to avoid constant revision.

As work on this assurance argument progressed, a Mission Committee was formed to re-examine the mission documents and to suggest any needed revisions. This group met several times beginning in 2016, including a focused effort during an HLC Steering Committee retreat in October 2016 ([MISSION-Retreat Minutes-10\\_07\\_2016](#)). The Mission Committee suggested various changes to the mission statement and documents, including removal of the Philosophy Statement because of its more theoretical nature, removal of the "Our students' success is our own success" tagline, and inclusion of language to make the mission more relevant in today's digitally connected society ([MISSION-Retreat Minutes-10\\_07\\_2016](#)). A notable development is the inclusion of a new [value statement](#): "In serving our students and community, we strive to be student-focused, authentic, and resourceful." Student focus is central to our mission, and the revisions to the mission documents helped articulate this. The statements on diversity were combined into two instead of three, and the [General Education](#)

[Statement](#) was relocated to the official college Catalog.

In [April 2016](#), the Board granted final approval to create the Mission Statement Review policy and procedure ([Policy 2.1125](#)), crafted as a way to engage the Board with the mission statement on an annual basis as part of the strategic planning process. The Board approved the revised mission documents in [July 2017](#) and again reviewed and approved the mission statement in [July 2018](#). Strategic planning also has undergone significant restructuring to make it more mission-driven; this is discussed in detail in **5C**. The mission statement and documents are included in the [RLC Policy Manual](#).

## 1A2

RLC's academic programming, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission to provide educational opportunities across economic and cultural boundaries. The mission documents express the college's commitment to instill the four major learning outcomes – critical thinking, problem solving, oral communication and written communication – into all of our degree-seeking students, and this is evidenced by the fact that these four outcomes are embedded into all degree curricula and assessed. Inclusion of these outcomes into the mission documents provides a direct connection between the mission and academic programming.

As an [open-admission institution](#), students come from diverse backgrounds and varying levels of preparation. In its context as a public community college, RLC offers two-year Associate in Science, Arts, Fine Arts, Engineering Science and Applied Science degrees as well as shorter-term occupational certificates. These offerings are appropriate to the mission of "providing general, transfer and career-technical education" ([Diversity of Purpose](#)). RLC offers 36 associate degree programs and 74 certificates ([curriculum master](#)). Student educational goals, such as transfer or workforce entry, are discussed during the advisement process. Classes are offered in face-to-face, online and hybrid formats for increased accessibility, and distance learning technology is used to connect with the college's additional locations in Mt. Vernon and Pinckneyville as well as in-district high schools. Assessment of academic programming is addressed in **4B**.

[District poverty rates](#) vary based on family situation, and it is important that RLC remains economically viable across "economic boundaries". [ICCB numbers](#) indicate about 11.5% (10,291 adults) were in poverty in 2016. In FY 2017, 1,056 students collectively received \$3,224,687 in federal student aid, the majority coming from PELL grants (\$3,024,809) ([Fact Book](#)). Another \$815,629 in state aid was awarded.

It is important to note that in Summer 2013, the college withdrew from the federal direct student loan program ([February 2013 Board minutes](#)). This was done in response to the Department of Education's move in 2009 to track default rates on a three-year cohort basis instead of a two-year basis. However, student loans remain available through alternative providers ([Financial Aid Booklet](#)). The RLC Foundation, a separate non-profit entity with the goal of garnering support for scholarships and institutional growth ([MOU](#)) issues hundreds of student scholarships annually, with awards totaling \$198,500 in FY 2017 and \$207,735 awarded as of June 5, 2018 ([scholarship summary](#)).

RLC has endeavored to maintain a reasonable tuition rate. In February 2016, the Board approved a tuition increase from \$95 to \$110 per credit hour, the first increase in three years ([February 2016 Board minutes](#)). This was primarily in response to the state budget impasse ([Board recommendation](#)). Even so, this allows RLC to remain an affordable option for our constituents when compared to four-

year universities ([NCES table](#)) and keeps us on par with our neighboring community colleges ([ICCB tuition comparisons](#)).

Student support services are appropriate to the mission. A strong example of this is the Student Transfer and Retention Support (STARS) program, which provides first-generation, low-income and disabled students with the support services they need to successfully complete an associate degree and transfer to a four-year college or university ([catalog description](#)). STARS is a Student Support Services grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education as a component of TRIO and assists up to 160 students annually ([STARS report](#)). In addition to the Academic Advisement Center and the Financial Aid Department, other student support services include the Learning Enhancement Center, which includes the Communications Lab, Writing Center, Mathematics Lab and tutoring assistance; the RLCares program, a free service encouraging students to discuss issues, whether personal or academic, pertaining to their educational futures; Career Services, providing career counseling for undecided students as well as assistance with resumes and interviews; the RLC Foundation Children's Center, providing care for children six weeks through five years and for school-age children in the summer; the First-Year Experience orientation program; and several others outlined in the [Student Services and Activities](#) section of the Catalog and in **3D1**

Rend Lake College's enrollment profile ([Fact Book p. 49-51](#)) is consistent with district population figures ([ICCB census](#)). Students numbers are nearly equal by gender, primarily white, with about 40% of students in the 17-20 age group. RLC's district encompasses the major portions of Jefferson, Franklin, Hamilton and Perry counties; large areas of Wayne and White counties; and small, unpopulated portions of Washington and Williamson counties ([ICCB map](#)). An analysis of students by county shows that, in FY 2017, 1,771 and 1,582 students came from Jefferson and Franklin counties, respectively ([students by county](#)), which are the counties in the district with the highest populations. That year, two-thirds (5,843) of our students were part-time ([Fact Book](#)). Regional programming draws some students from areas outside our district. In FY 2017, 73.3% of our students lived in-district and 26.7% lived out-of-district ([enrollment by residency](#)).

See **1C1** for additional demographic information.

## 1A3

**5C1** explains RLC's strategic planning process, which in 2016 was restructured to flow more directly from the college's mission; the budgeting process, tied to strategic planning, is discussed on **5A5** and **5C1**. The college's planning process up to that point was more operational than strategic, although SWOT analyses were conducted by the various departments on campus to help determine future directions, and [operational planning worksheets](#) related to college goals also were required for planning purposes. In addition, the college's [Master Plan](#) document and the [Resource Allocation and Management Plan](#) have a future focus.

## Sources

---

- ADV-Advisory Council Standard Agenda-08\_03\_2018
- Advisory Committee Manual-03\_21\_2017
- Advisory Committee Manual-03\_21\_2017 (page number 17)
- FA-Financial Aid Booklet-2017-2018.pdf
- FA-Financial Aid Booklet-2017-2018.pdf (page number 10)

- HLC-Self Study 2008 Ch 3 Mission and Integrity
- HLC-Self Study 2008 Ch 3 Mission and Integrity (page number 3)
- HLC-Self Study 2008 Mission Revision Pages.pdf
- ICCB-Curriculum Master-06\_19\_2018
- ICCB-District Census Data-2013-2016
- ICCB-District Census Data-2016
- ICCB-District Census Data-2016 (page number 9)
- ICCB-District Map with Counties-06\_19\_2018
- ICCB-Tuition and Fees FY 2018
- INST-In-Serv Agenda-Fall 2017
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 13)
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 14)
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 35)
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 51)
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 52)
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 53)
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 61)
- MAINT-Master Plan-06\_2016.pdf
- MAINT-RAMP Report-FY2020
- MISSION-Retreat Minutes-10\_07\_2016
- NCES-College Prices 2015-2016 06\_19\_2018
- PLAN-Operational Planning Worksheet Template-2012
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-02\_09\_2016
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-02\_09\_2016 (page number 44)
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-07\_12\_2016
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-07\_12\_2016 (page number 66)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-02\_09\_2016.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-02\_09\_2016.pdf (page number 5)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-04\_12\_2016.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-04\_12\_2016.pdf (page number 5)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-07\_10\_2018
- PRES-BOT Minutes-07\_10\_2018 (page number 6)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-07\_11\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-07\_11\_2017.pdf (page number 5)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-07\_12\_2016.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-07\_12\_2016.pdf (page number 4)
- PRES-BOT\_Minutes-02\_12\_2013.pdf
- PRES-BOT\_Minutes-02\_12\_2013.pdf (page number 7)
- PRES-Mission Statement and Documents Prior to Revision-03\_08\_2017
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf (page number 2)
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf (page number 3)
- PRES-Policy 2.1125 Mission Statement Review-03\_15\_2018.pdf
- PRES-Policy Manual Intro Pages-06\_14\_2018.pdf
- PRES-Policy Manual Intro Pages-06\_14\_2018.pdf (page number 7)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Gen Ed Statement
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Gen Ed Statement (page number 2)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Pages 35-36
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Pages 35-36 (page number 2)

- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 23)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 32)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 38)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 41)
- PUB-Catalog-2018-2019 Page 20
- PUB-Updated Degrees & Programs Page-06\_19\_2018
- RLCF-Foundation MOU-08\_06\_2018.pdf
- RLCF-Foundation MOU-08\_06\_2018.pdf (page number 2)
- RLCF-Scholarship Information-06\_18\_2018
- STUSER-STARS and UB Retention and Completion Objectives-2013-2017.pdf
- WHAT-What's Happening Initial Mtg Min-07\_27\_2017

## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

---

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

## Argument

---

### 1B1

In addition to the mission statement itself, the [mission documents](#) include the four institutional outcomes – critical thinking, problem solving, oral communication and written communication (CPOW) – as well as statements regarding who we are, who we serve, diversity and common outcome. A statement of values was added as a result of the 2016-2017 mission revision efforts. The statement of values is: “We will always strive to be student-focused, authentic and resourceful.” The Mission Review Committee found that these three concepts are qualities to which the institution has been dedicated in its operations ([Mission minutes](#)).

The mission statement and documents are clear and articulated publicly. They are published in several places, including the college website, [RLC Catalog](#), [class schedules](#), the RLC [Fact Book](#), [Employee Handbook](#), [Student Handbook](#) and the annual [Report to Our Community](#), and are reviewed by new employees as part of the orientation process ([orientation checklist](#)). The mission statement, value statement and institutional outcomes also are included on [course syllabi](#). The strategic planning process flows from the mission ([strategic planning overview](#)). The mission is featured in the annual [Commencement Program](#) and in the District Site and Construction [Master Plan](#), and is presented to and reviewed by business and industry Advisory Committees annually ([Advisory Committee agenda template](#)).

A group called the What's Up Committee ([Initial Meeting Minutes](#)) was formed as a way to help promote the revised mission statement and new value statement, as well as to inform stakeholders of the overall reaffirmation process. Some efforts included:

- Unveiling the revised mission and new value statement in Fall 2017 ([In-Service Agenda](#)) and at faculty / staff in-service ([Spring 2018](#))
- Informational flyers in classrooms / buildings
- Email memes promoting the new values

Two pizza parties were held in Spring 2018 at which students were asked about both the values and the institutional outcomes. The first, held in April 2018, saw 236 votes cast in a graphic design contest aimed at students. They were invited to create designs centered on the mission and college values to be featured on banners hanging on the main face of the Student Center and other uses ([winning](#)

[design](#)). The value statement is now automatically appended to the bottom of emails originating from college employees.

## 1B2

The mission documents are current, having been most recently reviewed and approved by the Board in July 2018 ([packet](#), [minutes](#)). As noted above, the mission statement undergoes annual review ([Mission Review policy](#)) by the Board of Trustees, and the mission documents are reviewed as part of the college's annual planning process. Included in the mission documents is the [Diversity of Purpose](#) statement, which explains that RLC provides general education to transfer students, training to those seeking gainful employment, and personal fulfillment and growth for those taking community and corporate education classes. As explained in **Criterion 5**, the college mission also informs the strategic plan. The strategic plan connects to the annual budget, ensuring that college activities remain mission-driven.

## 1B3

The [Diversity of Purpose](#) statement explains that the college serves various types of students, including traditional and non-traditional in both academic and career technical areas. Some reasons students engage with us include educational requirements, curiosity, retraining, new skills, and healthy lifestyles. The [Diversity of Culture](#) statement reflects RLC's characterization of serving a relatively homogenous, small-town culture, serving a population with diversity based on age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity / race, and gender ([district demographics](#)). There is little ethnic diversity in the district, and a larger level of socioeconomic diversity. Taken collectively, these diversity statements make up the [Who We Serve](#) section of our mission documents. It explains the distinctiveness of our student population, which is a necessary component of how we meet our programmatic goals. Additionally, our [Common Outcome](#) indicates that the college will serve each student equally, regardless of background, purpose or origin.

## Sources

---

- ADV-Advisory Council Standard Agenda-08\_03\_2018
- Advisory Committee Manual-03\_21\_2017
- Advisory Committee Manual-03\_21\_2017 (page number 17)
- Advisory Council Manual-03\_20\_2018.pdf
- Advisory Council Manual-03\_20\_2018.pdf (page number 17)
- HR-Employee Handbook-07\_10\_2018.pdf
- HR-Employee Handbook-07\_10\_2018.pdf (page number 5)
- HR-New Employee Orientation Form-07\_12\_2018.pdf
- HR-New Employee Orientation Form-07\_12\_2018.pdf (page number 2)
- ICCB-District Census Data-2016
- INST-Faculty Orie Division Agendas-2018.pdf
- INST-In-Serv Agenda-Fall 2017
- INST-Master Syllabus Template-2018.pdf
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 7)



- MAINT-Master Plan-06\_2016.pdf
- MAINT-Master Plan-06\_2016.pdf (page number 6)
- MISSION-Committee Mtg Min-04-26-17
- MISSION-Retreat Minutes-10\_07\_2016
- PLAN-Strategic Planning Overview-2018
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-07\_10\_2018
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-07\_10\_2018 (page number 43)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-07\_10\_2018
- PRES-BOT Minutes-07\_10\_2018 (page number 6)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-07\_11\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-07\_11\_2017.pdf (page number 5)
- PRES-BOT Mtg Packet-07\_11\_2017
- PRES-BOT Mtg Packet-07\_11\_2017 (page number 28)
- PRES-Inserv Agenda-Spring 2018
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf (page number 2)
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf (page number 3)
- PRES-Policy 2.1125 Mission Statement Review-03\_15\_2018.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 4)
- PUB-Commencement Program 2018
- PUB-Commencement Program 2018 (page number 12)
- PUB-Report to Our Community-2017
- PUB-Report to Our Community-2017 (page number 20)
- PUB-Summer Fall 2018 Class Schedule
- PUB-Summer Fall 2018 Class Schedule (page number 3)
- STUSER-Student Handbook 2018-2019.pdf
- STUSER-Student Handbook 2018-2019.pdf (page number 5)
- WHAT-Flyers for Classrooms-07\_06\_2018
- WHAT-Sabryn Griffin Design-07\_06\_2018
- WHAT-Values Memes-07\_06\_2018
- WHAT-What's Happening Initial Mtg Min-07\_27\_2017

## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

---

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

### Argument

---

#### 1C1

The college addresses its role in a multicultural society, beginning with its [mission statement](#). The mission's first sentence discusses providing educational opportunities across cultural and economic boundaries. The [Statement on General Education](#), contained in the Catalog, describes this eponymous concept as one way to prepare students to function in a diverse and changing world. Students will benefit from the ability to formulate their own values while remaining open-minded to the ideas of others as global society evolves. Degree-completing students will demonstrate awareness of a range of perspectives, have opportunities to appreciate and understand the fine arts, and explore individual values in today's multicultural world. Students are engaged with multiculturalism in various ways, such as a diversity module included in First Year Experience, availability of study abroad opportunities and inclusion of diversity experiences within most specific programs. More detail on these activities is available in **3B4**.

The [mission documents](#) contain other facets addressing the diversity of society. The Who We Serve section contains two additional statements, Diversity of Culture and Diversity of Purpose, which address the variety of our students' origins and purposes. The Diversity of Culture statement notes that our district population is diverse primarily based on [socioeconomic factors](#) and [age](#). The statement indicates that the college continues to serve groups with diverse characteristics, including age, disability, gender, national origin, race / ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status and special populations.

There is a low level of ethnic diversity in the district in terms of demographics; there is greater diversity in terms of [socioeconomic status](#). Rend Lake College's student population in 2017 was about 92.9% white, 4.5% black, 1.15% Hispanic, 0.7% Asian, and less than 0.4% American Indian or Alaskan native, with extremely small percentages of nonresident aliens and Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders ([Fact Book, p. 49](#); 2017 numbers converted to percentages). These figures closely reflect the population of the college district ([student ethnicity comparison](#)) and are nearly the same as [10 years ago](#). In 2017, students ages 17-20 made up 38.2% of the student body. Taken collectively, students aged 21-39 made up 34.5% of the total student population. This was followed by students age 40-55 at 17.8% ([Fact Book, p. 49](#)).

The [Diversity of Purpose](#) statement addresses some of the reasons students and the public may choose to engage with Rend Lake College. The most prevalent purpose is the provision of transfer and career technical education to traditional and non-traditional students. People may engage with the college for other reasons, including discovery / curiosity, personal enrichment, lifelong learning, health, new or enhanced skills and others. Regardless of culture or purpose, the [Common Outcome](#) portion of the mission documents indicates that each individual will be served equally with an open admission

policy and an opportunity for success.

In 2017, 1,065 students were enrolled in transfer degree programs ([Fact Book p. 56](#), total of AA, AS, AFA & AES programs). Another 960 were enrolled in Associate in Applied Science or occupational certificate programs. That year, 2,046 students (duplicated) registered for short-term vocational skills classes such as mandatory retraining classes for industry, food sanitation and the like; 3,337 students (duplicated) enrolled in dual-credit classes in FY 2017. In FY 2018, 2,804 enrolled in [non-credit offerings](#).

## 1C2

As referenced in **1B3**, the mission documents contain the [Who We Serve](#) section, which addresses diversity of culture and purpose. The college strives to provide cultural experiences for its students as well as the public. The main instrument for exposure is the college's cultural events offerings curated by the Cultural Arts Committee, comprised of faculty from the Liberal Arts Division. A modestly budgeted events schedule includes professional writers, visual artists, historians and public performances that inform from a wide variety of ideological and cultural perspectives. Often, classes whose learning outcomes directly connect to events (primarily Liberal Arts or First-Year Experience) are required to go; other students are encouraged through incentives and publicity such as the Cultural Arts Calendar mailer ([Cultural Arts Calendars 2017-2018](#)).

The college's Community and Corporate Education Division offers personal enrichment classes and cultural experiences to students and the public ([CCE Catalog, Spring 2018](#)). Hunter safety workshops and taxidermy classes are common offerings, appropriate for this rural area. CCE organizes and hosts several [Kids Camps](#) each summer, ranging from sports camps to offerings on topics such as science, art, cooking, gaming and more. The Division's Institute for Lifelong Learning program offers daytrips to cultural and historic locations ([CCE Catalog listing](#)). For example, Spring 2018 offerings included a tour exploring Missouri's role in the Civil War and a tour of the churches of St. Louis. Working with Collette Vacations, additional CCE travel opportunities have included more expansive trips such as week-long tours to experience fall in New England or to explore the Colorado Rockies ([CCE Catalog listing](#)).

Additional diverse populations served include veterans and adult learners. The college's Financial Aid Office includes a Veterans Services Coordinator, who acts as the liaison between the college and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This coordinator helps student veterans submit applications for military benefits and other financial aid, and officially certifies their enrollment to ensure they get timely payments. RLC also operates a grant-funded Adult Education and Literacy Department ([catalog description](#)), which offers Adult Basic Education, High School Equivalency / General Educational Development, and Job Readiness. The program serves students 16 years and older who are not enrolled in high school and who lack basic math and reading skills. Adult Education and Literacy classes are offered free of charge to eligible students.

Also in the Adult Education umbrella are programs designed to connect adult education and career technical instruction. The Bridge program helps GED students improve their skills while working toward certificates in allied health or manufacturing ([2018-2019 Catalog, pg. 31](#)). ICAPS (Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System) combines accelerated career training and job placement opportunities with personalized educational support ([2018-2019 Catalog, pg. 32](#)).

Two federal TRIO programs, Student Transfer & Retention Support and Upward Bound, serve

diverse groups and are further explained in **3D1**. STARS assists first-generation, low-income and / or disabled students; Upward Bound provides a variety of services to high school freshmen, sophomores and juniors who intend to earn a college degree ([catalog descriptions](#)).

The college addresses diversity and protection from discrimination in other areas. Disability access services are available to provide reasonable accommodations and equal access to programming for those with documented disabilities. The college is an equal opportunity employer and states this in job postings on its website. Help wanted advertisements in the newspaper feature the “EOE” acronym. The inside cover of the Catalog contains a [non-discrimination statement](#) indicating the college’s commitment to decisions involving students and employees being based on merit and free from discrimination in all its forms.

## Sources

---

- CCCE-Catalog-Spring 2017
- CCCE-Catalog-Spring 2017 (page number 11)
- CCCE-Kids Camps Brochure-Summer 2018
- CCE-Catalog-Spring 2018
- CCE-Catalog-Spring 2018 (page number 9)
- CCE-Catalog-Spring 2018 (page number 10)
- Cultural Events Calendar-2017 & 2018
- GED-Bridge Program-Catalog 2018-2019
- GED-ICAPS-catalog 2018-2019
- HR-FERPA Training Completions-Fall 2017
- HR-FERPA Training-2017
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 13)
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 49)
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 51)
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 58)
- IR-Fact Book-2008.pdf
- IR-Fact Book-2008.pdf (page number 23)
- IR-N1 Report-2018.pdf
- IR-N1 Report-2018.pdf (page number 2)
- PRES-Academic Integrity Definition Stu Hdbk-2018
- PRES-Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974-Cat page 46
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf (page number 2)
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf (page number 3)
- PRES-Pol 3.1012 Faculty Qualifications.pdf
- PRES-Pol 4.1400-Family Education Privacy Act-06\_14\_2018
- PRES-Pol 4.1405 Release of Stu Info-12\_15\_2017
- PRES-Policy 2.1200 Discrimination and Harassment-06\_22\_2018.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Gen Ed Statement
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Gen Ed Statement (page number 2)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Inside Cover
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Inside Cover (page number 2)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Pages 31-32.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Pages 31-32.pdf (page number 2)

- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Pages 31-32.pdf (page number 3)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Pages 35-36
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Pages 35-36 (page number 2)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 3)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 34)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 38)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 41)
- PUB-Catalog-Student Clubs-2018-2019
- PUB-Catalog-Student Clubs-2018-2019 (page number 2)
- PUB-STARS Brochure-06\_22\_2018
- PUB-Student Ethnicity RLC vs ICCB-06\_21\_2018
- STUSER- Student Clubs and Organizations-catalog-2018-2019
- STUSER-STARS Proj Objectives-2013-2017
- STUSER-Student Handbook 2018-2019.pdf
- STUSER-Student Handbook 2018-2019.pdf (page number 15)
- STUSER-Upward Bound Proj Objectives-2013-2017
- Who We Serve Statement-Catalog 2018-2019

## 1.D - Core Component 1.D

---

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

### Argument

---

#### 1D1

Rend Lake College's actions and decisions reflect a public obligation, and in fulfilling its core mission, the college contributes to the greater community. In 2014, Northern Illinois University's Center for Governmental Studies, working with the Illinois Community College Board, conducted an economic impact study (EIS) of the state's community college system. The overall report was then segmented for individual colleges. [RLC's report](#) shows that a program graduate of RLC can expect a total lifetime earnings gain of \$602,000 over a 40-year career, a 46 percent increase over those not completing a community college program; students who completed their education at RLC in 2011 saw a \$5,644 increase in earnings over pre-enrollment wages ([p. 4](#)).

The [EIS](#) shows that 81 percent of students who graduated in 2011 were employed in Illinois in 2012, which is slightly higher than the state average of 77 percent. Looking further back, 92 percent of students who graduated in 2005 were employed in Illinois within five years after completion. RLC students also make up a large portion of taxpayers in the district. In a 2002 cohort, both enrollees and completers had paid more than \$83 million in state taxes and nearly \$278.5 million in federal taxes combined from 2003-2012 ([p. 16](#)).

The college is among the largest employers in the district and generates additional economic benefits for local communities through expenditures and employment impacts. In 2012, almost 420 faculty and staff members lived in the district, with a total payroll of almost \$13.2 million ([p. 18](#)). RLC's purchases and expenditures also mix into the local economy. These direct and indirect expenditures approached a total of \$19.5 million in value and 500 jobs in the 2012 fiscal year.

The college offers dual credit and dual enrollment classes to in-district high school juniors and seniors in order to help them accelerate their college educations. Because tuition is waived for dual credit classes, in-district students and their families saved \$972,510 in tuition and \$432,620 in books in FY 2018 ([dual credit savings](#)). That year, 2,798 students took 8,862 credit hours across the 12 participating high schools in RLC's district. In some cases, students from in-district schools are transported to the Ina campus for instruction in areas such as automotive technology and welding, or in general education classes when the sending high school does not have a qualified instructor in a particular area. A statewide reciprocal agreement between Illinois community colleges allows out-of-district students to pay in-district tuition rates and attend programs at another community college if not offered in their residing district. Recently a similar agreement was signed between Rend Lake

College and John A. Logan College, a bordering college, expanding educational resources for district high schools through dual credit ([July 2018 board minutes](#)). This agreement provides a jump start for out-of-district high school students who plan to attend one of our programs not offered by JALC and vice versa.

Similar to dual credit in value to the community, dual enrollment classes are offered outside the normal high school day and thus do not result in high school credit. Tuition is offered at half cost for the first eight hours per semester, plus the cost of supplies, books and course fees. In FY 2017, 768 students took a total of 1,706 dual enrollment hours ([2017 Fact Book, p. 43](#)).

The college has two additional locations, the RLC MarketPlace in Mt. Vernon and the RLC Murphy-Wall Pinckneyville Campus. Mt. Vernon is the largest city in RLC's district and Pinckneyville is in the far west side of the district, and these locations provide greater access for our constituents. In addition to the education function, the MarketPlace is a benefit to the public good in other ways ([brochure](#)). It houses an Illinois One-Stop Center, which includes the Departments of Human Services and Employment Security, Office of Rehabilitation Services and Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse. The RLC Golf Outlet is owned and operated by the college. Studio RLC, the college's cosmetology program, offers services to the public, and there are privately-owned retail operations and a restaurant on site. Meeting space is available for rent to outside organizations, and Project CHILD, the grant-funded Child Care Resource and Referral program, is located here. The MarketPlace also holds Cruise Nights, hosted by the Kingsmen Auto Club, during the summers.

Another benefit is the various articulation agreements RLC has with four-year institutions ([agreements list](#)), allowing students to complete the requisite associate degree coursework here and transfer smoothly into related programs at four-year institutions. The college also rents space to Missouri Baptist University and Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, which offer their degree programs on campus and at the MarketPlace.

Some programs appropriate to our mission are retained despite reduced resources. An example is the continued support for the college's Adult Education and Literacy program, even in light of decreased support from the state and federal levels. Although offerings did need to be drawn back and a staff member was released, adult education is closely related to our mission and thus deserving of support ([board minutes](#), [board packet](#)). The RLC Foundation Children's Center operates at a loss each year but provides child care for students who need it, and serves as a learning lab for college students in the Early Childhood Education program. Projected revenues for 2018 were \$212,000, compared to projected expenses of \$280,078 ([FY 2018 budget](#)).

The college is a member of the one-stop delivery system in Local Workforce Area #25, which is affiliated with the Southern Illinois Workforce Development Board. RLC's Director of Adult Education, sits on this board. The SIWDB's purpose is to integrate education, business and labor in an effort to direct workforce development in the area. Similarly, the college provides office space at both the Ina campus and the MarketPlace for Man-Tra-Con, an organization which promotes economic development in the region by offering services needed to provide a quality regional workforce.

The college organizes the annual Job Search Party in Mt. Vernon. At this career fair, open to the public, job seekers can speak with representatives of business, industry and public sector entities about job openings. In April 2018, about 50 employers and other agencies registered for the event ([press release](#), [employer list](#)). The Illinois Regional College Fair, sponsored by the Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling, is held on the Ina campus in the fall. Various colleges and universities are invited to speak with potential students about program offerings; in 2017, 38 colleges, universities and institutions participated ([IRCF Program & Layout 2017](#)).



## 1D2

As a public community college, RLC does not have investors, a parent organization or external interests. The college's FY 2018 budget ([p. 3](#)) shows that 85.84%, or \$17.96 million, of budgeted operating fund expenses were projected to come from the Education Fund. The Education Fund includes categories such as Instruction, Academic Support, Student Services, Public Service / Community Education, Institutional Support, and Scholarships / Student Grants / Waivers. By comparison, 14.15%, or \$2.96 million, was projected from the Operations and Maintenance Fund.

## 1D3

Rend Lake College engages with its various constituencies as appropriate for its mission and capabilities. Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, made up primarily of educational offerings in the Allied Health, Applied Science and Technology, and Community and Corporate Education divisions, make use of Advisory Committees ([Advisory Committees Policy](#)), bodies made up of professionals who currently work in or have expertise in a specific program discipline. These councils are meant to keep faculty and administration informed about what skills the college's graduates will need in order to succeed in their respective fields. Advisory Committees have input into how the curriculum is designed and what skills are taught in classes ([example](#)).

A function of the Community and Corporate Education (CCE) Division is to serve as a link between the college and the community. CCE offers a slate of personal enrichment and professional development courses ([CCE Catalog](#)). Classes come in a wide range of subjects, including computer programs such as the Microsoft Office Suite, cooking, fiction writing, crafting, astronomy, golf, street rodding and others. In recent years, concealed carry training classes have been popular offerings after the passage of state legislation on the topic.

For several years, the college has partnered with Continental Tire in Mt. Vernon, the largest employer in RLC's district, to provide on-site education and training to its employees. This includes scheduling some classes on a staggered basis to accommodate shift changes among employees. In addition, students in RLC's Industrial Electronics and Maintenance Technician Associate in Applied Science Degree program have the option to intern with Continental Tire, with graduates often receiving priority consideration during the interview process.

In Summer 2018, RLC received approval from the U.S. Department of Labor to offer apprenticeships beginning Fall 2018 in four programs: Industrial Maintenance Technology, Basic Machining Technology, Truck Driver Training and Welding Technology ([press release](#), [example packet](#)). Through this program, students will work with local industry in paid apprenticeships.

New in 2018 is the partnership with between RLC and the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board to host the [Part-Time Police Academy](#) on campus. The college provides the facilities and our Criminal Justice students are able to observe. Another partnership is between RLC and SSM Health, in which we offer CPR and other types of training to their employees ([agreement](#)). The college also partners with numerous businesses and organizations to provide [clinical and on-the-job training](#) experiences in many programs.

RLC also partners with area organizations to facilitate entrepreneurship among young people. This



began with the Jefferson County CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) program, in which participating students in Jefferson County high schools (Mt. Vernon, Waltonville, Webber and Woodlawn) are exposed to real-life entrepreneurial situations, travel to various businesses in the area, hear from entrepreneurs, and ultimately design, implement and promote their own ideas for business ventures. Participating students earn college credit, and most of the participating high schools grant their students high school credit as well. The college provided the facilitator for CEO, and in 2018, RLC increased its commitment beyond Jefferson County by naming a Director of Entrepreneurship for this region, providing a stipend for this as well as for Entrepreneurship Facilitators as needed throughout the district ([Feb 2018 minutes](#)). For Fall 2018, 23 students planned to participate in the Jefferson County CEO, 11 in the Perry County CEO, and 14 in the Franklin County Edge program. Wayne County and Hamilton County also are planning to establish programs in the near future.

Rend Lake College participates in the Land of Lincoln / Southern Seven AmeriCorps ([brochure](#)) program, which sends participating students into the community to tutor and mentor at local schools. Participants are eligible to receive stipends and an education award ([Catalog](#)).

RLC Foundation staff and members of President's Cabinet visit high school award events to present scholarships and academic awards, and members of the Academic Advisement Center visit area high schools to meet, advise and register students. Dual credit is a major initiative, with 12 of our 13 in-district high schools participating. College staff visit these schools to register students for dual credit as well. In 2016, the college began publicizing [College Signing Days](#) by visiting each in-district high school and taking group pictures of all seniors enrolling at RLC. Preview Day and the new Prospect Day are events which invite prospective students and athletes to campus to meet instructional staff and coaches and take tours.

The [Kickstart Your Journey](#) event brings high school freshmen and sophomores to campus to learn some of the basics of college and of independent living. Topics discussed include financial literacy, budgeting, goal setting, college programs, and others. In recent years, the college has held the [Children's Health Fair](#) for pupils in kindergarten through sixth grade. They participate in health and physical fitness activities encouraging them to be active, eat better, and more. A popular project engaging local second-grade students is [Flat Stanley](#), which is part of the First-Year Experience program.

This [list of campus events](#), gleaned from a fiscal year's worth of board packets, includes these and several other additional examples of engagement with internal and external constituencies. Engagement of Students / Community / Faculty / Staff is one of the four focuses of our strategic planning process, and there are more than [50 items](#) relating to community engagement in the current plan. The Rec (recreational center) and the RLC Aquatics Center host public and private events. The Aquatics Center holds public open swim hours and is used by the Rend Lake Aquatic Youth Otters swim team, in partnership with the college.

The RLC Foundation is in the early stages of creating an Alumni Association through the use of social media and an online registration form. The Alumni and Community page on the RLC website contains this form and invites alumni to report their status and connect on social media, also promoting the #iamawarrior tag.

## Sources

---

- AREV-QI Institutional Report-Flat Stanley-2017
- AREV-QI Institutional Report-Flat Stanley-2017 (page number 5)

- ASAT-OFTC Adv Mtg Docs-03\_21\_2017
- ASAT-OFTC Adv Mtg Docs-03\_21\_2017 (page number 9)
- CCE-Catalog-Spring 2018
- ENR-IRCF Program & Layout-2017
- FINADM-Annual Budget-FY 2018
- FINADM-Annual Budget-FY 2018 (page number 6)
- FINADM-Annual Budget-FY 2018 Page 14
- FY 18 Strategic Plan- Community Engagement-07\_31\_2018
- INST-Articulation Agreements List-07\_26\_2018.pdf
- INST-Clinical and OJT Sites-08\_21\_2018
- INST-DOL Apprenticeship Certificate-08\_09\_2018
- INST-DOL Apprenticeship Packet-08\_09\_2018.pdf
- INST-DOL Apprenticeship Packet-08\_09\_2018.pdf (page number 7)
- INST-Dual Credit Savings-FY 2018.pdf
- INST-MOU with SSM Health-2015
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 41)
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 44)
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 45)
- PLAN-Strategic Plan Engagement Items-2018
- PLAN-Strategic Plan Improve Student Learning Items-2018
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-02\_13\_2018.pdf
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-02\_13\_2018.pdf (page number 55)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-12\_08\_2015.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-12\_08\_2015.pdf (page number 7)
- PRES-BOT Mtg Min-Dual Credit-07\_10\_2018.pdf
- PRES-BOT Mtg Packet-12\_08\_2015
- PRES-BOT Mtg Packet-12\_08\_2015 (page number 25)
- PRES-Events List for July 2017-June 2018
- PRES-Policy 2.1605 Advisory Councils-06\_22\_2018
- PUB-AmeriCorps Land of Lincoln brochure-2017
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Page 33
- PUB-Childrens Health Fair PR-April 2017
- PUB-College Signing Day Dates-2017 Dates
- PUB-DOL Apprenticeship PR-08\_08\_2018
- PUB-Economic Impact Report for RLC-2014.pdf
- PUB-Economic Impact Report for RLC-2014.pdf (page number 9)
- PUB-Economic Impact Report for RLC-2014.pdf (page number 19)
- PUB-Economic Impact Report for RLC-2014.pdf (page number 21)
- PUB-Economic Impact Report for RLC-2014.pdf (page number 23)
- PUB-Economic Impact Study PR-2014
- PUB-Job Search Party PR-2018
- PUB-Kickstart Your Journey PR-March 2016
- PUB-MarketPlace Brochure-06\_22\_2018
- PUB-Part-Time Police Academy-02\_23\_2018.pdf
- PUB-Part-Time Police Academy-02\_23\_2018.pdf (page number 2)
- RLM-Job Search Party 2018 Attendee List-04\_19\_2018

## **1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary**

---

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

### **Summary**

---

Rend Lake College has a student-focused mission appropriate for its area, with offerings of associate degrees and occupational certificates available to meet goals of transfer or workforce entry. The mission review process has been greatly improved, with new policy placing the mission statement before the Board of Trustees annually, and greater integration of the mission within the strategic planning process. The institution remains community-focused despite its rural location, supported by initiatives such as the Jefferson County CEO and other high school-based entrepreneurship programs, Kickstart Your Journey, the partnership with the Rend Lake Radio Controlled Aircraft club, and others.

The mission documents are articulated publicly in multiple ways. The college has improved in its efforts to promote the mission documents to new hires, as these are now included in the Employee Handbook and as part of the orientation process. As an institution, our employees' focus on students is assumed, but we can be better at articulating this.

### **Sources**

---

*There are no sources.*

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

---

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

### 2.A - Core Component 2.A

---

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

#### Argument

---

##### Financial

Financial integrity is assured in several ways, particularly via [approval of the annual budget](#) and monthly public board meetings ([sample agenda](#)). The Board of Trustees approves expenditures ([meeting minutes](#)) and reviews [financial information](#) at each month's meeting, and the monthly check registry is available at the meeting as well. Major expenditures are projected and reviewed by President's Cabinet each year during the strategic planning process ([overview](#)), which itself feeds into the preparation of the [budget](#). The budget sits for public inspection for 30 days as required by law. A [public hearing](#) is held on the budget prior to adoption, and [public hearings](#) also are held in the event of bond issuances. The [annual tax levy](#) is set in accordance with Truth in Taxation laws ([minutes](#)). The college undergoes an [annual audit](#), which is presented to and accepted by the Board, generally after a presentation from a member of the auditing firm ([board item](#)).

The audit for FY 2017 was a clean audit with no findings, but it was a qualified opinion ([audit, p. 88](#)). When the state legislature passed a budget on July 6, 2017, after 736 days without one, there was clear direction [in the legislation](#) and from the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) as to which fiscal years to record them ([allocation tables](#)). Simply stated, the budget bill indicated that the money allocated for FY 2017 should be recorded in FY 2017, and money allocated for FY 2018 should be recorded in FY 2018. ICCB issued matching guidance ([ICCB year-end notes](#)). However, the college's auditors argued that this did not agree with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and qualified the audit ([p. 2, p. 25](#)). Other community colleges in Illinois in similar situations, with different auditing firms, did not receive qualified audits. As a direct result of the qualified opinion, the Department of Education automatically placed RLC on Heightened Cash Monitoring 1 status, meaning the institution must expend projected Pell amounts before actually drawing down Pell funds. The college, however, is not financially deficient; the HCM1 designation is simply a reflection of the qualified opinion.

The college notified its HLC liaison, Dr. John Marr, of this situation, and the college and Dr. Marr contacted the ICCB. Ellen Andres, the ICCB's Chief Financial Officer, wrote a strong [letter to DoE](#) supporting RLC's financial status and requesting that RLC be removed from HCM1. "The ICCB strongly believes that Rend Lake College is in a strong financial position and should not be penalized for attempting to convey the true financial standing of the college district to the recipients of its financial statements," the letter reads. The Department of Education, however, refused to remove the HCM1 designation ([letter from DoE](#)).

Audits for FY 2015 and 2016 were unqualified but did contain findings, in both cases centered on financial aid processes. In 2015, the [findings](#) involved the return of funds calculation being inaccurate due to an incorrect start date and attendance reporting issues, and error reports not corrected and submitted within the required 10 days due in part to a National Student Clearinghouse upgrade issue. The latter finding was repeated in 2016 ([audit](#)). However, these items were corrected in 2017, which had [no findings](#).

Additional information about budgeting and monitoring expenses can be found in **5A**, and the strategic planning process is described in greater detail in **5C**.

## Academics

Students are governed by the rights, responsibilities and Student Code of Conduct contained in the [Student Handbook](#). The content of the Handbook covers topics such as the complaint process, student discipline, academic integrity and several other relevant policies and procedures. Specifically, the [academic integrity portion](#) of the Handbook includes the college's definition of academic dishonesty, labels it as a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, and includes the procedures for addressing it. The [Handbook](#) also contains procedures for addressing student academic complaints. Additionally, several career technical programs have their own handbooks containing rules and guidelines specific to those programs.

RLC's [policy](#) on Performance Evaluation and Tenure of Faculty Members addresses the college's commitment to its educational program: "The single most important responsibility of the Rend Lake College Board, faculty, and staff is to provide a quality instructional program designed to promote effective student learning." Faculty are the content experts in their areas and have ownership of academic content. Integrity of classes and curricula is addressed by the approval and review process, outlined in the Curriculum Development and Course Approval [policies](#). The college's Academic Council reviews and approves any curricular changes ([example agenda and minutes](#)), additions or withdrawals prior to sending these to the chief academic officer. These are then sent to the Board of Trustees ([board minutes](#)) for approval and, if warranted, submission to ICCB for action. One of the college's Computer Science faculty also serves as an instructional designer. She has undergone the Quality Matters training and handles the day-to-day work of Quality Matters assessment. In addition, she teaches an instructional methods course geared for RLC instructors. More on this topic is found in **3A3**.

Academic integrity is further assured by regional accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission. Several other programs have specific accreditations as well, while others are [approved](#) by agencies such as the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation and the Illinois Department of Public Health. The college undergoes the ICCB recognition process every five years ([recognition certificate](#)), ensuring the college meets ICCB's instructional, administrative, financial, facility and equipment standards ([ICCB Recognition Manual](#)).

Regular evaluation of instructors adds to academic integrity and is addressed in detail in **3C3**. Non-tenured faculty are evaluated by their dean, vice president or designee at least once each semester for the first two and a half years of employment. Tenured faculty are evaluated at least once every three years. Tenure eligibility is addressed in accordance with [Article IIIb](#) of the Illinois Public Community College Act. Part-time faculty are evaluated at the discretion of deans or program directors.

Instructor qualifications are grounded in [Policy 3.1012](#) and are discussed in **3C2**. Assessment of student learning is addressed more thoroughly in **4B**.

### Personnel

Integrity in personnel issues is addressed in multiple ways. The college is an equal opportunity employer and announces this in [job postings](#) and at [www.rlc.edu/jobs](http://www.rlc.edu/jobs). Jobs are advertised in area newspapers and in several online formats, and the procedure for screening, interviewing and selecting full-time employees is covered in the [Selection of Personnel](#) policy. Interview committees, which include the appropriate Cabinet member, are convened to interview selected candidates. Interview committee members sign a [form](#) indicating they have read the job description and advertisement and will recommend a candidate based on merit, and listing the qualifications and rationale for recommending a candidate. Upon the President's approval of the recommendation, the candidate is taken to the Board for approval ([example](#)). The President or designee is responsible for the recruitment, appointment, evaluation and termination of part-time personnel. Offers of employment are contingent on background checks ([Policy 2.1700](#)). The [Employee Handbook](#) includes policies on workplace expectations, ethics, conduct and more. Employees with financial duties and all board members are required annually to file a [statement of economic interest](#) with the county clerk. The [third chapter of the RLC Policy Manual](#) is dedicated to employee matters, and others such as [nepotism](#) and [ethics](#) are addressed in Chapter 2. In 2016, all job descriptions were reviewed to ensure currency and compliance with proposed Department of Labor regulations ([minutes](#)).

Faculty and staff qualifications are addressed in **3C2** and **5A4**, respectively. Evaluations of faculty members are addressed in **3C3**. Non-faculty personnel are evaluated as described in [Policy 3.1200](#). Evaluations may be conducted at any time, with written evaluations for all personnel to be completed by June 30 of each even-numbered year and placed in their employee file.

The college publishes the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 notice in both its [Catalog](#) and [Student Handbook](#) as well as on its website and public notification bulletin boards found in every student-accessed building on campus and off-site locations. Publicly accessed documents include contact information for filing a complaint. Internally, the act is located in the RLC Policy Manual ([4.1405](#)). This policy, along with [Policy 4.1400](#), Student Records, were developed from the Illinois School Student Records Act, which provides additional guidance in the management of and access to sensitive student records.

To ensure clarity of expectations regarding personal information use, faculty and staff are informed and trained in FERPA at regular intervals at [in-services](#), including Part-time Faculty Orientation, where mandatory attendance of part-time and dual credit instructors is required. In Fall 2017, online FERPA training was issued to employees through Workplace Answers, with 204 out of 267 registrants completing it ([FERPA Training Documentation](#)).

The college also works with Workplace Answers to provide online training regarding Title IX, the Violence Against Women Act, the Illinois Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act and other pertinent federal and state regulations and institutional policies. Training modules are sent to all faculty and staff, and to any student taking at least one credit class on campus. The college maintains a dedicated webpage at [www.rlc.edu/titleix-policy](http://www.rlc.edu/titleix-policy) containing the college's policy on discrimination, harassment, sexual assault and related offenses, as well as contact information, reporting procedures and survivor resources ([Policy 2.1200](#)). Annually, this policy and the URL of the webpage are sent by email to the entire student, faculty and staff population.

### Auxiliary

The college's various auxiliary functions operate with integrity. The RLC Bookstore was one of the first in the state to implement a textbook rental program, designed to save students money. Faculty have cooperated in longer implementation cycles, also leading to lower costs. Computers and other supplies, such as tool kits, are available for purchase using financial aid.

Student athletes are bound by the [Student Athlete Handbook](#), which includes the Athletic Department philosophy and guidelines on subjects such as eligibility, financial aid requirements, attendance at the Learning Enhancement Center, residency, the Rend Lake College image, the Student Athlete Code of Conduct, substance abuse, and more. Coaching staff must abide by the [Coaches Handbook](#), which includes discussion of the responsibilities of coaches, fundraising, sexual harassment, mandated reporting, program administration and privacy, among others.

The RLC MarketPlace (RLCMP), the college's Mt. Vernon location, leases space to the state for its One-Stop Center. This houses offices for the state departments of Employment Security, Human Services and others and creates a revenue stream to maintain the site. The RLCMP provides class space in the largest city in the district, as well as a location for registration and advisement.

The college has availed itself of grants when possible, and these are governed by comprehensive policies and procedures ([RLC Policy Manual, Section 5](#)) to ensure proper reporting and use of funds. Grants must first be approved via the [Grant Development Approval Request](#) form and must be within the scope of the college's mission. The [Grant Report Review](#) form also was created to ensure the integrity of needed reports, and this goes through an approval process as well.

### Fair and Ethical Behavior

The college's Board of Trustees establishes and follows ethics policies designed to avoid impropriety and to comply with the [State Officials and Employees Ethics Act](#). In particular, these include policies [1.1320](#) and [2.1275](#), which establish a Board of Trustees Code of Ethics and an employee Code of Ethics, respectively. Policies and procedures are established by the Board upon recommendation of the President. These can be found in the [RLC Policy Manual](#), the entire first section of which is devoted to Board operations and includes, among others, policies on the [authority and powers of the Board](#) and [confidentiality](#).

New board members are required to complete the Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act training provided by the Office of the Illinois Attorney General at least once during their service. Illinois Public Act 099-0692 requires community college trustees elected or appointed after Jan. 1, 2017, to complete four hours of trustee training during their first, third, and fifth years in office, with topics including ethics, audits, fiduciary responsibility, and more. Six current RLC board members have completed this training through the Illinois Community College Trustees Association, and this is indicated on the Board of Trustees page of the college website. The seventh member was newly seated in August 2018.

### **Sources**

---



- AC-Academic Council Agenda and Minutes Example-06\_04\_2018
- ATHL-Coaches Handbook 2017-2018
- ATHL-Student Athlete Handbook 2017-2018
- BUSOFF-Audit-FY 2015
- BUSOFF-Audit-FY 2015 (page number 114)
- BUSOFF-Audit-FY 2016
- BUSOFF-Audit-FY 2016 (page number 94)
- BUSOFF-Audit-FY 2017.pdf
- BUSOFF-Audit-FY 2017.pdf (page number 7)
- BUSOFF-Audit-FY 2017.pdf (page number 30)
- BUSOFF-Audit-FY 2017.pdf (page number 99)
- BUSOFF-Board Financials Template-July 2018
- BUSOFF-Course Fees-Feb 2018
- FINADM-Annual Budget-FY 2018
- GRANTS-Grant Approval Request Form
- GRANTS-Grant Report Review Form
- HR-Employee Handbook-07\_10\_2018.pdf
- HR-Employee Recommendation Form-05\_10\_2018.pdf
- HR-FERPA Training Completions-Fall 2017
- HR-FERPA Training-2017
- HR-Statement of Economic Interest Form-12\_20\_2017.pdf
- ICCB Recognition Manual-FY 2016-2020
- ICCB-FY 2017 Year-End Notes-08\_04\_2017
- ICCB-FY 2017 Year-End Notes-08\_04\_2017 (page number 2)
- ICCB-FY17 and FY18 final budgets
- ICCB-FY17 and FY18 final budgets (page number 2)
- IL State Budget 2016 Public Act 100-0021
- IL State Budget 2016 Public Act 100-0021 (page number 638)
- IL-Public Community College Act.pdf
- IL-Public Community College Act.pdf (page number 121)
- IL-State Officials and Employees Ethics Act.pdf
- INST-Example Cost Sheets-07\_16\_2018
- INST-ICCB Recognition Certificate-2017
- INST-Program Approvals-07\_18\_2016
- PLAN-Strategic Planning Overview-2018
- PRES-BOT Agenda Financials-07\_10\_2018
- PRES-BOT Agenda Financials-07\_10\_2018 (page number 4)
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-03\_13\_2018.pdf
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-03\_13\_2018.pdf (page number 84)
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-06\_12\_2018.pdf
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-06\_12\_2018.pdf (page number 27)
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-09\_12\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-09\_12\_2017.pdf (page number 26)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-06\_12\_2018.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-06\_12\_2018.pdf (page number 11)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-08\_09\_2016.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-08\_09\_2016.pdf (page number 3)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_12\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_12\_2017.pdf (page number 2)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_12\_2017.pdf (page number 5)



- PRES-BOT Minutes-11\_14\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-11\_14\_2017.pdf (page number 3)
- PRES-Cabinet Mtg Min-Job Descriptions-2016
- PRES-Curr Dev and Course Approval Policies-07\_16\_2018
- PRES-DOE Letter re HCM1-06\_11\_2018
- PRES-Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974-Cat page 46
- PRES-Letter from ICCB to DOE-05\_03\_2018.pdf
- PRES-Letter from ICCB to DOE-05\_03\_2018.pdf (page number 2)
- PRES-Pol 3.1012 Faculty Qualifications.pdf
- PRES-Pol 3.1205 Fac Perform Eval and Tenure-11\_03\_2017.pdf
- PRES-Pol 3.1205 Fac Perform Eval and Tenure-11\_03\_2017.pdf (page number 2)
- PRES-Pol 4.1400-Family Education Privacy Act-06\_14\_2018
- PRES-Pol 4.1405 Release of Stu Info-12\_15\_2017
- PRES-Policy 1.1305 Powers and Duties of Board-07\_13\_2018
- PRES-Policy 1.1315 Confidentiality-07\_18\_2018
- PRES-Policy 1.1320 Board Ethics-07\_18\_2018
- PRES-Policy 2.1200 Discrimination and Harassment-06\_22\_2018.pdf
- PRES-Policy 2.1275 Employee Ethics-07\_18\_2018
- PRES-Policy 2.1280 Nepotism-07\_30\_2018.pdf
- PRES-Policy 2.1700 Background Checks-07\_16\_2018
- PRES-Policy 3.1010 Selection of Personnel-07\_11\_2018
- PRES-Policy 3.1200 Evaluations of Non-Faculty-07\_12\_2018
- PRES-RLC Faculty Contract 2018-2021
- PRES-RLC Faculty Contract 2018-2021 (page number 13)
- PRES-RLC Policy Manual-07-11-2018
- PRES-RLC Policy Manual-07-11-2018 (page number 81)
- PRES-RLC Policy Manual-07-11-2018 (page number 160)
- PUB-Job Posting Examples-07\_16\_2018
- STUSER-Student Handbook 2018-2019.pdf
- STUSER-Student Handbook 2018-2019.pdf (page number 18)
- STUSER-Student Handbook 2018-2019.pdf (page number 25)
- STUSER-Student Handbook 2018-2019.pdf (page number 26)
- STUSER-Student Handbook 2018-2019.pdf (page number 28)

## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

---

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

### Argument

---

Rend Lake College makes useful information readily available to students and the public through various platforms. The most comprehensive of these is the college's website, [www.rlc.edu](http://www.rlc.edu). The page at [www.rlc.edu/tuition](http://www.rlc.edu/tuition) includes the college's current tuition rates and universal fees, a table of estimated costs and a link to a net price calculator. This URL is included in publications such as the [RLC Catalog](#) as a way to direct users to the most current tuition information. The page includes rates for in-district, out-of-district, out-of-state and out-of-country students. Linked to this page are the [list of course fees](#) with justifications; the net price calculator, using a template from the National Center for Education Statistics; and other Financial Aid Department resources. [Program cost sheets](#) showing estimated tuition, books, fees and supplies for programs, were added to the site in 2018. It is approaching time for a refresh of the website design to streamline navigation.

In the particular case of the Catalog, which covers an academic year and is printed a few months before it becomes official, the URL only is provided because tuition rates may change in the interim. The printed [class schedules](#) include the actual tuition rates and universal fees. They are included here because the twice-annual printing provides ample opportunity to include the most current rates. Tuition also is included in other publications such as the [Report to Our Community](#) and the [Fact Book](#).

Tuition rates are subject to Board of Trustees approval, and the rates are set at the February meeting each year ([2018 minutes](#)). This action is included in the [meeting highlights](#) distributed to area television stations, radio stations, newspapers, and other interested parties. They also are available on our news page at [www.rlc.edu/pressroom](http://www.rlc.edu/pressroom). Cost sheets for the various program offerings are available on the college's website in the Academics section; these forms show estimated tuition, fees, books and supplies for specific programs. The [course fee list](#), including brief justifications, is available on the website, as is the [book list](#).

[Admission](#) and [graduation requirements](#) are outlined in the RLC Catalog, including [special admissions requirements](#) for particular programs. The [Catalog](#) is available in print and online, and an online [addendum](#) is maintained to make immediate note of changes. Admission information is detailed on the college website. [Brochures](#) containing information about the various programs are available online, as are course sequence outlines.

Accreditation relationships are readily accessible. Affiliation with the Higher Learning Commission is presented on a dedicated page one click away from the home page, and the Mark of Affiliation is featured there and on several second-level pages throughout the website. Programmatic accreditation relationships are announced in the Catalog ([Page 16](#)) and in the respective program outlines, and online in both the specific program pages and on the Student Consumer Information page.

Information about full-time faculty and staff is presented in several locations. The Catalog contains names, titles, contact information and general educational information in the [faculty and staff listing](#). There is a directory linked to the home page of the college website, and contact information for

faculty involved in a particular educational program can be found on that program's web page. In other cases, such as advisement, financial aid and STARS, the staff members in those areas are listed along with their contact information.

In addition to the official college Catalog, other documents are publicly available. The RLC Policy Manual is linked to the website. [Course schedules](#) are available in print and online. These publications include the schedule of specific classes as well as information about registration procedures, tuition and fees, textbook availability, important dates and more. The official [Student Handbook](#) is available in both formats and contains the Student Code of Conduct and other policies and information.

Institutional research information is available online at the RLC Achieves page, created in 2017 and available one click away from the home page. This web page includes information about academic honors, student success rates, class size, [Community College Survey of Student Engagement](#) results, the [institutional assessment summary](#) and more. The college's [Fact Book](#), a compilation of a significant amount of institutional research information, is linked here for public viewing. Also linked to this page are the college's [Resource Allocation and Management Plan](#), District Site and Construction [Master Plan](#), and the We Are Warriors section, outlining the various successes of students, faculty, staff and the institution itself. A recently developed [dashboard](#) showing enrollment and other information at the division level is linked to this page as well. With additional work, the dashboard ultimately will show retention and completion data at the program level.

Important policy information is available, including [academic](#) and [financial aid](#) policies, both in the catalog and online. There is a dedicated page for the college's sexual harassment and discrimination policy, and the Student Consumer Information page contains various information and disclosures required by regulations.

Communication with the public is further enabled by the college's social media presence. This includes platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr and others.

## Sources

---

- Assess-Student Success Summary Report 2017-2018 07\_20\_2018.pdf
- BOOKS-Booklist-Fall 2018
- BUSOFF-Course Fees-Feb 2018
- INST-Example Cost Sheets-07\_16\_2018
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf
- IR-CCSSE 2017 Key Findings
- IR-Dashboard Example-08\_16\_2018
- MAINT-Master Plan-06\_2016.pdf
- MAINT-RAMP Report-FY2020
- PRES-BOT Minutes-02\_13\_2018.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-02\_13\_2018.pdf (page number 6)
- PUB-Brochure Samples-07\_19\_2018
- PUB-Catalog Addendum-2018-2019
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Academic Policy Section
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Faculty-Staff Listing
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Financial Aid Section
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Page 16
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Page 22

- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Pages 21-22
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Pages 52-56.pdf
- PUB-Meeting Highlights Samples-07\_19\_2018
- PUB-Report to Our Community-2017
- PUB-Summer Fall 2018 Class Schedule
- PUB-Summer Fall 2018 Class Schedule (page number 4)
- STUSER-Student Handbook 2018-2019.pdf

## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

---

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

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Argument

---

#### 2C1

The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution. The RLC Board of Trustees, governed by the [Illinois Public Community College Act](#), consists of seven trustees elected to six-year terms and a student trustee elected to a one-year term. The Board approves several documents important to the preservation and enhancement of the institution, including the [annual budget](#), the [Resource Allocation and Management Plan](#), and the College District Site and Construction [Master Plan](#). In recent years, the board has had multiple opportunities to deliberate on important matters as the state was gridlocked in a budget impasse. Significant examples include the two \$5 million bond issuances in 2016 and 2017, discussed in **5A1**.

The Board made the decision to increase the college's tuition by \$15 to \$110 per credit hour ([Feb. 2016 minutes](#)), and to implement a universal facilities fee of \$5 per credit hour ([Feb. 2015 packet](#)) and raise the universal tech fee from \$5 to \$10 per credit hour ([Feb. 2017 packet](#)). This was done as a way to generate additional revenue in response to the state budget gridlock.

While the college has been able to avoid mass layoffs, personnel matters have been part of the college's strategy and thus Board deliberations. After the departure of the Vice President of Academic Instruction in [July 2015](#), the position remained vacant until those duties eventually were combined with the Vice President of Career Technical Instruction under the [Vice President of Instruction title](#). The Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and the Dean of Admissions and Enrollment Management were not replaced after their departures, with those duties now distributed among other employees. In 2016, college officials opted to forego staff raises in light of the state budget impasse, instead giving staff Fridays off during the summer term. When the state budget was approved in July 2017, the board approved a 1% staff raise, and an average 1.99% faculty raise as part of union negotiations.

Board meetings are open to the public as required by law, with agendas distributed to area media and posted online and on bulletin boards in the Student Center, where the meetings are held, as well as in the Administration Building, which houses the President's Office. The Board conducts as much discussion as feasible in open session, and spends less time in [closed session](#) under the current administration than in years past. If there is no business worthy of closed session discussion, a closed

session is not held, although it is a standing agenda item. Minutes and agendas of previous meetings for the past several years are available on the college website.

## 2C2

The college's Board of Trustees has the opportunity to hear multiple reports at each monthly meeting ([agenda example](#), [minutes](#)). These include reports from the RLC Foundation, the Illinois Community College Trustees Association board representative, the Academic Council, an accreditation update and comments from the college President. Public comment also is a standing agenda item. The Board receives additional reports as needed, such as reports on the [annual audit](#), [enrollment reports](#), results of the [Great Colleges to Work For survey](#), [demonstration of the college website](#), and others. On the occasions of approval of the annual budget, truth in taxation matters and bond issuances, public hearings are held at which the public is invited to give comment.

An example of Board consideration is the selection of a new college president. During the most recent process in 2012, candidates were interviewed not only by the Board, but by President's Cabinet, faculty, and staff. The Board considered the input of each of these three groups before making a final decision on an appointment. Another is the revision of the RLC Policy Manual. This was done by a committee, reviewed by President's Cabinet and eventually was taken to the Board in sections over a period of months, from March to July 2017 ([agendas](#)). This was intended to allow the Board ample time to review the sections of the revised manual prior to voting on approval.

The District Site and Construction [Master Plan](#) was created based in part on input received from both internal and external constituents. This planning document involved input from the President's Cabinet, faculty and department heads; members of the college's Advisory Committees, made up of area business and industry leaders; and from public and professional sources, such as Chamber of Commerce meetings, high school administrators and counselors, and others. The Master Plan serves as a guide for RLC's constructed environment and is intended to help guide and establish priorities for future expansion.

## 2C3

Preservation of the Board's independence from undue influence is addressed in multiple ways. The Board of Trustees Code of Ethics policy ([1.1320](#)) is based in large part on relevant state regulations such as the [State Officials and Employees Ethics Act](#) and addresses such things as prohibited political activities, a ban on gifts, confidentiality and others. All board members are required annually to submit a [statement of economic interest](#) disclosing pertinent information such as official capacities in professional organizations in which a certain level of pay is received, rendering of professional services to units of government for pay in excess of a particular level, and more.

Donations for scholarships and college improvements are handled by the Rend Lake College Foundation, a corporate entity separate from the college which operates under a [memorandum of understanding](#) with the college and is governed by a separate [Board of Directors](#) ([sample minutes](#)) with accompanying [bylaws](#). The [MOU](#) states there is a limit of two people who can serve on both the RLC Board of Trustees and the RLC Foundation Board of Directors at any given time. The college President sits on the Foundation Board as an ex-officio non-voting member, and thus can keep the Foundation Board apprised of institutional perspectives and happenings.

## 2C4

Daily management of RLC is delegated to the administration. Evidence of this comes partially by what is not present. There are no standing institutional committees, councils or other bodies on which board members maintain a presence, other than when there is a presidential search. The Board does not have an office on campus. The President is responsible for the overall operation and general administration of the college ([Policy 1.5100](#)) and is responsible to the Board for the total college program. Day-to-day operation is facilitated by administrators, who share a set of common duties and responsibilities ([Policy 1.5200](#)). The principal advisory group to the President is President's Cabinet ([Policy 1.5305](#)), which generally meets weekly. The more expansive President's Council ([Policy 1.5300](#)) meets monthly and is designed for two-way communication ([July 2018 minutes](#)).

The Board does not directly dictate the college's education program. The Board does approve curricular actions and authorizes their submission to the Illinois Community College Board for action, but these originate from the Academic Council or the office of the Vice President of Instruction. During monthly Board of Trustees meetings, the Academic Council holds a standing agenda item to report on the group's activities. [Policy 1.1305](#), Item S, dictates that the Board will consider and act upon program and curricular offerings of the college. The college's Academic Council ([AC Bylaws](#)) is tasked with studying matters relating to education, including initiation of new programs, graduation requirements, recommendation for classroom and technological enhancements, and is further discussed in **3A1**.

## Sources

---

- AC-Bylaws-2017
- FINADM-Annual Budget-FY 2018
- HR-Statement of Economic Interest Form-12\_20\_2017.pdf
- IL-Public Community College Act.pdf
- IL-State Officials and Employees Ethics Act.pdf
- MAINT-Master Plan-06\_2016.pdf
- MAINT-RAMP Report-FY2020
- PRES-BOT Agenda-07\_10\_2018
- PRES-BOT Agenda-07\_10\_2018 (page number 4)
- PRES-BOT Agendas March-July 2017
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-02\_14\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-02\_14\_2017.pdf (page number 35)
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-11\_08\_2016.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-02\_09\_2016.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-02\_09\_2016.pdf (page number 5)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-04\_10\_2018.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-04\_10\_2018.pdf (page number 9)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-04\_12\_2016.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-04\_12\_2016.pdf (page number 4)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-06\_12\_2018.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-06\_12\_2018.pdf (page number 3)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-06\_13\_2017 Special.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-06\_13\_2017 Special.pdf (page number 4)

- PRES-BOT Minutes-07\_12\_2016.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-07\_12\_2016.pdf (page number 4)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-08\_08\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-08\_08\_2017.pdf (page number 4)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-08\_08\_2017.pdf (page number 7)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_12\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_12\_2017.pdf (page number 5)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_13\_2016.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_13\_2016.pdf (page number 6)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-11\_08\_2016
- PRES-BOT Minutes-11\_08\_2016 (page number 3)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-11\_14\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-11\_14\_2017.pdf (page number 3)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-12\_13\_2016.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-12\_13\_2016.pdf (page number 3)
- PRES-BOT Mtg Packet-02\_03\_2015.pdf
- PRES-BOT Mtg Packet-02\_03\_2015.pdf (page number 103)
- PRES-BOT\_Minutes-06\_09\_2015.pdf
- PRES-BOT\_Minutes-06\_09\_2015.pdf (page number 8)
- PRES-Cabinet and Council Policy and Rosters-07\_13\_2018
- PRES-Closed Session Frequency-08\_06\_2018.pdf
- PRES-Policy 1.1305 Powers and Duties of Board-07\_13\_2018
- PRES-Policy 1.1320 Board Ethics-07\_18\_2018
- PRES-Policy 1.5100 Presidential Dutes-07\_20\_2018
- PRES-Policy 1.5200 Administrator Duties-07\_20\_2018.pdf
- PRES-President's Council Minutes-07\_09\_2018
- RLCF-Board of Directors-08\_01\_2018
- RLCF-BOD Minutes October 2017
- RLCF-Bylaws-01\_04\_2018
- RLCF-Foundation MOU-08\_06\_2018.pdf
- RLCF-Foundation MOU-08\_06\_2018.pdf (page number 2)
- RLCF-Foundation MOU-08\_06\_2018.pdf (page number 4)



## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

---

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

### Argument

---

#### 2D

The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. Rend Lake College's policy on academic freedom is explicitly spelled out in the Faculty Contract ([Article IX, Academic Freedom](#)). It uses the American Association of University Professors' definition as a model and outlines the freedoms and limited restrictions on the content of research and discourse. Academic freedom is also referenced as a principle in the college's [Anti-Discrimination Policy](#) found in the RLC Policy Manual, Student Handbook, Employee Handbook, and the college's website. The principal mechanisms to address academic freedom grievances and complaints is through the college's Academic Council; however, no such concerns have been discussed for more than a decade. A 2018 survey indicated that 96% of full-time faculty and 98% of part-time/dual credit faculty had no concerns with academic freedom ([Academic Freedom Survey](#)). The few concerns noted were minor in nature. The college recognizes that the uniformity of a course's content achieved through a master syllabus and required texts needs to be implemented under the fundamental principle of academic freedom. Therefore, the college opens up discourse on syllabi, textbooks, and course content with dual credit and part-time faculty through the annual Faculty Orientation Day, as well as other programmatic and faculty development processes like Advisory Committees, and a semi-annual English Retreat ([English Retreat Summary Minutes](#)).

### Sources

---

- Assess-Student Success Summary Report 2017-2018 07\_20\_2018.pdf
- ENGL-Agenda English Retreat 2016--Summary Noted Added
- INST-Academic Freedom-Fac Contract-2018-2021
- INST-Fac Surv Responses-PT- DC-Academic Freedom-Summer 2018
- INST-SLD PT-DC Surv-Diversity-Summer 2018
- LA-English Retreat Agenda and Summary-2016
- Pol 2.1200 Discrimination Policy-06\_14\_2018
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf
- PRES-Policy 2.1200 Discrimination and Harassment-06\_22\_2018.pdf

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

---

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

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Argument

---

#### 2E1

Scholarly research is not part of RLC's mission, and research and publication traditionally performed at research institutions is infrequent; however, review of full-time faculty research and publication occurs through the salary movement process as outlined in **3C4**. The Vice President of Instruction will review the nature of research and the quality of published work before final approval for salary movement.

RLC understands that faculty, staff and students need to follow ethical research, information management and publication processes. It provides guidance and oversight for research integrity to all college personnel and students. Student research integrity is overseen predominantly through instruction and guidance in the writing course sequence of ENGL 1101, required for all degree-seeking students, and ENGL 1102, required for A.A. and A.S. degrees. The [English 1101 syllabus template](#) is required for use by all faculty who teach the course. It includes [standardized prompts](#). Four of the five required essays have research components. The syllabus also requires plagiarism be addressed and library resources be introduced. All sections of 1101 then teach basic research integrity while students write experiential essays in different rhetorical modes; in 1102 research skills are developed in preparation for upper-level course work ([English 1102 syllabus template](#)).

Additionally, the Blackboard LMS includes a Safe Assign feature available for use on any course work. This service checks against intentional academic dishonesty by comparing student writing with other documents submitted to Blackboard or available on the Internet, but it can also be used as an instructional tool for showing how unintentional plagiarism can occur if sources are not cited properly.

Online resources also support research integrity. The OWL at Purdue is used by all full-time English faculty, and most part-time and dual credit. It is a primary resource for teaching research integrity and proper formatting. Also, the Learning Resource Center (LRC) web page includes links to two online resources to help evaluate the quality of research ([CRAAP Test](#), [Five W's of Website Evaluation](#)). The reference librarian outreach, in all its various forms, supports the integrity of student research as detailed in **3D5**.

A number of policies guide ethical information management for college personnel. Policies on grant management are found in Section Five of the RLC Policy Manual, beginning with Policy [5.1600](#). The LRC keeps an updated list of public performance right holdings. It is the responsibility of the LRC to seek out those materials that have "educational use" licensing to ensure only those materials

are checked out for any public screenings of digital media. Notice of federal copyright law is posted on public copiers, in computer labs, near library learning pods, and on the LRC web page. Our library web page links to fair use and digital media laws.

## 2E2

As described below in 2E3, the [Academic Dishonesty Policy](#) includes a definition and explanation of consequences of all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism. The portion of this policy on [Academic Integrity](#) is included on all instructor syllabi across modalities.

A definition of plagiarism and detailing of its consequences is also found in the [Online Library Guide](#), present as a tab for all courses in Blackboard. ONE 1500, the online learning module for online and hybrid students, includes a section on plagiarism and links to the LRC web page on copyright, digital media and fair use laws.

English 1101 includes modules on plagiarism, reliable sources, and bias. Content for the course includes assignments requiring objectivity and evidence-based thinking ([1101 outcomes and assessments](#)). English 1102, required for A.A and A.S. programs, includes advanced emphasis on ethical use of information including reflections on media ([1102 content outline and outcomes](#)).

Use of electronic services and resources is further governed by an [Access to Electronic Network Policy](#) which is in the Student Handbook and is referenced on start up of all public access computers. Finally, Educational Technology (EDUC 1104), required for our elementary education program, includes a module on ethical use of technology ([1104 Module](#)).

## 2E3

[Section V](#) of the Student Conduct Code defines academic dishonesty and outlines the process and policy regarding student violations. This policy is also found on the college's website. The policy gives "full authority" to each faculty member in identifying and establishing courses of action and discipline for student dishonesty. Because of this latitude, dishonesty is defined in the conduct code, but individual instructors are responsible for establishing their own plagiarism policy. All instructor syllabi, however, include the college's Academic Integrity Statement. If an incident is severe enough to warrant failure in the course or withdrawal, clear procedural steps outlined in the code are followed. No cases of academic misconduct have been documented through the formal complaint process ([Complaint Summary](#)). Most cases of academic dishonesty have been handled at the instructor level. Any notes regarding dean interventions between student and faculty regarding academic dishonesty are found in respective division files. A lack of a systematic documentation process for instructor-level incidents is being addressed in the fall of 2018 with a simple tracking form ([Informal Complaints and Issues Form](#)).

## Sources

---

- CCCE-Busi 1202 Syllabus-2018
- ENGL-1102 Instructor Syllabus Content Emphasis
- HLC-Complaint Summary-Compliance Report-07\_05\_2018
- HR-FERPA Training-2017
- INST-2018-2019 Instructor Ref Guide-Office Hours

- INST-Academic Integrity on Syllabus-2018
- INST-ENGL 1101 Syllabus Template-2018.pdf
- INST-ENGL 1101 Syllabus Template-2018.pdf (page number 3)
- INST-ENGL 1101 Syllabus--Assessments Emphasis
- INST-ENGL 1102 Syllabus Template-2018.pdf
- INST-Ethical Use of Technology-EDUC 1104 Syllabus-Spring 2018.pdf
- INST-Ethical Use of Technology-EDUC 1104 Syllabus-Spring 2018.pdf (page number 4)
- INST-Informal Complaints and Issues Form-2018.pdf
- INST-One 1500 Overview-2018
- INST-SLD PT-DC Survey-Aca Dishonesty-Summer 2018
- INST-Student Testimonials Sample-2013-2017
- LA-Eng 1101 Course Outcomes-Fall 2017
- LA-Eng 1102 Course Outcomes-Fall 2017
- LA-English 1101 Essay Prompts-2018
- LRC-5 W's of Website Evaluation-2017
- LRC-Applying the CRAAP Test-02\_12\_2018
- LRC-BB Lib Resource Guide-2018
- PRES-Academic Integrity Definition Stu Hdbk-2018
- PRES-Acceptable Use of College's Electronic Network-2018
- PRES-Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974-Cat page 46
- PRES-Pol 4.1400-Family Education Privacy Act-06\_14\_2018
- PRES-Pol 4.1405 Release of Stu Info-12\_15\_2017
- PRES-Pol 5.1600-Fin and Prog Man of Fed Grant Funds-06\_14\_2018
- PRES-Policy 4.1405 Educational Records-07\_20\_2018
- PRES-RLC Policy Manual-07-11-2018
- PRES-RLC Policy Manual-07-11-2018 (page number 175)
- PRES-Section V.C. Student Conduct Code-2018
- STUSER-Student Handbook 2018-2019.pdf
- STUSER-Student Handbook 2018-2019.pdf (page number 15)
- STUSER-Student Handbook 2018-2019.pdf (page number 28)

## **2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary**

---

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

### **Summary**

---

There is a strong set of policies in place at Rend Lake College concerning ethical behavior on the part of both employees and the Board. The RLC Policy Manual was reviewed, updated, and approved by the Board in 2017. The Board takes an eyes-on, hands-off approach, remaining engaged and knowledgeable while leaving the day-to-day operations to the administration.

A qualified audit opinion has resulted in the college being placed on Heightened Cash Monitoring 1 status by the Department of Education, but this is less a reflection on the college's finances and more a direct result of how the state appropriations were recorded once the 736-day state budget impasse ended.

The college has improved in its efforts at transparency and disclosure. Major initiatives here include the creation of the RLC Achieves web page and the addition of program cost sheets. The college's website was redesigned several years ago, and it is approaching time to re-examine it in order to improve navigation and clarity.

The college has a strong stance on academic freedom spelled out in the faculty contract. The academic integrity statement is available in multiple locations, including every course syllabus provided to students.

### **Sources**

---

*There are no sources.*

## **3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

---

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

### **3.A - Core Component 3.A**

---

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

### **Argument**

---

#### **3A1**

The college enhanced its advisory committee process in 2017. Feedback from these committees, required by all career-technical education (CTE) programs, ensures both currency and appropriate student performance levels of certificate and degree levels. Each program relies on regional industry and business leaders to shape those expectations ([Advisory Committees Roster](#)), and the process results in content appropriate for programs ([Advisory Meeting Minutes](#)). The [Advisory Committee Meeting Manual](#) was created in 2017 to improve consistency of both the process and results. As part of that document, job placement data is included for review during meetings; the minutes from the meetings are also reviewed as part of evaluating program viability ([Architecture Adv Com Mtg Packet](#), [Medical Coding Adv Com Mtg Packet](#)).

Also, annual strategic planning processes result in some recommendations, including SWOT analyses by faculty and staff, for curriculum updates and modifications ([SWOT Analysis](#)). [President's Cabinet](#) approves and prioritizes SWOT-generated actions for budgeting, including updating programs with new equipment and technology ([Strategic Planning and Program Review](#)).

Appropriate levels of student performance are also regulated through the college's academic governing body, the [Academic Council](#). All curriculum is approved, significantly modified, and discontinued systematically through this body ([AC bylaws](#)). The dean or faculty member proposing a new course or program completes a [New Curriculum Form](#), which includes learner outcome and assessment methods information. Then the Curriculum Committee reviews those documents. If concerns are expressed, the proposal is tabled until those concerns are researched and addressed. After the Curriculum Committee approval of a course/curriculum, the Academic Council entertains discussion and comment, with the originator of the proposal justifying cause in formal committee. Discussion and a vote follows ([Academic Council Minutes April 2018](#)). A "no" vote sends the curriculum/course back to the Curriculum Committee or the course is approved under the condition of revision. With Academic Council approval, the Academic Council Chair presents the proposal with

justifications to the college Board. After ICCB approval, when applicable, other accreditation agencies, including HLC, are sent appropriate documentation.

The process of withdrawal of a course or discontinuance of a program follows the same process ([Curriculum Meeting Notes, Photography](#)). As a means of assuring sound decision-making, the instructional deans and directors group reviews any course or program slated for withdrawal, to ensure discontinuing a program does not have unforeseen negative impact. The annual call for college Catalog review by faculty and deans assures any changes that have been made to curriculum are accurately reflected in public documents, including the Catalog and website ([Call for Catalog Review](#)).

Transfer articulations include reviews of the appropriateness of student performance for the amount of course credit and degree level. For transferring students, the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) utilizes a specific set of criteria to organize and align transfer courses with other participating Illinois community colleges and universities. The IAI panels of state-wide educators review courses from a set of criteria, objectives, and course descriptions appropriate for their type ([IAI Articulation Criteria Sample](#)). New courses adopted by the college are submitted to the appropriate IAI panel for approval. IAI approval guarantees that courses with an IAI code will transfer from a two-year institution to any state senior institution or anywhere within the two-year system. RLC and senior institutions continue to have active 2+2 agreements. RLC is presently in agreements for many career technical programs with most common transfer institutions. Recent A.A. and A.S. programs similarly articulated include psychology and history. These agreements guarantee seamless student transfer to junior status within those programs ([Articulation Agreements](#)). A traditional articulation process is also still followed. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) requires course-to-course articulation with senior institutions for non-IAI transfer courses. This process is initiated utilizing an [ICCB Form 13](#). In this process, the completed form and syllabus are sent to three senior institutions for approval. ICCB requires three articulation agreements per course for the college to offer it. RLC analyzes all articulation agreements for re-submission in conjunction with the internal program review process on a five-year cycle, but changes in university articulation agreements may occur when programmatic change occurs at either institution.

In 2014 the college began a comprehensive credit hour compliance inventory to ensure the student workload is appropriate for the credit hours generated. A [Credit Hour Compliance Audit Form](#) was created. It allows instructors to evaluate the amount and level of work required in a class. This form also calculates the amount of work outside the class, using the expectation of two hours outside work for every lecture hour. It also factors in the complexity of reading assignments. Using this form, all courses, except for non-credit vocational courses, calculated workload. If the workload was in excess or below the appropriate amount for the credit hours generated, faculty worked with instructional deans to modify the course content or credit hours awarded. When completed, supervisors reviewed results and suggested improvements. All new credit courses have one year to complete a Credit Hour Compliance Form. The form is also revisited as part of program review. The initial review resulted in one program, Cosmetology, revising its curriculum when the process revealed the workload for several courses was significantly over the appropriate amount for the credit hours ([Cosmetology Compliance Form](#)). CTE divisions also used the compliance audit to assure proper alignment of credit hours to workload in their high credit hour courses ([6-credit-hour course justification](#)). All classes taught in 2017-2018 fell within the appropriate workload parameters. The Office of the Vice President of Instruction houses all completed credit hour compliance audits ([Master Tracker Checklist: CHC](#)).

Additionally, RLC faculty mapped program learning outcomes using the Tk20 assessment software in late 2016. Faculty were asked to review the level of proficiency--"introductory, reinforces or master"--expected for student performance. Faculty revisited the accuracy of those levels during a Spring



2018 in-service day to validate appropriateness ([Re-evaluating the Curriculum Map](#)). More comprehensive maps are being developed outside Tk20 to overcome that program's limitations ([Curriculum Map Sample](#)).

Though a separate process, the annual analysis of program productivity reports provides economic indicators of a program's desirability, which helps maintain currency; Cabinet reviews these documents as part of program review and strategic planning ([Productivity Reports](#)). For certain programs, predominantly in the Allied Health and Applied Science and Technology divisions, program accreditation, state boards, and industry certification also serve as a means of assuring currency and appropriate performance levels (See **4A5-6**).

### **3A2**

RLC offers five associate degrees ([Associate in Arts](#), [Associate in Science](#), [Associate in Fine Arts](#), [Associate in Engineering Science](#), and Associate in Applied Science) and numerous occupational certificates. The college Catalog clearly differentiates career technical programs from baccalaureate transfer programs as well as the broad learning goals for certificates as opposed to degrees ([Baccalaureate Transfer/CTE Programs](#)). The Catalog also provides a recommended [Course Sequence](#) and course descriptions that broadly define the main employment or transfer learning goals for each course ([Course Descriptions](#)).

Internally, learning goals are articulated as measurable outcomes. A college-wide shift to convert learning goals to measurable outcome language occurred during the 2008 self-study process. RLC has comprehensively articulated program learning goals as learning outcomes across the curriculum ([Tk20 Program Outcomes Report](#)). **4B1-3** addresses how program outcomes are articulated, differentiated, mapped, and assessed.

As of August 2018, all programs' web pages include learning outcomes. All credit course syllabi are required to articulate mission as well as course and institutional outcomes on their syllabi (see **3A3** below). Though not required, a recent faculty survey indicated that around half of faculty include program outcomes on their syllabi as well ([Faculty Survey Responses](#)).

### **3A3**

Several measures assure a consistent quality of learning across location and modality. The college has a master syllabus for all active courses. The instructor syllabus for each course is created utilizing a [syllabus template](#), master syllabus information, and instructor-specific content. Instructors can add course information but cannot change the core master syllabus information. The syllabus template follows the Illinois Community College Board's specifications. It also standardizes the inclusion of the college's mission statement as well as institutional and course-level outcomes ([Guidelines for Course Syllabi](#)). This master syllabus is used regardless of instructor status or mode of content delivery ([instructor syllabi samples](#)). Though there is always the possibility of an oversight, conformity to the standards is reviewed every semester by instructional deans. Updated syllabi are submitted to them by the first Friday of each semester, including summer. All current instructor syllabi are on file in the offices of the Vice President of Instruction and appropriate instructional deans. Additionally, faculty can supplement but not substitute for approved textbooks.



Faculty oversee creation of consistent quality of courses through the Academic Council. The Curriculum Committee of the Academic Council reviews syllabi for approval of new programs or courses for conformity to the master syllabus ([Curriculum Committee Minutes 2017-2018](#)); this group also reviews the syllabus template, recommending changes to all syllabi dependent on new regulatory guidelines for improved clarity. Approved curriculum syllabi are sent to Academic Council, then recommended to the college President.

Another assurance of quality is annual faculty orientation. All faculty, including part-time and dual credit, are required to attend this in-service every fall. Along with assessment updates and procedural changes, this professional development event includes review of the appropriate master syllabus by all instructors ([2018 Orientation Materials](#)).

Qualified faculty are also a means for assuring consistent program quality. Faculty qualifications are documented through a [Faculty Qualification Policy](#) that evolved directly from revised faculty qualification guidelines of the Higher Learning Commission and the ICCB (See **3C2**). All dual credit, part-time, and full-time faculty have original transcripts secured in HR.

Previous online quality assurance processes consisted of a faculty Online Committee which oversaw the creation and implementation of quality online programs. An optional [Instructional Methods](#) class for faculty was offered, focusing on online success strategies. When RLC began offering all online programs, as indicated in the 2013 [Change of Status Visit Report](#), the college required any faculty teaching online to attend a similarly structured Instructional Methods Workshop. Both the workshop and course continue to be taught; however, as online offerings increased, the workshop became voluntary rather than mandatory. Administration recognized these efforts alone were an inadequate assurance of quality and adopted a Quality Matters (QM) framework in 2016.

RLC's Instructional Designer completed both QM Coordinator and rubric training and now leads the Quality Matters initiative. The process is faculty-driven by internal review teams of instructors with online teaching experience. Three online courses were initially reviewed in July 2017 with a pilot group of peer reviewers. By Summer 2018, RLC had 33 peer reviewers, 13 courses under review and 17 courses that met QM review expectations. The goal is to review all online courses taught at RLC starting with full-time faculty courses. The target completion is Fall 2019. The [Quality Matters Status Report](#) provides an overview of the process.

The Murphy-Wall Pinckneyville Campus and the MarketPlace in Mt. Vernon are the college's additional locations. RLC ensures consistent quality across its off-site locations by centralized administrative oversight using regular instructional staff. Instructors there are drawn from the same pool of full-time and part-time instructors teaching courses on the main campus. Educational modalities are included within the same budgeting, staffing and organizational divisions, also ensuring consistency. Dual credit and online courses are managed as part of five instructional divisions, not as separate programs. Online faculty are largely full-time faculty who teach traditional classes concurrently. 31% of full-time faculty teach at least one dual credit class.

College participation in education consortiums is limited. Only three students have taken advantage of the college's study abroad program through the ICISP consortium since 2009 (outlined in **3B4**); however, faculty at Christ Church Canterbury, RLC's primary education partner, have credit hour compliance forms on file, and classes are articulated for direct transferability.

RLC participated in the Southern Illinois Collegiate Common Market (SICCM) from 1973 until 2017. In September 2016, the college informed SICCM that it was exercising its right to withdraw from the consortium effective June 20, 2017 ([Board Minutes, Sept. 2016](#)). Though several reasons precipitated

this action ([SICCM Letter](#)), one concern was inconsistency in program quality between the consortium and the college. HLC was notified of this change on February 16, 2017, and a plan for addressing student completion was also sent. The final students completed required core courses at SICCM in Spring 2018 ([SICCM Teach Out Documents](#)). The college has, however, entered into a new partnership with Southeastern Illinois College (See **3C1**).

## Sources

---

- 1143 20130415 Change Visit - Team Report
- 2017-2018 Academic Council and Committees Members-08\_18\_2018
- AC-Academic Council Agenda and Minutes Example-06\_04\_2018
- AC-Bylaws-2017
- AC-Cur Com Mtg Min Photography-09\_27\_2017
- AC-Curr Mtg Min-2017-2018
- Advisory Com Mtg Min-2018
- Advisory Committee Manual-03\_21\_2017
- Arch Tech & CAD Adv Com Mtg Packet-2018
- ASSESS-Curriculum Map Examples-08-21-2018
- ASSESS-Fac Surv Responses-Outcomes-02\_20\_2018
- ASSESS-Tk20 Outcomes by Organization 2018-07-30.pdf
- Baccalaureate Transfer Prog-2018-2019 Catalog-Page 59
- Course Descriptions-2018-2019 Catalog-pages 126-173
- FINADM-Productivity Reports-2009-2017
- ICCB-Course Master List-06\_19\_2018
- ID-QM Status Rpt-2018
- INST- AC Cur Com Mtg Min Photography-09\_27\_2017
- INST CourseApprovalCriteriaGECCComm 08\_10\_2018.pdf
- INST Six Hour Credit Hour Courses--Justification.pdf
- INST-AC-Mtg Min-04\_23\_2018
- INST-Advisory Committee Master List 2018 (1)
- INST-CoOp-Eval by Employer-01\_2017
- INST-COSM Credit Hr Compliance-04\_30\_2018
- INST-Credit Hour Compliance Audit Form-2017
- INST-Credit Hr Compliance Crs Master Tracker-2018
- INST-Curr Approval Form-03\_27\_2018.pdf
- INST-EDUC 1603-Instructional Methods Strategies- Spring 2018.pdf
- INST-Faculty Ori Division Agendas-2018.pdf
- INST-Faculty Orientation Materials-Fall 2018
- INST-Guidelines for Course Syllabi 08\_2018
- INST-ICCB Articulation Form 13-09\_2013
- INST-Instruc Deans-Directors Mtg Min-08\_07\_2017
- INST-Master Syllabi 2018 Samples Revised.pdf
- INST-Master Syllabi 2018 Samples Revised.pdf
- INST-Master Syllabus Template-2018.pdf
- INST-Outcomes on Syllabus Fac Responses-01\_05\_2018
- INST-Re-evaluating the Curriculum Map Responses-01\_2018
- INST-RLC Syllabus Template-2018
- INST-SICCM Teach Out Plan-Student Completion-2018.pdf
- INST-SWOT Analysis Worksheet.pdf

- INST-Syllabus and Credit Hour Compliance Info-2018
- INST-Syllabus and Credit Hour Compliance Info-2018(2)
- Medical Coding Adv Com Mtg Packet-2018
- PERK-Advisory Committee Master List 2018
- PLAN-SWOT Items in Strategic Plan-2018
- PRES-Articulation Agreements.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_13\_2016
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_13\_2016 (page number 7)
- PRES-Cabinet and Council Policy and Rosters-07\_13\_2018
- PRES-Cabinet and Council Policy and Rosters-07\_13\_2018 (page number 2)
- PRES-Pol 3.1012 Faculty Qualifications.pdf
- PRES-SICCM Participation Withdraw Letter-12\_22\_2016
- PRES-Strategic Plan-Program Review-FY 2019
- Programs-Catalog 2018-2019-pages 76-122
- PUB-Call for Catalog Rev-09\_11\_2018.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 41)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 59)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 62)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 63)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 65)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 67)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 73)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 74)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 77)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 124)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 127)
- PUB-Degree Worksheets Catalog 2018-2019.pdf

## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

---

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

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

## Argument

---

### 3B1

Rend Lake College's general education curriculum reflects the diverse purposes for which students come to the college as articulated in its mission documents ([Diversity of Purpose](#)). Students learn broad knowledge to achieve the mission-defined "common outcome" of success in pursuit of educational goals. Initially, first-time degree-seeking students take ORIE 1101 (First Year Experience) which reinforces the support skills required to achieve a degree, such as developing personal connections, time management, and navigation of college resources ([ORIE syllabus](#)). Certificate students are presented with a different but similar orientation to basic workforce success strategies in Work Ethics ([Work Ethics Syllabus](#)), which is required for certificate-seeking students. From there, as defined by the [degree guides](#) and recommended [course sequences](#) found on the web and in the Catalog, our general education courses, required or elective, provide appropriate broad education while students pursue specific fields of study.

One strong assurance of the appropriateness of general education to our offerings and degree levels is our participation in the state-wide Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI), which standardizes the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC). As outlined in **3A1**, transfer courses are confirmed as freshman or sophomore level through IAI, with senior institutions reviewing standards. The GECC provides students the broad-based knowledge they need to successfully transfer and "assures transferring students that lower-division general education requirements ... have been satisfied" ([Catalog, page 45](#)).

Both institutional and program learning outcomes are reviewed on an annual basis as part of assessment, Advisory Committee, and planning processes as outlined in **4B** and **3A1**. Annual advisory committee processes, explained in **3A1**, also assure review of appropriateness of general education in career-technical degree programs and certificates.

### 3B2

As indicated in **3B1**, the electives and requirements within a program's course sequence are made clear in the degree guides located in the college Catalog ([Degree Guide](#)). The General Education Statement articulates the philosophy and intended outcome of the general education program. It elaborates on the mission framework by defining the breadth of knowledge every student is expected to obtain. The statement is found in the Catalog ([General Education Statement](#)) as well as on the website and in the Student Handbook. The college's current general education statement was examined and revised during the 2008 self-study. The result expresses a set of skills, knowledge, and values that all students are expected to demonstrate as part of their general education.

Knowledge outcomes are tied directly to the general elective course offerings and heavily shaped by requirements of the Illinois Community College Board for elective credit ([ICCB Gen Ed Credit Policy](#)). Academic skills are the college's four institutional outcomes that are defined as a part of our mission and assessed, as explained in **4B1-2**. They are articulated on syllabi, embedded in the mission and found in numerous other documents. The value outcomes--particularly the ones concerning active learning and objectivity--are linked to our critical thinking definition ([CPOW Definitions](#)). Exposure and understanding of cultural diversity connects to our mission's diversity language and the co-curricular and classroom experiences outlined in components **3B4** and **3E1**. In Summer 2018, curriculum mapping documented where these core general education outcomes occur across the curriculum, including co-curricular; however, mapping activities are ongoing ([General Education Mapping](#), [Co-Curricular Mapping](#)).

### 3B3

All degrees include a series of electives and program-specific required courses that emphasize the modes of inquiry most applicable to the fields of study contained within them, but also include exposure to all approaches. For example, the Associate of Arts, Science, Fine Arts, and Engineering Science degrees require at least 10 hours of science and math credits, all of which emphasize quantitative modes of inquiry and discovery of knowledge through experiment, computation, and lab work. Qualitative analysis, creative process, and textual analysis are emphasized within the aforementioned degrees, with Engineering Science requiring the least (three credits) and the A.A. requiring the most, with nine credits of Humanities and Fine Arts. Social and behavioral electives balance qualitative and quantitative modes of discovery, with at least three credit hours from these areas required for every degree ([Course Options for Gen Ed Requirements](#)). Institutional outcomes of critical thinking, problem-solving, oral communication and written communication have been formally adopted as part of our mission with language mirroring this Core Component: "every-degree seeking student should possess these skills." All degree programs require engaging students in all these areas as evidenced in **3B1-3**. Specifically, courses in the communications sequence (written and oral) require students to research, analyze and communicate information. English 1101 uses a critical thinking textbook which develops self-reflection, objectivity and metacognition. Principles of Effective Speaking (COMM 1101) is required for both the A.A. and A.S. degrees and the majority of A.A.S. degrees.

### 3B4

As part of the mission documents, the [Who We Serve Statement](#) acknowledges our district students are not racially diverse. Recent disaggregated data by race shows 92.9 percent of our students identifying as Caucasian, with little change in that percentage over the last decade ([Enrollment and 2008 Self-Study Profiles](#)). Campus-wide efforts, including classroom activity, are focused on exposing students to culturally or ideologically diverse experiences.

The college's cultural events offerings are curated by the Cultural Arts Committee comprised of faculty from the Liberal Arts Division. A modestly budgeted events schedule showcases experiences from a wide variety of ideological and cultural perspectives ([Cultural Arts Calendars 2017-2018](#)).

In Spring 2018, a Diversity Week was developed in partnership with ORIE 1101 (First Year Experience). A diversity module was part of the original FYE syllabus but was temporarily removed (2016) because of lack of student engagement. A revised module was reinstated in the spring of 2018, revolving around a week-long series of guest speakers, films, and faculty led discussions ([New FYE Diversity Module](#)). Though in its infancy, the initial response from students has been positive ([Diversity Week Feedback Survey](#)). Improvements and expansions are planned. ([FYE Diversity Week 2018-19](#)).

One of the college's most popular diversity initiatives is SOSC 2102, the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program ([Chicago Tribune, Jan 18](#)). As the course description states, "The course integrates college students (outside students) and detainees (inside students) at a local justice center ... Inside-Out is designed to create a paradigm shift for students." The first of two in the state, the course brings the incarcerated student face-to-face with traditional learners, allowing for direct dialogue. This course is consistently cited by students as one of the most impactful ([Student Testimonials](#)).

Across the curriculum, diversity experiences are found within most programs. A survey of full-time, part-time, and dual credit faculty documents the varied means by which diversity is addressed in programs ([Diversity Survey](#)).

RLC is also a member of the Illinois Consortium of International Studies and Programs. A faculty member coordinates their study abroad opportunities ([ICISP Brochure](#)). The program allows RLC students to earn course credits abroad. They enroll in directly articulated classes, so college credit is not forfeited. The program is, however, cost prohibitive for most students. Since 2009 RLC has sent only three students to study abroad; two studied in Canterbury, England, and one in Carlow, Ireland. ICISP also provides professional development through two-week faculty exchanges and full semester teaching opportunities. The last faculty participant traveled in 2009.

### 3B5

The college mission does not include a research mandate, and scholarly publication is not required for professional advancement; however, faculty are active in their respective professional organizations, as documented by an annually updated [Faculty Professional Development](#) form. Scholarly and creative research activities are reviewed as part of the salary movement process outlined in 3C4. Recent scholarly and creative work was documented in a faculty survey ([Scholarly Research and Performance](#)).

Student authors and visual artists submit their best work to the college's art publication, *Lake*, which celebrates creative work by students, faculty, staff, alumni and the district community at large. The annual publication includes paintings, drawings and photography, as well as fiction. Co-editorial



duties fall to the creative writing instructor and a student editor ([Lake Online Issue](#)). Each issue culminates in a release party often with student music, recitations and testimonials. An alumni and employee visual art show was recently initiated which compliments the biennial Student Art Show and scholarship awards ceremony.

Other student contributions to scholarly and creative work include student writers participating in a partnership with the *Centralia Sentinel* newspaper to produce a weekly newspaper section dedicated to RLC ([Clocktower Chronicle](#) 2012-2016). In Fall 2018 a pilot group of roving "Twitter Student Ambassadors" is being selected to serve a similar function for the college's social media sites. Twenty students from AST 1101 and PHSC 1102 helped with the launch of research weather balloons and presentations during the solar eclipse at Southern Illinois University in 2017. A number of theatre and music majors are involved in regional performance groups including the Sesser Opera House and Pyramid Players.

## Sources

---

- AREV-QI Institutional Report-Flat Stanley-2017
- AREV-QI Institutional Report-Flat Stanley-2017 (page number 5)
- ASSESS-Co-Curricular Map Updated-2018.pdf
- ASSESS-Examples of Curriculum Mapping to General Ed Statements 08\_20\_2018
- ASSESS-Oral Comm Rubric-08\_2013
- CPOW Institutional Outcomes Definitions-07\_10\_2007
- CTE--BUSI 1202 Syllabus 07\_28\_2018
- Cultural Events Calendar-2017 & 2018
- Diversity Week Feedback Survey-Spring 2018.pdf
- FYE-Diversity Week Module and Assignments-Spring 2018.pdf
- Gen Ed Statement-2018-2019 Catalog-page 38
- ICCB Gen Ed Credit Policy-2018
- INST-BUSI 1202-Work Ethics Syllabus-2018.pdf
- INST-Chicago Tribune Inside Out-01\_18\_2018
- INST-Chicago Tribune Inside Out-01\_18\_2018 (page number 4)
- INST-FA & Humanities Electives-Cat 2017-2018 pages 51-52
- INST-Fac Prof Dev Example-2017-2018
- INST-Faculty Scholarly Research and Perf-01\_05\_2018
- INST-FYE Diversity Week Planning-2017.pdf
- INST-FYE Student Learning Outcomes-08\_10\_2017.pdf
- INST-ICISP Brochure-2018
- INST-Math & Science Electives-Cat pg 53-54
- INST-ORIE Syllabus-2018
- INST-SLD Fac Survey-Diversity-2018
- INST-SLD PT-DC Surv-Diversity-Summer 2018
- INST-Social & Behavioral Electives-Cat pg 59-60
- INST-Stu Learn Day Fac Survey-Diversity-01\_05\_2018
- INST-Student Testimonials Sample-2013-2017
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 51)
- IR-Student Demographics-2008 and 2017
- LA-Lake magazine-Spring 2017.pdf
- ORIE-Flat Stanley Project-2018



- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf (page number 3)
- PUB-Catalog 2018-2019 Diversity of Purpose
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 AA Worksheet
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Course Outlines
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Gen Ed Statement
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 41)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 46)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 77)
- PUB-Catalog-2018-2019 IAI
- PUB-Clocktower Chronicle-2015-2016
- PUB-Cultural Events Calendar-Spring 2018
- PUB-Degree Worksheets Catalog 2018-2019.pdf
- PUB-Gen Ed Statement-2018-2019 Catalog-page 38
- Who We Serve Statement-Catalog 2018-2019

## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

---

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

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

## Argument

---

### 3C1

Rend Lake College has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty to carry out instructional and non-instructional responsibilities. IPEDS enrollment survey data indicates that the student-to-teacher ratio is at or below good practice standards (18:1, *National Center for Educational Statistics*).

Fall Enrollment		Student-to-faculty ratio
Fall 2017	2333	17-1
Fall 2016	2489	18-1
Fall 2015	2303	13-1
Fall 2014	2970	15-1
Fall 2013	2714	15-1

The average class size at RLC is small with some exceptions ([Class Size Pie Chart](#)). While class sizes of 30 or larger are not common, larger classes are found predominantly in introductory-level lecture courses such as Introduction to Psychology and freshman-level math classes.

For FY18, there were 59 full-time faculty members and 155 part-time instructors. Though fluctuating slightly over the years, the number of full- and part-time faculty has remained steady ([Instructional Employees Chart](#)). There are 57 instructors are high-school-employed dual credit instructors; however, 19 full-time and 18 non-high-school-employed part-time instructors teach some dual credit classes ([Comprehensive Faculty Roster](#)).

The college has a relatively low turnover rate for full-time faculty. 2.9% retired in FY15 and 6.1% in FY16. The percentage increased in FY17 (12.5%), possibly because of the uncertainty of future state benefits.

[Section 10.6](#) of the faculty contract outlines the nature of committee service for full-time faculty. To ensure that there are adequate instructors to fulfill all non-classroom responsibilities, the college attempts to employ at least one full-time lead for each program/content area, with English and math having the most full-time instructors, five in each area. Lead faculty select texts for each program area, manage course syllabi, and oversee part-time and dual credit assessment activities. Faculty leads, however, are not always economically viable for programs that involve a small credit sequence or experience low enrollment. Adjuncts teach in most of these low-credit-hour certificate programs. In these cases lead faculty duties are handled by instructional deans or the direct program supervisor. In other cases such as foreign language, consistent low numbers result in no expectation of filling lead positions. Instructional deans permanently fill those roles.

President's Cabinet prioritizes the need for full-time faculty through the strategic planning process. As part of this process the college has developed a list and rationale for areas without full-time lead faculty ([Adjunct and Administratively Led Programs](#)). Because of low enrollment, the Architecture program is continuing with adjunct faculty after a full-time retirement. However, as state finances have stabilized, two of three new full-time instructors have been hired for Fall 2018 to replace vacancies not filled over the last two years.

The most dominant non-classroom duty for RLC faculty is student learning assessment. The college does not employ an assessment officer and is reliant on faculty for all analysis and some organization of activity. RLC faculty assessment responsibilities, including cross-curricular peer mentoring, are described in **4B**. Though the process is time-intensive, Tk20 allows for data collection to be handled by every course instructor, including part-time and dual credit adjuncts. Full-time instructors then analyze and document learning improvements systematically.

After RLC left the Southern Illinois Collegiate Common Market (see **3A3**), RLC partnered with Southeastern Illinois College to create a solution for some staffing and resource issues. The colleges share resources, including faculty, in certain low enrollment programs which may not have the numbers to justify full-time instructors at both institutions ([Instructor Share Agreement](#)). The colleges created a shared Veterinary Assistant certificate, and also share a cosmetology instructor. Both presidents have presented on their partnership at the HLC Annual Conference in 2017 and 2018 ([2017 Building Bridges PowerPoint](#)). The colleges maintain accountability with an instructor / course share agreement, a program sharing agreement and an [intergovernmental agreement](#). The partnership continues, with plans for a joint Massage Therapy program.

Oversight of academic credentials is largely governed by policy as outlined in **3C2** below. Faculty participate by serving on full-time faculty hiring committees. Full-time faculty may be consulted in hiring decisions regarding adjuncts, but these decisions are largely made by instructional deans. As required by the faculty contract, [Article 16.1](#), a salary placement committee for full-time faculty includes two baccalaureate transfer and two career tech faculty. This group evaluates a new hire's experience and credentials to establish placement on the salary schedule.

### **3C2**

The college has established criteria for faculty qualifications based on the expectations of both the

HLC and its state regulatory agency, the Illinois Community College Board ([ICCB Faculty Qualification Policy](#)). The college [Faculty Qualification Policy](#) was revised to reflect these expectations in 2017.

Beginning in 2015, the college adopted formal procedures to review and approve Faculty Qualifications for existing faculty members and before the hiring of any new faculty. Instructors not meeting qualifications developed an educational plan and timeline on how to meet the qualification expectations ([Faculty Qualifications Verification and Professional Development Timeline](#)). These plans were then reviewed and approved by the appropriate dean, Vice President of Instruction, and President.

The college's [Faculty Qualification Policy](#) addresses required qualifications for career-technical instructors of a bachelor's degree in the field and/or a combination of education, training and tested experience. This policy follows ICCB guidelines of 2,000 non-teaching hours of related experience in the field. Documentation of each instructor meeting this requirement resides in personnel files secured in the HR office.

As part of a 2016 qualification audit, faculty transcripts were confirmed to be on file in the HR office. Additionally, instructors began completing an annual [Faculty Professional Development Form](#) which documents degree levels, certifications, and professional development activities throughout the academic year. These forms are submitted by faculty annually on Faculty Orientation Day to document appropriate qualifications and new professional development activity, including license renewals. The instructional deans and Vice President of Instruction review and sign off on these forms. After supervisor review, they are housed in the HR Department and appropriate instructional dean offices.

The Vice President of Instruction and the instructional deans reviewed all faculty qualifications when deciding whether or not to apply for the HLC five-year extension for meeting dual credit qualification expectations. There was, however, confusion about external governing agency expectations for faculty teaching general education courses. Administrators understood a master's degree in the discipline *or* a bachelor's degree with 18 hours of graduate work in the instructor's teaching discipline was the expectation by both the HLC and the college's state governing board, ICCB. Operating under this misunderstanding, they concluded all faculty who teach degree transfer courses met--or would meet by the Fall 2017 deadline--the expectations. This misunderstanding was discovered as part of a scheduled five-year recognition process by ICCB ([ICCB Recognition Report](#)).

As a follow-up to the ICCB Recognition Report, the Vice President of Instruction conducted an audit of the credentials of faculty--full-time, part-time and dual credit--who taught during the 2017-2018 academic year. Of the 268 instructors, nine were not qualified according to the new HLC and ICCB guidelines ([Non-compliance Faculty List](#)). Since these instructors were already told they met the qualification requirements with a bachelor's degree and 18 graduate hours, the nine dual credit instructors were approved by RLC to teach one additional year with the following requirements:

- The completion of a professional development plan for appropriate qualifications by a targeted completion date, August 2019.
- A qualified faculty member will observe and mentor the dual credit instructor a minimum of two times in each course taught until the dual credit instructor becomes qualified.

In June 2017 and 2018, a faculty qualification update was submitted to ICCB, explaining these circumstances ([ICCB Recognition Response](#)).

### 3C3

RLC [Policy 3.1205](#) and [Article XI](#) of the faculty contract establishes processes for evaluation of all full-time tenured and non-tenured faculty. All tenured full-time faculty are observed in the classroom and evaluated by the appropriate instructional dean every three years. All non-tenured faculty are observed and evaluated every semester. The evaluation is comprehensive, covering all aspects of job performance ([Faculty Evaluation Form](#)). Also, the process allows some form of response to the evaluation by the faculty member ([Evaluation: Faculty Response](#)).

Full-time tenured instructors are evaluated by students in two classes every year using the IDEA evaluation instrument. Non-tenured faculty are evaluated in three classes a semester. An electronic version of IDEA is used for full-time faculty teaching online at the dean's discretion. Deans follow up with all full-time faculty to discuss any concerns revealed by the IDEA results. For non-tenured faculty both IDEA results and classroom observations weigh heavily in tenure decisions. Documentation for tenure denials and remediation plans resides in that instructor's personnel file in HR.

Other evaluation processes vary by format, instructor status, and modality. Part-time faculty are evaluated with in-house-created evaluation forms. The frequency of part-time classroom observations is at the discretion of the faculty member's supervisor. Instructional deans conduct classroom observations of new part-time instructors at least once a semester and conduct follow up evaluations for faculty with noted concerns. All evaluations are securely housed in HR ([Part-Time Evaluation Example](#)). Both full- and part-time faculty who teach online are also evaluated through an [Online-Hybrid Satisfaction Survey](#) which, admittedly, provides only limited instructor evaluation data. New dual credit instructors are evaluated through a process of peer observations. Though not required, divisions may require full-time faculty to observe the classroom up to twice a semester. A class observation form is completed. These observation reports are kept in each dual credit instructor's personnel file and the appropriate dean's office ([Class Observation Report](#)). Results inform termination and remedial action, though a documentation system only exists for tenure-track faculty. Personnel files in HR house denial-of-tenure documents for current and former employees. The college recognizes the need to create a more consistent process of evaluation across modalities and platforms. Instructional deans have developed a three-year rotation for evaluating all part-time instructors. A consistent instrument for student evaluation of faculty will be implemented during the 2018-19 academic year within the college's new Canvas LMS.

### 3C4

#### **Faculty Professional Development**

The college incentivizes continued professional development for full-time faculty through the salary movement process outlined in Article 16.6 of the faculty contract and [Policy 3.1235](#). All professional development is pre-approved through a salary movement process that follows the administrative approval of a [Salary Movement Form](#). As follow-up, faculty provide proof of completion. The college supports broad opportunities for professional improvement including appropriate work experience, course completion, travel, and relevant conference and workshop attendance. Changes in language starting in the 2013-2017 faculty contract codifies the approval of professional publication and conference presentations to improve consistency ([Section 16.6](#)). Prior to the 2013 contract,

approval was left to the discretion of the Vice President.

Recently, on-campus in-house courses for professional development have been created. Three ongoing courses have been approved through ICCB and offered to faculty for professional development, with one, [Instructional Methods and Strategies](#), on a consistent annual rotation since its approval. Leadership I and II are open to both faculty and staff, full- and part-time, and are geared toward developing leadership qualities modeled on the National Chair Academy, offering an in-depth examination of college leadership strategies ([Leadership I and II Syllabus](#)). This course sequence is in its third cycle.

Although limited, a series of issue-specific trainings are periodically held by departments. These sessions and seminars are open to all staff and faculty; often dual credit or high school faculty attendees receive CPDU credit. Perkins and TRIO programs have provided workshops for faculty, including one on disabled students in the classroom. Part-time and dual credit faculty have also attended training that includes active shooter training, CPR, and common core articulations. [Faculty externships](#) in our career-technical programs are offered to both full- and part-time faculty. In July 2018 the college created a \$45,000 faculty development fund for all faculty, including dual credit and part-time instructors. The money will be released on a first-come, first-serve basis ([Professional Development Request Form](#)).

### 3C5

All instructors are required to provide contact information on their course syllabus provided to the students; they are updated each semester.

In addition to required contact information on the syllabi, as regulated by Section 10.4 of the faculty contract, full-time instructors are required to hold physical office hours five hours each week. Those hours are subject to approval by their direct supervisor. Contract language states these hours should “provide maximum convenience for students.” Administrative approval is intended to ensure student convenience. Article 10.4 also outlines the college’s office hours policy. Adopted in 2015, it allows instructors to keep one “virtual” office hour for every three online credit hours assigned, with no more than two virtual office hours allowed ([Office Hour Policy](#)).

At the annual Faculty Orientation Day, all faculty, including new faculty, are informed about the [Instructor Reference Guide](#) which includes contact information requirements. On that day preferred contact information is gathered and updated as well.

Administrative assistants for the instructional deans keep a record of faculty contact information including dual credit, and make available class schedules and office hours for full- and part-time on-campus instructors upon student request. Office hours are posted on all full-time faculty doors by the end of week one. Both the Catalog and college website provide email addresses and extension numbers for full-time faculty ([Catalog Contact Information](#)).

### 3C6

All student support staff are appropriately qualified. The hiring process adheres to the college policies outlined in 2A and 3C2.

The [Employee Recommendation Form](#), transcripts, and board packet recommendations demonstrate appropriate qualifications. Additionally, staff degrees are listed in the Catalog ([Catalog Pages 176-179](#)). In 2017 the Student Services departments implemented a professional development and qualification review based on the faculty qualification review process outlined in 3C2 ([HR Qualification Verification Document and Samples](#)). All support staff now complete an annual [professional development form](#) on which they update professional credentialing and development activities.

As documented by the annual forms, notable trainings include active shooter, poverty, emerging leadership, CPR, Strength-Based Learning and stress management. TRIO staff attend annual Council of Opportunity in Education and legislation and regulation training. Financial Aid personnel attend the annual Illinois Association of Student Financial Administrators Conference, Association of Veterans Education Certifying officials and the Financial Aid Workshop for New Professionals held by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.

## Sources

---

- Dual Credit --Not Qualified
- HLC-Building Bridges Presentation-2018
- HR-Employee Recommendation Form-05\_10\_2018.pdf
- HR-Support Staff Quals Verification-2017.pdf
- ICCB-Final Recognition Report-2017.pdf
- ICCB-Final Recognition Report-2017.pdf (page number 10)
- ICCB-Recognition Report and RLC Response-2017
- ICCB-Recognition Report and RLC Response-2017 (page number 11)
- ICCB-System Rules-05\_04\_2018.pdf
- ICCB-System Rules-05\_04\_2018.pdf (page number 24)
- ICCB-System Rules-05\_04\_2018.pdf (page number 124)
- INST Faculty Professional Development 2018 07\_29\_2018(2)
- INST Non-Compliant Dual Credit
- INST-2018-2019 Instructor Ref Guide-Office Hours
- INST-Adjunct and Admin Led Programs-06\_03\_2018
- INST-Comprehensive Fac Roster-2018
- INST-Dual Credit Observation Form and Sample-04\_13\_2018\_Redacted.pdf
- INST-EDUC 1603-Instructional Methods Strategies-Spring 2018
- INST-Fac Contact Info-Catalog 2018-2019
- INST-Fac Prof Dev Opportunities-2018
- INST-Fac Qual Annual Update ICCB-06\_14\_2018
- INST-Fac Qual Form With Rep Samples 07\_29\_2018.pdf
- INST-Fac Roster with Credentials-Cat p174-176-2018
- INST-Faculty Orientation PP-Fall 2017
- INST-FT Fac Evaluation Form-2018
- INST-FT Faculty Eval Responses-2015-2017
- INST-ICCB Fac Qual Requirements-10\_30\_2017
- INST-ICCB Recognition Report-2016
- INST-ICCB Recognition Report-2016
- INST-Instructor Reference Guide-2017-2018
- INST-Part Time Faculty Evals-2017-2018(2)
- INST-Prof Dev Timeline-2017



- INST-Professional Development Request Form 08\_01\_2018
- INST-PT Faculty Eval
- Instructor Reference Guide\_2018-2019.pdf
- Instructor Reference Guide\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 39)
- INST-SIC Instructor Share Signed Agreement-08-22-2018
- INST-Stu Learn Day Fac Survey-Diversity-01\_05\_2018
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 88)
- IR-Class Size Pie Chart-10\_30\_2017
- IR-Instructional Employees Chart-2016
- LA-English Retreat Agenda and Summary-2016
- LEAD 1101 & 1102 Syllabi-2017
- LEAD 1101 and 1102 Syllabi-2018.pdf
- Online Crs Stu Satisfaction Survey
- Perk Externships 2015-18
- Pol 3.1012 -Tested Experience-07\_25\_2018
- PRES- SIC Partnership-BOT Mtg-07\_10\_2018
- PRES- SIC Partnership-BOT Mtg-07\_10\_2018 (page number 31)
- PRES-Article 16.1 Fac Contract 2018-2021
- PRES-Article 16.6 Contract-Salary Movement-2018-2021
- PRES-Article 16.6 Salary Schedule Movement-Fac Con 2018-2022
- PRES-Article XI Contract-Evaluation of Faculty-2018-2021
- PRES-Cabinet Mtg Min-Job Descriptions-2016
- Pres-Intergovernmental Joint Agreement
- PRES-Pol 3.1012 Faculty Qualifications.pdf
- PRES-Pol 3.1205 Fac Perform Eval and Tenure-11\_03\_2017.pdf
- PRES-Pol 3.1235 Professional Development-03\_15\_2018
- PRES-RLC Faculty Contract 2018-2021
- PRES-Salary Movement Schedule-Fac Contract 2018-2021.pdf
- PRES-Section 10.4 Contract-Office Hours-2018-2021
- PRES-Section 10.4 Contract-Office Hours-2018-2021.pdf
- PRES-SIC Partnership-BOT Mtg Min-07\_10\_2018
- Sec 10.6-Faculty Contract-2018-2021
- Sec 10.6-Faculty Contract-2018-2021 (page number 15)
- STUSER-Student Services Staff-2018-2019 Catalog pages 178-181
- STUSER-Yearly Prof Dev Forms and Sample-2017.pdf

## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

---

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

### Argument

---

#### 3D1

Student support services are suited to the needs of our student population as understood through our enrollment profile and similar documents. Advisement services include the Advisement Center and Financial Aid Office, the Career Center, and Testing and Placement Center. The Advisement Center includes a director and two advisors who oversee registration processes. Online advisement is available upon request, and advisors travel to high schools and extension sites to enroll dual credit and dual enrollment students.

[The Financial Aid Office](#) includes a Director of Financial Aid and two financial aid specialists who provide assistance in completing the FAFSA and determining need-based federal and state aid, as well as related functions, such as encouraging students to apply for Foundation scholarships. Veterans Services also are provided here.

[Career Services](#) assists students with career planning. They receive help by drop-in, counseling referral, and as part of ORIE 1101 ([FYE Career Planning Module](#)). Professional development workshops are held twice a semester for graduating students. The Center also maintains the employment opportunities web page.

[The Testing and Placement Center](#) provides placement and other testing, including Psychological Service Bureau for Allied Health majors, CLEP, Pearson-VUE, and the Illinois Certified Nurse Assistant Test. An explanation of placement procedures is outlined in **3D2**.

Student success support includes a Learning Enhancement Center, Health Studies Student Success Center (HSSSC), federally-funded TRIO programs, a First Year Experience course and several non-academic support services and retention initiatives.

The [Learning Enhancement Center](#) (LEC) includes writing, math and oral communication tutoring labs, plus other on-demand tutoring. Tutoring programs are explained in detail below (**3D2**). Dependent on their academic performance, student athletes may be required to spend a certain amount

of time in the LEC ([Student Athlete LEC Policy](#)). The LEC Specialist also serves as the [Disabilities Coordinator](#), and provides counseling and strength-based learning assessments for at-risk students.

[ORIE 1101 \(First Year Experience\)](#) was the focus for RLC's initial [HLC Quality Initiative](#). One of the main objectives of the FYE program is to improve student engagement, and ultimately retention, while introducing them to key areas such as tutoring, library services, advisement, financial aid, and career services ([ORIE 1101 Syllabus](#)). Related retention improvements are documented in **4C3**.

[Federal TRIO](#) programs include Student Support Services ([Student Transfer and Retention Support](#), i.e. STARS) and Upward Bound. STARS provides academic support each year for up to 160 RLC students who are first-generation, low-income, or disabled. Upward Bound serves ninth- through 11th-grade students attending Benton, Hamilton County, Zeigler-Royalton and Mt. Vernon high schools.

Enrollment profile data, supported by [withdrawal surveys](#), and other district demographics, including the high percentage of first-generation students and those living in poverty, clearly indicate many non-academic factors prevent student success. In response, student support and enrollment management staff have improved support processes and initiated interventions designed to mitigate social barriers, including the following:

Developed in Fall 2017, the **Food Pantry** is stocked by donations from campus staff and faculty, and sometimes student groups. A request form on the college website provides a discreet process for student access. Both full- and part-time faculty are reminded about the Food Pantry at the annual instructor orientation ([Food Pantry Application](#)).

**An improved early alert** process automates the previous pen-and-paper system. Faculty now submit student attendance and performance issues online ([Early Alert Form and Minutes](#)). During week four, an automated email request is sent to faculty, asking them to check any of the at-risk indicators that may apply. If a student is at-risk in more than one area, a support staff member contacts the student to offer assistance. Coaches are also contacted regarding athletes. Currently only athletes and students participating in STARS are tracked.

[RLCares](#) ([C](#)onsultation, [A](#)dvisement, [R](#)eferral, [E](#)xploration, [S](#)uccess) is a mostly non-academic consultation service providing help for students outside the advisement process. Students learn about RLCares during First Year Experience and through course syllabi and the college website ([RLCARES Roll Out Powerpoint](#), [RLCARES Meeting Minutes](#)).

**The Student Emergency Fund** provides help for students who face financial difficulties not covered by financial aid ([request list](#)). Though housed in Enrollment Services, it is monitored by an approval committee that includes academic support staff. Funding is exclusively from monies raised by employees. Examples of assistance include financial help for those who have been a victim of fires, giving students gas cards who have not received their financial aid refund and purchasing scrubs for a nursing student who could not afford them for clinicals ([Emergency Fund Form](#)).

Additional economic and social support services include the RLC Foundation and the Foundation Children's Center. As outlined in **2C3**, the RLC Foundation is a financial support entity associated with but separate from college operations. They provide funding for scholarships and capital projects.

[The Foundation Children's Center](#) provides child care services. The preschool has been awarded the All-Illinois State Board of Education Grant continuously since 2005. This grant provides childhood education experiences for at-risk preschool children. The center is National Association for

the Education of Young Children accredited and also serves as a learning lab for Early Childhood Education students; three of the four lead teachers provide instruction in that program. Additional support initiatives include a Perkins grant providing support services for CTE special population students, and a process to charge public transportation to a student's Pell Grant after all other semester expenses are paid.

Throughout all the student support services provided, staff members strive to serve equally those students who take classes at night, off campus, or through dual credit and distance learning delivery methods. In doing so, we ensure we are fulfilling our mission to be student-focused. Our [additional locations](#), Murphy-Wall Pinckneyville Campus and the MarketPlace in Mt. Vernon, offer an on-site administrator who can register students, advise, and serve as a referral point for those services available only on campus, such as textbook rental/purchase and financial aid advisement. The RLC MarketPlace also provides an additional location for placement testing. On-campus hours are extended for many services including advisement (one night a month and the two weeks leading up to fall and one week before spring); Math Lab and Writing Center; library (7 a.m.-6 p.m.); and the IT Help desk (10 p.m). With the full adoption of the Canvas LMS in Spring 2019, students will receive 24-hour online Canvas tech support. Online support also includes Writing Center access through email. The reference librarian has also designed a [Resource Guide for RLC Students](#) for inclusion in our LMS. It outlines the same college research resources discussed in face-to-face sessions. For military service or online students, distance advisement and registration occurs through phone conference and email. Zoom video has recently been made available for online program advisement.

### 3D2

As outlined in **3D1** above, the Learning Enhancement Center supports learning through three tutoring centers: writing, math and oral communication. The HSSSC Allied Health tutoring lab is located in the Learning Resource Center. It allows for the use of models, demonstrations, and practice. The centers provide traditional walk-in tutoring services or by appointment in one-on-one and small group sessions. Students who need assistance in particular subjects may also request tutoring. The majority of tutors have Master's degrees. Tutoring labs serve hundreds of students a semester ([Tutoring Usage and Course Completion Rates 2016-2018](#)). In Spring 2018 a direct assessment of Writing Center students was piloted to better track reasons for student visits and learning improvements. A preliminary comparison of first and final student encounters indicates improvement of writing, with no student falling below college ready in their final encounter; however, the Writing Center staff will not fully analyze results until Fall 2018 ([Writing Center Assessment Pilot Results](#)). The Communication Lab helps students prepare for and practice public speaking assignments. Tutoring services recently underwent program review. Results indicated the need to improve tutoring's visibility among users ([Tutoring Program Review](#)).

**The Adult Education and Literacy Department** supports adult basic education, high school equivalency/general educational development, and job readiness. The program serves students 16 and older not enrolled in high school and who lack basic math and reading skills. All Adult Education and Literacy classes are offered free of charge to students ([Adult Ed. Mission and Services Brochure](#)).

**Placement Testing** evaluates the appropriate placement for new students by looking specifically at English, reading, and math skills. RLC administers ACCUPLACER as our primary placement test. The college also recognizes ASSET, COMPASS, ACT and SAT scores. In-district high school students have the opportunity to be tested at their high school. All students are allowed two testing attempts. If a student chooses to test only one time in an area, places into and enrolls in that review

course, no additional placement testing is allowed in that area ([Placement Testing Chart](#)). Degree-seeking students are required to have placement scores in sentence skills and/or reading, and math.

In Fall 2016 RLC adopted a co-requisite process for English college prep classes. For those not meeting the minimum standard on sentence skill or reading, students are enrolled in ENGL 1101 and ENGL 1411 concurrently their first semester. Students must earn a 'C' or better in both ENGL 1101 and ENGL 1411 to have met the course standards when working towards all degrees except the Applied Science degree. Students in these degree programs may earn a minimum of a 'D' in ENGL 1101 and a 'C' in ENGL 1411. Co-requisite learning success is determined through the English assessment process. Success of results is linked in section **4C2**. Degree-seeking students must also place into the appropriate math level. Placement in the math course sequence is dependent on both major and ACCUPLACER score. Students must earn a minimum of a 'C' to have satisfied the requirement for entry into the next level math course ([Math Placement Flowchart](#)). Evidence of student success in college prep math is provided in **4C2**.

### 3D3

To better serve a rural, first-generation population that is sometimes both economically challenged and without Internet access, RLC's registration and advisement processes are still conducted face-to-face whenever feasible. Exceptions include students living outside the region, such as those serving in the military or those taking online courses exclusively ([Registration Process Catalog, Page 22](#)).

The Academic Advisement Center maintains an appointment-only policy through most of the academic year. Priority registration appointments are grouped by student population, with earlier registration opportunities for veterans, TRIO students, student-athletes and student workers. Walk-in registrations take place two weeks prior to the start of fall and one week preceding the start of spring and summer.

Before advisement, students complete a pre-enrollment form which provides demographic and program information. Students showing a change of address from out-of-district to in-district are required to provide proof to confirm their in-district status. Students returning after leaving the college have their transcript reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure previous coursework counts toward their current program. Unofficial college transcripts, potential transfer coursework, placement testing, transfer plans, and articulation guides are all referenced for successful advisement. An academic plan is developed outlining coursework the student needs to meet their academic goal. Advisor and student review the schedule together, then students are directed to the next steps in the process and given a map and [Starter Pack](#). If online or hybrid courses are selected, students are given an online readiness assessment. If not successful, they are enrolled in ONE 1500, the Online Navigation Essentials course. Students must successfully complete all modules of ONE 1500 no later than the first two weeks of the semester ([ONE 1500 Overview](#)).

During spring semester, academic advisors travel to in-district high schools to provide on-site advisement and registration. Incoming freshmen receive the same services as if they were being registered on-campus, with the exception of receiving student log-in information. The Testing and Placement Specialist generates those accounts on campus after the off-site process is completed.

Faculty advisement takes place in varying levels in all academic divisions ([Faculty Advisor List](#)). In most cases students are advised by a faculty member or program advisor then directed to Student Records for data entry. The academic advisors guide students to the appropriate faculty advisors.

Since access to our ERP advisement module is not available to faculty, advisors within those programs complete an electronic registration form and email it to Student Records. Students are not formally registered until academic plans are reviewed with the student and demographic information is updated. This process has eliminated incorrect data being entered by faculty and improved communication among all parties. For continuing students in the Applied Science and Technology divisions, dates for faculty advisement are scheduled by program. Academic advisors travel to their locale for data entry. This allows faculty to advise in their content areas while student service advisors complete data entry, clarify requirements and inform on college procedures. Students within select programs such as Radiology and Nursing are advised and registered as cohorts.

The vast majority of students are advised in person with an academic or faculty advisor; however, students obtaining a minimum of 30 credit hours and 2.5 grade point average can self-advise. Qualifying students can bypass advisors and register directly in the Student Records office. Self-advising students assume responsibility for knowing how classes impact progress to graduation ([Self-Advisement Policy](#)).

Individuals who reside outside the region are advised by phone or email, and registered if necessary; however, the same standards with regards to testing and prerequisites must be met, Student athletes are primarily advised and registered by one particular academic advisor who is well versed in National Junior College Athletic Association transfer requirements.

### **3D4**

RLC has the space, infrastructure and resources to successfully educate students. The campus and additional locations provide 223 classrooms and labs serving 8,745 students in FY2017.

All on-campus and additional location classrooms have been fitted with technology to make them “smart.” The college defines a smart classroom as one that contains at least a graphic display--either projector or monitor--document camera (ELMO) and internet-connected computer. Several of these classrooms also include smart boards. Many computer labs are dual-purpose, serving as open labs for students when classes are not being held in the room ([Computer Labs by Location](#)). Specialized technology labs include a robotics lab, an automotive lab that is a simulated automotive service center, and a manufacturing lab with high-tech machining equipment including a CNC plasma cutter, laser etcher, and milling machine ([Specialized Technology Labs](#)).

The process for replacement of obsolete technology is fluid, based on budget and planning requests, program need, age and other technology priorities. Approximately 10 percent of computers are replaced annually, but over 70 machines were replaced by new machines in FY17, while only 40 were replaced in FY16. FY18 saw the addition of four new labs with a total of 83 PCs with 15 mobile devices added. The IT Department developed a five-year projection of resource allocations that helps anticipate major technology projects ([Five Year Road Map](#)). Additionally, in response to student and faculty complaints, the college took over the previously outsourced campus wireless network in 2016. Improvements to service include seamless connectivity when moving across campus.

Surprisingly, video conference distance learning technologies have seen a resurgence. In total RLC has 12 video conference-style distance learning rooms, four on our main campus, two at our additional locations, and six at in-district high schools. In addition to college use, high schools use these facilities in non-dual credit capacities to combine small classes. The equipment is also available for use by in-district agencies and community groups. The college [Fact Book](#) documents DL rooms,



equipment, computers, and other technology available for use.

IT supports students and instructors throughout the various learning environments. The college employs an instructor as a part-time instructional designer. She conducts software training, oversees Quality Matters, and manages the Tk20 assessment system. In July 2018, the college entered into a 5-year agreement with Instructure for use of their Canvas LMS, starting in Fall 2018. The agreement includes 24/7 tech support for our students. Various other technological support comes in the form of student access to apps, such as Microsoft 365; Dell discounts for students; and laptop checkout for faculty in the library and for accommodating students with disabilities. Additionally, the Information Technology help desk (Ext. 1259) offers service support for faculty, staff and students.

The Information Service Request system documents all significant employee requests for service ([ISR Report](#)). For students, the IT help desk provides information on how to access and use college resources relevant to classroom and support services such as password resets and step-by-step instructions ([Help Desk Student Call Log](#)). A separate process for documenting student help requests is being developed in FY19.

A systematic upgrade of all science labs has occurred on a rotating basis for the last 15 years. Recent upgrades included a complete remodel of three science labs prior to 2017 (Chemistry, Microbiology and Biology), and the addition of two labs (Murphy-Wall Science and Computer Center and an on-campus Anatomy & Physiology lab).

The Learning Resource Center is centrally located on campus and serves thousands a semester ([Learning Resource Center Fact Book Page](#)). It participates in the Illinois Heartland Library System and is the location of the main open computer lab. Private study areas and several learning pods provide informal work space for on-campus students. A full-time collection management specialist and reference librarian, along with two part-time library specialists, oversee organization of resources, including the website and electronic database main page. In addition to a database subscription budget of \$52,000 in FY18, there are annual budgets for faculty and library staff discretionary spending on materials, though these budgets have been reduced in recent years due to the state budget crisis. The oversight process for learning resources is further discussed in **4A4**.

A 2015 theatre remodel included lighting, curtains and rigging. A state-funded capital building project was completed in 2014, creating an art classroom addition, doubling the size of the teaching space for ceramics, life drawing and stained glass design. The existing art space was remodeled including all new furnishings and lockers for students to securely store their work. The new ceramic room also freed up the set design room, which ceramics classes used for over a decade. In 2013 there was a RLC Foundation-supported renovation of the entire music space, including practice rooms. The space is now secured with electronic locks to ensure safety and privacy. New equipment included desks, risers, student lockers, and a significant number of new instruments, including a baby grand piano.

Clinical practice sites include an extensive list of locations across the district ([Clinical Sites List](#)). RLC also has five simulated clinical classroom sites, including three clinical classrooms in the Learning Resource Center (nursing and CNA) and two in the Advanced Technology Center (Radiologic Technology and Medical Assistant). The college also has three labs at the Mt. Vernon MarketPlace, one Emergency Medical Technician lab and two CNA labs.

Other spaces of note include the Bookstore, located in the Academic Building. As well as textbook purchase and rental, it provides school supplies, snacks, and school-branded items. As part of a Foundation-led initiative, a 1,500-square-foot developmental multi-purpose room for the Children's Center was completed in 2016. Increasing communal student space has been a planning priority. A



faculty group met with the President to help plan a major capital project to improve student commons space ([Public Space Initiative 2015](#)). This plan is still under consideration. Smaller student space upgrades have occurred, including a 2017 redesign of the Administration Building to improve student access to resources. These changes include a more private area to complete FAFSA online, more secure and confidential testing space, increased technology for students to access resources, and separate career and welcome center areas. Also, the upstairs Academic Building hallway was remodeled with seating for students, and a brick facade improved library aesthetics. A systematic upgrade of bathroom facilities is in the strategic plan, with several upgrades completed.

### 3D5

Guidance for effective use of research in the classroom is a dominant focus of the college's written communication course sequence, ENGL 1101 (all degree seekers) and ENGL 1102 (A.A. and A.S. degrees). Guidance outside the classroom comes predominantly from library staff and electronic resource reference material.

ORIE 1101 (First Year Experience) is required of all first time degree-seeking students. One of its primary outcomes includes understanding the college's physical and virtual environment ([FYE Syllabus](#)). The course includes a week-long introductory module on library literacy and college research. The module includes discussions on library policies and services, plus a demonstration on how to research professional databases. Each session is conducted by the reference librarian or other library staff. In the case of online ORIE 1101 sections, the same material is presented through Blackboard. Students demonstrate competence by completing a discovery exercise and finding information from seven types of online sources ([Library Assignment](#)).

English 1101, the introductory writing course, is required by all degrees. Four of five [standardized prompts](#), even those based on personal experience, include a small research component. The course includes instruction in preliminary research strategies while students write experiential essays. All prompts are included in the course textbook and further standardized through the syllabus template required to be used by all faculty. The [English 1101 syllabus template](#) also directs English 1101 instructors to guide students in the use of the college's online and physical research resources. English 1102, required for our A.A. and A.S. degrees, is an argumentative research writing course. Work prepares students for conducting junior- and senior-level research and creating formal researched arguments. The course includes instruction on documentation systems, research methodology, using reliable sources, and media literacy ([English 1102 Syllabi Template](#)).

Various programs also guide students in research specific to their discipline. Examples include customized training for STARS students and sessions on research skills specific to second-year nursing students analyzing peer-reviewed scholarly articles and using content-specific databases like CINHAL, EBSCO Health Source, and Gale Nursing Collection ([Allied Health Assignment](#)). These and similar program sessions are conducted as outreach by the reference librarian. An overview of full-time faculty research writing shows 50% of full-time faculty incorporate research projects in their courses. A Google form survey spreadsheet captures the scope and nature of research assignments for faculty, including part-time and dual credit ([Research Assignment-Faculty Survey](#)).

The main student resource for research guidance outside the classroom is the MLIS-degreed reference librarian. She guides students in developing research skills through numerous activities. In the library she conducts small group library tours and documents face-to-face instruction on research. She also conducts in-class sessions and workshops on online research strategy and resources including off-site

in dual credit classes at local high schools. Detailed documentation of her activities is kept in a spreadsheet ([Research Instruction Sessions](#)).

The college has centralized electronic resources that include all subscription databases ([A-Z Electronic Resources List](#)). These include guidelines for evaluating reliable sources ([CRAAP Test](#)). The page also links to documents for understanding bias, logical fallacies and reliable sources.

## Sources

---

- 1143 20170803 Quality Initiative - Institutional Report
- Adult Education bro 2018
- ADV-Faculty Contacts for Program 2018\_2019 Catalog \_Page 72
- ADV-RLC Starter Pack-Fall 2018
- ADV-RLCares-RLC Starter Pack-Fall 2018
- AH-Clinical Practice Sites-2018
- ASSESS-Writing Center Assess Pilot Results-Spring 2018
- ASSESS-Writing Center Assess-Research-Spring 2018
- Clinical Sites 2017-2018 edit.pdf
- ENR-Drop Addresses-07\_10\_2018
- HLC Change of Status Report-2013
- INST-CTE Prog Specialty Lab List-2018
- INST-ENGL 1101 Syllabus Template-2018.pdf
- INST-ENGL 1102 Syllabus Template-2018.pdf
- INST-Fac Surv Responses-Research-2018
- INST-FYE ORIE 1101 Syllabus-2018
- INST-FYE Student Learning Outcomes-08\_10\_2017.pdf
- INST-MS-Guide to Math Review Placement
- INST-One 1500 Overview-2018
- INST-Program Lab List-2018
- INST-Program Lab List-2018(3)
- INST-Program Review Student Services\_ Tutoring 2013-17
- INST-Program Review Student Services\_ Tutoring 2013-17 (page number 5)
- INST-PT and DC Stu Learning Day Surv-Research-Summer 2018
- INST-Research Assignment Fac Surv-01\_05\_2018
- IR-LRC Factbook Data-2013-2017.pdf
- IR-Student Withdrawal Survey-2017 & 2018
- IR-Tech Chart Inst Data Bk-FY 2017
- IT-Computer Lab By Location 08\_03\_2018
- IT-Five-Year Roadmap-12\_20\_2016
- IT-FY 2017 Computer Count- Institutional Data Book-2017
- IT-Help Desk Call Log-FY 2018
- IT-ISR Report-01\_2018-07\_2018
- LA-English 1101 Essay Prompts-2018
- LA-FYE Career Planning Module-2018
- LA-FYE ORIE 1101 Syllabus-2017
- LEC-Math Lab Info for Advisors-2018
- LEC-Student Athlete Learning Enhancement Center Policy-2018
- LRC- Allied Health Research Quiz-2018
- LRC-A to Z Electronic Resources-2018

- LRC-Applying the CRAAP Test-02\_12\_2018
- LRC-BB Lib Resource Guide-2018
- LRC-ORIE Lib Assignment-2018
- LRC-Public Space Capital Initiative-2015
- LRC-Research Instruction Sessions-2011-2018
- PRC-Early Alert Form and Min-2018
- PRC-Early Alert Form-2018
- PRC-Food Pantry Application-2018
- PRC-Lunch on the Lake-2016
- PRC-RL-Cares In-Serv PP-02\_17\_2017
- PRC-RLCares Meeting Minutes-12\_13\_2016
- PRC-RLCares-Cat pg 34-2018-2019
- PRC-RLCares-Cat pg 34-2018-2019 (page number 24)
- PRC-Student Barrier Data-Spring 2018
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Additional Locations
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Additional Locations (page number 2)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Financial Aid Section
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Financial Aid Section (page number 2)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 FYE
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 FYE (page number 2)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Student Services.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Student Services.pdf (page number 2)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Student Services.pdf (page number 5)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Student Services.pdf (page number 6)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Student Services.pdf (page number 7)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Testing for Placement
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Testing for Placement (page number 2)
- PUB-Catalog-2018-2019 Registration Steps-Page 22
- PUB-Catalog-Student Services and Activities-2018-2019
- PUB-Extended Adv Hours Email-06\_07\_2018
- STUSER-College Review Placement Chart-10\_26\_2017.pdf
- STUSER-Emergency Fund Form-2018
- STUSER-Self-Advisement-Cat pg 24-2018-2019
- STUSER-Student Emergency Fund Requests-08\_22\_2018
- STUSER-Tutoring Stats-FY 2016-2018.pdf

## 3.E - Core Component 3.E

---

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

### Argument

---

#### 3E1

The co-curricular programs are appropriate to the college's mission by contributing toward student success. Athletics are seen as extra-curricular while other activities available for students on a voluntary basis are viewed as co-curricular.

While still an ongoing process, co-curricular program outcomes have been developed and are connected to the mission through mapping ([Co-Curricular Map](#)). Welcome Week, research workshops, Lunch on the Lake, Painted Rocks Retention, Fun Fest, and Preview Day are all co-curricular activities that have been mapped. Example outcomes include "identifying relevant resources" and "opportunities which contribute to student success" and "recognizing the diverse viewpoints of others." These connect to the mission's commitment to student success and the Diversity of Purpose statement, for instance. The status of assessment of these activities is outlined in **4B2**.

In addition to the diversity activities (**1D1**) and the classroom experiences (**3B4**), our mission language concerning "working across cultural ... boundaries" and recognizing diversity is reflected in club activities that provide opportunities to explore diversity ([RLC Catalog](#)). Examples include GLBTF, Creative Writing, Culinary Arts, RLC Thespians, and Student Ambassadors. Other organizations are service- or honor-based, such as AmeriCorps, Phi Theta Kappa and the Society for Leadership and Success.

In 2017 it was determined that voluntary tutoring services could be defined as co-curricular, but since they encompass three of the four institutional outcomes, they should be directly assessed. A direct assessment was piloted in the Writing Center in Spring 2018, with results showing student learning improvements promising enough to continue and expand the activity to other tutoring services ([Writing Lab Assessment Results](#)).

#### 3E2

Our mission directly addresses fulfilling our "community program objectives." Our community engagement is connected to mission through its inclusion as one of four main strategic planning focus areas. Along with student, faculty, and staff engagement, the college documents the most recent community engagement across the institution ([Community Engagement, Strategic Plan](#)). Ongoing and

long-standing community engagement is documented in **1D3**, including our community education offerings.

The college's mission also outlines our commitment to be student-focused, and the college is determined, "regardless of circumstance or a student's personal and educational goals" to provide the environment and support that leads to success. Implicit in that claim is our need to engage the community from which those students originate, including, whenever feasible, engagement with business and industry located in our district. **1D1** outlines the significant economic partnerships and community engagement initiatives through which we do so.

To support economic development, the college also offers skill and trade opportunities for students seeking employment and economic mobility as stated in our [Diversity of Purpose](#). Examples of this include campus visits from [industry leaders and student field trips](#), as well as opportunities for cooperative education and recently developed apprenticeships. Community engagement and service learning projects are coordinated by faculty and staff to support student enrichment. For example, cosmetology students practice skills by providing hand massages and salon services at [community events](#). Other examples include [on-the-job training and clinical experiences](#), class projects from psychology students, the [AmeriCorps](#) program, and college-sponsored blood drives.

## Sources

---

- ASSESS-Co-Curricular Map Updated-2018.pdf
- ASSESS-Writing Center Assess Pilot Results-Spring 2018
- CCE-AmeriCorps Brochure and Info-08\_21\_2018
- COSMO-Community Events-2016
- FY 18 Strategic Plan- Community Engagement-07\_31\_2018
- HLC-Complaint Summary-Compliance Report-07\_05\_2018
- INST-Clinical and OJT Sites-08\_21\_2018
- INST-Dual Credit Savings-FY 2018.pdf
- INST-Field Trips and Guest Speakers-FY2017
- INST-FYE Student Learning Outcomes-08\_10\_2017.pdf
- INST-Syllabus with RLC Resource Info-2018
- INST-Syllabus with RLC Resource Info-2018 (page number 3)
- INST-Syllabus with RLC Resource Info-2018 (page number 4)
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 39)
- PRES-BOT Mtg Min-Dual Credit-07\_10\_2018
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf (page number 3)
- PRES-Pol 4.1505 Textbook Rental-04\_18\_2018
- PRES-Pol 4.1505 Textbook Rental-07\_25\_2018
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 17)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 26)
- PUB-Catalog-Student Clubs-2018-2019
- PUB-Catalog-Student Clubs-2018-2019 (page number 2)
- PUB-Types of Financial Aid-Catalog 2018-2019 pages 26-27
- RLCF-Scholarship Information-06\_18\_2018
- STUSER-Club List and Activity Form-2018

- STUSER-Co-Curr Definition Stu Hdbk-2017-2018

## 3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

---

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

### Summary

---

The degree programs at Rend Lake College are appropriate to higher education as indicated by the formal review processes in place, including the curriculum governance processes of the Academic Council, input from Faculty Advisory Committees and several articulation processes. The development of a credit-hour compliance review system assures the appropriateness of college course work for credit hours awarded. The college clearly articulates the expected learning outcomes for courses, programs and the institution. Its publications explain the different expectations for certificates and degrees, as well as the distinctiveness of each one. Though not complete, recent outcomes mapping across the curriculum also helps confirm appropriate student performance for courses, programs and degrees. The master syllabus template and syllabus review process provides consistent quality across modalities.

The broad learning that constitutes general education is defined by a Statement of General Education, which includes the college's institutional learning outcomes, CPOW. Assessment of student performance in these outcomes ensures CPOW remains central to our students' education.

Committed faculty and support staff are in place for successful student learning. The college has endeavored to keep one full-time faculty employed in every major program area for stability, quality control, and administrative consistency. A more uniform process for evaluation of faculty across modalities is needed with plans to do so using the Canvas LMS starting in Spring 2019. The college's qualification policy conforms to ICCB and HLC requirements, but the college has nine dual credit instructors not qualified according to the recent guidelines. A plan is in place to be in compliance by Fall 2019.

One of the central tenants of the college's mission, that we are student-focused, drives the student services provided by the college. This is demonstrated by the nature and breadth of support services we provide. Our awareness of our rural, economically challenged, first-generation students has increased social support services.

Co-curricular activities enrich student experience. The college's community and economic mission language is demonstrated through the college's engagement in the district.

### Sources

---

*There are no sources.*



## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

---

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

### 4.A - Core Component 4.A

---

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

### Argument

---

#### 4A1

A five-year cycle of program review mirrors the Illinois Community College Board's (ICCB) review schedule. The review is part of RLC's planning process and conforms to this regulatory agency's reporting expectations ([RLC Current Five Year Review Plan](#)). Review teams are led by the appropriate instructional dean or fiscal manager and conducted by their faculty or staff, with support from administrative leads.

For academic program reviews, elements include evaluating program quality, reaffirming appropriateness of content, reviewing course articulations, and updating program objectives and learner outcomes as warranted. Course descriptions are reviewed, program cost and need analyzed, and improvements are documented, including rationales for further actions and expenditures ([Program Review Meeting Minutes, Current Cycle](#)). If the program review results in a change to the sequence of courses or courses offered, these changes are submitted to the Curriculum Committee of the Academic Council to undergo its formal approval process. Final results of reviews, using the

program-specific ICCB templates, are submitted annually to the ICCB by September 1, as required. Student service program reviews exclude much of the instructional and student assessment data, but require well-developed and thorough responses to the ICCB review questions ([Student Services Review Example](#)).

Until 2017, review summaries were sent to ICCB following a single-page template. A new 2017 ICCB template expanded the information reported to that agency and impacted how we do program review. Though the new template requires much of the same information that RLC was already gathering, it now requires disaggregated data and narrative about data gaps.

Because of these changes, a committee was established in Fall 2016 to examine the new ICCB Program Review Manual. The committee found that because a summary of the process was all ICCB required previously, there were a number of inconsistencies. Quality and the level of specificity varied greatly dependent on the instructional deans or program area lead. The result of this committee's work was the creation of in-house program review checklists, creating a consistent process of data gathering and providing recommended sources for finding required information ([Program Review Checklist CTE](#), [Program Review Checklist Academic Disciplines](#)).

These checklists, along with the new ICCB review format, have resulted in more consistent documents that are of increased value to stakeholders. Also, these changes help the college better connect retention/completion data and learning assessment analysis to program review ([Rad Tech: Example](#)); however, the college continues to work on a balance of consistent process while allowing program reviewers discretion in methodology.

Internally, the President's Cabinet is the body that analyzes program review results. Prior to being submitted to ICCB, the staff member responsible for the review leads Cabinet discussion of the findings. Along with productivity reports from the Business Office and Advisory Committee reports, program reviews are used to help determine a program's viability. The information provided by the review is also used to justify program changes, including the percentage of adjunct hours, any learning assessment issues noted, or any changes in requirements by the IAI (Illinois Articulation Initiative) or ICCB.

Program review is informed by several other processes. Program advisory committees complete a survey as part of the process. The new ICCB template requires the inclusion of assessment methods and results, as well more detailed persistence, retention and completion data. ([Communications Program Review 2017](#)). Conversely, program review results are integrated into other college activities. Program review plays a part in completing SWOT analyses during annual strategic planning as well as budget requests. In fact, the annual SWOT process of strategic planning, as outlined in **5C** and **1A3**, often serves as annual program review, generating much of the same data and analysis of program effectiveness. Beginning in 2017, an annual report is completed for each CTE program and presented to the Advisory Committee ([Advisory Committee Annual Report](#)). This new document provides an annual review of program data for the advisory constituents.

Examples of improvement made through program review include the addition of the Work Ethics class to our Baking and Pastry certificate based on advisory committee concerns ([Baking and Pastry Program Review](#)) and the expansion of a high school intervention initiative, transitional math ([Remedial Math Program Review](#)).

Starting in 2017 all program reviews that follow the new ICCB template are located on the college's Intranet SharePoint site. Prior reviews and supporting documentation from 2014-2018 are housed electronically in the Vice President of Instruction's office. Earlier program reviews are archived in

LRC 117.

#### 4A2

The Registrar evaluates all transfer credit based on the student's declared major. A transfer policy workflow has been created for our most common transfer colleges ([Transfer Policy Workflow](#)). Credit hours, course content, and dean's recommendations/approvals, where necessary, are used to determine the transferability of courses. Transcripts which originate from uncommon transfer colleges are evaluated by searching that college's catalog on their website and evaluating the credit hours and course content, as well as obtaining instructor recommendations and dean approval when necessary. Whether or not a course is an Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) course is also a determinant of transferability. IAI is a statewide agreement on course transferability among more than 100 participating colleges ([ittransfer.org](http://ittransfer.org)). All participating schools agree to accept articulated IAI general education courses.

When content of courses is uncertain or credit hour equivalency is hard to determine, the appropriate deans review transcripts. The final awarded credit relies heavily on their evaluation. Clear policies exist for evaluating and transcribing several experiential and alternative education processes, as evidenced by the public policies outlined below in **4A3**.

#### 4A3

In order to assure quality, the [Transfer Credit Procedure](#) defines what credit is acceptable for transfer. It is located in the college Catalog (P.43) and on the college website under Student Consumer Information.

Policies for transcribing occupational experiences such as military and state police service are articulated in the Catalog ([Types of Credit p. 39](#)). As a member of the Servicemembers Opportunities Consortium (1,700 members nationwide), RLC also adheres to their policies for evaluating military services for transcription of credit ([SOC Policy](#)). RLC has clear guidelines for college credit by examination including CLEP, high school advanced placement, and proficiency, as well as international baccalaureate credit ([Advanced Placement and Proficiency](#)). A process for home school student admissions is also outlined in the Catalog ([p. 20](#)). RLC is also a participant in Transferology ([www.transferology.com](http://www.transferology.com)), which allows students to find statewide requirements and transferability information for courses ([Catalog, p.43](#)).

#### 4A4

The college maintains authority over all aspects of its educational processes. Instructional deans work closely with faculty who exercise and maintain authority over prerequisites, course content, and learning outcomes.

##### **Authority over Prerequisites:**

The college works within the guidelines of the ICCB as well as the articulation agreements in place for courses; however, the establishment and review of prerequisites is the propriety of faculty,

supported by instructional deans. Through the faculty led Academic Council curriculum process faculty establish prerequisites as part of the development of new curriculum as described in **3A1**. As part of college Catalog annual updating, instructional deans request by email that full-time faculty review their respective offerings in the Catalog and submit changes or errors in the listed prerequisites to the VP of Instruction ([Call for Catalog Review](#)).

### **Rigor of Courses:**

The Curriculum Committee of the Academic Council approves new courses after a thorough examination of justification, learning outcomes, formatting and assessment methods ([Curriculum Committee Checklist](#)). Once new curriculum is approved by the Curriculum Committee, the full Academic Council reviews and votes on its [Curriculum Packet](#). Credit hour compliance has been completed for all courses currently taught as outlined extensively in **3A1** ([Credit Hour Compliance Audit Form](#)). Articulations with high school and university programs are designed to help assure proper coursework alignment, though meetings have become more infrequent. The development of dual credit and the IAI processes serve many of the same functions as face-to-face articulations. Recent articulation meetings between university, community college and high school faculty were held mostly in preparation for common core standards ([Common Core Articulation Agenda](#)), with a meeting scheduled this fall regarding transitional math.

Authority and rigor are also maintained across all modalities by integrating them within the five instructional divisions. Additionally, in the career technical fields, program Advisory Committees and other industry partnership meetings identify updates for training and skills for success of students in their respective career fields.

### **Expectations for Student Learning:**

**4B1** includes the process of the development of program and institutional outcomes that define learning expectations. Originally developed by faculty as part of the 2006-2008 self-study process, institutional outcomes are articulated on all course syllabi and reviewed as part of annual assessment planning. In 2016, faculty reviewed and mapped program outcomes for appropriate levels of performance (See **4B2**). They make changes to learning based on analysis of student performance as documented in their annual assessment plans (**4B3**) as well as strategic planning, Quality Matters review, and several other student learning committees such as the standing Curriculum Committee of the Academic Council. Though there is no institutional grading standard, several departments do have documented definitions that are used by faculty in their department ([English Grading Guidelines](#)).

### **Access to Learning Resources:**

As described in **4D4**, the Learning Resource Center is centrally located on campus and it is the location of the primary open computer lab. Website monitoring and annual headcount processes indicate it serves thousands a semester ([Learning Resource Center Page Factbook](#)). A full-time collection management specialist and reference librarian, along with two part-time library specialists, oversee organization of resources including the website and electronic database main page. A Learning Resource Committee of the Academic Council serves as liaison between faculty and library staff concerning relevant issues ([Minutes-03\\_27\\_2018](#)). With a new management flowchart the library now falls under the administration of the Dean of Allied Health. Staff meetings are held monthly ([Library Staff Meeting Minutes](#)). Both faculty and library staff have an annual budget for discretionary spending on electronic and print resources. The Electronic Library is a college-developed web page that links to all databases, e-references and research resources. An annual budget

for database subscriptions falls between \$45,000-\$60,000 ([Annual Database Budget](#)).

Decisions concerning other campus-wide resources of significant cost such as computer software, simulators or industrial equipment are made through strategic planning budgeting processes that include faculty. Decisions for instructional materials are made by faculty in consultation with the instructional deans and referencing the bookstore's policy for book rental. In the few cases where a program does not have a full-time instructor, instructional deans may make textbook and other resource decisions based on recommendations of adjunct faculty.

### **Faculty Qualifications:**

The Vice President of Instruction and instructional deans have undertaken a thorough process of evaluating faculty qualifications as outlined and documented in **3C2**, with HR ensuring the required faculty credentialing documents are on file (see **3B4**). These qualification expectations extend to our dual credit program, as well as our reciprocal agreements and college partnerships (see **3C1**).

### **Dual Credit:**

Authority over dual credit instruction is maintained with expectations consistent with full and part-time instruction as well as oversight integrated into divisions as opposed to separate departments. All dual credit classes are taught using the same text with the master syllabi and outcomes standardized for each course, regardless of modality. Full-time faculty mentors are often assigned to beginning dual credit instructors and sometimes asked to observe dual credit classrooms (see **3C3**). Dual credit instructors are included in faculty development opportunities, particularly the annual faculty orientation meeting at the beginning of the instructional year, and at program-level meetings such as the bi-annual summer English Retreat ([Retreat Agenda-Summary](#)).

## **4A5**

A number of areas have accreditations that support the rigor of programs, many providing national testing opportunities for students:

EMT Paramedic – Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions

Initial Accreditation: July 21, 2016 – July 31, 2021 (5 years)

([CoAEMSP Accreditation Documents](#))

Health Information Technology- Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education

Initial Accreditation – October 23, 2015

CAHIIM Accreditation is not time limited. The program will submit the APAR annually.

([Health Information Technology Accreditation Documents](#))

Medical Assistant – Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)

Initial Accreditation: September 15, 2017 – September 30, 2022 (5 years)

([CAAHEP Certificate and Accreditation Documents](#))

Radiologic Technology- Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology  
Initial Accreditation: March 2011-2016 (5 years)  
Continuing Accreditation: 2016 – 2024 (8 years)

[\(Radiologic Technology Accreditation Documents\)](#)

#### Ancillary Accreditations

Automotive Technology – National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF\*)  
Master Automobile Service Technology Accreditation  
Initial Accreditation: 1995  
Continuing Accreditation: January 2018 - January 2023 (5 years)

\*The Council for Higher Education for Accreditation does not recognize this accrediting body.

[\(Automotive Accreditation Documents\)](#)

RLC Foundation Children’s Center - National Association for the Education of Young Children  
Initial Accreditation: January, 1999  
Continuing Education: 2017-2022 (5 years)

[\(NAEYC Accreditation Documents\)](#).

#### Licensures and Approvals

In addition to specialized accreditations, other RLC programs hold licensures and approvals in several career-technical areas ([List of Licensures and Approvals](#)).

#### 4A6

There are several processes for the evaluation of graduate success, both in regards to employment and students who seek advanced degrees.

At the institutional level, a graduate survey is deployed six months after graduation ([Student Graduate Survey, Fall 2017](#)). The results are shared by the Director of Enrollment Services with the President’s Cabinet ([Cabinet Minutes](#)), though graduate survey return rates have not been robust. A new process was implemented in May 2018 to capture employment data. Immediately prior to the graduation ceremony, students complete a brief survey regarding employment status in their program of study and provide a current email address ([Exit Survey and Results 2018](#)).

For evaluation of continuing students, the college uses IPEDS data, with the Institutional Research Department tracking individual students using IPEDS's Four-Year Outcomes report. Additionally, RLC has begun using [National Student Clearinghouse](#) data to look at undergraduate institutional completion rates. The 2009 cohort six-year tracking indicated a 19.24% four-year completion rate against the 15.07% national benchmark. Mixed enrollment graduates exceeded the benchmark also (16.19% RLC; 13.52% national). However, part-time students at RLC were 0% completers of a Bachelor's Degree as tracked at 200% time to completion, though the national benchmark is only 2%. This has informed the college’s persistence, retention and completion strategies for improvement (See **4C3**).



Due to the state-wide issue of tracking workforce outcomes for college graduates, a new system on capturing and disseminating employment information is expected to be available this fall. The Illinois Career Outcomes Tool, created by ICCB and other governmental agencies in Illinois, will connect higher education data to employment data. Colleges will have the ability to track graduates' instructional programs to industries, earnings and job stability.

Some specific programs also track students beyond graduation in both employment and continuing education. Several Allied Health programs collect a variety of outcome data to meet accreditation standards. For one, clinical evaluations by site supervisors show the potential student strengths and weaknesses as they leave the program ([Clinical Employer Evaluations 2016-2018](#)). For another, various types of surveys are collected six months after students complete their certificate and/or degree to evaluate the program and job placement ([Allied Health Employer Surveys](#)). Information gained from the surveys is fed back into program and learning improvements. The Applied Science and Technology Division uses [surveys](#) to evaluate employer satisfaction of students during the on-the-job training component of their program of study. Both divisions include a survey of their advisory committee members regarding the success of our graduates ([Advisory Survey Summary](#)). A few programs also collect board pass rates ([Nursing Exam Pass Rates](#), [Cosmetology Graduate Statistics](#)).

Two significant sources of labor market information are used to assure that the programs RLC offers will lead to successful employment. The U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Information Network ([www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org)) provides occupational and industry profiles, as well as salary and economic data, for both the national and state levels. The Illinois Department of Employment Services also provides the same type of labor market data but by county or the local workforce investment area (LWIA). Labor market information is utilized for CTE in the following ways: new curriculum submitted for approval, five-year program review, and the annual report for advisory meetings ([Welding Market Information](#)). Throughout those processes, market and economic need are heavily weighed to ensure graduate success. The ICCB requires that any new program approval request must include labor statistics and area needs assessment and, sometimes, letters of industry support ([Certified Production Tech Application](#)).

When economic indicators lead to any discontinuance of a program, the approval process for inactivating or withdrawing a program is the same as adding a new program; it is reviewed by the Curriculum Committee ([Curriculum Committee Minutes](#)), Academic Council and Board of Trustees for final decision. The discontinuance of Massage Therapy and Mining Technology program reductions are largely a response to a negative employment outlook ([Meeting Minutes](#)).

As part of Gainful Employment regulations, RLC includes disclosure information of required certificate programs on its website ([List of GE Programs](#)). All programs fall within the limits and remain eligible for federal student aid.

## Sources

---

- AC-Cur Com Mtg Min Photography-09\_27\_2017
- AC-LRC Com Mtg Min-03\_27\_2018
- Adv Placement and Proficiency Credits-2017-2018 Cat pg 31
- ADV-Advisory Council Annual Report Template-03\_21\_2017.pdf
- ADV-Advisory Council Annual Report Template-03\_21\_2017.pdf (page number 2)
- Advisory Committee Manual-03\_21\_2017
- AH-CAAHEP Med Assist Accred-2017-2022



- AH-CAHIIM HIT Accredited and Progress Rpt-10\_23\_2015
- AH-Clinical Practice Sites-2018
- AH-Employer Surveys-6 months-2016-2018
- AH-IDFPR Nursing Pass Rates-08\_20\_2018
- AH-IDFPR Nursing Pass Rates-08\_20\_2018 (page number 4)
- AH-JRCERT Rad Tech Accredited-08\_31\_2016.pdf
- AH-Student Clinical Surveys-2016-2018.pdf
- ASAT-CPT Curr Application and Materials-08\_20\_2018
- ASAT-NATEF Auto Tech Accredited-2017-2023
- ASAT-On the Job Surveys-2016-2017
- CCCE-EMT Paramedic Accredited Docs-2017.pdf
- COSMO-Graduate Statistics 2004-2018.pdf
- ENR-SOC Policy-2018-2019 Cat pg 23
- FINADM-Profitability Reports-2009-2017.pdf
- ICCB 5-Year Prog Rev Schedule-2017-2021
- INST Program Review 2018\_Culinary Arts Certificate 2013-2017.pdf
- INST Program Review 2018\_Culinary Arts Certificate 2013-2017.pdf (page number 6)
- INST Program Review Remedial Math FY 2018.pdf
- INST Program Review Remedial Math FY 2018.pdf (page number 3)
- INST-Acad Disciplines Prog Rev Checklist-2017
- INST-Accred Licensures and Approvals-2018
- INST-Advisory Survey Summary-2018.pdf
- INST-Common Core Articulation Agenda-09\_09\_2011
- INST-Communications Program Review-2017
- INST-Course Approval Form-07\_12\_2017
- INST-Credit Hour Compliance Audit Form-2017
- INST-CTE Prog Rev Checklist-2017
- INST-Curr Approval Form-03\_27\_2018.pdf
- INST-Curr Approval Form-07\_11\_2017
- INST-Curr Com Packet-UAS-04\_24\_2018
- INST-EMT Paramedic Program Review-2017-2021
- INST-Mining Inactivation Curr Com Mtg Min-11\_30\_2015
- INST-Prog Inactivation-MIN and THM-2015
- INST-Prog Rev Mtg Min-02\_07\_2017.pdf
- INST-Rad Tech Prog Rev-FY 2018
- INST-SICCM Teach Out Plan-Student Completion-2018.pdf
- IR-Graduate Survey Responses-May 2018
- IR-LRC Factbook Data-2013-2017.pdf
- IR-National Stu Clearinghouse Stats-Fall 2009
- IR-Student survey - Mitchell-09\_26\_2012
- LA-English Retreat Agenda and Summary-2016
- LA-Levels of Acceptability in Writing 08\_07\_2018
- LRC-Electronic Resources Budget-2015-2018.pdf
- LRC-Staff Mtg Min
- PERK-Gainful Employment Programs-08\_20\_2018
- PERK-Gainful Employment Programs-08\_20\_2018 (page number 2)
- Pol 4.1005 Home Schooled Student Enrollment
- PRC-Rad Tech Graduate Surveys-2013-2015
- PRC-Student Grad Exit Survey-Fall 2017
- PRES-Articulation Agreements-06\_13\_2018

- PRES-Cabinet Mtg Min-Feb and Mar 2018.pdf
- PUB-Adv Place and Prof Credit page 30-31
- PUB-Call for Catalog Rev-09\_11\_2018.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 20)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 24)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 30)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 33)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 45)
- PUB-Catalog-Home-School Credit-2018-2019.pdf
- PUB-Transfer Credit Proc-Cat 2018-2019 pg 43.pdf
- PUB-Transfer Credit Proc-Cat 2018-2019 pg 43.pdf (page number 2)
- RLCFCC-NAEYC Accred Cert-2017-2022
- STUREC-Example of Transfer Credit-08\_29\_2017
- STUREC-Transfer Policy Workflow-03\_19\_2018
- STUSER-Program Review-2017
- Types of Credit-2018-2019 Cat Pg 39
- Types of Credit-2018-2019 Catalog-pages 41-42
- WELD-Tech Adv Com Mtg-2018

## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

---

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

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

## Argument

---

### 4B1

The college's commitment to a formal process of student learning assessment is long-standing, dating back to 1997 ([Assessment Historical Timeline](#)). Since then, student learning assessment has evolved to become an impetus for positive impact on student success. Notable progress in the last 10 years includes incorporating institutional assessment outcomes into the mission documents to ensure college commitment and a systematic annual planning cycle with cross-curricular peer review for improved quality and consistency. Institution-, program- and course-level assessment activity is documented within the Tk20 by Watermark assessment management system.

**NOTE:** Both program and institutional outcomes are assessed during our annual assessment cycle. Though connected, these processes are distinctive. For clarity, institutional and program assessment processes are explained separately in **4B1-3**.

### **Institutional Outcomes Assessment:**

As part of the previous self-study process, a significant campus-wide initiative was undertaken to identify broad institutional learning goals ([Initiative Meeting Notes](#)). The result was the establishment of four measurable institutional learning outcomes for all degree-seeking students: critical thinking, problem-solving, oral communication and written communication ([Institutional Outcomes Definitions](#)). The acronym "CPOW" was created as a mnemonic for a campus-wide awareness campaign. To maintain institutional focus, CPOW was adopted as part of our mission documents and has become a core expectation for student success.

With the exception of oral communication, which is assessed exclusively through a standardized process developed in-house (see below), CPOW outcomes are assessed through both nationally normed instruments and assessments developed by faculty. Until Fall 2017, critical thinking was evaluated using the [CAAP critical thinking](#) instrument. [Problem solving \(math\)](#) is assessed through the College Base Math Test. Writing was also assessed through [College Base](#) until Fall 2013 when faculty decided to switch to the CAAP writing sample assessment for improved data. The rotation for administering the CAAP tests in written communication and critical thinking had been every other year for manageability, but to quickly establish longitudinal data from the new writing measure, the CAAP writing sample was given annually from 2013-2016 ([CAAP Writing Results](#)). The goals for

these measures are to stay at or near the national average (See Institutional Outcome Achievement in **4B2**).

The nationally normed testing outlined above is supported by additional institutional outcomes assessment performed by faculty in each program area. During an annual assessment cycle, each instructor is required to assess at least one of the two institutional outcomes currently considered "in cycle," (three-year periods) dependent of the outcome's relevance to their respective program. Faculty develop their own assessment instrument and process ([Tk20 Institutional Assessment sample](#)). Despite being "out of cycle," English faculty have continued to assess critical thinking as part of an improvement initiative outlined in **4B3**. The current cycle of assessing oral communication and problem solving stretched to five years to implement and refine these new assessment processes. In Fall 2018, the college will change to a more manageable cycle with written communication data collection in the 2018-19 academic year, followed by actions for improvement and analysis of results the next, 2019-20. Critical thinking data collection will begin in that same year, with analysis the next, and the pattern will be repeated until all four outcomes have been assessed, and then cycle back to written communication.

The fourth learner outcome, oral communication, is assessed using an e-rubric housed in Tk20 ([Oral Comm. E-Rubric](#)). Full-, part-time, and dual credit instructors who choose this institutional outcome to assess are required to assess at least one oral communication assignment in at least one of their classes each semester using the institutional rubric. Each instructor enters their own data into Tk20. A college-wide benchmark for performance has been set and, like the other three outcomes, results are reviewed by the Institutional Assessment Committee ([Oral Communication Annual Assessment Rpt 2015-17](#)). Changes implemented in 2018 include looking at the three rubric criteria for areas of improvement rather than just meeting a benchmark.

An Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC) examines all processes holistically. They focus on examining the results of the nationally normed test and Tk20 institutional outcome data in order to discuss concerns and plan for future improvements ([Institutional Assessment Committee Minutes 2017-2018](#)). Though several assessment committees have existed in the past ([career-tech](#), [developmental](#), [general education](#), [assessment review](#)) currently three ad-hoc sub-committees support the IAC. A Developmental Assessment Committee has recently divided into separate College Prep English and Math Prep sub-committees. The Oral Communication Assessment sub-committee is the third. Members of the IAC and its current sub-committees are predominantly faculty ([IAC Members](#)).

### **Program-Level Assessment Process**

The college has adopted an annual assessment process that documents both institutional and program-specific assessment activity in the Tk20 assessment management system. Tk20 documents measurable program-level learning outcomes across curriculum for our degree and certificate programs ([Program-Level Learning Outcomes](#)). General education faculty sometimes analyze and document course assessment programmatically. For example, ENGL 1411 (the college prep co-requisite), ENGL 1101 and ENGL 1102 course-level assessment is analyzed as a "program", which allows for consistent documentation and reporting within Tk20. several other elective and general education courses are documented as "program" in Tk20 for the same reason. Mapping within Tk20 was initiated in 2017. The process has resulted in some outcome revisions for improved measurability and a confirmation that the appropriate level of student work is occurring in both courses and programs ([Sample Tk20 Curriculum Map-Ag Production/Mgmt](#), [Tk20 Curriculum Mapping Faculty Responses](#)). The curriculum map is being expanded to encompass general education goals and the institutional outcomes, CPOW. Reviewing the proper level of student performance is ongoing as part of a review of processes to improve methodology while maintaining manageability.

Faculty use Tk20 to run annual reports on assessment data, analyze results, and document improvements made in student learning ([Tk20 Annual Cycle Timeline](#)). All Tk20 processes are exclusively in the hands of the faculty with support from the Instructional Designer and instructional deans. Faculty examine both the annual institutional assessment data and Tk20-generated assessment results. A cross-curricular faculty mentoring mechanism is a highlight of the process, allowing for critical peer review, exchange of good practice ideas, and mentoring by colleagues more experienced with assessment ([Tk20 Feedback Module](#)).

#### **4B2:**

##### **Institutional Outcomes Achievement:**

Achievement in three of the four institutional outcomes has been examined longitudinally for over 10 years. Generally, all three nationally normed tests indicate RLC student performance consistently at or slightly above the national norm, with problem solving being the most inconsistent ([Institutional Assessment Longitudinal Charts](#)).

A primary institutional learning benchmark is that student achievement in these areas is at or near the national norm for written communication, critical thinking and problem solving. Downward trends are examined carefully. For instance, a critical thinking improvement initiative was created to address a slight weakness in the CAAP sub-category of “Evaluating Arguments” ([2012 CAAP Critical Thinking Score Breakdown](#)). The result was an improvement initiative that standardized rubrics, the assessment tool, and the creation of standardized resource materials (see **3B3** for improvement results).

The [Tk20 Oral Communication Report](#) provides institutional perspective on oral communication student achievement. The benchmark was that 55% of students receive a score of competent (6/10 or above) on the oral communication rubric. Since full implementation of the process, this goal was met by a considerable margin. In Spring 2018 the IAC increased the benchmark to 75%, slightly above the current average student performance level ([Institutional Assessment Minutes, April 2018](#)). The Oral Communication sub-committee also looked at weaknesses in rubric criteria for the first time, recognizing where the needed improvements should be made.

Student achievement of institutional outcomes is shared across college constituents, with faculty examining it in department meetings. Dual credit and part-time instructors examine and discuss results at a faculty orientation that begins each academic year ([Faculty Orientation Division Agendas](#)). The IAC reviews, analyzes and suggests improvements and changes to the process. Results are annually updated on the RLC Achieves web page ([www.rlc.edu/achieves](http://www.rlc.edu/achieves)).

##### **Program Outcomes Achievement:**

All curricular and co-curricular programs typically have four to six outcomes that have been reviewed for measurability. Faculty are required to assess at least one program outcome each semester. These processes are documented in each program's Annual Assessment Plan within Tk20. A sample of plans and learning improvement results are documented below (**4B3**). Because Tk20 does not produce a global report of all assessment activity, a document called the [Annual Assessment Summary Report](#) was created in-house. It is a summary of the process and results across all programs. It documents the establishment of benchmarks as well as many other aspects of the process. An additional [Continuous Improvement Spreadsheet](#) provides a snapshot of a program's success in

fulfilling this essential element of assessment.

### **Co-curricular Assessment:**

In the past, co-curricular assessment at RLC has occurred sporadically with little documentation of data ([Fun Fest Survey](#)). Systematic co-curricular student learning assessment is still in the early stages at RLC. Co-curricular activities have been defined (3E1) and measurable outcomes established and mapped to our institutional outcomes and general education goals ([Co-curricular Map](#), [Co-curricular Outcomes](#)). Career and library services completed co-curricular assessments in Summer 2018 ([co-curricular assessment Summer 18](#)). The Writing Center piloted direct assessment of learner outcomes in Spring 2018 ([English Tutoring Assessment Results](#)). Discussions on how to adopt these processes to the other tutoring programs continue.

### **4B3**

### **Institutional Outcomes Learning Improvement:**

One significant CPOW initiative has been the "recognizing argument" improvement plan initiated by English faculty. Students under-performed in the "evaluating argument" portion of the CAAP Critical Thinking Assessment ([Breakdown Analysis Report 2012](#)). This led to an initiative to standardize curriculum and develop assessment processes to improve student performance in both analyzing and evaluating written arguments. Through a 5-year process English faculty created a pre- and post-test, as well as a rubric which evaluates student ability to recognize argument elements. This was implemented in all sections of the second semester writing course, English 1102, where argument is taught. A consistent set of supporting materials was developed. They were uploaded to the English instructor Blackboard platform, Improving Student Learning. Dual credit and part-time faculty were encouraged to use them during Faculty Orientation. ([Recognizing Argument Materials](#)). Since 2014, annual Tk20 reports demonstrated an annual improvement of student learning in this skill ([Tk20 Annual Reports 2014-2016](#)). One setback for this initiative was the discontinuance of the CAAP critical thinking instruments. The Tk20 annual assessment results prove student learning is improving in this area ([Tk20 Improvement Results 2016-2017](#)) and English faculty consider the initiative a moderate success, but a final comparison of the CAAP Breakdown Analysis Report, pre- and post-initiative, will not be feasible.

### **Program- and Course-Level Outcomes Learning Improvement:**

Though assessment efforts still vary significantly in quality dependent on instructor experience, knowledge and buy-in, two examples of significant student learning improvements are found in the Office Systems Technology/IT Systems Assistant and Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs. The assessment process revealed that students in the Office Systems Technology and IT Systems Assistant degrees struggle with file formatting and grammatical/typographical errors. Faculty limited the use of templates and implemented additional formatting exercises to improve student learning. As a result, student learning increased. Faculty later shifted the grading scale to raise expectations and encourage students to improve these skills ([Tk20 Assessment Plan--OFTC/IT Sys Asst 2016-2017](#)). Through learning assessment, ECE faculty realized that students were struggling with poor mechanical application within their professional portfolios. Based on these results, faculty implemented a "resubmission" policy that allows students to submit their portfolios for faculty critique, make corrections, and re-submit for grading. While grammar and mechanical application continues to be an issue, assessment scores increased, signaling a higher quality of work. Faculty plan



to continue preliminary critique and encourage peer advising ([Tk20 Assessment Plan--ECE, ECE Assessment Timeline](#) 2016-2017).

More typical improvements include credit hour reviews within Ag Business & Ag Production areas which provided insight regarding credit hour changes, realignment of curriculum, and analysis of student test performance deficiency in fertilizer concepts. With this information, faculty were able to revise the instructor's lesson plans to cover these concepts in depth ([Tk20 Assessment Plans--Ag. Business/Production 2015-2016, 2017-2018](#)). History faculty realized that not all dual credit instructors were collecting data as expected. Inconsistency in assessment methodology was revealed as dual credit faculty must review for any assessment given to high school students. On-campus faculty follow a strict no-review policy. Faculty believe that no review provides a better gauge of student learning, but students that reviewed in high school performed better. To improve consistency faculty are reevaluating their methodology as well as exploring an alternative to the graded assessment within the high school ([Tk20 Assessment Plan--History](#) 2017-2018).

Several programs have recently made significant improvements: Radiologic Technology faculty used assessment results to redirect their efforts when they revealed a need to place additional focus on the evening student. The process also made it evident that adjustments to the grading scale would more accurately reflect student performance ([Tk20 Assessment Plan--Rad Tech](#)). Meeting the benchmark may indicate student learning; however, music faculty recently realized that focusing on continuous improvement generates more precise understanding. They revamped student learning outcomes to improve their measurability and better capture specific student learning data ([Tk20 Assessment Plan--Music](#)).

Some programs, however, have little documentation of assessment, such as philosophy. The suspicion that exclusively faculty-led assessment activities may have contributed to a lack of accountability prompted a revision of the peer mentoring system to include the instructional deans in the process ([Institutional Assessment Committee Minutes](#)).

#### 4B4

RLC periodically reviews National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) guidelines to ensure good practice:

- All aspects of the annual Tk20 program assessments are performed by faculty. A majority of the [Institutional Assessment Committee Members](#) (IAC) are also faculty. Starting in Fall 2017, the IAC is co-chaired by faculty. In-house assessment data entry is exclusively performed by faculty, including dual credit and part-time instructors. Results are analyzed by full-time faculty leads.
- Assessment has been codified with policy and procedures language (revised 2017) ([Assessment Policy](#)). That policy is supported monetarily, with a 2016 annual budget expenditure of \$5,000 a year ([Annual Assessment Expenditure](#)). Monies are budgeted for supporting all student learning activities, including nationally-normed tests. The culture of assessment is cultivated in a variety of ways, including a recent \$200 annual stipend for faculty serving as mentors. There is also a \$500 Assessment Award for deserving faculty or staff picked through an annual nomination process ([Assessment Award Letter](#)). Assessment award winners are recognized in the Catalog's faculty directory and the RLC Fact Book.



- Outcome language is evaluated for measurability through annual Tk20 planning, previously through the 2008 self-study and, most recently, outcomes mapping. Across college programs, benchmarks have been established and outcomes are measured against target goals ([Annual Assessment Summary Report](#)).
- The college developed systematic documentation of assessment through Tk20. The college's instructional designer (also a faculty member) manages the annual Tk20 assessment activities and supports faculty with training.
- The college holds two annual "Student Learning Days" for full-time faculty ([Agendas 2009-18, 2018 materials](#)). They focus on assessment as well as retention efforts. Traditionally, they have included workshops, guest speakers, data review sessions, and cross-curricular peer mentoring. Additionally, Faculty Orientation Day begins each school year during which part-time and dual credit instructors are informed about assessment. Attendance is required for all faculty ([Faculty Orientation 2018 Agenda](#)).
- Cross-curricular mentoring is a significant part of our annual assessment activity ([Peer Review Session Presentation](#)). This systematic program and institutional assessment review process grew from the college's 2011 [Progress Report on Career Technical Assessment](#). During the writing of that document, faculty strong in assessment provided feedback to the faculty that were struggling. This process was formalized, and cross-curricular review teams were created for peer mentoring. Reviewers provide peer feedback within Tk20, then meet with faculty to discuss them. From 2005-2017 over 20 of 60+ full-time faculty volunteered as mentors for cross-curricular review of assessment. Recently the process of mentoring has been modified to occur in departmental sessions. These changes were intended to improve communication with instructional deans and accountability ([Revised Mentor Assignments 2018](#)).
- The assessment processes at the college are continually improving. Recently, the Annual Assessment Timeline was revised to extend analysis time. The organization of the IAC was revisited in 2017. Sub-committee structures were simplified and agenda and meeting schedules formalized ([Institutional Assessment Committee Minutes 2017-2018](#)).
- Assessment is integrated into college processes. Though there is room for improvement, assessment analysis is connected to institutional budgeting through long- and short-term strategic planning and program review. Improving student learning is one of four focus areas on the institutional Strategic Plan. See **5C1**. Program reviews now include some assessment data (see **4A1**).

Secondary measures of student learning are discussed throughout the assurance argument including CCSSE, graduate, exit and satisfaction surveys (**5D1, 4A5, 4A6**).

Though the college demonstrates commitment to assessment and has evidence of student learning improvement through its processes, several concerns remain. In trying to balance manageability with thoroughness, poor methodology was sometimes used, including the following:

Mapping was only partially successful at the early stages of our assessment efforts, and has been inferred rather than directly referenced. To address this, a comprehensive mapping process was begun in 2016. This resulted in performance levels of "introductory," "reinforced" and "master" being documented across program outcomes, but Tk20 does not provide some mapping capability. Mapping is being expanded outside Tk20 in order to map courses and programs to both program and institutional outcomes, as well as general education goals ([Curriculum Mapping 2018](#)).

Faculty need to rotate the outcomes they assess. With the exception of English, which assesses a majority of their outcomes, only a handful of programs assess more than one. Review of our assessment cycle occurred after a core group of faculty and the VP of Instruction attended HLC's assessment workshops in the summer of 2018. The result was a revised process plan that improves best practice while maintaining manageability ([Comprehensive Assessment Plan Revisions 2018](#)). Beginning in 2018-2019, the college will require faculty to rotate assessed program outcomes rather than letting instructors choose outcomes for assessments. The rotation process will eventually lead to faculty measuring student learning across all outcomes.

Student learning improvements need to be better documented by faculty. By reviewing assessment activity, it is clear that faculty understand assessment, but the continuous improvement aspect has sometimes been elusive when benchmarks are met. There has been confusion regarding where to record activity, whether in a timeline or in the analysis tab in Tk20. Contributing to this was an administrative emphasis on documenting all programmatic changes on timelines, regardless of their relationship to assessment. A consistent method of reporting student learning improvements (timeline) was established in 2017. To improve continuity between annual planning cycles, the college's Instructional Designer created a section of Tk20 reporting that allows documenting the actions that carried over from the previous year ([Closing the Loop Presentation](#)).

The college could improve transparency. It communicates the purpose of pre-, post- and nationally-normed assessment to students internally, but only recently added institutional assessment information to the website ([Student Learning Success](#)) and learning outcomes to program web pages. Expanding what results are published, as well as including explanations of assessment processes, is a 2018-19 priority of the IAC.

## Sources

---

- 1143 20090625 Continued Accreditation - Action Letter
- 1143 20111024 Progress Report - Report
- ASSESS-2017 Jan SLD - Assessment Updates (2).pdf
- ASSESS-Annual Assess Rpt-Oral Comm- 2015-2016, 2016-2017.pdf
- ASSESS-Annual Assessment Summary Report-2016-2017
- ASSESS-Annual Assessment Summary Rpt-Benchmarks-2016-2017
- ASSESS-Assess Award-03\_13\_2017
- ASSESS-Assess Plan-Early Childhood Edu-2016-2017
- ASSESS-Assess Plan-IT Systems Asst-2016-2017
- ASSESS-Assess Plan-Music-2016-2017
- ASSESS-Assess Plan-Rad Tech-2016-2017
- ASSESS-Assess Rev Mtg Min-2009-2017.pdf
- ASSESS-Assessment Historical Timeline-07\_30\_2018
- ASSESS-Assessment Plan-Ag-2015-2017
- ASSESS-Assessment Plan-History 2015-2016 and 2016-2017
- ASSESS-Assessment Plan-IT Systems Asst-Updated.pdf
- ASSESS-Assessment Plan-Music-2016-2017
- ASSESS-Assessment Plan-Radiologic Technology-2016-2017
- ASSESS-Budget FY 2017
- ASSESS-CAAP Critical Thinking Pre- Post Results-2008-2016.pdf
- ASSESS-CAAP Critical Thinking Score Breakdown-Spring 2012
- ASSESS-CAAP Writing Essay Results-2013-2017

- ASSESS-CAAP-Critical Thinking Graph-2008-2016
- ASSESS-Career Service and LRC Co-curricular Results-2018
- ASSESS-Closing the Loop Mtg Min-08\_13\_2007
- ASSESS-Co-Curricular Map Updated-2018.pdf
- ASSESS-Co-Curricular Outcomes.pdf
- ASSESS-College BASE Math Scores-2003-2018
- ASSESS-College Prep Math English Success Rates-2018
- ASSESS-College Prep Mtg Min-2011-2016
- ASSESS-CollegeBASE-Writing-2003-2013
- ASSESS-Comprehensive Assessment Plan Revisions-Summer 2018
- ASSESS-CPOW Initiative Mtg Min-08\_13\_2007
- ASSESS-CTE Mtg Min-2010-2011
- ASSESS-Curriculum Map Examples-08-21-2018
- ASSESS-ECE Assess Timeline-2016-2017
- ASSESS-Evidence of Continuous Improvement-2016-2017 Updated.pdf
- ASSESS-FacultyTimeline-2017-2018.pdf
- ASSESS-FacultyTimeline-2017-2018.pdf
- ASSESS-Gen Ed Com Mtg Min-2009-2015
- ASSESS-Gen Ed Com Mtg Min-2009-2015(2)
- ASSESS-ID Mentor Training PP-07\_26\_2016
- ASSESS-ID Mentor Training PP-07\_26\_2016
- ASSESS-Institutional Assess Longitudinal Charts-05\_08\_2018
- ASSESS-Mentoring Teams by Division-01\_2018
- ASSESS-Oral Comm Rubric-08\_2013
- ASSESS-Policy 2.1175 Assessment-01\_11\_2018
- ASSESS-TK20 Annual Reports - 2014-2016
- ASSESS-TK20 Improvement Results-2016-2017
- Assess-Tk20 Institutional Assessment Examples 2016-2017
- ASSESS-Tk20 Mentor Feedback Form and Documentation-07\_23\_2018 Updated
- ASSESS-Tk20 Mentor Feedback Form with Feedback-07\_23\_2018
- ASSESS-Tk20 Oral Comm Report-Fall 2013-2015
- ASSESS-Tk20 Outcomes by Organization 2018-07-30.pdf
- ASSESS-Writing Center Assess-Research-Spring 2018
- CPOW Institutional Outcomes Definitions-07\_10\_2007
- EFFECT-PRC Mtg Min-2016\_2017
- ENGL-Faculty Orientation Assessment Handout-08\_16\_2018
- ENGL-Faculty Orientation Assessment Handout-08\_16\_2018 (page number 2)
- INST-Curriculum Map Faculty Responses-01\_2018
- INST-Faculty Ori Division Agendas-2018.pdf
- INST-Faculty Orientation Materials-Fall 2018
- INST-Recognizing Argument Materials-2018
- INST-Stu Learning Day Agendas-2009-2018.pdf
- INST-Student Learning Day Materials-Fall 2018
- INST-Tk20 Ag Prod Mgmt Curr Map -07-30-2018.pdf
- PRES-2017-2018 Institutional Assessment Committee Members Updated.pdf
- PRES-Inst Assess Com Members-2017-2018
- PRES-Inst Assess Com Mtg Min-04\_26\_2018
- PRES-Inst Assess Com Mtg Min-2017-2018
- PRES-Student Learning Success Report-2018
- STUSER-Emergency Fund Form-2018

- STUSER-Fun Fest Feedback-2016

## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

---

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

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

## Argument

---

### 4C1

RLC defines completion rate as its full-time, first-time graduation rate. Our completion rates are rather high in comparison to other Illinois community colleges. The most recent IPEDS data shows 58% graduated at 150%, compared to the most recent Illinois community college average of 25%. This metric, among others, is one of the primary reasons RLC has made state and national lists for being one of the best community colleges ([Wallet Hub](#)).

Our completion goal is to maintain this level of achievement.

<b>Graduation Rates from IPEDS and GR200 Survey</b>			
<b>Full-Time, First-Time Degree/Certificate Seeking</b>			
<b>Cohort Year</b>	<b>100% Graduation Rates</b>	<b>150% Graduation Rates</b>	<b>200% Graduation Rates</b>
<b>Fall 2014</b>	41%	58%	--
<b>Fall 2013</b>	38%	51%	--
<b>Fall 2012</b>	40%	51%	53%
<b>Fall 2011</b>	44%	52%	55%

<b>Fall 2010</b>	42%	51%	53%
------------------	-----	-----	-----

The college’s active planning and implementation of improvement measures revolve around its part-time retention rate in comparison to full-time students. The college defines retention as those students retained from fall to fall. Based on IPEDS data, the college consistently exceeds the annual part-time retention average by several percentage points. Also, we are narrowing the gap between full- and part-time retention. The Fall 2015 cohort of part-time students had a retention rate of 50%, which was 20% lower than the rate for full-time students. Fall 2016 cohort retention numbers were 59% for full-time and 46% for part-time, showing only a 13% gap.

<b>Retention Rates from IPEDS Fall Enrollment Reports</b>		
<b>Cohort Year</b>	<b>Full-Time, First-Time</b>	<b>Part-Time, First-Time</b>
<b>Fall 2016</b>	59%	46%
<b>Fall 2015</b>	70%	50%
<b>Fall 2014</b>	66%	51%
<b>Fall 2013</b>	62%	52%
<b>Fall 2012</b>	59%	51%
<b>Fall 2011</b>	61%	47%

Given our relatively high completion rate for first-time, full-time students, the Persistence, Retention and Completion (PRC) Committee focused on setting a retention goal of 1.5% improvement to the Fall 2016 part-time retention rate by Fall 2019. Since the full-time retention rate dropped significantly, the committee will compare our 2016 full-time cohort rate to the national numbers when they become available. The 2017-18 retention goal was presented at the annual [Faculty Orientation](#) and [Student Learning Day](#) in August, 2018, and has been understood by internal constituents since March 2018. Two new institutional initiatives will occur in FY 2018-19 as outlined in **4C3** below to help achieve the retention improvement goal.

**4C2**

The Institutional Research (IR) Department collects campus-wide data, relying on the college ERP, IPEDS and the Illinois Community College Board in collecting, organizing and comparing retention and completion information. The Director of Enrollment Services manages IR, is part of President’s Cabinet, and presents retention and completion data to Cabinet and the Board ([2016 Board Presentation](#)). The annually updated [RLC Fact Book](#) was revised and expanded to include a PRC stand-alone section in 2016. The RLC Achieves section of the college’s website also provides information on assessment, retention and completion, and other student success data

([www.rlc.edu/rlc-achieves](http://www.rlc.edu/rlc-achieves)).

Student Success was identified as one of four focus areas for strategic planning in late 2016. Improving retention and completion are two of the goals associated with the focus. The college's major retention initiatives are documented and success is tracked using an annually updated spreadsheet ([Strategic Plan Spreadsheet: Retention Focus](#)). Retention initiatives from across campus are reviewed and discussed during the strategic planning process in Cabinet. These initiatives are prioritized based on institutional need and potential impact.

The Enrollment Services Department created a retention-focused Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEM) in 2017. Many of the goals were developed in response to student engagement concerns noted in both the [2014 and 2017 CCSSE reports](#). In Spring 2018, a core group of staff attended a SEM workshop. Following the training, the SEM plan was updated to be more manageable with college resources. ([2018-2020 Enrollment Management Plan](#)).

In addition to institutional decision-making, PRC data is used throughout programs, initiatives and offices within the various instructional and Student Services areas. These groups often collect additional PRC data for the students they serve.

Grant programs centered on career-technical fields rely heavily on their own PRC data in their reporting, analyzing and decision-making ([Grant Overview Document](#)). The college maintains a number of grants related to improving student success. All programs outlined below collect, analyze and create action plans in response to completion and retention numbers. Performance measure results are provided by ICCB through the Perkins Online Data System.

**Pathways to Results:** Rend Lake College has been an active participant in the Pathways to Results (PTR) continuous improvement model developed by the Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) at the University of Illinois. The PTR model is an outcomes-focused, equity-guided process to improve programs and policies. The five-step process provides methods, templates, and tools to help organizations continuously improve pathways and programs of study by addressing inequities in student outcomes. The information discovered through this process is used to develop improvement strategies. RLC has participated in five different PTR projects since FY 2012. The first three projects focused specifically on the Architectural Technology, Nursing, and Culinary Arts programs. The fourth project focused on improving student retention and completion throughout CTE programs ([FY 15 PTR Grant Summary](#)). The fifth project focuses on improving retention and completion of part-time and nontraditional-by-age students throughout various programs of study ([Pathways Grant Summary Results 2013-2018](#)).

**ICAPS** are accelerated opportunity grants focusing on improving student progress through the High School Equivalency (HSE) process, using a co-requisite model similar to College Prep courses and based on national retention data connected to speed of completion. The program dual-enrolls students in college-level classes in Allied Health and Manufacturing to provide incentive to continue their education and increase success ([ICAPS Grant Report](#)).

**Special population grants** support students identified as economically or academically disadvantaged, limited in English proficiency, physically or mentally disabled, displaced homemaker, or enrolled in a non-traditional field of study by gender. This grant focuses on identifying barriers these students face, providing resources to assist in student retention and completion. The FY2017 grant focused on improving nontraditional-by-gender student retention/completion ([Special Populations Mid-term and final report](#)).



**STARS and Upward Bound** are RLC's two Department of Education TRIO Grants, Upward Bound and Student Support Services (or Student Transfer And Retention Support, STARS). Both programs have federal retention goals and report and document success ([Grant Objectives Reports 2013-2016](#)).

**College Prep:** English and math also collect success rates (completion rates) as do the college's tutoring programs. The college's developmental English program, revised as a co-requisite program in 2016, collects and reviews success data in its decision-making ([2018 Annual English Assessment Review Minutes](#)). Co-requisite English assessment includes a look at the disparity of student success between the College Prep (1411) and college transfer (1101) section ([Success Rate Comparison](#)). Success will be tracked for improvement through the assessment processes. Developmental math includes tracking each developmental course's success as a secondary assessment measure ([Developmental Math Summary Spreadsheet](#)). All Learning Enhancement Center labs track success rates in courses for students who use their services ([Tutoring Success Report](#)).

Faculty connect with PRC data in several other ways. Student Learning Day has expanded to include discussion of PRC data for all full-time faculty and relevant PRC data is shared at in-services and the annual all-faculty event, Faculty Orientation, in the fall. With annual assessment processes, faculty often track success rates of individual programs and classes, as secondary assessment measures in Tk20, particularly the College Prep math and English programs ([College Prep Math and English Success Rates](#)).

Currently a campus-wide and targeted retention initiative are being deployed. The inclusion of part-time students in FYE is the primary institutional-level retention strategy. The college will track the retention rate of degree-seeking part-time students who have taken the course and compare with retention numbers before this requirement. As noted in the [Quality Initiative Report](#), retention of full-time students did increase after ORIE 1101 was created, though a direct correlation is hard to establish.

The second strategy is early intervention and improved advisement of at-risk high school students who enter as freshmen with poor math and English skills. The implementation of this plan is being piloted and documented through the PRC Committee. The plan has been developed, research gathered, and a pilot group established. The pilot has students placing below C level receiving additional intensive counseling support with a single lead contact ([Academy Update 3.0](#)). Students in the pilot will also receive individualized support from our Learning Enhancement Center (LEC) focusing on their strengths as identified by the Clifton Strengths Finder. The program will be piloted in Fall 2018. Any change in retention percentage, positive or negative, will guide decisions regarding improvement strategy.

A statewide initiative to begin a math intervention strategy for high school is also in the early stages at RLC. High school seniors will take a college review class if they score below college-level on placement tests. Successful completion of this course will place them in college-level math. A similar plan is being developed for English as well.

#### 4C3

The college used national PRC data to support our quality initiative, the creation of First Year Experience (FYE). As indicated in the Quality Initiative Final Report, retention rose at the college after the implementation of the course ([Success Data. Quality Initiative Report](#)). These numbers help justify a continued commitment to the initiative and expansion of it to all degree-seeking part-time

students. An FYE part-time cohort is now being developed with the intention to track students in terms of success in several indicator courses.

Lower completion rates for online courses led to the creation of a math hybrid class requiring student tutoring sessions. Most math courses are now available as self-directed courses, and Math Lab staff administers these alternatives to an all-online environment. Students progress at their own rate, but with required tutor supervision ([Math Lab Information for Advisors](#)). Based on the math self-directed model, a hybrid English course balancing 15 face-to-face tutoring sessions with online course management is being considered.

Rend Lake College was one of the 39 schools chosen, and the only school chosen in Illinois, to receive a Title III Pathways to Success in Health Careers Grant. RLC received approximately \$449,000 annually, for a total of \$2,249,833 over five years. The data from the Nursing program during Title III was compared to pre-Title III data and there was an 18-23 percent increase in successful completion since the inception of Title III. During this initiative, other significant division changes occurred, chiefly the conversion of a system-based to a concept-based curriculum. It is therefore difficult to identify a single cause for the increase. However, when examining the Title III data there is an increase in successful completion of NURS 1209 in years two and three. During year one 78% of students successfully complete NURS 1209. For the next two years, hours in the HSSSC were mandatory. In those two years, NURS 1209 was successfully completed by 95% in year two and 94% in year three. This data led to the decision to begin developing targeted tutoring and study groups for program courses across campus that present the greatest obstacle to successful completion ([Nursing Grade Distribution](#)).

**Call Squad** members contact students reported as attending infrequently and direct them to support services or remind them to withdraw. Similar interventions occur when students miss payment deadlines. Support staff call students in danger of being dropped for non-payment and remind them of their payment options. For Fall 2018, a list of 533 students in danger of being dropped for non-payment was reduced to 78 ([Call Squad Results](#)), resulting in 455 students being immediately retained.

#### 4C4

The college uses IPEDS methodologies for organizing and interpreting its PRC data. ICCB reporting expectations have traditionally guided the nature of PRC data collection, but the college's increased retention and completion efforts outlined in **4C3** above have expanded the use of data. The college updated its ERP to PowerCampus in 2012, improving the reliability of in-house-generated student PRC data. This software provides the data reported to both IPEDS and ICCB. The IR department compiles and provides considerable analysis of results; a recent conduit for decision-making and analysis regarding PRC data is the PRC Committee, originally formed as the HLC Persistence and Completion Academy team in 2016. This group is now a standing committee comprised of IR, faculty, and Student Services staff who meet regularly to complete HLC Academy work ([PRC Committee Meeting Minutes 2017-18](#)).

As outlined in **4C3** above, the college gathers and analyzes retention and completion data at the program level, particularly in its developmental programs and career-technical offerings, Perkins initiatives and federal student success grants such as TRIO. With a newly implemented [program data dashboard](#), disaggregated completion and retention data by program is expected to be available in 2019.

## Sources

---

- 1143 20170803 Quality Initiative - Institutional Report
- ASSESS-College Prep Math English Success Rates-2018
- EFFECT-PRC Mtg Min-2016\_2017
- EFFECT-PRC Mtg Min-Definitions-2016\_2017
- ENGL-Success Rate Comparison-2018
- ENR-Drop Addresses-07\_10\_2018
- FY 18 Strategic Plan-Retention-02\_28\_2018
- GRANTS-Active grants list from 2014 -2017
- GRANTS-ICAPS Grant Report-FY 2016
- GRANTS-PTR Grant Summary Results-2013-2018
- GRANTS-PTR Grant Summary-FY 2015
- GRANTS-Special Pop Grant Mid-term and Final Grant-FY 2017
- INST-Faculty Orientation Materials-Fall 2018
- INST-Student Learning Day Materials-Fall 2018
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 63)
- IR-CCSSE 2014 Key Findings
- IR-CCSSE 2014 Key Findings
- IR-CCSSE 2017 Key Findings
- IR-Dashboard Example-08\_16\_2018
- IR-PRC-Institutional Data Book-2013-2017
- IR-RLC Achieves Screenshot-2018
- IR-Student Engagement-CSSSE Rpts 2014 and 2017.pdf
- LA-Division Mtg Min-05\_03\_2018
- LA-English Assess Mtg Min-06\_06\_2018
- LEC-Math Lab Info for Advisors-2018
- MS-Dev Math Summary- 2007-2017
- PRC-Academy Update 3.0-04\_30\_2018
- PRC-Academy Update 3.0-04\_30\_2018 (page number 6)
- PRC-Student Success ENGL 1101 & ALP (corequisite)-FY 2017-2018
- PRES-2016 Board Presentation - BOT Mtg Min-12\_13\_2016.pdf
- PRES-Chicago Tribune-IL CC Master Mediocrity-08\_24\_2016
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 37)
- PUB-RLC WalletHub ranking-08\_2017
- Quality Initiative Institutional Rpt Sect 2-2018.pdf
- Quality Initiative Institutional Rpt Sect 2-2018.pdf (page number 2)
- Strategic Enrollment Management Plan FY 2018-2020
- Strategic Enrollment Management Plan FY 2018-2020.pdf
- Strategic Plan-Retention Focus-02\_28\_2018
- STUSER-STARS and UB Retention and Completion Objectives-2013-2017.pdf
- STUSER-Tutoring Stats-FY 2014-2018
- Title III-NURS Grade Distribution Report-2018.pdf

## 4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

---

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

### Summary

---

The college has effective processes in place for ensuring the quality of its programs; however, it continues to seek better student graduate information, particularly employment data.

Documented assessment activities show a significant commitment to student learning assessment, and improvements are being made at all levels. Several assessment concerns are currently being addressed which include focusing on continuous improvement after benchmarks are met and clearer documentation. The college's assessment methodology also needs to be improved and simplified, with a comprehensive mapping process still ongoing. In an effort to keep the process manageable, the college allowed faculty to choose outcomes to assess, resulting in many programs focusing on only one outcome. A plan with a timeline to address these issues is now in place. Co-curricular assessment has not been systematic, but a systematic assessment process has been developed, with co-curricular activities mapped to outcomes and an assessment instrument developed.

The revised strategic planning process makes student retention one of four planning focuses, and RLC joined the Persistence and Completion Academy in 2016 to improve methodology and results. Improved retention processes have been a recent college priority. The annual RLC Fact Book was revised to include more PRC data in 2016 and is now on the college's website. PRC data is shared with college constituents annually at faculty orientations, in-services, and student learning days. When completed, a new dashboard is expected to include completion and retention data disaggregated by program. The college's completion and retention data is collected, and changes are made based on it; however, many areas have not documented those changes. Put simply, improvements will start by tracking success in the completion and retention initiatives we begin.

### Sources

---

*There are no sources.*

## 5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

---

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

### 5.A - Core Component 5.A

---

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

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

## Argument

---

### 5A1

Rend Lake College remains in solid financial position and has the resources needed to support its operations, despite the State of Illinois' budget difficulties in recent years.

In Fiscal Year 2018, a mid-year analysis of the operating budgets was completed after the third quarter ([fund summaries](#)). The projected total operating revenues (education, operations and maintenance, and auxiliary funds) were \$23,452,349 and total operating expenditures were \$21,458,500, resulting in a projected surplus of \$1,993,849. Accounting for the previous year's fund balance and other adjustments, the projected fund balance at the end of FY 2018 is \$16,890,539. The college relies heavily on state funding, with \$8,185,001 projected in FY 2018. The percentage state funding has fluctuated over the years. This is a highly solvent position for the college considering the lack of funding from the state in recent years. The state went more than two years – July 1, 2015-July 6, 2017 – without a budget due to legislative gridlock. The impasse resulted in RLC missing about \$5.5 million in equalization payments, operating grants and other revenue ([Uniform Financial Statements](#)). RLC has not sought lines of credit or issued tax anticipation warrants, and has not experienced mass layoffs ([March 2017 board minutes](#)).

RLC's recent Composite Financial Index (CFI) values are 4.17 (FY 2017), 2.11 (FY 2016), and 4.01 (FY 2015) ([compliance filing](#)). This number is a measure of an accredited institution's fiscal viability. CFIs in this range are considered "above the zone," meaning there is no need for review by HLC's Financial Panel.

The FY 2017 audit was a clean audit with no findings, but it was a qualified opinion (audit, [p. 88](#)). This was a result of the state budget impasse. The budget legislation directed that money allocated for FY 2017 should be recorded in FY 2017, and money allocated for FY 2018 should be recorded in FY 2018. The auditors argued this was a departure from generally accepted accounting principles and qualified the audit. However, the college is in strong financial position and had [support from the Illinois Community College Board](#) in disputing the HCM1 status. This situation is discussed in greater detail in **2A**.

Efforts to place RLC in a solid position have included prudent planning, organizational restructuring and bonding. A major revenue-generating initiative in 2016 involved the sale and immediate repurchase of the RLC MarketPlace, the college's Mt. Vernon location. The facility was sold for \$5 million and immediately repurchased through a bond issuance ([July 2016 board minutes](#)). This generated \$5 million in unrestricted cash reserves for the district, and was completed ahead of a potential property tax freeze under consideration in Illinois. An additional \$5 million bond issue was completed in 2017 over a series of board meetings as another boost to the college's reserves, with the caveat that this money will not be used without the permission of the Board of Trustees ([June 2017 special board minutes](#)).

In [February 2016](#), the college increased the in-district tuition rate from \$95 to \$110 per credit hour for FY 2017. This was a direct result of the state budget impasse, marking the first time tuition had been increased in three years, and resulted in approximately \$594,000 in additional revenue. We also have looked to universal fees, implementing a facilities fee of \$5 per credit hour ([February 2015 board packet](#)) and raising the technology fee from \$10 to \$15 per credit hour ([February 2017 board minutes](#)) in order to remain current in both of these areas. [ICCB comparisons](#) for FY 2018 show RLC below the state average for tuition and fees.

President's Cabinet in February 2018 ([minutes](#)) explored the amount of tuition the institution had been waiving. Some waivers, including High Achievers Awards and athletic waivers, will be reduced in FY 2019 in an effort to bring up the percentage of actual revenue realized from tuition. Cabinet members believe it is important to reduce the amount of tuition given away before exploring further tuition or fee increases.

The college has undertaken additional money-saving measures in recent years, including the conversion of the employee insurance plan from a traditional insurance system to a health savings account (HSA) system, which has saved the college about \$600,000 since the conversion in 2015.

The college also has looked to its organization to save resources. As discussed in **2C1**, there are two fewer vice president positions due to retirements and reorganization. Elsewhere, several stipends have been folded into existing job descriptions, and retirements and resignations have been carefully examined to determine if those positions need replaced or can be filled with part-time employees.

Cash flow analysis shows the college as cash sufficient for the remainder of FY 2019. As of June 30, 2018, RLC had \$21,254,563 in operating cash and \$5,263,766 in working cash ([July financial information](#)). In addition, there were invested funds worth \$3,866,217 as of that same date. The college's average monthly expenses at that date were \$2,227,991 ([cash flow projections](#)). We also expect an inflow of tuition and local property tax dollars as new students register for Spring and Fall 2019. Average monthly revenues received from various sources are \$2,965,919. The college is able to make payroll, pay vendors and fund essential expenses and services.

Prior to FY 2016, RLC had not experienced a deficit in the past 10 years. This was due to the college's ability over the years to build strong reserves thanks to careful fiscal management. However,

the lack of state funding caused the college to experience a deficit of nearly \$3,000,000 in FY 2016. In FY 2017 the college was able to offset the prior year's deficit with a surplus of nearly \$2,000,000 ([Uniform Financial Statement 1](#)). As stated above, the projected surplus for FY 2018 will be \$1,993,849.

The state budget impasse prompted two reports per HLC's request, in which many of these actions were reported. Illinois public institutions of higher education were required to submit reports in [February 2016](#) and in [December 2016](#), based largely on CC5A, addressing our status in light of the budget impasse and any plans for layoffs or personnel cuts. Our perspective in both cases was that we were in sound financial position considering the circumstances and that we had been able to avoid layoffs.

As of July 12, 2018, RLC employed 112 full-time and 113 part-time staff members. Additionally, in FY 2018 there were 59 full-time and 155 part-time instructors, including dual credit instructors ([comprehensive faculty list](#)). Educational programs are delivered in traditional classroom settings through the week as well as through online and hybrid instruction ([class schedule](#)). Administrative offices are open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday through fall and spring semesters and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday during the summer term ([workweek policy](#)).

Operations at the RLC MarketPlace in Mt. Vernon are supported by a full-time director and an additional full-time staff member. The Murphy-Wall Pinckneyville Campus includes a full-time coordinator and a part-time staff member. Both facilities have access to college IT and maintenance staff when needed.

Information Technology infrastructure and associated services are maintained by a staff of nine full-time and three part-time employees. The coordinator of network operations and security supervises the department and reports to the dean of communications and marketing ([organizational chart](#)). In addition to these employees, the department also includes the coordinator of data information systems, coordinator of computing and audiovisual services, coordinator of technology integration and training, report writer, network specialist, information systems specialist, a computer technician, and the Health Studies Student Success Center / help desk technician. A 35-hour employee staffs the help desk during the day. For students in online or hybrid classes, the IT Help Desk is available during office hours and in the evenings, and students can email the help desk or their instructors during weekends and off hours. Additionally, the Canvas implementation planned for Spring 2019 will include 24/7/365 tech support for students and employees; it will cost \$288,000 over five years ([July 2018 board packet](#)).

Much of IT's progress and development stems from the strategic planning process, discussed in more detail in **5C**. A [five-year IT forecast](#) has been created to help guide the college's efforts in this regard. Even in light of Illinois' recent budget struggles, the college continues to provide sufficient funding for IT projects and development ([IT budget](#)). A significant example is the implementation of the new in-house Warrior Wireless wifi network implemented in Summer 2016 ([initial cost quote](#)). This was a major undertaking and replaced the previous system, hosted by a third-party provider. The new system is more reliable, allowing for better connectivity for students as they travel among the various buildings on campus.



The college's strategic planning process ([Policy 2.1150](#)), [District Site and Construction Master Plan](#) and [Resource Allocation Management Plan](#) (RAMP) are designed to ensure the college remains focused on the strategic allocation of resources. More about the strategic planning process, which drives the budget, is available in **5C**. The Master Plan ([July 2016 board minutes](#); [Policy 5.1015](#)) and RAMP ([June 2018 minutes](#)) are approved by the Board. The Master Plan process is described in [the document](#), with the public input solicitation process last occurring in 2013. The RAMP document is generated according to the [ICCB RAMP Manual](#) and is discussed in President's Cabinet ([minutes](#)). As a public community college governed by a Board of Trustees, there is no superordinate entity.

### 5A3

The goals included in the college's [mission statement](#) refer generally to the goals of the individual student and our commitment to helping them reach those goals. This is a realistic aspiration due to multiple factors, including [qualified faculty](#) and the various [student support services](#) available. Specific to degree-seeking students are the four [institutional outcomes](#) – critical thinking, problem solving, oral communication and written communication – and the [General Education Statement](#) included in the college Catalog. The institutional outcomes, referred to by the acronym CPOW, have for several years been incorporated into degree curricula and are assessed. The mission also references community-focused programming, which is realistic and overseen by the Community and Corporate Education Division.

The college's strategic planning process, which determines how resources are allocated, ultimately derives from its mission. The [four major strategic focuses](#) of effective communication, an environment conducive to learning, student success, and engagement of students, community, faculty and staff were generated through the use of a [future-focused, mission-based survey](#) deployed to faculty and staff. These categories subsequently were used to classify planning requests. More about the process can be found in **5C**.

### 5A4

RLC's staff are appropriately qualified and trained. Qualifications for staff positions are set by members of Cabinet and are included in job announcements. Announcements are submitted to the human resources specialist for review prior to distribution ([Policy 3.1010](#)).

All new employees are given an [Employee Handbook](#) and an [orientation checklist](#), which requires that they visit several offices on campus for introductions and other matters. They also are given access to the [RLC Policy Manual](#). Non-faculty employees undergo formal evaluations every even-numbered year, although supervisors may conduct an evaluation at any given time ([Policy 3.1200](#)). Staff recently submitted a [qualification verification form](#) to HR, and also submit to HR a [form](#) regarding professional development each spring. These documents are available in the Human Resources Office. Going forward, staff qualifications will be documented by the [employee recommendation form](#) filled out during the hiring process. General degrees and certifications of staff are included in the online [staff directory](#) and the [staff listing](#) in the college Catalog.

Faculty and support staff qualifications are addressed in **3C2** and **3C6**, respectively.

### 5A5

The budgeting process begins in late spring with strategic planning. The Business Office looks at what was spent in each department's line items the prior fiscal year, consults with fiscal managers to determine expected deviations in those amounts, and factors in the new expenses resulting from the strategic planning process. Revenue projections are made based on expected disbursements from the state, local property taxes, and tuition and fees based on enrollment projections, as well as any expected grant funds.

The budget is reviewed by President's Cabinet and later [approved in tentative form](#) by the Board of Trustees. By state law, the budget then must sit open for public examination for 30 days, with a [public hearing](#) and [final adoption](#) at the next Board meeting. There also is a mid-year budget review, initiated by the Business Office, in which fiscal managers review the status of their budgets and request any necessary adjustments.

Expenses are monitored through the requisition approval process ([Policy 5.1200](#)). When purchases are required, fiscal managers or their designees enter requisitions into the college's online Business Portal. These are approved by the fiscal manager, controller and CFO before being sent to accounts payable. Hard copies of purchase orders are forwarded to the fiscal managers. When received by the college, invoices are stamped with locations to fill in the fiscal manager's name or initials, purchase order number, and budget account number. The purchase orders are stapled to the invoice and returned to the Business Office, where they are processed for payment and filed.

Fiscal managers can request budget reports from the controller as needed and can inform the Business Office if adjustments are required. As discussed in **2A**, financial information is reviewed by the Board, and grants go through an approval and reporting process.

## Sources

---

- BUSOFF-Audit-FY 2016
- BUSOFF-Audit-FY 2016 (page number 60)
- BUSOFF-Audit-FY 2017.pdf
- BUSOFF-Audit-FY 2017.pdf (page number 7)
- BUSOFF-Audit-FY 2017.pdf (page number 30)
- BUSOFF-Audit-FY 2017.pdf (page number 99)
- BUSOFF-Uniform Financial Statement 1-2016-2017
- BUSOFF-Uniform Financial Statement 3-2015-2017
- COMP-CFI Pages from Compliance Filing-07\_12\_2018
- FINADM-Annual Budget-FY 2017
- FINADM-Annual Budget-FY 2017 (page number 4)
- FINADM-Annual Budget-FY 2018
- FINADM-Annual Budget-FY 2018 (page number 5)
- FINADM-Annual Budget-FY 2018 (page number 43)
- FINADM-Board Financial Info-July 2018
- FINADM-Cash Flow PROJECTIONS-07\_20\_2018
- FINADM-FY 2018 Fund Summaries at 04\_19\_18
- HLC-Assumed Policies-November 2017
- HLC-Assumed Policies-November 2017 (page number 30)
- HR-Employee Handbook-07\_10\_2018.pdf
- HR-Employee Recommendation Form-05\_10\_2018.pdf
- HR-New Employee Orientation Form-07\_12\_2018.pdf

- HR-Professional Development Form for Staff-07\_16\_2018
- HR-Support Staff Quals Verification-2017.pdf
- ICCB-FY 2017 Year-End Notes-08\_04\_2017
- ICCB-FY17 and FY18 final budgets
- ICCB-Memo on FY17 and FY18 Budgets-07\_07\_2017
- ICCB-RAMP Manual FY 2017.pdf
- ICCB-System Rules-05\_04\_2018.pdf
- ICCB-System Rules-05\_04\_2018.pdf (page number 124)
- ICCB-Tuition and Fees FY 2018
- IL State Budget 2016 Public Act 100-0021
- IL State Budget 2016 Public Act 100-0021 (page number 638)
- INST-Comprehensive Fac Roster-2018
- INST-Fac Roster with Credentials-Cat p174-176-2018
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf
- IT-Five-Year Roadmap-12\_20\_2016
- IT-Warrior Wireless Initial Costs-2016
- MAINT-Master Plan-06\_2016.pdf
- MAINT-Master Plan-06\_2016.pdf (page number 7)
- MAINT-RAMP Report-FY2020
- PLAN-Strategic Planning Focus Survey Results-2016
- PLAN-Strategic Planning Overview-2018
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-02\_09\_2016
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-02\_14\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-02\_14\_2017.pdf (page number 35)
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-03\_14\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-03\_14\_2017.pdf (page number 8)
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-07\_10\_2018
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-07\_10\_2018 (page number 51)
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-07\_12\_2016
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-07\_12\_2016 (page number 67)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-02\_09\_2016.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-02\_09\_2016.pdf (page number 5)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-03\_14\_2017
- PRES-BOT Minutes-03\_14\_2017 (page number 8)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-06\_12\_2018.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-06\_12\_2018.pdf (page number 3)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-06\_13\_2017 Special.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-06\_13\_2017 Special.pdf (page number 4)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-07\_12\_2016.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-07\_12\_2016.pdf (page number 4)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-08\_08\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-08\_08\_2017.pdf (page number 4)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_12\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_12\_2017.pdf (page number 2)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_12\_2017.pdf (page number 5)
- PRES-BOT Mtg Packet-02\_03\_2015.pdf
- PRES-BOT Mtg Packet-02\_03\_2015.pdf (page number 103)
- PRES-BOT Mtg Packet-06\_13\_2017 Special
- PRES-BOT Mtg Packet-06\_13\_2017 Special (page number 7)
- PRES-Cabinet Minutes-06\_05\_2018

- PRES-Cabinet Minutes-06\_05\_2018 (page number 3)
- PRES-Cabinet Waiver Conversation-02\_27\_2018
- PRES-DOE Letter re HCM1-06\_11\_2018
- PRES-HLC Report on Resources-Dec 2016
- PRES-HLC Report on Resources-Feb 2016
- PRES-Letter from ICCB to DOE-05\_03\_2018.pdf
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf
- PRES-Organizational Chart-07\_02\_2018
- PRES-Pol 3.1012 Faculty Qualifications.pdf
- PRES-Policy 2.1150 Strategic Planning
- PRES-Policy 3.1010 Selection of Personnel-07\_11\_2018
- PRES-Policy 3.1105 Workweek for FT
- PRES-Policy 3.1200 Evaluations of Non-Faculty-07\_12\_2018
- PRES-Policy 5.1015 Capital Projects-07\_09\_2018
- PRES-Policy 5.1200 Purchases
- PRES-RLC Policy Manual-07-11-2018
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Faculty-Staff Listing
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Faculty-Staff Listing (page number 4)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Gen Ed Statement
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019 Gen Ed Statement (page number 2)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 32)
- PUB-Catalog\_2018-2019.pdf (page number 41)
- PUB-Summer Fall 2018 Class Schedule
- PUB-Summer Fall 2018 Class Schedule (page number 21)

## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

---

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

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

### Argument

---

#### 5B1

The Board of Trustees is knowledgeable about the college and provides oversight. The authority, powers and duties of the Board are set forth in the [Public Community College Act](#) and are listed in limited form in [RLC Policy 1.1305](#). The Board consists of seven members who sit for six-year terms. As directed by the Act and [RLC Policy 1.1200](#), a student member of the Board is elected each year.

The Board meets at 6:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of the month. There are exceptions, such as the months in which the budget must sit for 30 days. The Board [approves](#) an annual [schedule of meetings](#), which is posted to the college's website. Prior to each meeting, the members of the Board are emailed their packet ([example](#)), which contains the agenda; recommendations, rationales and any supporting materials for action items; minutes of the previous meeting; and a list of coming events. The Board approves payment of bills and reviews financial information monthly, and [approves](#) the budget and tax levy annually. New or revised policies are brought to the Board for two readings ([policies](#)). The monthly Board agenda ([example](#)) includes opportunities for representatives of the Academic Council and the RLC Foundation to update the Board about happenings in their respective areas, as well as for the Board's Illinois Community College Trustees Association representative to give a report. There is time allotted for the college President to give remarks, and for the Board to hear an accreditation update from appropriate staff and faculty.

To assist with legal matters, the Board has appointed a staff attorney on a part-time-with-benefits basis. The Board hires counsel to deal with bond issuances as needed.

The Board maintains its fiduciary obligations. The Board appoints the college President ([Policy 3.1005](#)), but otherwise members of the Board do not sit on standing committees of the college and are not involved in the college's day-to-day operations. The Board periodically evaluates the President as dictated by his [contract](#), which is available along with the evaluation instrument on the college's website. The Board also sets policy for overall governance. The number of [closed sessions](#) the Board holds has decreased in recent years as well.

RLC is a member of the ICCTA Southeast Region Trustees, made up of the Boards and administrations of four neighboring community colleges. Meetings are hosted on a rotating basis at

each college and include discussions on pertinent topics and state-level updates from ICCTA staff ([program](#)).

## 5B2

Internal constituencies are engaged in numerous ways for purposes of governance. Two bodies established to assist with communication and governance are the President's Cabinet and President's Council ([rosters and policies](#)). President's Council is established for the purpose of maintaining two-way communication, and President's Cabinet is the principal advisory group to the President regarding actions to be taken and recommendations to be made to the Board. Generally, President's Cabinet meets weekly ([sample minutes](#)) and President's Council meets the Monday prior to the Board of Trustees meeting ([sample minutes](#)). In recent years, the President's Cabinet has been flattened, meaning that during the meetings, there is an equality among voices despite the level of a person's position. This allows for free contributions from all members.

Student engagement in institutional governance is accomplished through the election of a student member of the Board of Trustees ([Illinois law](#), [RLC Policy](#)). Student involvement also comes from the [Community College Survey of Student Engagement](#) (CCSSE) and instruments such as [student satisfaction surveys](#) and [withdrawal surveys](#) distributed from the college's SurveyMonkey account. These are discussed at President's Cabinet ([February 2017](#), [March 2018](#) minutes). More surveys are available for review in the Institutional Research (IR) Department. Suggestion boxes are located in various buildings across campus, with these suggestions periodically collected and forwarded to the Marketing and Public Information Department, then emailed to the President's Office.

Employees are involved in institutional operations and governance via several standing committees which meet regularly. Among these are the Instructional Deans, Admissions Committee, Academic Council and its subcommittees, and various division and departmental meetings. The 2016 Great Colleges to Work For survey, published by ModernThink and The Chronicle, was distributed to employees in 2016, and the [results](#) were shared at [in-service](#) and discussed at [Cabinet](#).

Section One of the [RLC Policy Manual](#) is devoted entirely to policy and procedure concerning the Board of Trustees, and Board governance is addressed in **5B1** above.

## 5B3

Administration, faculty, staff and students have several opportunities to contribute, several of which are addressed above. IR seeks student feedback through [student satisfaction surveys](#) and [withdrawal surveys](#), and results are reviewed at President's Cabinet and analyzed for trends. Students also have a voice in setting academic policy through the student member of the Board of Trustees.

Faculty members are involved in setting academic requirements. They create the course syllabus for each class, and textbooks are selected by the full-time faculty in each area. The Academic Council meets to discuss academic issues ([sample minutes](#)). Faculty and staff also are involved in several collaborative groups, such as the Institutional Assessment Committee, the Persistence and Completion Academy Committee, the Academic Calendar Committee and others.

## Sources

---

- AC-Academic Council Agenda and Minutes Example-06\_04\_2018
- IL-Public Community College Act.pdf
- IL-Student Trustee-2018
- IR-CCSSE 2017 Key Findings
- IR-Graduate Survey-Spring 2016
- IR-Great Colleges to Work For-2016
- IR-Student Satisfaction Survey-Fall 2017.pdf
- IR-Student Withdrawal Survey-06\_15\_2017.pdf
- PRES OFF-Cab Mtg Min-02\_14\_2017
- PRES-BOT Agenda-07\_10\_2018
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-06\_12\_2018.pdf
- PRES-BOT Meeting Schedule-2018
- PRES-BOT Minutes Special Meeting-03\_10\_2015
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_12\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_12\_2017.pdf (page number 5)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-12\_12\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-12\_12\_2017.pdf (page number 3)
- PRES-Cab Mtg Min-11\_01\_2016.pdf
- PRES-Cab Mtg Min-11\_01\_2016.pdf (page number 2)
- PRES-Cabinet and Council Policy and Rosters-07\_13\_2018
- PRES-Cabinet Minute Samples from 2018
- PRES-Cabinet Minutes-03\_13\_2018
- PRES-Closed Session Frequency-08\_06\_2018.pdf
- PRES-Contract Approval and Evaluation Instrument-March 2018
- PRES-Inserv Agenda-10\_10\_2016
- PRES-Inserv Agenda-10\_10\_2016 (page number 2)
- PRES-Policy 1.1200 Student Board Member 07\_13\_2018
- PRES-Policy 1.1305 Powers and Duties of Board-07\_13\_2018
- PRES-Policy 3.1005 Appointment of President-07\_13\_2018
- PRES-Policy 3.1005 Appointment of President-07\_13\_2018 (page number 2)
- PRES-Policy on Procedures-07\_13\_2018
- PRES-Policy on Procedures-07\_13\_2018 (page number 2)
- PRES-Presidents Contract-03\_13\_2018.pdf
- PRES-Presidents Contract-03\_13\_2018.pdf (page number 4)
- PRES-President's Council Minutes-07\_09\_2018
- PRES-RLC Policy Manual-07-11-2018
- PRES-Southeast Region Trustee Meeting Program-03\_28\_2018



## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

---

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

### Argument

---

#### 5C1

Rend Lake College's strategic planning [process](#) ties directly back to the mission and is grounded in [Policy 2.1150](#). To generate future-focused, mission-driven strategic goals, an online [survey](#) is distributed to employees, either as a whole or in groups. The survey includes questions relating directly to the mission and asks respondents for their thoughts on what the institution does well, how it can improve, and ideas for future endeavors and activities. Deployment of the survey is flexible. It can be distributed campus-wide or at the program or department level, and for broader viewpoints, groups from wide cross-sections of campus can complete the survey together, allowing for new ideas to emerge from employees who may not often work together. From the [survey responses](#), a set of common themes emerges, and these are discussed by President's Cabinet and organized into a set of strategic focuses. This process originated in Spring 2016, with the intent to repeat it every three to four years. The common themes resulting from this initial effort were Student Success, Effective Communication, Environment Conducive to Learning, and Engagement of Students / Community / Faculty / Staff ([overview](#)). For each of the four focuses, President's Cabinet then discussed and established four goals each.

The process helps identify objectives common to various departments, an example of which are web-based program videos which are now in production. These were requested by various departments and programs, and thus became a worthwhile goal.

The strategic focuses and their goals established, objectives and action items are developed at the department level for each goal, with most departments capturing planning discussions through [SWOT analyses](#). The mission statement and the strategic focuses are reviewed at the departmental level in this process as well. In the spring, the items from all the departments are combined into one strategic planning spreadsheet which includes department information, estimated cost, funding source and justifications, as well as Cabinet-level responses when warranted. In order to provide data on the origin of a request, "Source" and "Rationale" columns were added to the [strategic planning spreadsheet](#) in the spring of 2018. These pieces are intended to provide data on the origin of a given request, such as an Advisory Committee, assessment activities, program review, or SWOT analysis. Cabinet then reviews this list, merges any duplications, and approves or rejects the items.

The CFO both consults on fiscal viability of planned actions throughout the process and approves the final plan. Through these processes, an overall [strategic plan](#) and a tentative budget are generated. The strategic plan is updated halfway through the year, with action items being labeled as complete, in process, no progress made or terminated. There is a justification column and an additional comments column, used to provide feedback to the college body on reasons for approval or denial.

## 5C2

The annual strategic planning process has been directly linked to budgeting for decades. However, the college made significant improvements in linking assessment with budgeting and planning when revising the strategic planning processes in 2016 as noted above. One of the strategic focuses emerging from the planning process is Student Success, and one of the four goals of that focus is Improve Student Learning. In the FY 2019 strategic plan, there are more than 50 items linked to the Improve Student Learning focus. As such, tracking ongoing assessment activities and budgeting for them is now integrated and documented systematically ([Improve Student Learning items](#)). Also, during planning at the instructional level, faculty addresses assessment in respect to the SWOT rubric as part of planning ([Liberal Arts SWOT 2017-18](#)).

Advisory Committees review assessment information while conducting their annual planning activities ([agenda template](#), [council minutes examples](#)); Advisory Committee packets are available for review. In 2017, the career technical education (CTE) programs began completing annual reports of their programs for the campus-wide Advisory Committee meetings held in March ([examples](#)). These are overviews of each CTE program over the previous year and are handed out to the members of the Advisory Committees prior to their meetings. They provide information such as program headcount, number of degree and certificate majors, breakdowns of program student population, labor market information, curriculum changes, program goals and more. A similar report for the general education programs is being explored. This would provide the college with additional information and feedback upon which to make decisions.

Program reviews include assessment information, indicators of quality, cost effectiveness evaluation and more, which ties back to the institutional planning process and how assessment has driven curriculum changes ([example](#)). Profitability reports prepared by the Business Office explore the revenue and costs generated by specific programs, providing insight into viability from a business standpoint ([examples](#)). Program reviews and profitability reports are reviewed by President's Cabinet for action if needed. For example, low enrollment in the Architectural Technology program along with insight provided by industry through Advisory Committee meetings and impromptu conversations with architectural firms prompted a shift toward a Construction Management curriculum, now in development.

The college evaluates and tracks new projects and initiatives via the web-based Project Form ([examples](#)), which includes the name of the project, those involved, rationale, and the measurements or outcomes of the project. These are reviewed by President's Cabinet.

## 5C3

The main strategic planning process is described in **5C1** above and includes every department of the

college. Each department reviews the strategic plan annually and submits ideas generated by SWOT analyses, program reviews, Advisory Committees, departmental meetings or other methods, thus involving the entire institution in the process.

The [District Site and Construction Master Plan](#) is submitted every five years as required by the Illinois Community College Board. Information for this plan was gathered from numerous meetings held with the President's Cabinet, the Board of Trustees, the Strategic Planning Committee, faculty and department heads, and Advisory Committees. Public meetings were held during which college administration explained the process and purpose of the Master Plan and encouraged input and feedback from attendees, which included high school superintendents, representatives of business and industry, and representatives of local municipalities. Open forum meetings were held for students and faculty to explain the purpose of the master plan and to obtain their opinions and input, and an online survey was conducted. While the Master Plan has since been updated through internal efforts, the process of collecting external input on the plan has not been conducted since 2012-2013.

Operational feedback is gathered in several other ways. Examples include [feedback from employers](#) regarding on-the-job training visits (4A6); participation in the [Community College Survey of Student Engagement](#); annual Advisory Committee meetings; the breakfast meetings held on campus with high school superintendents, principals and counselors to discuss dual credit, transfer and other relevant issues ([agenda](#)); meetings with industry such as that recently held by the Applied Science and Technology Division ([agenda](#)); and others. Continuing education events such as [CNA workshops](#) have been held on campus, along with events related to groups such as FFA.

#### 5C4

The institution has a sound understanding of its capacity and plans accordingly. Major examples here include the two \$5 million bond issues discussed in 5A1, which were implemented in response to an expected lack of funding from the state. RLC was able to avoid the mass layoffs which affected other institutions in the state in large part due to prudent financial planning such as this. In recent years, we have budgeted in anticipation of receiving less revenue from the state than legislators predict.

Enrollment has been on a decline in Illinois, and RLC has seen the same trend ([ICCB report](#), [Fact Book](#)). The college has been forced to increase tuition and fees, but also has sought cost-saving measures such as reevaluating the number of academic awards distributed, carefully evaluating the need for added positions or replacement of retiring personnel, and bringing larger projects to the RLC Foundation for consideration. Examples of the latter include taking on the replacement of the PoolPak in the RLC Aquatics Center for \$198,700 ([Jan 2018 packet](#)).

The college also has used grant funding to open up sustainable programs. The Title III Pathways to Success in Health Careers Grant from the Department of Education, worth up to \$2.25 million over five years ([Fact Book](#)), has been used to establish programs such as Biomedical Electronics, Pharmacy Technician, Medical Assistant and others, along with support services such as the Health Studies Student Success Center.

#### 5C5

Institutional planning considers emerging factors. One is the change in focus from recruitment and

credit hour generation to persistence, retention and completion, based in part on a declining student pool. The population of the college district has experienced a downward trend with few changes in demographics ([ICCB census](#)) and flat or decreasing high school populations. This has led to greater emphasis on retention activities, as evidenced by participation in HLC's Persistence and Completion Academy and our attendance at HLC's recent Student Success Workshop. We also have added the Student Success Coordinator and Career Services Specialist positions; the Student Success Coordinator recently left the college, and we are exploring how best to fill that role. More about persistence, retention and completion can be found in **4C**.

The Information Technology Department has prepared a [Five-Year Roadmap](#), which lists major projects such as hardware refresh and maintenance, Windows 10 migration and others. It also provides guidance for possibilities such as a new learning management system or the building out of SharePoint as a central information repository, for example. The college has opted to shift to a new LMS. Informal student feedback resulted in Cabinet exploring Canvas as an alternative LMS to Blackboard. After introductory web meetings and phone calls, a Canvas representative demonstrated the platform to faculty and staff. Some faculty already were using a free version of this LMS. Those in attendance were in favor of moving to Canvas, and the Board approved this in [July 2018](#).

Additional examples of institutional planning based on emerging factors is the implementation of our in-house wifi system, Warrior Wireless, at the Ina campus as a more reliable replacement to the previous third-party provider; establishment of a mobile computer lab consisting of 15 laptops and a charge cart to be deployed in Fall 2018 and making use of Warrior Wireless; and the creation of learning pods featuring computers and large-screen monitors in the Learning Resource Center, among others.

As noted in **3A3**, we have adopted the Quality Matters framework to improve quality as we see continued expansion of online offerings. Additionally, we will soon pilot a Zoom room, an alternative style of distance learning delivery.

## Sources

---

- ADV-Advisory Council Annual Report Examples-2018
- ADV-AG-HEQT-DIEL Mtg Packet-2018.pdf
- ADV-AG-HEQT-DIEL Mtg Packet-2018.pdf (page number 2)
- Advisory Council Manual-03\_20\_2018.pdf
- Advisory Council Manual-03\_20\_2018.pdf (page number 17)
- AH-CNA Workshop Brochure-2017
- Arch Tech & CAD Adv Com Mtg Packet-2018
- ASAT-Industry Meeting Materials-07\_17\_2018.pdf
- ASAT-On the Job Surveys-2016
- ENR-Project Form Examples-07\_21\_2018
- FINADM-Profitability Reports-2009-2017.pdf
- FY 18 Strategic Plan- Community Engagement-07\_31\_2018
- ICCB-District Census Data-2013-2016
- ICCB-Enrollment Report-Fall 2017.pdf
- INST-Communications Program Review-2017
- INST-Program Review Examples-2017-2018
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 37)

- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf (page number 98)
- IR-CCSSE 2017 Key Findings
- IT-Five-Year Roadmap-12\_20\_2016
- MAINT-Master Plan-06\_2016.pdf
- PLAN-Liberal Arts SWOT-2018
- PLAN-Liberal Arts SWOT-2018 (page number 3)
- PLAN-Strategic Plan FY 2019
- PLAN-Strategic Plan Improve Student Learning Items-2018
- PLAN-Strategic Planning Decision Cycle-06\_27\_2018
- PLAN-Strategic Planning Focus Survey Results-2016
- PLAN-Strategic Planning Overview-2018
- PLAN-SWOT Examples-07-21-2018
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-07\_10\_2018
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-07\_10\_2018 (page number 51)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-01\_09\_2018.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-01\_09\_2018.pdf (page number 5)
- PRES-Mission Statement-07\_11\_2017.pdf
- PRES-Policy 2.1150 Strategic Planning
- PRES-Superintendents Breakfast Agenda-02\_24\_2017

## 5.D - Core Component 5.D

---

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

### Argument

---

#### 5D1

The college develops and documents evidence of its performance in several ways. The Illinois Community College Board recognition process, occurring every five years, involves a thorough review of RLC's academic programs, student services, finances, facilities and accountability ([recognition manual](#)). In addition to responding to the ICCB's criteria, these reviews also include the college's own recommendations for improvement and indicators for compliance. When ICCB reviews the [college's recognition report](#), they send back a [report](#) containing advisory and compliance recommendations for improving college processes in appropriate areas.

Examples of such changes include an affirmative response in the 2017 ICCB recognition report to an ICCB suggestion that the college begin submitting educational cooperative agreements to ICCB for approval ([p. 11](#)), and audits to ensure that dual credit instructors are appropriately qualified ([p. 7](#)). More examples are available in the [report](#) itself.

The HLC accreditation process is a large data collection and evaluation effort in itself, and there are programmatic accreditations requiring periodic evaluations as well ([compliance filing](#)).

RLC has used the [Community College Survey of Student Engagement](#) to document how we perform in terms of CCSSE's five benchmarks of effective educational practice: Active and Collaborative Learning; Student Effort; Academic Challenge; Student-Faculty Interaction; and Support for Learners. The CCSSE results are reviewed at Cabinet and have been shared at in-service. We were encouraged by our mentor for HLC's Persistence and Completion Academy to do another round of CCSSE, and we did so in Spring 2017. In that CCSSE, the college included a special focus on [academic advisement](#). Data showed that, of students who met with advisors multiple times in a semester, roughly equal numbers met with the same advisor as met with a different advisor, and the reasons for this are being investigated by advisement staff. Data also indicated that students are sometimes unaware of when a future advising session should occur, so this information was placed in the starter pack for new students to bolster existing notification efforts ([CCSSE feedback](#)). Plans call for the CCSSE to be completed on an annual basis beginning next year.

RLC presents evidence of performance and accomplishments to the public as well. The annual [Report to Our Community](#) is distributed by mail to friends of the college and is attached to the college website. Distributed early each year, this publication includes highlights from the previous year, major changes, a snapshot of institutional finances, fast facts about enrollment, and more. The RLC Achieves web page ([www.rlc.edu/achieves](http://www.rlc.edu/achieves)) contains information about success rates, achievements on the part of students and employees, major developments and other topics. The Marketing and Public Information Department generates numerous press releases, housed at [www.rlc.edu/pressroom](http://www.rlc.edu/pressroom),



on subjects ranging from graduation and honor rolls to coming events and upcoming trainings. [Highlights](#) of each Board meeting are sent to area media and to all faculty and staff.

An important collection of data occurs with the compilation and dissemination of the [RLC Fact Book](#). This document, produced primarily by the Institutional Research Department with help from other areas, provides longitudinal enrollment information, along with facts and figures on such topics as financial aid, human resources, tuition and fees, persistence, retention and completion, and more. The Fact Book is publicly available on the RLC Achieves page on our website.

Academic assessment information is documented using the Tk20 platform. Assessment of student learning and support services is addressed more thoroughly in **Criterion 4**, as is work to improve persistence, retention and completion. Assessment and improvement of Perkins-related programs is discussed in **4C2**.

## 5D2

Overall, RLC is working to become more data-driven in its decision-making processes, and will continue to improve in this respect. Steps the college has taken in this direction include a commitment to complete the CCSSE more regularly, creation of the RLC Achieves page to promote transparency in college data and other material, and the move toward SharePoint as a central hub for institutional documents. The college's intranet site, containing helpful information for employees, has been moved to SharePoint. Forms such as the employment application and class cancellation form have been moved online and integrated with SharePoint via the PDF ShareForms software, which allows collection and export of bulk data. The revamp of the [strategic planning process](#) has made it more data-driven and helps close the loop from year to year.

The institution learns from experience and feedback. An example is the ICCB recognition report and feedback referenced above. [Survey results](#) from RLC's in-service days indicated that many of the faculty and staff prefer information and training which is more relevant to their particular positions. In recent years, the [in-service agenda](#) has included more breakout sessions, led by current staff and faculty members, on a more diverse set of subjects. The [Strategic Enrollment Management Plan](#) developed by Enrollment Services, discussed in **4C2**, is another example of operational learning.

[Profitability analyses](#) on the various educational programs offered by the college are prepared by the Business Office in conjunction with the instructional deans. These provide longitudinal data at the program level such as revenue generated from tuition, fees and state reimbursement; expenses for salaries, benefits, and other factors; and an overall profit or loss. This provides insight into which programs remain in demand and which do not. These are reviewed by President's Cabinet.

The Institutional Research Department has become much more robust and effective in recent years, expanding to two full-time employees. IR also plays a major role in evaluating persistence, retention and completion information. Working with Information Technology, IR has been able to provide numerous helpful reports pulled from PowerCampus as well as reliable information the college can use for decision-making purposes; much of this is evident in the [Fact Book](#).

Experience at times teaches the college when to let go. [Warrior Fest](#) was a public event held on campus for several years. It started as a car show initiated by the Automotive Technology program, then expanded to include vendors, children's activities, games, crafters, food and more. However, the event was discontinued after 2017 due to low attendance.



Operational experience also shows in the partnership between RLC and Southeastern Illinois College, referenced in **3C1**. In addition to instructor sharing, RLC sends maintenance personnel to SIC on a contractual basis in order to help them complete more projects in-house ([board minutes](#)).

There is an opportunity for improvement in making the college's information cycle more systematic. When operational feedback is reviewed by President's Cabinet, a designated person or group should add any relevant notes to the current strategic plan spreadsheet for review at the next planning session. Additionally, during the campus-wide strategic planning process each spring, departments should identify one or two opportunities, either through SWOT analysis or other methods, for improving any of the four overall focuses of the strategic plan. These should then be reviewed by President's Cabinet for a determination on inclusion.

## Sources

---

- ADV-CCSSE Feedback-07\_25\_2018
- COMP-Appendix W Eval Reports from Accrediting Agencies-2018
- ENR-Project Form Examples-07\_21\_2018
- ENR-Project Form Examples-07\_21\_2018 (page number 6)
- FINADM-Profitability Reports-2009-2017.pdf
- ICCB Recognition Manual-FY 2016-2020
- ICCB-Final Recognition Report-2017.pdf
- ICCB-Final Recognition Report-2017.pdf (page number 8)
- ICCB-Final Recognition Report-2017.pdf (page number 12)
- ICCB-RLC Recognition Report-2016
- INST-In-Serv Agenda-Fall 2016
- IR-2013-2017 Fact Book-2017.pdf
- IR-CCSSE 2017 Key Findings
- IR-CCSSE 2017 Key Findings (page number 7)
- PLAN-Strategic Planning Decision Cycle-06\_27\_2018
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-07\_10\_2018
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-07\_10\_2018 (page number 31)
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-09\_13\_2016
- PRES-BOT Board Packet-09\_13\_2016 (page number 52)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_12\_2017.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_12\_2017.pdf (page number 6)
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_13\_2016.pdf
- PRES-BOT Minutes-09\_13\_2016.pdf (page number 7)
- PRES-Inserv Agenda-Spring 2018
- PUB-Meeting Highlights Samples-07\_19\_2018
- PUB-Report to Our Community-2017
- Strategic Enrollment Management Plan FY 2018-2020.pdf

## **5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary**

---

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

### **Summary**

---

Despite the state's budget woes and the lack of state funding, the college is in a strong financial position due to prudent planning and lean operations. RLC has the resources to carry out its mission and support its operations. Projections are that, if the state finds itself in another budget impasse, the college would remain cash-solvent through FY2020. A knowledgeable board governs RLC and its constituents have input in its governance.

The revamped college-wide strategic planning process is more mission-driven and provides more data on the various objectives. This, the growth in the IR Department and the commitment to conduct the CCSSE annually are positive steps toward continuous improvement. The college recognizes an opportunity for improvement in becoming more systematic in its information cycle, and there is a plan in place to address this as noted in **5D**.

### **Sources**

---

*There are no sources.*