

# **Systems Appraisal Feedback Report**

**Completed in Response to a  
Systems Portfolio Submitted by**

1849 – SOUTHEAST TECHNICAL COLLEGE

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## I. Reflective Overview

Upon completing its review of the Institutional Overview and Category Introductions included in the Systems Portfolio, the Systems Appraisal team formulated its understanding of the institution, the institution's mission, and the constituents served. This understanding is conveyed in the following Consensus Reflective Statement. Additional team insights are also summarized here in relation to the six AQIP Pathway categories.

### ***Reflective Overview Statement***

Southeast Tech is a public, non-profit state run college governed by the K-12 Sioux Falls School district board which serves around 3,000 students (1,900 FTE) a year and is one of four state-supported technical institutes in South Dakota. The Institute has a single campus located in Sioux Falls, the state's largest city. Southeast Tech offers over 50 certificate, diploma, and AAS degree options housed in the divisions of Advanced Technology, Engineering, Health Sciences, Industrial Technology, Transportation Technology, and Business and Communications. The Institute offers 14 degree/diploma options in online formats, and over 50 other program offerings in hybrid, and traditional classroom. The Institute also provides non-credit customized training and continuing education programs for local employers, an adult basic literacy program, and basic skill attainment in mathematics, English, and reading. TAACCCTIII grant funding supports training the institute provides at a variety of locations.

Southeast Tech's students are largely white (86%) and attend full-time (70%). The Institute has a 95% or higher graduate placement rate and its students succeed in national certification exams at rates above national means. The Institute has received numerous awards for excellence over the last five years. Southeast Tech created a new strategic plan in 2016 hired a new President and because of a constitutional amendment, has a new state-level technical institute board, comprised of industry professionals representing all institutional program divisions which will oversee the technical institutes at the state level beginning July 1, 2017. In the strategic plan, the Institute has set forth goals to improve enrollment, grow strategic partnerships and increase their academic program offerings.

Southeast Tech uses the Capture, Develop, Decide, Deploy, Evaluate, Publish and Reflect process throughout all their operations. Despite recent changes in the administration, the Institute has a high level of key stakeholder (students, employees, employers and graduates) input as demonstrated by the rising rates of participation and completion of surveys. These inputs inform the institution and are sustained by the 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' efforts of various Southeast Tech stakeholders.

### **Category Summary Statements**

1. **Helping Students Learn:** The Institute has processes developed and “integrated” in the areas of Academic Program Design, Academic Student Support, and Academic Integrity. Southeast Tech has developed Common Learning Outcomes (CLO’s) and Program Learning Outcomes (PLO’s) assessed regularly in alignment with the institutes’ mission. Their system as described is fully articulated and repeatable, involving a variety of stakeholders, both internal and external, who are engaged on a timeline for orderly, coordinated effort. This demonstrates a planned approach to assessment that encompasses strategic planning, academic planning, and CLO assessment.

Southeast Tech has identified four Common Learning Outcomes (CLO’s): Science and Technology, Problem Solving and Critical Thinking, Communication, and Professionalism. Each academic program has identified Program Learning Outcomes (PLO’s) that include the knowledge, skills, and abilities its graduates are expected to possess within that particular program. A Celebrating Learning Team coordinates these activities. The team’s suggestions for improvement or further analysis are made and included in the budgeting and planning processes. Numerous improvements within the programs have resulted.

2. **Meeting Student & Other Key Stakeholder Needs:** Southeast Tech has processes in place to capture information about its students’ needs, developing plans to meet those needs, deciding whether to deploy those plans, evaluating the effectiveness of the initiatives that are deployed, publishing the results of the initiatives, and reflecting upon and improving those initiatives. The results for student course success, retention, transfer, and graduation rates are higher than national averages. The Institute has a clear mission of educating for employment, with external relationships and retention processes established to meet that objective. The Institution believes that its current and prospective student need processes and results are now at the integrated maturity level.
3. **Valuing Employees:** Southeast Tech has a comprehensive eight-step process for hiring new employees and processes for retention of existing employees. Formal processes are also in place for employee mentoring, onboarding, performance evaluation, recognition, and professional development. Communication efforts include monthly all-employee meetings and monthly academic building meetings. Faculty and staff input are an integral part of the budgeting and committee efforts. CESS (Ruffalo-Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction

Surveys) are administered to determine employee satisfaction and results compared to national averages. These results inform plans for improvements in these processes. The Institution's commitment to valuing employees has resulted in several action projects on employee relations. Southeast Tech believes its processes for valuing employees is reaching the aligned maturity level.

In March 2017, the state passed legislation removing all unions at the technical institute levels across the state as of July 2017. It is unclear how this will affect the Institutes' current employee process, including compensation and benefits. The impact this will potentially have on morale and employee retention may present an area of opportunity for the institution.

4. **Planning and Leading:** Southeast Tech has a clear and defined mission and vision, "Southeast Tech's mission is all about educating for employment" (Cat 4, page 3); so as a two-year associate-degree granting institute, Southeast Tech has the benefit of operating to serve a clear niche: students seeking entry-level jobs among its 50 or so offerings. At the same time, the economy and emerging technologies are changing and ruthlessly shrinking the base of lower-skilled jobs, a trend now starting to consume certain professional fields. Deployment of the mission and vision are accomplished through the Strategic Planning, Annual Planning, Planning and Assessment Documentation, and Employee Evaluation processes along with an established Culture of Quality. These have been refined and reviewed multiple times with a process to ensure they remain viable and relevant, resulting in a new Strategic plan being implemented in 2016.

Historically, the five-member Sioux Falls School Board has been the Institute's official governing board until very recently. Board members have been elected from the Sioux Falls School District and have been meeting monthly to assure the Institute uses its resources effectively and fulfills its mission. The Southeast Tech Council, consisting of other external stakeholders, provides community input and offers recommendations.

Communication of information takes place through formal and informal methods within the Institute's flat organizational structure. Leadership roles are assumed by a variety of individuals and teams based upon functional needs. Recently the Institute established a Leadership Development process. The Institute uses the CESS to gauge its leadership effectiveness. Integrity in terms of legal and ethical behavior is emphasized with employees

as part of the onboarding process. Board members also must disclose any conflict of interest prior to any Board action.

5. **Knowledge Management & Resource Stewardship:** The region surrounding Southeast Tech has an unemployment rate less than 3%, which has led to periods of decreased enrollment and budget constraints. These external constraints are defined by the institution as requiring, “major institutional adjustments”.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are established to help guide the knowledge management process. Programs and departments are monitored in part by the disaggregation of the indicator information and by additional measures specific to their areas. The Office of Institutional Research (IR) organizes data. IR creates reports for the appropriate offices and teams to analyze. These data are shared with other stakeholders for input and planning. Although these data are readily accessible, the Institute backs up information nightly at an off-site location to ensure integrity and security. The Institute believes its information access processes to be integrated, but systematic to aligned for other knowledge management processes.

The Institute oversees the allocations it receives from the government and revenue it generates from its Child Care, Bookstore, and Corporate Education operations. It believes its ability to plan and adjust has allowed it to remain in a solid position during a time of declining enrollment. Another asset has been its sharing of certain resources and services with the Sioux Falls School District. The result of these practices has been the balancing of its annual budgets, the accumulation of budget reserves, and the maintenance of its physical infrastructure.

6. **Quality Overview:** Southeast Tech links quality processes and a culture of quality with all of its systems and uses the framework of AQIP (Plan Do Check Act) to drive quality improvement initiatives. The Institute has a long history with the quality process, having initiated staff professional development in Total Quality Management (TQM) and the hiring of an administrator with a background in continuous quality improvement in the early 90's, with the institution joining AQIP in 2006. Southeast Tech is using their Deploying Actions Process to develop consistent and robust processes across the institute.

Although any stakeholder can generate initiatives, these must be approved by an appropriate official or committee before execution to ensure alignment with Southeast Tech's goals and

strategic plan objectives. The AQIP Futures Team oversees the overall initiative process for alignment and implementation.

The governing boards, administration, department teams, program teams, AQIP Futures Team, External Stakeholder Relationships Team, Celebrating Learning Team, Education Design and Delivery Team, Student Success Team, and Campus Climate Team all have prescribed roles in the quality improvement process. The institution has also set in place implementation and communication flow mechanisms to foster awareness and participation. Internal Strategy Forums are held annually to train all employees on continuous quality improvement.

## **II. Strategic Challenges Analysis**

In reviewing the entire Systems Portfolio, the Systems Appraisal team was able to discern what may be several overarching strategic challenges or potential issues that could affect the institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and overall quality improvement goals. These judgments are based exclusively on information available in the Systems Portfolio and thus may be limited. Each item should be revisited in subsequent AQIP Pathway reviews, such as during the comprehensive evaluation in Year 8.

### ***Strategic Challenge 1:***

Throughout the Portfolio Southeast Tech reports and heavily relies on internally collected data in response to process, results and improvement questions. Frequent use of examples and individual activities that appear reactive rather than systematic may not represent Institutional drivers and measures used to make strategic decisions.

### ***Strategic Challenge 2:***

While Southeast Tech brings much institutional history and momentum to its quality improvement efforts, its Systems Portfolio contains evidence to suggest it struggles against the inherent limitations of certain quality metrics it has chosen. The Institute may want to critically reflect upon the role of the benefits of lesser-used formative evaluation metrics versus its more-favored summative evaluation metrics such as graduation rate. Similarly, less overall reliance on indirect measures such as satisfaction surveys and greater reliance upon targeted performance indicators might yield more actionable data upon which to base quality improvement decisions. The Institute may find participation in the HLC Assessment Academy to advance these conversations.

***Strategic Challenge 3:***

Southeast Tech may be served by identifying its peer institutions to establish benchmarks. Without this information, it may be difficult to establish performance targets or determine where the Institute stands in relation to its counterparts. Such comparative data sets may often provide improvements and innovations that can help the institution in accomplishment of its strategic goals, mission and vision.

**III. AQIP Category Feedback**

As the Systems Appraisal team reviewed the Systems Portfolio, it determined the stages of maturity of the institution's processes and results. These stages range from "Reacting" to "Integrated" and are described in Appendix A. Through use of the maturity stages and its analysis of the institution's reported improvements, the team offers below summary feedback for each AQIP Pathway category. This section identifies areas for further improvement and also possible improvement strategies. In addition to the summary information presented here, Appendix B conveys the team's specific feedback for all Process, Results, and Improvement items included in the institution's Systems Portfolio. The summary feedback below, and the detailed feedback offered in Appendix B, is based only upon evidence conveyed in the Systems Portfolio. It is possible that the institution has additional information on specific processes, results and improvements that was not included in the Systems Portfolio. In such instances, the institution should plan to provide this evidence in a future AQIP Pathway review process.

***Category 1: Helping Students Learn***

Southeast Tech has taken steps over the past several years to create a set of both Common Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). As many of these are relatively new, Southeast Tech is at the systematic level as it works to integrate these into the institutional culture. The results for these goals are hard to ascertain in a number of areas, as some are too new to measure, while others only have results dating from several years ago with nothing more current. The Institute also shows strength in many components by measuring student outcomes and achievement over time, yet the absence for certain measures of external benchmarks – coupled with declines on reaching internal goals in recent years for some outcomes – indicate levels of maturity for Institute results as reacting to systematic. It would also help Southeast Tech to advance in maturity level to be more deliberate about periodically evaluating the efficacy of its processes.

The processes for determining program-learning outcomes are commendable, being tied to both institutional mission and goals as well as the Institute's common learning outcomes. Signs of success at the institutional level – such as program completion and employer feedback – would not seem to readily lend themselves to the kinds of information that is specific enough to enable the faculty to improve those parts of the curriculum needing improvement. It would be helpful for evaluators to know this process within typical Southeast Tech programs. Without sacrificing the emphasis upon Institute-wide results, better disaggregation of student learning process and data by program is warranted.

Southeast Tech has clear statements regarding academic freedom and integrity that were developed in a collaborative manner and are communicated widely. That said, the ongoing processes and scrutiny to assure that these policies are being honored in practice is not clear. The Institute is encouraged to bring these activities into explicit recognition.

### **Category 1 Strategic Issues:**

Southeast Tech has long practiced the admirable and sometimes difficult work of closely connecting its programs to the career-oriented institutional mission. The Institute has wisely and regularly sought out information from a variety of internal and external stakeholders to design and improve its offerings, and courageously seeks out external benchmarks to determine how well it performs its educational mission.

As the Institute has claimed, space constraints within the Systems Portfolio may have prevented detailed story-telling at the program level. Its emphasis in the Portfolio upon institution-level metrics of success (summative metrics such as graduation rate, job placement rate) make the task of evaluating progress in continuous quality improvement processes difficult, because different programs may need to do entirely different kinds of work in order to improve (e.g., some programs might need better outcomes defined and measured, others might need more effective learning activities). While programs share CLOs embedded in the PLOs, it was not clear from the Systems Portfolio whether cross-departmental conversations and learning were even possible because PLOs differ across departments. Indirect measures such as graduation rate and job placement rates contribute no direct understanding of how Southeast Tech students might better learn what is required of them. Adding to the complexity here is the fact that unless other institutions use the same PLOs as Southeast Tech, there are no shared direct measures of student learning except for those instances in which there are certifications or licensure exam results of graduates.

The Institute may want to consider if the “dual credit” operations offered for high-school aged students has analogues for older students, especially as adults seek career-advancement through further education. The Institute does so already for military students (via military transcripts) but other forms of employer-sponsored training have been recognized by colleges and universities in order to give students advanced standing when enrolled. Such arrangements to recognize on-the-job learning and credit-by-proficiency may become a useful recruitment strategy to entice workers in returning to learning.

### ***Category 2: Meeting Student & Other Key Stakeholder Needs***

Southeast Tech is commended for the steps it has taken to improve their collaborations and partnerships. The institution can improve further by understanding the distinction between processes and activities in this category. It also can benefit by investigating ways to better identify what measures are appropriate for gaining the kind of information that is relevant and significant for making decisions to other areas of meeting stakeholder needs. It has taken some first steps and can advance in maturity as it develops internal targets, trend data, and external benchmarks. At this time, the maturity level for this category is reacting.

There is dramatic growth in the Career Connections program since its inception. Perhaps more information could be provided in terms of how this growth is strengthening all of Southeast Tech's partnerships. It is not certain how workforce development is involved, for example. In addition, there does not appear to be any results for partnerships with other post-secondary institutions. Although indirect measures of effectiveness are relevant, disaggregation of the retention data could help confirm if specific initiatives and services are indeed effective, especially where discrete demographic groups and direct measures are concerned. The results for retention, persistence, and completions are outstanding, though.

It would be helpful for the reviewer of this category for Southeast Tech to conform more nearly to the AQIP Portfolio template instead of integrating the information and utilizing its own method of presenting the materials.

### **Category 2 Strategic Issues**

While the Institute has categorized the students its serves (Table 2P1.2) by their background traits (first-time, transfer, dual credit, ethnic diversity, veteran, non-traditional) and by their needs (developmental, tutoring, financial need, disability, housing, distance learner), the Portfolio does not

discuss students by their various potential aspirations (BS/BA-degree-seekers, career changers, job-advancement-seekers, 'drifters' and more). The Institute may want to consider how it groups the 'segments' in the potential student marketplace by their life goals in order to determine how to reach out to prospective enrollees.

Selecting tools/measures/methods that actually measure the particular topic; for example, employer surveys on the institution does not measure student skills and preparation. While some metrics apparently are used in this arena for efficiency's sake – for example, student clubs are only recognized if they have 5 active members – an opportunity exists for Southeast Tech to consider relevant metrics that do not rely upon sheer volume as activity as 'success'. Benchmarking data should be a priority for this institution.

The Institute is encouraged to articulate the exact processes involved with the various systems within the Category. Presentation of data is also a factor. For example, use of data that is incomplete (N not reported or very low) or tools that are skewed (survey results that does not offer a direct connection to the area or process being evaluated). The Institute is encouraged to include data that corresponds and supports the processes mentioned in the Category and make benchmarking a priority. Moreover, interpretation of the data is presented as an overview and might be better presented along with the data, as an interpretation of the data itself.

While there is a school-wide cohort definition to assure consistency in rates, the Institute may want to consider the frequency with which retention rates may be influenced by factors wholly outside the Institute's control, thus beyond its quality improvement efforts. Finally, being able to specify who is involved in measuring, who reports what to whom, who analyzes data and information and who is involved in making recommendations and changes will help the Institute.

While nothing requires the school to do so, it is remarkable that nowhere in the Portfolio does the school use the concepts of faculty/student or staff/student ratios or of average class size. These metrics are accessible and popular benchmarks, enabling both laypersons and evaluators to understand the sufficiency of faculty and staff. Southeast Tech offers the analogy of the hourglass as an aid to explaining its approach to dealing with student retention; the analogy compares reducing the risk of students quitting to a stopping of the sand before it runs out. Southeast Tech may want to consider a different conceptual analog to avoid a restrictive 'lens' that likens a student to an inanimate object needing an intervention rather than a viewpoint of people interacting within social groups. The current analog seeks to stop something going on 'inside' the student by answering deficits felt by or attributed to the student. Students tend to resist being objectified and faulted.

A sociological approach could enable a view that students are becoming someone more than who they are today – they aspire to join a new (often professional or career-oriented) community, to know what experts know, to be able to achieve what experts can, to adopt the attitudes of the ‘tribe’ they seek to join as full members. Such a new view might inspire Southeast Tech to imagine an entirely different set of ‘needs’ other than deficits that the student presents – such as students’ need for inspiration, encouragement, connections to others, and celebration of important milestones while on their way to becoming fully accepted as new ‘members’ of the community of practitioners they want to join.

The unwanted consequence of the ‘deficit’ model is evident in what Southeast Tech says about having no goal for increasing its metric for disability services: “students with disabilities do not want their particular disability to be viewed as a limitation for them in their program” (C2, page 14). Similarly, the low (and declining) retention rates of the “Academic Recovery Students” (students on financial aid/academic warning) may be related in part to not wanting to feel defined by their deficits.

### ***Category 3: Valuing Employees***

Southeast Tech’s processes for hiring are explicit, replicable and regularly evaluated for efficacy. The inclusion of a format feature in the new performance evaluation form that articulates the connection between an individual employee’s goals and those of the institution is noteworthy. The institute is encouraged to look beyond employee feedback to solicit input from students and external partners and beyond employee satisfaction to deeper levels of feedback on specific hiring process components.

In the wake of the bargaining units’ dissolution Southeast Tech has done an admirable job of maintaining its efficacy in its evaluation of employee performance, and appears to embrace the opportunities for improvements that the removal of contract language now frees them to consider. Southeast Tech acknowledges it has limited measures and results in many areas, but is working to implement additional measures.

### **Category 3 Strategic Issues:**

As budget pressures may continue to rise in coming years, and as those pressures may impact the level of staffing that may be deployed, the Institute may want to consider which student and stakeholder transactions require live (synchronous) interactions and services to be delivered. The consumer culture is increasingly pushed towards “self-service” through web-based applications that enable service providers to hold down their prices. Students are part of this overall environment and may be both accepting and expecting certain, simpler transactions that they must conduct with the

Institute to be automated in some fashion. While the Institute evidences a strong continuous willingness to look at new IT software applications, the Institute may wish to be wary of using those that require intensive staff input to document their work, instead looking for those that enable students to record their preferences while leaving substantive conversations with “live” responders.

#### ***Category 4: Planning and Leading***

Southeast Tech’s processes largely address key goals and strategies, are shared across institutional divisions, and are explicit and repeatable. However, the fact that these processes themselves are not evaluated for efficacy in achieving their stated purpose, and that much of the metrics used are surface-level data places the maturity level at the systematic to aligned level. In order to improve, the Institute may benefit from implemented process review techniques into its evaluation of process, in addition to its current measurement of efficacy by outcome alone. Results associated with mission/vision and strategic planning appear to be reacting to systematic, while results tied to leadership and integrity can best be characterized as being at the reacting maturity level due to the lack of overall measures that directly relate to processes in this category. Improvement of leadership processes and results appears to be strongly tied to opportunities in improving communications on vision, strategy and operational planning.

#### **Category 4 Strategic Issues**

The economy and emerging technologies are shrinking the base of lower-skilled jobs available, a trend now being felt strongly in selected professional fields. Southeast Tech may want to consider what its future may become if low-skilled jobs continue to vanish over the long term. If numbers of jobs requiring only an associate degree shrink, and if the baccalaureate degree becomes the new standard for being “work-ready,” the position of schools such as Southeast Tech serving such a transformed economy may change, thus their strategies may change. One harbinger of such changes may be as Southeast Tech reports on page 100 of the Systems Portfolio: “Employers believe Southeast Tech graduates have strong technical skills, but they would like the Institute to develop more ways to improve graduate soft skills as they relate to job performance.”

#### ***Category 5: Knowledge Management & Resource Stewardship***

Southeast Tech has aligned its mission, strategic plan, budgeting cycle, and KPIs. However, it is not clear how readily employees have access to the daily operational data they need to perform their jobs effectively. One main area of possible enhancement would be the use of direct measure to

assess operational effectiveness. Each section provides measures that are limited in scope or are indirect measures of success. In addition, although the budgeting process is strong, the financial measures do not have any external benchmarks, which are likely easily ascertainable from peer institutions. Its plans to develop a new model to focus on resource management and accountability will provide more efficient checks and balances to help identify opportunities for savings real time. Integration of a forecasting tool may be beneficial and allow the Institute to obtain calculations on demand to help make informed resource allocation decisions.

### **Category 5 Strategic Issues:**

In Category 5, as in other categories, there are no periodic evaluations connected with any of the processes. The AQIP guidelines for an aligned maturity level state that processes must be “periodically evaluated for improvement.”

Regarding the results information, it is important for reviewers to be able to know the number of participants (n) being surveyed or evaluated in order to discern if the findings are significant. This information is largely missing in this category and throughout the Portfolio.

### **Category 6: Quality Overview**

Southeast Tech has a long-standing and admirable commitment to continuous quality improvement processes for strengthening the school. A wide variety of stakeholders are involved in committees and administrative structures using key metrics tied to institutional mission and success in order to guide their deliberations and work. From that, it is clear that the school's AQIP work has strong and sustained momentum. The Institute may want to start distinguishing those metrics more related to growth and sustainability from those that measure performance day-to-day (e.g., an indirect metric like enrollment volume resists the kind of analyses that confidently inform what day-to-day changes will lead to improvement). In several areas, the Institute's Portfolio shows the reliance upon a single type of metric (such as surveyed satisfaction) when one or two additional metrics could help ‘triangulate’ the validity and meaning of results obtained. Expanding the sets of metrics should be accompanied by a school-wide initiative to improve skills in interpreting such measures.

The Institute's work over the past twenty years to create a culture of quality is evident when reading this section. The institute has many processes in place to involve stakeholders at all levels within the organization, and has a dedicated team to oversee quality initiatives. There is also an established system to implement quality initiatives and to report out on this work to all stakeholders, including to

the Board. By creating more measures that directly assess the impact of quality improvement initiatives, Southeast Tech will continue to reach a higher level of maturity in this category.

Southeast Tech has done much to embrace a Deploying Actions Process as an understood and replicable means of pursuing and achieving continuous quality improvement. It has demonstrated its organizational capacity for learning in the revisions and improvements it has made to its planning infrastructure and processes over the years. The 2016-2017 changes associated with the Futures Team is but one example of such learning. Charging a centralized and cross-representational body with ensuring alignment of effort, consistency in communications and overarching professional development with its employees holds promise for improvements in process maturity to occur.

### **Category 6 Strategic Issues**

Enhancing the Deploying Actions process with a process component to evaluate the individual key processes associated with the systems portfolio would likely have a global affect in moving the maturity level of multiple processes to aligned, given that so many of the key processes make use of the Deploying Actions Process.

Despite a robust institutional investment of time and money in AQIP participation and in creating a Culture of Quality, recent CESS survey results indicate a drop in employee perception that Institute leaders have a clear sense of purpose. In several places in the Portfolio, the Institute comments that to address this issue, leadership of various team meetings and functions is being shifted from supervisors / administrators to staff. It is unclear from the Portfolio if this change was an outcome that the frontline staff wished to see; the Institute may wish to consider that team leadership might be felt as an additional burden on top of what may already be busy responsibilities tied to their job titles.

Enrollment growth is a KPI tied to the Institute's quality improvement efforts, yet despite longstanding CQI work in many arenas, enrollments have declined over several years, with the consequent stresses upon the budget and overall campus climate. The Institute may want to consider whether employees might be beginning to view their CQI work as unrelated to enrollment growth; this may be what is prompting the decline in satisfaction rating from 2014 to 2016 in the CESS survey item reading "Efforts to improve quality are paying off" (Table 6R2.1). The Institute may need to have stakeholder discussions that explore how robust, valid, and reliable the metric of enrollment growth can be taken as a CQI indicator.

#### **IV. Criteria for Accreditation Evidence Screening**

The Systems Appraisal team screened the institution's Systems Portfolio evidence in relation to the Criteria for Accreditation and the Core Components. This step is designed to position the institution for success during its comprehensive evaluation in Year 8. In order to accomplish this task, HLC has established linkages between the Systems Portfolio's Process and Results items and the Criteria's Core Components. Systems Appraisal teams have been trained to conduct a "soft review" of the Criteria and Core Components for Systems Portfolios completed in the third year of the AQIP Pathway cycle and a more robust review for Systems Portfolios completed in the seventh year. The formal review of the Criteria and Core Components for purposes of reaffirming the institution's accreditation occurs only in the eighth year of the cycle and is completed through the comprehensive evaluation, unless serious problems are identified earlier in the cycle. As part of this Systems Appraisal screening process, teams indicate whether each Core Component is "Strong, clear, and well-presented"; "Adequate but could be improved"; or "Unclear or incomplete." When the Criteria and Core Components are reviewed formally for reaffirmation of accreditation, peer reviewers must determine whether each is "Met," "Met with concerns," or "Not met."

Appendix C of this report documents in detail the Appraisal team's best judgment as to the current strength of the institution's evidence for each Core Component and thus for each Criterion. Institutions are encouraged to review Appendix C carefully in order to guide improvement work relative to the Criteria and Core Components. Immediately below, the team provides summary statements that convey broadly its observations regarding the institution's present ability to satisfy each Criterion, as well as any suggestions for improvement. Again, this feedback is based only upon information contained in the institution's Systems Portfolio and thus may be limited.

##### ***Criterion One. Mission***

Southeast Tech's mission is communicated and supported through various media, publications and marketing materials to students and other external stakeholders. Program decisions, student activities (clubs and co-curricular) are aligned to mission and vision. Budgeting, resource and annual planning involving all stakeholders' align and support the Institute's mission, vision, values, and operate in the interest of the common good. Southeast Tech is encouraged to continue its process of including all stakeholders in its budgeting and resource allocation and annual planning processes.

##### ***Criterion Two. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct***

Southeast Tech demonstrates fiscal responsibility by providing strong evidence that supports its management, oversight and control of its financial operations. There is a comprehensive budget approval process in place to assure responsible use of financial and human resources at the Institute. As the Institute operates under the auspices of the State of South Dakota and a cooperative budget protocol with the Sioux Falls School District, there are controls in place, which help to foster accountability. There is an opportunity to better document the Board selection process to confirm that the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the board members, including the expectation of independence of outside influence are enforced, as the details of how these expectations are ensured were not clearly presented.

***Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support***

Southeast Tech's faculty and staff appear appropriately credentialed, and the Institute has established common learning outcomes across all programs and degrees within the Institute; however, there is no evidence that this applies equitably to dual credit programs. Southeast Tech continues to evolve in its assessment of its common learning outcomes and is encouraged to continue to develop evidence that common and Program learning outcomes are linked to the mission and students' success in addition to identifying appropriate metrics, which can confirm these linkages. Evidence of instructor access and rigor of instruction relative to scholarship and research present an area of opportunity for the Institute

***Criterion Four. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement***

Southeast Tech demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement in student assessment and learning outcomes. Assessment of student outcomes are aligned to targets for predetermined metrics but are at times limited in results garnered and comparisons are not often utilized to reflect good practice in this area. Use of retention and persistence data is limited to internal measures are presented however, there is an opportunity to close the loop on what it can tell the Institution about student success, how effective support services are or assess student learning as it relates to meeting the skill need of employers.

***Criterion Five. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness***

Southeast Tech's administrative leadership and Southeast Tech Board develop and follow established policies and all stakeholders are heard before decisions and policies are made and all actions are guided by the Institution. The Institution's planning and resource allocation process is aligned to the mission and vision of the Institute. All decisions for change, planning and ability to

deliver its programs are guided by a structured decision process involving key internal and external stakeholders.

With the recent change to the governing board and organizational structure led by the State of South Dakota and Sioux Falls School District, Southeast Tech is strongly encouraged to work with their HLC staff liaison to ascertain whether or not a Change of Control has occurred that might require HLC Board approval or further documentation of any new Institutional processes.

## **V. Quality of the Systems Portfolio**

Overall the Portfolio reflected a narrative of an institution that is committed to its quality journey with many activities documented and innovations referenced. However, Southeast Tech did not always link evidence or data collection nor was there evidence presented to confirm that the data shown was analyzed before considering improvements. Integrated approaches are an important aspect of the Portfolio and the lack of comparisons, benchmarking and linking of processes, results and improvements within each category does not communicate the level of maturity in the quality improvement process of an institution with the length of experience such as that of Southeast Tech. This inconsistency between statements made and the lack of supporting evidence affected the team's ability to indicate that all areas were "strong, clear and well presented."

Readability was impacted by the Institute's decision to collapse its responses to discrete components and provide composite statements for its response. Often upon further review, the team was unable to distinguish a response or track the Institution's argument, and at times, there was in fact no response to the area, which affected the review process, and subsequent feedback to the Institution. The information shared reflected daily activities within the various departments and operations but did not always reflect systematic/integrated processes, which will affect the institution in a sustainable way relative to quality improvement in the long run.

## **VI. Using the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report**

The Systems Appraisal process is intended to foster action for institutional improvement. Although decisions about specific next steps rest with the institution, HLC expects every institution to use its Feedback Report to stimulate improvement and to inform future processes. If this Appraisal is being completed in the institution's third year in the AQIP Pathway cycle, the results may inform future Action Projects and also provide the focus for the institution's next Strategy Forum. In rare cases, the Appraisal

completed in the third year may suggest either to the institution itself or to the Commission the need for a mid-cycle (fourth year) Comprehensive Quality Review. If this Appraisal is being completed in the institution's seventh year in the cycle, again the results may inform future Action Projects and Strategy Forums, but more immediately they should inform institutional preparation for its comprehensive evaluation in the eighth year of the cycle when the institution's continuing accredited status will be determined along with future Pathway eligibility. Institutions are encouraged to contact their staff liaison with questions.

**APPENDIX A**  
**Stages in Systems Maturity: *Processes***

<b>Reacting</b>	<b>Systematic</b>	<b>Aligned</b>	<b>Integrated</b>
<p>The institution focuses on activities and initiatives that respond to immediate needs or problems rather than anticipating future requirements, capacities, or changes. Goals are implicit and poorly defined. Informal procedures and habits account for all but the most formal aspects of institutional operations.</p>	<p>The institution is beginning to operate via generally understood, repeatable, and often documented processes and is prone to make the goal of most activities explicit, measurable, and subject to improvement. Institutional silos are eroding and signs of coordination and the implementation of effective practices across units are evident. Institutional goals are generally understood.</p>	<p>The institution operates according to processes that are explicit, repeatable and periodically evaluated for improvement. Processes address key goals and strategies, and lessons learned are shared among institutional units. Coordination and communication among units is emphasized so stakeholders relate what they do to institutional goals and strategies.</p>	<p>Operations are characterized by explicit, predictable processes that are repeatable and regularly evaluated for optimum effectiveness. Efficiencies across units are achieved through analysis, transparency, innovation, and sharing. Processes and measures track progress on key strategic and operational goals. Outsiders request permission to visit and study why the institution is so successful.</p>

**Stages in Systems Maturity: *Results***

<b>Reacting</b>	<b>Systematic</b>	<b>Aligned</b>	<b>Integrated</b>
<p>Activities, initiatives, and operational processes may not generate data or the data is not collected, aggregated, or analyzed. Institutional goals lack measures, metrics, and/or benchmarks for evaluating progress. The monitoring of quality of operational practices and procedures may be based on assumptions about quality. Data collected may not be segmented or distributed effectively to inform decision-making.</p>	<p>Data and information are collected and archived for use, available to evaluate progress, and are analyzed at various levels. The results are shared and begin to erode institutional silos and foster improvement initiatives across institutional units. The tracking of performance on institutional goals has begun in a manner that yields trend data and lends itself to comparative measures in some areas.</p>	<p>Measures, metrics and benchmarks are understood and used by all relevant stakeholders. Good performance levels are reported with beneficial trends sustained over time in many areas of importance. Results are segmented and distributed to all responsible institutional units in a manner that supports effective decision-making, planning and collaboration on improvement initiatives. Measures and metrics are designed to enable the aggregation and analysis of results at an institutional level.</p>	<p>Data and information are analyzed and used to optimize operations on an ongoing basis. Performance levels are monitored using appropriate benchmarks. Trend data has been accrued and analyzed for most areas of performance. Results are shared, aggregated, segmented and analyzed in a manner that supports transparency, efficiency, collaboration and progress on organizational goals. Measures and metrics for strategic and operational goals yield results that are used in decision-making and resource allocations.</p>

## APPENDIX B AQIP Category Feedback

### Category 1: Helping Students Learn

Category 1 focuses on the design, deployment and effectiveness of teaching-learning processes (and the processes required to support them) that underlie the institution’s credit and non-credit programs and courses.

#### 1.1: Common Learning Outcomes

Common Learning Outcomes focuses on the knowledge, skills and abilities expected of graduates from all programs. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.B., 3.E. and 4.B. in this section.

**1P1** Describe the processes for determining, communicating and ensuring the stated common learning outcomes, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

1P1	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
Aligning common outcomes to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution	<p><b>Systematic</b> The process by which Southeast Tech aligns its common learning outcomes to its mission and offerings is clear, sequential and repeatable, designed to solicit input from well-defined internal and external stakeholder groups. During the first renewal year in the 8-year strategic planning cycle, the Institute formally evaluates alignment of CLOs and Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) to mission. This process is also faculty-driven and articulates the decision-making role of the administration, board and council.</p> <p>Finally, the process is commendable in that it includes a communications plan for distributing updates to all stakeholders. The process of how the Institute aligns the course offerings and common outcomes to their mission and strategic plan are outlined in Figure 1P1.1. By including a periodic evaluation of this process, the maturity level could be strengthened. The level of maturity of this process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
Determining common outcomes	<p><b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech’s process of determining common outcomes is connected with each strategic plan cycle. It is systematic process. After the mission statement is affirmed or changed, internal and external stakeholders provide input to the Celebrating Learning Team (CLT). The Celebrating Learning Team conducts an analysis of the common learning outcomes to determine their currency, transferability and ability to provide students with adaptable skills. The CLT, with the help</p>

	<p>of the IR Office, develops a draft of the Common Learning Outcomes (CLO's). This draft is then sent back out to the stakeholders for further review. A second draft of CLOs is presented by the CLT to the Administrative Team for approval. It then is presented to the Board and Tech Council for adoption. By including a period evaluation of this process, the maturity level could be strengthened. The level of maturity of this process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Articulating the purposes, content and level of achievement of the outcomes</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech articulates the purposes, content and level of achievement of its Common Learning Outcomes (CLSs). Each of the four (previously eight) CLOs has statements explicating their purpose; content and level of the outcomes has been detailed by Institute faculty. Publication venues include the catalog (including policy statements therein), posters, course syllabi, and outcome assessments reports. Assessment metrics associated with achievement of these outcomes have been defined. Levels of achievement are demonstrated through student performance assessment in each of the four CLO's, but there was not a documented process for communicating these discussed in the portfolio. The level of maturity of this process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Incorporating into the curriculum opportunities for all students to achieve the outcomes</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  At Southeast Tech all programs have specialized program-learning outcomes (PLO's) that are aligned to CLO's. A course-mapping matrix indicates the method used to assess the CLO's by course, with a program-mapping matrix that indicates in which course PLO's are taught and to what level.</p> <p>There does not appear to be a similar intentionality for general education courses. General education faculty members participate on program advisory committees which helps ensure CLOs are reflected in PLOs. Students engage in activities such as standardized testing, portfolio activities and academic inquiry aligned to the PLO (Program Learning Outcomes).</p> <p>It is unclear what specific assignments such as teamwork, capstone activities or direct field experience students are engaged in which further demonstrate how the students who complete the institutions programs are mastering the CLO outcomes. The level of maturity of this process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Ensuring the outcomes remain relevant and aligned with student, workplace and societal needs</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech CLO's are discussed in several venues, including during CLT team and program meetings, with Program Advisory Committees, and as part of the CLO assessment process. General education faculty are said to participate in Program Advisory Committee meetings although</p>

	<p>how this is accomplished is not clear. Employer and graduate surveys are used to help determine what improvements, if any, are needed; subsequent changes are vetted using Institute protocols. Because these processes could also trigger a review of the CLO's, it isn't clear how these processes connect to the larger goal of reviewing the CLO's at the beginning of each strategic plan, how consistent the CLO's are from year to year, and how the institution can accurately measure long-term progress given this potential variability. The process of how related career components and opportunities were integrated into the curriculum however is unclear. The level of maturity of this process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Designing, aligning and delivering co-curricular activities to support learning</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  In addition to the events offered and campaigns conducted to address the institution's valuation of diversity, Southeast Tech provides opportunities for students to engage in leadership development through its Student Government Association, and involvement in institutionally-sanctioned clubs and organizations (currently numbering 16). While there are clear processes for establishing and supporting a club or organization, there is no process described for how Southeast Tech intentionally designs, aligns or reviews the activities it offers to support student learning, in particular its CLOs. This represents a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.</p>
<p>Selecting tools, methods and instruments used to assess attainment of common learning outcomes</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  A Celebrating Learning Team (CLT) formed in 2012, comprised of academic administrators, employees representing programs and departments across the Institute, and institutional research staff, has overall responsibility for the assessment process including tools and methods. The selection of assessment tools and methods are guided by the CLT and supported by employers and alumni to establish benchmarks and career application measures (Figure 1P1.1 and 1P1.2). The Portfolio does not describe how the tool selection process itself is periodically reviewed and improved. The process is at the <b>systematic</b> level of maturity.</p>
<p>Assessing common learning outcomes</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  As part of the process, the CLT provides multiple opportunities for faculty and staff input, with the CLT-recommendations seeking final approval from the Academic Administrative Team. Assessment results are appropriately reviewed by faculty in consultation with institutional research, resulting in an assessment report inclusive of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement that is made available to all employees. The CLT closes the process loop by identifying and implementing actions, sending forward those recommendations in need of administrative support to the various departments and the Program Advisory</p>

	Committee. The Portfolio does not describe how this process is periodically evaluated, so its maturity level is <b>systematic</b> .
Other identified processes	

1R1	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)	<p><b>Reacting</b>                      Southeast Tech presents tables (Tables 1R1.1, 1R1.2, 1R1.3, 1R1.4, 1R1.5) in a format that demonstrate institutional capacity to collect, display and distribute results over time in a way that may inform improvement planning efforts. Southeast Tech made a decision during this cycle to limit their tracking to communication skills based on employer survey results. It appears as though communication was no longer measured once the target was reached in 2010, which is also the last year in which writing was assessed.</p> <p>It is unclear what other tools were used other than the survey to track and measure this outcome, and it is unclear on this and some other summary results what is the decision-making process being used. It may be of benefit for the Institute to consider using additional tools such as assessment rubrics, evaluation rubrics and internal dashboards to track and measure outcomes.</p> <p>Results of technical skill assessment testing in the areas of technical, writing, problem solving and professionalism were provided in Table 1R1.1 for the years 2010 - 2015. Results of employer surveys were provided in Table 1R1.3 in the areas of communication, problem solving, technical skills and professionalism for the years 2001 and 2003.</p> <p>No other results were provided in the portfolio to confirm student attainment of learning KSA (knowledge skills and abilities). The sporadic nature of reporting as stated above and the fact of CLOs being folded into PLOs makes the observation of CLO results Institute-wide seem to be largely anecdotal. The level of maturity is <b>reacting</b>.</p>
Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks	<p><b>Reacting</b>                      Results are compared using data from employer surveys against established institutional targets, to assess how students are applying their skills in the workplace. Tables in the Systems Portfolio (pages 13 &amp; 14) clearly show the target goals and expected scores on the CLOs and some constituent subcomponents. Because the CLOs are locally determined, direct external benchmarks for these learning levels are not possible. It may be helpful to consider using benchmarks</p>

	<p>obtained from career services, accreditation agencies, course level results over periods of assessment, and peer institutions as potential sources of comparison. The level of maturity is <b>reacting</b>.</p>
<p>Interpretation of results and insights gained</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  Across the four CLOs and by multiple years, the Institute presents tables of outcome data with subsequent interpretations drawn and the actions taken in response. In particular, Southeast Tech has begun to make improvements at the program level to address gaps in these outcomes with changes in specific programs (Construction Management, Automotive, General Education Math and English). The Professional outcome had only a single year of analysis and insights shared, though in the future the inclusion of expectations and actual performance on the Employer Survey may yield appropriate results for interpretation as the years proceed. While the college discusses multiple results, it is not clear how its conclusions are arrived at based on the data given. Many of the measures appear to be indirect measures of achievement. The level of maturity is <b>reacting</b>.</p>

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<p><b>Evaluation of Efforts Made</b></p>
<p>The reviewers of the Systems Portfolio of the Institute view the overall development of common learning outcomes at Southeast Tech as being solidly <b>systematic</b> in its level of maturity. Nearly all processes are widely understood, repeatable, and often documented, with much evidence of cross-functionality within the Institute. Much outcome data from the relevant processes are centrally collected, organized, and reported out to Institute stakeholders. Two areas emerge as having the most potential for improvement and advancement to the next level of maturity. First, while co-curricular activities have a deliberate structure and accountability, their intended connections to student learning could be made more explicit. Second, the stories the Institute may tell of its use of data to improve learning can be made more prominent, with particular emphasis upon subsequent outcomes that clearly show improvement compared to those prior to interventions. One difficulty in doing so currently are the gaps in time over which some data have been collected. What follows below are some specific observations and ideas that illuminate these general evaluative remarks:</p> <p>The Institute’s strengths are in the manner in which its processes provide opportunity for input, and in identifying actionable opportunities for improvement within programs and divisions. The Institute will benefit from its plans to develop more robust data sets to measure common learning outcomes, as it proceeds with its rotational review timelines. Finally, the Institute will more fully experience an aligned level of maturity should it take the opportunity to articulate process steps to review the efficacy of the processes used with common learning outcomes.</p> <p>It may be beneficial for the Institute to identify direct measures for course level assessment measures to ensure outcomes achieved address those areas of opportunity identified in</p>

employer surveys. Additionally, moving past one comparative data source may aid the Institute in achieving a more mature level in assessment of both CLO and PLO. Aligning CLO development to the strategic plan is an effective strategy that the Institute is encouraged to build upon with a more formal process, which will permit the institution to improve in its data collection and benchmarking process to effectively measure its common learning outcomes.

Because the CLO's are assessed within the programs, only the number of students taking the Science and Technology Assessment and the percentage passing are sent to the IR Office. The institution may want to consider breaking this down at lower levels, as the purpose of the CLO's is to assess the students' overall learning experience. The Institute might also clarify how CLOs are delivered within its general education courses. The current method used may make it extremely difficult to make valid determinations that truly span the entire curriculum.

The Institute may benefit from reflection on the rotational schedule required to validate and sustain quality improvements, The 2010 'Writing Skills' outcome met the Southeast Tech institutional goal (84%), having been preceded by years of shortfalls (43%-68%); yet after the single success of year 2010, the Institute turned its attention to other matters.

The Professionalism outcome faces an interesting dilemma with respect to achieving quality improvements: between 2013 and 2015 employers' survey ratings of graduate performance increased, yet employers' expectations rose more rapidly, so the 'gap' between the ratings is larger despite student improvement. Most of Southeast Tech's reported improvements for common learning outcomes are in extensions and refinement of process as opposed to results, which is understandable given the Institute has greater control over the former.

### 1.2: Program Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes focuses on the knowledge, skills and abilities graduates from particular programs are expected to possess. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.B., 3.E. and 4.B. in this section.

- 1P2** Describe the processes for determining, communicating and ensuring the stated program learning outcomes and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

1P2	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
Aligning program learning outcomes to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution	<b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech does not begin reviewing Program Learning Outcomes (PLO's) until Common Learning Outcomes (CLO's) are clarified. The CLO's take into account the mission of the institution. Thus, PLO's become aligned through an associative process. Internal and external stakeholders are given an opportunity to provide feedback into this process. This sequence of activities is logical, but more direct processes of review might be a safeguard to ensure alignment. It is not clear that they have described a process

	<p>that ensures the PLO's align with the educational and degree offerings and levels. Also there is no indication that this process, itself, is periodically reviewed. The maturity level here is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Determining program outcomes</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  PLO's are derived from the institutional-level CLO's to ensure alignment between the two. PLO's are determined by program faculty, informed by external industry stakeholder input, reviewed Program Advisory Committees, and guided by the CLT. External input on PLOs is obtained from employer surveys as well as standards set by programmatic accrediting agencies. The process for determining PLO's includes steps for institution-wide communication to stakeholders. Additionally, programs with external accreditation specific to their field also incorporate these standards into the PLO development. The Institute cites no periodic evaluation for improvement of this process, and this process is viewed as <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Articulating the purposes, content and level of achievement of these outcomes</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  PLOs are not created in isolation; the Celebrating Learning Team at the Institute, comprised of cross-functional representatives, helps play a vital role in assuring across all programs that learning outcomes are properly constructed and specified. PLO's are articulated to students through the Southeast Tech website and on standardized syllabi, while also frequently reviewed through during academic advising meetings. However, the process described falls short of defining the explicit activities within which the separate purposes, content and level of achievement of PLO's are presented to students in the most appropriate and timely fashion. There does not appear to be a defined process for determining how effective these processes are for helping students understand what the PLO's are or what their purpose is. The level of maturity here is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Ensuring the outcomes remain relevant and aligned with student, workplace and societal needs</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  The Institute uses input from multiple stakeholders, including employers, to ensure PLO's are relevant. Industry advisory councils play a key role in providing the Institute with information on workplace and societal needs to guide PLO development and relevancy. Program Advisory Committees provide ongoing feedback on the PLOs as observed in graduates' performance on the job. The Institute may want to strengthen the role of its current students in providing such input about PLOs that will meet their needs.</p> <p>It appears as though there is no formal Institute-wide process in place to systematically review PLO's on a regular basis to determine their relevancy. While the number of distinct and informal activities described may contribute to ensuring that</p>

	<p>PLO's are relevant and aligned with needs, they do not occur as part of a sequential and replicable process. Instead, it seems this is more of an informal process that occurs only when an external stakeholder tells program faculty a change may be needed. The level of maturity here is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Designing, aligning and delivering cocurricular activities to support learning</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  While there are clear processes for establishing and supporting the existing sixteen student program organizations, there is no process articulated for how Southeast Tech intentionally designs, aligns or reviews the activities it offers to support student learning in its co-curricular offerings. The co-curricular opportunities for student learning appear to be fortuitous, not deliberate; these opportunities include providing students with real-world connections through professional organizations in their field, conferences and competitions at the state and local level, which provide networking opportunities with potential employers. The Institute may want to consider and describe how student clubs and activities support its articulated CLOs and PLOs, and how the stipulations on recognition of clubs support a quality improvement process. The institution will pilot a report process that details how the groups reinforce PLO development (1P1). There is no periodic review of this process mention, though. This represents a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.</p>
<p>Selecting tools, methods and instruments used to assess attainment of program learning outcomes</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Assessment tools are selected by faculty, and are specific to their field of expertise. All faculty use the "Measuring Student Learning Cycle" process to develop and deploy their program assessments. This involves a six-step process: Capture/Develop/Decide, Deploy, Evaluate, Plan, Act, Communicate/Publish. At each step, various program inputs are utilized to assess associated program outcomes (Figure 1P2.1). Every program selects its own assessment instrument under the assumption program faculty who have worked in the profession are in the best position to know the needs of their industry and the type of assessment that best measures student learning. The Celebrating Learning Team coordinates efforts of faculty across the various programs to assure selection of valid and reliable measures. Because programs select their own tools and methods, however, it is unclear how much commonality could be found across the use of the various program methods. The level of maturity here is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Assessing program learning outcomes</p>	<p><b>Aligned</b>                  Standard and recurring assessments are captured on each outcome, sent to the Institutional Research office, reported for institutional purposes, plus shared with departments for purposes of program effectiveness. The assessment includes</p>

	<p>evaluation of the program level assessments (pass rates, pre/post testing or certification), employer surveys and employment rates to ensure requirements are met. Every program utilizes a program-specific outcome assessment tool, while programs may also utilize certification/licensure passing rates, portfolios, or other measures to supplement these data. Employer surveys and job placement rates are also used as indirect measures to measure workforce satisfaction with graduate readiness. Figure 1P2.1 depicts a clear process designed in its “Measuring Student Learning Cycle.” The Institute’s explicit and replicable elements -- along with its attention to goals, strategies and outcomes – demonstrate that this process as <b>aligned</b>.</p>
Other identified processes	

1R2	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
<p>Overall levels of deployment of the program assessment processes within the institution (i.e., how many programs are/not assessing program goals)</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      Although Southeast Tech states it has long history of deploying program-level assessments that dates back to the 1990’s, it still is not yet consistently meeting its targets for having 90% of all programs assessing program goals every two years and 100% assessing PLOs every three years (Table 1R2.1). The Institute reports an opportunity area for some programs who have not met the assessment target citing new programs, new faculty and lack of documented assessment plans. It is a concern that the percent of programs in both categories has declined in recent years. The level of maturity here is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      A detailed summary of program assessments and results are provided in Figure 1R2.1. These results depict summative and formative assessment models used and their results. Targets are designated for each program along with the results and associated assessment tool. In some cases, the targeted goals were exceeded.</p> <p>The results are such that all could understand them, but it is less clear that all use these results. Although the Table helps with an institution-level overview, it makes it difficult to understand variation across programs, particularly when there are several programs that do not regularly assess program outcomes. It is unclear if certain programs habitually perform the work while other programs might be persistently avoiding it. The Institute might want to reflect upon how purposeful its assessment approach is viewed across the various programs.</p>

	<p>During all but one of the past 8 years, the Institute fell short of reaching its minimum of 80% of programs conducting their assessments (it has declined to 66% in recent years), which the Institute believes indicates a highly ambitious goal. It is unclear if internal goals fluctuate annually or reflect a long-term commitment. The level of maturity is <b>systematic</b> yet it would be difficult for the Institute to advance to the next level without addressing the difficult questions about why it has so dramatically fallen short of its goals in recent years.</p>
<p>Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks</p>	<p><b>Aligned</b>                  Southeast Tech may describe its comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks as being at the aligned level. Though not a direct assessment of the Institute’s programs, about 17 of the programs track graduates’ licensure and certification exam results over time, and Table 1R2.3 shows the Institute’s graduates consistently scoring above the national norms on such exams. (Not all Institute programs are in fields that have licensure or certification opportunities). It is unclear if the external benchmarks are disaggregated by the providers to allow the institute a more targeted comparison by comparing itself to true peer institutions. The Institute believes certain programs with lower scores may be an indication of having set ‘stretch’ goals. This level of maturity is <b>aligned</b>.</p>
<p>Interpretation of assessment results and insights gained</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  The Institute is using graduate employment rates to determine that the institute is meeting its mission. Though these are impressive results at 90% + overall and 89% + for in field these data do provide only one perspective on the success of the program support services, curriculum and assessment outcomes. The interpretations of data from a variety of measures (I.e., employment rates, employer satisfaction, pass rates, etc.) appear to be accurate in that mission clarity about educating individuals to meet the region’s workforce needs is broadly embraced. Yet, no specific insights were shared other than general employer and institutional satisfaction and that programs use the data to develop action plans. Because the institute has not met its target for programs measuring outcomes within two or three years since 2012, and there are one-third of programs who are not hitting their program-level outcome targets, this inability to comment on program improvements is concerning. Southeast Tech might be well served to convene cross-discipline conversations to discuss the meaning of these results and how the institute can use them to improve future performance, particularly at the program level. The institution is effective in gathering results however there is an opportunity for Southeast to better interpret their results This process is at a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.</p>

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**Evaluation of Efforts Made**

Given that Program Learning Outcomes derive in significant part from the Common Learning Outcomes discussed earlier, it may be no surprise that the reviewers of the Systems Portfolio of the Institute view the overall development of program learning outcomes at Southeast Tech as being solidly systematic in its level of maturity. As with CLOs, nearly all processes involving PLOs are widely understood, repeatable, and often documented, with much evidence of cross-functionality within the Institute, especially via the Celebrating Learning Team. Much outcome data from the relevant processes are centrally collected, organized, and reported out to Institute stakeholders. The efforts of the Institute to find and validate its PLO results using external benchmarks is a contributing factor to team assessments resulting in the 'aligned' level of maturity where indicated.

With respect to program learning outcomes (PLOs), Southeast Tech students overall earn high scores on certification/licensure tests where applicable. While those test results are detailed in the Systems Portfolio by program, for reasons unclear there is only one institutional graduate job placement rate (annualized) cited but with no disaggregation by program. Even a multi-year job placement rate by program would begin to be informative, especially if the number of graduates per program per year is small. Disaggregation might also target programs which 'under-perform' relative to Institute targets, thus putting focus upon where improvement efforts may be most beneficial to the overall result.

The Institute can improve upon its stories by clarifying how quality improvement efforts led subsequently to demonstrably better outcomes. For example, some recent improvements cited include changes mandated or requested by external accreditors. In another example, for at least five of seven bulleted examples of improvements to programs (page 21) cited investments in technologies and learning tools/resources that have occurred, without indicating how those particular decisions derived from the evaluation of PLOs or from the Institute's quality improvement processes. Such connections must be made explicit to warrant higher ratings of maturity of process and outcomes.

Southeast Tech has identified a number of improvement opportunities associated with PLO's. It is commendable that the Institute seeks to apply PLO processes to not only its curricular and programmatic offerings, but to its departments and services as well. There is clearly an admitted opportunity for the Institute to better orient and train new faculty on the role and importance of learning outcome assessment, and to define a process by which program assessment is better embedded with the process of new program development.

Southeast Tech continues to develop its program assessment process focusing on integration of program and common learning outcomes. Developing a consistent format to track their results, determine appropriate baselines and evaluate external benchmarks are among the objectives to help the Institute improve in this area. A continuous curriculum assessment process is one of the goals to achieve this objective as the institution moves toward better alignment of program and common learning outcomes.

**1.3: Academic Program Design**

Academic Program Design focuses on developing and revising programs to meet stakeholders' needs. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 1.C. and 4.A. in this section.

**1P3** Describe the processes for ensuring new and current programs meet the needs of the institution and its diverse stakeholders. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

<b>1P3</b>	
<b>Process</b>	<b>Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement</b>
Identifying student stakeholder groups and determining their educational needs	<b>Aligned</b> Southeast Tech has identified a number of student stakeholder groups. In terms of academic approach, the key groups are students who are: first-time; transfer; under-prepared; status full- or part-time; program-specific by entrance requirement. Southeast Tech makes use of its “Capture – Develop – Decide” process to review a variety of data, bring cross-representational teams together to analyze and identify opportunities to address needs, and decide courses of action to implement in meeting the educational needs of specific stakeholder groups. Although data are collected on extant student groupings, the full process for identifying student stakeholder groups – especially new refinements to current categories – and how they have their educational needs defined is unclear. This latter activity would be indicative of how the Institute evaluates the efficacy of its process to segment student stakeholder groups. The maturity level of process here is <b>aligned</b> .
Identifying other key stakeholder groups and determining their needs	<b>Systematic</b> Realizing its previous methods used to maintain relationship with non-student stakeholder groups was not working, Southeast Tech developed a stronger process in 2016-17 for identifying stakeholders and developing plans for meeting their needs. This included the initiation of a new AQIP team called the External Partnerships Relationship Team. Those stakeholders with a direct interest in academic program design include employers (including government agencies), regional business and industry, and state / federal education departments of labor and education. The Institute has identified them and assigned an internal champion to monitor their needs and to drive relevant initiatives to serve them, although the Institute may want to consider having more program-specific interactions with the External Partnerships team. The level of maturity in this regard is <b>systematic</b> .
Developing and improving responsive programming to meet all stakeholders' needs	<b>Systematic</b> The Institute has a comprehensive process for development of programming. This process involves Stakeholder input, Program Proposal/Development, External approval, Local approval, State recommendation, Board of Education approval, and Implementation evaluation and reflection.

	<p>Figure 1P3.2 visually details the steps associated with its new program approval process. They also have a process that allows them to review programs internally for upgrade/change and improvements; however, the processes used to improve programs are less clear than those for their development are. Across the span of its fields of study, the Institute offers credentials at three levels (degree, diploma, and certificate) and in program design as elsewhere uses its general process model (capture / develop / decide / deploy / evaluate / plan / act / communicate &amp; publish). This approach provides the Institute a discipline-based streamlined method to respond to program demands and make informed changes to address stakeholder needs; its process for program launch and initial evaluation is separate from the ongoing program review intended for all programs. This level of maturity is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to assess the currency and effectiveness of academic programs</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  In addition to those tools and measures chosen at the option of the South Dakota Director of the Office of Career and Technical Education, the Institute itself uses its Administrative Team (with input from its Southeast Tech Futures Team) to select tools and measures. Current tools include rates of enrollment; persistence/graduation; graduate salaries; tuition; costs of facilities &amp; equipment; instructor availability; student &amp; employer satisfaction; and assessments. Although the Institute is required to employ the methods and tools used in the state’s process, neither the methodology nor goals used by Institute teams to select its own tools are clearly described in the Portfolio, so the rationale for picking the aforementioned metrics is unclear. Although it may have been assumed, scant mention is made about the program faculty, advisory committees, or specialized accrediting agencies in selecting measures of program effectiveness. This level of maturity is <b>reacting</b>.</p>
<p>Reviewing the viability of courses and programs and changing or discontinuing when necessary</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech may describe its process to review the viability of courses and programs for changing or discontinuing them when necessary as being at the <b>systematic</b> level. Multiple stakeholders, both internal and external, review the regulatory, financial, academic, and marketplace data in deciding whether or not to continue a program. The evaluation process is led by the Southeast Tech Administrative Team with plans to expand this process with a more formalized Annual Planning process to incorporate a program review. This process appears to be focused heavily on budgetary considerations to determine program viability, although assessment results are listed as one element of the review. The course-level review for viability is not as robust or proactive. Programs to discontinue have action plans developed to minimize disruption to the students involved.</p>

Other identified processes	
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1R3	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
Summary results of assessments (including tables and figures when possible)	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      As part of the Annual Planning process all programs receive program KPI data sheets each fall. Southeast Tech has also started developing a vitality measure for all programs, which includes enrollment, retention rates, placement, employer survey data, and student satisfaction data. This vitality measure will be included as part of the full program KPI data sheets when it is fully developed. An aggregated program vitality measure has also been created. Southeast Tech states this measure will not only show how many program meet the target, but also why they are not meeting the target. However, there is nothing in Table 1R3.2 that would answer “why” programs may not currently be meeting their targets. Latest results show the Institute has not met its vitality score target since 2011 and is 42% below target for the aggregated rate as of 2015. The portfolio does not provide information on how these outcomes are used and what the drivers were for the measures chosen. However, the aggregated vitality measure is still under development and is due for a full pilot in 2017-18. The level of maturity here is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks	<p><b>Reacting</b>                      Southeast Tech is developing a process to use a vitality score as its internal target to measure program effectiveness. However, no data beyond this measure is presented nor are there any external benchmarks to provide for peer comparisons. It is unclear how the Institute balances the results of internal targets across the institution, as they do not appear to be set with any particular program considerations and opportunities in mind, making it easier for some programs than others to hit their target. The external benchmark on program performance is set by the South Dakota Director of the Office of Career and Technical Education, whose office put four Southeast Tech programs on reporting for metric shortfalls. However, the Institute states that all four programs successfully improved their performance and were removed from state monitoring. It is unclear if the Institute plans to commit to benchmark targets other than those set by the state. This level of maturity is <b>reacting</b>.</p>
Interpretation of results and insights gained	<p><b>Reacting</b>                      Southeast Tech acknowledges a need to better connect its vitality scores against their established internal targets. A process in which faculty use KPI sheets in tandem with working with their Academic Administrator is being proposed</p>

	<p>to devise plans of action for improvement. No targeted deadlines or benchmarks or this process were set forth in the portfolio. The System Portfolio’s descriptive interpretation of Vitality score fluctuation is accurate, although avoiding any preliminary analysis based on the underlying data inputs that would explain why the ‘At/Above Target’ results dropped 8 points in 2014 followed by a 13-point drop in 2015, simultaneously with an 8-point jump in ‘Below Target’ results in 2014 followed by a 16-point jump in ‘Below Target’ results in 2015. For example, a single factor that might be heavily weighted in the formula (such as enrollment which has been declining) may have accounted for virtually the entire difference based on the dynamics of the Vitality metric. The level of maturity in this regard is <b>reacting</b>.</p>
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<b>113</b>
<b>Evaluation of Efforts Made</b>
<p>The implementation of the seven-step process for program development has been a significant improvement in this area undertaken by the Institute. The Institute may still need to engage in the development of processes to ensure that steps taken are targeted on the areas which need to be addressed in each program; become more specific in terms of what information is used to inform program decisions; and establish a documented procedure that affirms their commitment to effective alignment of learning outcomes to programs. The Institute indicates it will be implementing a new process to address improvement areas but does not delineate how this process will work, when it will be implemented and what significant benchmarks the Institute will be looking for as the process is underway to validate its success. Overall, the processes and result outlined in the Portfolio clearly merit the designation of a systematic maturity level. The Institute is encouraged to confront the design dilemma of creating appropriate program-specific measures that do not compromise the focus that Southeast Tech may want to keep upon its institutional success. That dilemma emerges when too much emphasis is placed at the institutional level without helping programmatic success, and vice versa. Solving the dilemma could help move the maturity level from systematic to aligned.</p> <p>The institution may want to consider changes to the Aggregated Program Vitality metric and table of reported results to suggest “why” programs are not meeting their targets. This is stated as one function of the aggregated benchmark; however, the ability to know the answer to this question is not possible based on the data provided, for either internal or external audiences.</p> <p>The Institute’s framework of student characteristics includes first time, transfer (from other institutions), and military, so these categories make important distinctions between students based on their prior learning experiences. Yet having done so, the Portfolio gives limited attention to the question of recognizing and supporting students eligible for creditable prior learning, either formal (classroom) or informal (work or career-related experience). Further comments are made under Academic Program Quality (AQIP 1.4), but for now the team suggests the Institute study the impact of the assessment of prior learning on older students for a very practical reason: Empirical research demonstrates that students earning PLA</p>

credit are far more likely to persist than those who are eligible to do so but do not complete an experiential learning evaluation process.

Southeast Tech is thoughtful in recognizing ESL populations as a student group distinct from underprepared students, attending to the specific needs of transfer students, and re-engineering orientation processes for its First Time students. It is unclear how their processes and results led them to enact these specific improvements.

### 1.4: Academic Program Quality

Academic Program Quality focuses on ensuring quality across all programs, modalities and locations. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.A. and 4.A. in this section.

**1P4** Describe the processes for ensuring quality academic programming. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

1P4	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
Determining and communicating the preparation required of students for the specific curricula, programs, courses and learning they will pursue	<b>Aligned</b> Southeast Tech has a clear process for determination and review of the program entrance requirements necessary for student success. The program requirements are, among other methods, identified through the mapping process done with CLO's and PLO's. Program administrators play the key role in assuring that suitable admissions requirements, program learning outcomes, course content and learning are identified; this authority permits programs to focus upon different learning priorities for different career fields (for example, math versus writing skills). Programs are placed on the six-year rotation review schedule as displayed in Table 1P4.1. Curricula and course requirements and changes are communicated to stakeholders through the Institute's website, catalog, degree audits, and program brochures. Due to the wide involvement of relevant constituents in the process (program faculty, institutional research, admissions, etc.), and the evaluative and communicative components, this process is <b>aligned</b> .
Evaluating and ensuring program rigor for all modalities, locations, consortia and dual-credit programs	<b>Aligned</b> Southeast Tech integrates all processes to ensure rigor for all modalities in its use of a comprehensive faculty on-boarding, training and evaluation process, required Advisory Councils for each program, a curriculum committee processes, assessment and accreditation standards at the program level, and internal and state program reviews and assurance of standards across all modalities. All faculty must meet minimum qualifications, and are then taken through an initial orientation period. Faculty also have access to on-going professional development and are evaluated on a set

	<p>evaluation cycle. Students taking online courses must meet minimum entrance requirements to be sure they are prepared for the different expectations that exist in an online environment. As the same course outcomes are used in all modalities, the Institute is able to evaluate programs in a consistent manner and ensure academic quality. An appropriate safeguard might be to disaggregate the student learning outcome results of these different contexts. Southeast Tech does not maintain any consortia relationships and all dual credit programs are taught by Southeast faculty except for a pilot using high-school instructors. This process is at the <b>aligned</b> level.</p>
<p>Awarding prior learning and transfer credits</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  The Portfolio is unclear who initiates the processes for recognition of both course-transfer and prior-learning credits (whether students, admissions staff, academic advisors, faculty, or other stakeholder). For both kinds of credit recognition, the Portfolio states that the institutional registrar has complete discretion in granting credit yet may as needed seek the advice of Southeast Tech faculty; no data are given about the contexts or frequencies of such consultation. The Portfolio does not state what training or expertise the registrar or faculty have received to perform the role of evaluating experiential learning credit or of determining the equivalency of courses completed elsewhere. The observed volume of prior learning and transfer credit that is awarded is not stated. The Portfolio states the efficacy of this process is evaluated as part of the catalog revision process but no other detail provided. The level of maturity of this process is <b>reacting</b>.</p>
<p>Selecting, implementing and maintaining specialized accreditation(s)</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  Southeast Tech has frequently succeeded in achieving and maintaining specialized accreditation. Academic Administrators work with program faculty in the process of maintaining these accreditations, managing the self-studies, outcomes assessments, and the entailed processes of analysis and evaluation. The Portfolio notes that faculty members are encouraged to obtain it for their programs but does not indicate any institutional decision-rules about how to weigh the costs/benefits involved or to determine the necessity of specialized accreditation. No indication is given how the Institute periodically assesses the value of continuation of currently-held forms of specialized accreditation, whether upon marketing for enrollment or graduate success, nor how such accreditations are linked explicitly to the Institute’s goals. The level of maturity of this process is <b>reacting</b>.</p>

<p>Assessing the level of outcomes attainment by graduates at all levels</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech uses graduate outcome assessments, registrar transcript reviews and employment rates of graduates to assess outcome levels of students in each program. The Institute’s program of Outcomes Assessment is the key process here, but it is unclear which outcomes are most closely aligned to graduating student success. The Institute may want to consider the need to track outcomes for the subsequent academic success of graduates who transfer to four-year institutions. The level of maturity of this process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to assess program rigor across all modalities</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  The Celebrating Learning Team and the Education Design &amp; Delivery Team are responsible for selecting the measure to assess program rigor across all modalities. Tools used by the Institute include surveys, National Program accreditations, internal and state program reviews, employment rates and licensures and certifications. Thus, the Institute relies upon up to six methods, some but not all being Institute-wide. The Portfolio is clear in that the Design &amp; Delivery and the Celebrating Learning teams are responsible for tool selection, but does not recap what latitude they exercise in that process, especially for apparently “optional” tools such as specialized accreditation and national licensure/certification results. It is unclear in this process what weight given to the opinion of the departmental faculty – the ostensible ‘experts’ in their respective fields - whose programs are being evaluated. The level of maturity of the process is <b>reacting</b>.</p>
<p>Other identified processes</p>	

<p><b>1R4</b></p>	
<p><b>Results</b></p>	<p><b>Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement</b></p>
<p>Summary results of assessments (including tables and figures when possible)</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  In Table 1R4.1, Southeast Tech displays its awareness of program accreditation timelines, and identifies a 93.8% program accreditation rate among its 16 accredited programs. In the Portfolio, Tables 1R4.1 through 1R4.4 track, respectively, program accreditation success, overall employer satisfaction, employer satisfaction with specific skills, and graduate placement rate trends across five 2-year cycle spans. Although the aggregate information is helpful, the lack of any disaggregation of data by program makes evaluation based upon program results difficult. Certain outcomes indicate unwanted declines; the Institute acknowledges this as an area of opportunity and is engaging in assessing how best to address the gaps within its programs. While the Portfolio discusses how outcomes influence institutional</p>

	<p>priorities, it has less information about how the outcomes have been analyzed and used to obtain demonstrated improvements in program quality. This level of maturity is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Although internal targets are presented for the data provided, there were no external benchmarks noted. Some specialized accrediting agencies publish ‘national norms’ for their constituent criteria. Given the number of Institute programs with specialized accreditation, this absence of external data is surprising as this may be a useful option for the Institute to benchmark itself against peer institutions. Many of the chosen measures for assessing results in this area appear to reflect an assumption at the Institute that merely completing a given process demonstrates quality. One exception here may be the results of the Employer Survey (Table 1R4.3) for which some analysis is presented. The level of maturity here is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Interpretation of results and insights gained</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  While interpretation of results and identification of insights is said to occur at the sector breakfast events held with external partners, Southeast Tech does not appear to have means for interpreting outcomes in ways to anticipate problems and prioritize quality improvement efforts. Among the six metrics indicated by the Institute for 1P4, the Employer Survey alone presents and interprets internal scales in a way that includes internal targets and that would suggest that higher satisfaction scores in all categories is both feasible and indicative of quality, thus being useful to prioritize future quality efforts. Elsewhere, four programs previously failed under established criteria, resulting in a state report. One other program previously failed to meet the standards of a specialized accrediting body. These events may indicate a need to reflect on whether early and critical interpretation of relevant data could have led to different outcomes. This level of maturity is <b>reacting</b>.</p>

<p><b>114</b></p>
<p><b>Evaluation of Efforts Made</b></p>
<p>Southeast Tech has identified some key initiatives to foster improvement in its programs, standardization of Lesson plan templates for faculty, assessment outcomes for Oral Communications and Problem Solving skills based on employer surveys and re-establishment a national accreditation for a critical program. The Institute acknowledges the need to better measure, track and evaluate how effectively they achieve outcomes in its programs and make better use of its data over the next three years to identify opportunities and track performance. While this is a great step toward continuous improvement, Southeast would also benefit from an evaluation of what data is collected and expand its</p>

scope relative to external comparison data to better inform their decision-making across all programs in tandem.

It appears that the processes for determining learning outcomes at the program level are generally working. It would be helpful for evaluators to be able observe how it works in specific program situations in terms of the entire assessment loop. This can only be done through at least some disaggregation of the data by program. Also, aside from the results from national certification and licensure exams, there is a gap of external benchmarking. There might be value in clarifying the involvement at the program level of program faculty in choosing assessment tools and methods. Conversely, there might be benefit for the institution to provide guidelines to the programs regarding principles of prior learning assessment.

The review team finds that the dimensions it rates the Portfolio on academic program quality vary considerably in maturity level, from 'aligned' (regarding determining and communicating academic requirements, plus evaluating and ensuring program rigor) to 'reacting' (regarding prior learning assessment, plus specialized accreditation). Lower rating levels may be from the Institute's unintended oversight of excluding relevant information from the Portfolio; if nothing else this may occasion the value of the Institute critically examining its assumptions about processes and results in these areas. This call to critically examine the assumptions the Institute makes with respect to program quality is bolstered by other observations the team makes. For example, the Portfolio reports academic program improvements in 114, some of whose mention cannot be found in the preceding sections on process and results. For example, three separate items were mentioned in relation to online learning, and one mentioned the conduct of industry sector breakfasts held in Spring 2017 resulting in input for workforce needs.

As a strongly career-focused institution, Southeast Tech indicates that its high graduate placement rate is indicative of academic program quality. At the same time, however, the Institute attributes increasing employment opportunities in recent years as a reason for lagging enrollment numbers. At a certain level, the assertions may contradict, because high placement percentages may reflect market conditions independent of graduate quality. In the future the Institute may want to report the details underlying the calculation of its graduate placement rate to clear up these confounding influences. This could be done by indicating what percentages of a graduating class are available for job placement after removing graduates who decline placement assistance because they are already employed, plan to continue their education, intend to move out of the local area, or have other plans. Lastly, it must be remembered that an aggregate number such as graduate employment percentage by itself yields little useful information for the Institute by which to improve those parts of its program curricula that need strengthening that in turn would drive student success to higher levels.

## 1.5: Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity focuses on ethical practices while pursuing knowledge. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 2.D. and 2.E. in this section.

**1P5** Describe the processes for supporting ethical scholarly practices by students and faculty. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

1P5	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
<p>Ensuring freedom of expression and the integrity of research and scholarly practice</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                      Regular review of the institutional policy on academic freedom has occurred with the drafting of faculty contracts. With the removal of recognition for all bargaining units taking place in July 2017, the institute acknowledges that it is currently without a process for review of this policy. Southeast Tech does not conduct research therefore there is no policy for the integrity of research. However, in it's operating procedure the Board provides assurance to protect faculty in the event their freedom of expression is denied or impeded, outlining the associated faculty grievance and supervisory discipline processes. How freedom of expression for students is protected is not described in the Portfolio, although the Institute does have an Academic Freedom policy – it is not clear what is covered by that policy. Beyond the matter of having published policies to assure freedom of expression for faculty and students, the Portfolio does not indicate what processes it uses to implement and improve upon its actual practices here (for example, surveying faculty and students on pertinent observations on this question). This level of maturity is <b>reacting</b>.</p>
<p>Ensuring ethical learning and research practices of students</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                      The Institute reports that students do not conduct research through the institution. The Portfolio has no discussion on Institutional Research Board activity, either directly by the Institute or 'on-loan' by another institution. The Portfolio indicates how expected ethical behavior is communicated to students via JumpStart days, faculty course presentations (specifically ENGL 101), the catalog, the SGA, and the Institute's professionalism CLO.</p> <p>Infractions of Southeast Tech's expected student conduct may be reported to any Southeast Tech employee, who may then report the infraction to administration. No specific form is required for capturing information about alleged infractions, and the process of investigating and responding to these reports can vary from individual employees taking responsibility, to oversight by one of the Institute's Vice Presidents. The only specific kind of student infraction mentioned under 1P5 in the Portfolio is plagiarism (page 36).</p> <p>The Portfolio does not discuss the detection and handling of various other possible forms of student cheating (including impersonation in the online environment). The Portfolio does state that a review of student conduct policies and procedures is conducted on an annual basis as part of the catalog review process, but no other details are provided such as what</p>

	processes or information contribute to the updates. The level of maturity here is <b>reacting</b> .
Ensuring ethical teaching and research practices of faculty	<b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech may describe its process for ensuring ethical learning and research practices of faculty as being at the reacting level. With the removal of negotiated agreements, the Institute’s current process for promoting ethical behavior is its Code of Conduct applicable to all employees, provided during orientation of new hires and reinforced annually through mandatory review. Two binding documents record the faculty awareness of the institutional code of conduct and employment expectations for ethical teaching. This is further detailed in the Instructor Evaluation Handbook, which is reviewed and updated with faculty on a three-to-five year cycle. New faculty are oriented to the expectations. The Portfolio states that anyone believing they have observed an ethical violation may report it to any Institute employee, who is then expected to report it to the administration. The Portfolio does not illuminate what process the administration follows to handle alleged violations, even for the now-defunct faculty agreement. This level of maturity is <b>systematic</b> .
Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to evaluate the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of supporting academic integrity	<b>Reacting</b> The Portfolio lists the policies it has developed in addressing academic integrity. The Institute’s Administrative Team selects these methods – which are named as: Student Complaints/ Appeals, Employee Grievances, and Student Integrity Issues. There is no reference to the process for selecting the tools, methods, and instruments used to evaluate the effectiveness of these policies and processes. This level of maturity is <b>reacting</b> .
Other identified processes	

1R5	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)	<b>Reacting</b> Southeast Tech may describe its results of measures for academic integrity issues as being at the <b>reacting</b> level. The Portfolio has no direct results reported for Student Complaints/Appeals, instead referring to 2R4 where both academic and non-academic student complaints are reported, while also stating that the data there does not include grade appeals and other academic issues. No data on employee grievances is presented other than to say four cases have arisen in 5 years. Student integrity issues (not specifically tallied) are said to average 5 to 8 cases a year, typically involving plagiarism or other cheating, but unlike many other tables in the Portfolio, annual disaggregated tallies are not

	<p>displayed. Without the benefit of centralized documentation of such instances, Southeast Tech is at a loss for being able to capture and present results. In order to determine the full extent of academic integrity, it might be helpful for faculty to submit the number of such issues they have addressed at the course level each semester.</p>
<p>Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  Southeast Tech cites a low number of student misconduct instances as the reason for a lack of results in this section. However, it acknowledges that 5 to 8 student integrity issues rise to administrative review and action. Due to the lack of information originating from the course level, it is difficult to consider progress against internal targets or external benchmarks the Institute might wish to set. The Student Satisfaction Inventory survey results indicate that the Southeast Tech admissions team is near the national mean in its fair portrayal of the campus; reflection upon other discrete SSI survey items would yield data relevant here or elsewhere in the AQIP process. Without the benefit of an institute-wide process to capture such instances of alleged violations of ethical behavior by students and faculty, Southeast Tech is at a loss for being able to compare results to internal targets or external benchmarks. This level of maturing is <b>reacting</b>.</p>
<p>Interpretation of results and insights gained</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  Southeast Tech cites a low number of conduct instances as the reason for a lack of results in this section. However, it acknowledges that 5 to 8 student integrity issues rise to administrative review and action. Without the benefit of centralized documentation of such instances, Southeast Tech is at a loss for being able to review comparative results, make interpretations, and draw insights. Having a greater understanding of student behavior at the course level, however may allow Southeast Tech to gain additional insights. This level of maturity is <b>reacting</b>.</p>

<p><b>115</b></p>
<p><b>Evaluation of Efforts Made</b></p>
<p>Within Category 1, the team finds that academic integrity is the area for which the Institute has the greatest opportunity for advancing its maturity level by systematizing its processes. The relative scarcity here of information about processes and reported results might be an indication that the Institute has assumed that merely instructing people what to do suffices as expectation that they will actually do it. There is little reason to believe that Institute policies in this domain are inadequate; rather, very little systematic information is collected to know how well people are complying. This fact also hampers the evaluation team from providing good tactical advice. Many dimensions rated here are thus at the <b>reacting</b> level.</p>

The team offers these additional observations and ideas:

Southeast Tech indicates it will take the following actions over the next three years: revise the Academic Freedom policy, develop new employee handbooks and implement a process to improve tracking of student integrity issues. It was unclear how the Institute specifically dealt with academic integrity among students and the response that few incidents occurring as an indicator of effectiveness may warrant revisit by the institution to ensure it is in fact ensuring ethical practices at the Institution. Southeast Tech may very well benefit from reviewing best practices in processes and measures employed by comparable institutions in ensuring academic integrity is maintained. This approach may also provide guidance to the Institute as it seeks to improve tracking of integrity concerns through their customer Relationship management software.

Although the current freedom of expression is defined in the faculty negotiated agreement, the Institute will likely need to think about how that will look going forward with the new state union law. This may be an appropriate time to codify this approach into institutional policy so that it exists outside a union agreement. That may also help it become better enmeshed into the fabric of the institutional culture.

On the matter of reporting on integrity-related processes, the Institute may want to consider a multi-year roll-up of formal cases or incidents that constitute exceptions to policy (because the annual tallies are so small, at least as understood today). The Institute may want to consider how categories of cases can be reported without resorting to details that might violate individual privacy. The Institute may also wish to consider reporting what outcomes occurred for the individuals involved in the cases that arose (example: none, versus students put on probation versus dismissal, etc.) plus what outcomes occurred for the Institute (redesigned materials for training faculty and students on ethical behavior; new adjudication procedures; etc.). Also helpful to note here, outcomes that occur for the Institute become stories to report on actual continuous quality improvement steps for AQIP purposes.

**Category 2: Meeting Student and Other Key Stakeholder Needs**

Category 2 focuses on determining, understanding and meeting needs of current and prospective students and other key stakeholders, such as alumni and community partners.

**2.1: Current and Prospective Student Need**

Current and Prospective Student Need focuses on determining, understanding and meeting the non-academic needs of current and prospective students. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.C. and 3.D in this section.

**2P1** Describe the processes for serving the non-academic needs of current and prospective students. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

2P1	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement

<p>Identifying key student groups.</p>	<p><b>Integrated</b>                  Table 2P.1 displays the broad representation on Southeast Tech’s Student Success Team, which is charged with the responsibility to identify key student groups and developing action projects to meet the needs of these groups, explicitly using the institution’s Deploying Actions Process (Figure 6P.1.1). In addition to making use of an annual summer retreat to analyze input, develop initiatives and set improvement targets, the Student Success Team meets 4 – 6 times a year to review the progress of its various subcommittees and projects. This process demonstrates an aligned level of maturity, primarily needing only regular evaluation of its efficacy to move into an integrated level of maturity.</p>
<p>Determining new student groups to target for educational offerings and services</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast has developed systematic processes that help them to identify and solve both current and future needs, using faculty, staff, and surveys as inputs to determine which students to target for services. Having defined and articulated their key student groups into seniors, commuters, distance learners and military veterans, the process to determine new student groups to target refers back to the process identified in Figure 2P1.1. This depicts the retention process used to help the institution better identify unique student groups.</p>
<p>Meeting changing student needs</p>	<p><b>Aligned</b>                  Southeast Tech utilizes their Retention Process inputs (Table 2P1.1) to identify and address student needs at the Institute. Through its history of using recurring and normed student surveys (Student Satisfaction Inventory, College Readiness Inventory, and GRIT), satisfaction surveys, employee observations, attrition, grades and incoming demographic data, Southeast Tech shows evidence of its capacity to adapt to changing circumstances as needed. As inputs are gathered the Institution Develops a plan of action to meet the needs the inputs have identified and then Decides if and when that action will be Deployed by the Institution to provide the necessary support.</p> <p>The Institute closes the loop by evaluating the effectiveness of the interventions, Publishing the results so that all stakeholders are informed of outcomes, which the Institution Reflects upon to further evaluate needs for change and identify any challenges that emerged.</p> <p>This <b>aligned</b> process is supported through regularly reviews by the Student Success Team at annual summer retreats to reflect on needed updates to support programs and interventions that may best meet the current needs of their</p>

	students.
<p>Identifying and supporting student subgroups with distinctive needs (e.g., seniors, commuters, distance learners, military veterans)</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech’s process for identifying and supporting student subgroups with distinctive needs are aligned with strategic goals and follow a clear, repeatable pattern accomplished primarily by direct input from student support advisors and faculty (Table 2P1.2). The Institute has identified its main subgroups with distinctive needs and has processes in place to address which student characteristics are addressed and the process and personnel that address them (Table 2P1.2).</p> <p>The list of student attributes reflects a rich organizational awareness of its students, spanning the range from demographics (age, gender, financial status, diversity) to experiences (first-time, transfer, veteran) to enrollment type (distance learner, housing resident, commuter). Group data is shared at departmental and institutional levels via committees and AQIP teams to enable planning (both strategic and operational) and resource acquisition to be properly targeted and effective.</p>
<p>Deploying non-academic support services to help students be successful</p>	<p><b>Aligned</b>                  Southeast Tech process for offering non-academic support services is at the <b>aligned</b> level. The Retention Office and Student Success Team determine the services that are needed. Once non-academic support services are established, ongoing deployment becomes the designated responsibility of an existing office, including the student success center, disability and tutoring services, and the career center office. Student Success Seminar courses also provide orientation to key coping skills for students’ academic journeys, and a variety of targeted supports are provided including personal counseling, tutoring, success coaching, and also ‘fun’ connections such as on-campus events and intramural sports. The Institute also supports campus clubs and organizations, and offers various on-campus events such as family picnics, dances and talent shows. The addition of steps for prioritizing services to monitor their effectiveness might bring richer meaning to this process’ efficacy.</p>
<p>Ensuring staff members who provide academic and non-academic student support services are qualified, trained and supported</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech ensures that its non-academic services staff members are qualified, trained and supported through its hiring, orientation, evaluation, professional development, code of conduct policies, student surveys, and program reviews. Detailed protocols are followed for identifying new or replacement hires, creating/updating job descriptions, recruiting and selecting properly qualified candidates, orienting new hires, providing for performance evaluations, and offering continuing education opportunities during their</p>

	<p>tenure. Southeast Tech acknowledges that new staff receiving training that is below the institute’s standards has called for the development of a stronger new staff training program. Staff are evaluated within the first 60 days of employment and then annually thereafter, with professional development opportunities also provided to staff.</p> <p>All advisors and student support staff participate in specific orientations and trainings. Beyond formalized training, the Institute provides additional training and support through self-paced training programs, webinars and professional development opportunities. Through the Internal Program Review process, Southeast identifies the skills needed within the program to create job descriptions used in the recruitment process. The Institute has in place a new evaluation process for monitoring effectiveness and potential improvements. This process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Communicating the availability of non-academic support services</p>	<p><b>Aligned</b>                  The college has a well-defined and fully deployed process for communicating with students about non-academic support services which is largely <b>aligned</b>. Timeframes have been identified for the student lifecycle milestones associated with pre-enrollment, early enrollment, and ongoing enrollment. Each of these times has associated methods of communication. Table 2P1.3 documents the multiple channels used as inclusive of face-to-face individual and group settings, print, school website, social media, and telecommunications (including texting). The Student Success Team oversees the communication process, which is reviewed during the Retention process reflection time at the Institution. The Institute actively plans improvements in its services and communicates with its student beneficiaries to encourage their use.</p>
<p>Selecting tools, methods and instruments to assess student needs</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  The Student Success Team determines the assessment tools, methods, and instruments to be used whenever a new service is offered, which is then folded into the annual planning cycle. Having a cross-functional team decide upon metrics helps ensure the outcomes, whether successes or failures, will be well-understood across the institution. However, as each of these methods are then housed within individual offices, it is not clear what types of on-going evaluation occurs at that level to allow for more regular changes to processes. Describing the processes and who is involved in the selection of these tools/methods/instruments would benefit the maturity of process. Describing the tools themselves is not sufficient to demonstrate CQI. It is a <b>systematic</b> level.</p>

<p>Assessing the degree to which student needs are met</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  Southeast Tech may describe its process for assessing the degree to which student needs are met as being at the <b>reacting</b> level. The predominant metrics here are institutional and key student group retention and graduation rates, disaggregated where possible by program of study and support provided, with student group identified, to indicate the degree to which it is meeting student needs. Using retention rates to indicate the degree to which it is meeting student needs is an extremely indirect measure that does not directly address this topic, particularly as it does not provide feedback into what is working and what processes require revision. It may benefit the college to develop more direct measures for student needs.</p> <p>While there is a school-wide cohort definition to assure consistency in rates, and the process is supplemented by information drawn from multiple student satisfaction surveys, the Institute may want to consider the frequency with which retention rates may be influenced by factors wholly outside the Institute’s control, thus beyond its quality improvement efforts. Finally, being able to specify who is involved in measuring, who reports what to whom, who analyzes data and information and who is involved in making recommendations and changes will help the Institute move this process to the next CQI level of maturity.</p>
<p>Other identified processes</p>	

<p>2R1</p>	
<p>Results</p>	<p>Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement</p>
<p>Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Because Southeast Tech is able to disaggregate its retention data by student demographic groups, it is able to gain useful information about the likely effectiveness of the support services connected to each group. The Portfolio displays tables of multi-year results for key student sub-groups such as first-timers, transfers, low-income, online, distance learners, veterans, non-traditional, diverse, and more. The results overall are positive. Southeast Tech provides results from the identified student populations against their targeted goals for 2011- 2016. In each of these areas the Institute reports results within range of target except for the outliers in the area of Online Student Retention, Veteran Student Retention, Disability Students Served Retention and Academic Recovery Student Retention. The institution clearly has an opportunity to improve its presentation of its results. This represents a <b>systematic</b> level.</p>

<p>Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  The fall-to-fall retention targets and course success rates are insufficient to measure how well the Institute is meeting student needs. Items from the SSI are better indicators but also not sufficient to evaluate the many initiatives that are described within this section. Southeast Tech has an opportunity to improve its presentation of comparison results. National benchmarks are mentioned, but no benchmark data with other institutions are included. This represents a <b>reacting</b> level.</p>
<p>Interpretation of results and insights gained</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech was able to gain valuable insights from the assessment data related to first-time students, new transfers students, low-income students, diverse students, online students, non-traditional students, pre-academic students, veteran students, tutoring students, housing students, and academic recovery students. The action plans noted appear to be important steps in better meeting student needs. However, these do not flow directly from the measures provided, indicating either additional data are being collected or new initiatives are being implemented based upon anecdotal data. Either of these scenarios is problematic, and keeps the level of maturity as systematic.</p>

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<p><b>Evaluation of Improvement Efforts</b></p>
<p>Southeast has developed many initiatives that assist students with issues, clearly demonstrating an institutional desire to better meet student needs. Southeast Tech has identified key areas of focus for the next 1-3 years. This involve focus on the needs of and provision of interventions for low income students, which resulted in the hiring of a consultant to review processes, implementation of NetPartner and receipt of Title III eligibility. The Institute also improved its document imaging process, improving the Jump Start program, which now also focuses on support for the online student in tandem with the orientation course and online tutoring options. To engage students and support their professional journey the Institute has developed a Decision Board to hear student’s ideas and implemented a Career Assessment Software package to help better align abilities and preferences to Southeast Technical program offerings.</p> <p>It may be beneficial for Southeast Tech to work on identifying why certain initiatives are taking place. There may also be benefit in identifying additional assessment methods, as well as using statistical methods for analysis of the assessment data. Although indirect measures of effectiveness are relevant, especially when the retention data are disaggregated by discrete demographic groups, direct measures could help confirm if specific initiatives and services are indeed effective. It is critical that initiatives be evaluated to determine how effective they are to avoid deploying scarce resources to areas that are</p>

not working while simultaneously avoiding initiative fatigue.

The benefit of persistence as a summative evaluation measure is its simplicity and impact; its shortcoming is that it does not point clearly to the specific conditions that trigger student drops prior to graduation. In the face of subpar results on this key internal target, the process improvements sought by the Institute must be derived from something other than the indicator that flags the presence of an issue. An analogy here is that when one runs a high temperature, one reliably knows something is wrong but without knowing what ails the person. The Institute may want to consider elevating the role of formative evaluation measures that point to strengths or weaknesses of various support services as they are delivered, so that specific functions are prioritized for improvement (hypothetically: financial aid, academic advising, or other).

## 2.2 Retention, Persistence and Completion

Retention, Persistence and Completion focuses on the approach to collecting, analyzing and distributing data on retention, persistence and completion to stakeholders for decision-making. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 4.C. in this section.

**2P2** Describe the processes for collecting, analyzing and distributing data on retention, persistence and completion. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

2P2	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
Collecting student retention, persistence and completion data	<b>Aligned</b> Southeast Tech has an internal database managed by the Southeast Tech IR office, which tracks a wide variety of cohorts, disaggregated by program and student demographic groups. Data are also collected from IPEDS and NSC for retention and completion rates and from NCCBP for persistence rates. Reports are made available the enables ready access to data which can support the decision making process. Having reports available on an as needed basis and persistence data being collected and reported via STInet so that all employees have access is an important part of the process. Knowing what data are being requested, frequency of requests, users, etc. could be very helpful to Southeast in problem solving and moving the Institute forward in CQI. As it appears the college has a comprehensive process for identifying, collecting, analyzing, and distributing this information, this process is <b>aligned</b> .
Determining targets for student retention, persistence and completion	<b>Aligned</b> The process for determining KPI (key performance indicators) targets for student retention, persistence, and completion are led by the Sioux Falls School Board, Administrative Team and Southeast Tech Council. Current targets are established based upon the previous year's data and create what the institution calls "stretch targets" to help move the institution

	<p>ahead. KPI results are presented to the board and council annually. Program retention and completion targets mirror institutional-level KPI targets. Individual departments also set their retention goals as part of the annual budgeting process. A wealth of historical data maintained by the IR office contributes to completing such goal-setting. External data and benchmarks may be drawn from the Institute's use of NCCPB data. This process is <b>aligned</b>.</p>
<p>Analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion</p>	<p><b>Aligned</b>                  The IR Office analyzes data trends, benchmarking levels, and results-to-target data. This occurs at both the program and institutional level. These reports are made available to all employees on the STInet website, with summary data made available to the public through multiple reporting mechanisms. The information collected appears to go through a comprehensive analysis system and is adequately made available to everyone who needs the information.</p> <p>Teams or individuals provide a summary to the Student Success Team. This team then discusses each result and looks for connections among the groups. Given the regularity with which retention/graduation data is collected at the Institute, the involvement of various stakeholders in the process of so doing, and the publication of resulting data, the Institute has many interested internal and external providers and consumers of such data who are familiar with the results and how to analyze them. This is an <b>aligned</b> process.</p>
<p>Meeting targets for retention, persistence and completion</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Targets for retention, persistence, and completion/graduation are part of action plans developed by each team involved in student success. These action plans are developed with the support of administration, using the KPI and key student group targets. Actions are documented in the Planning and Assessments database, and results are monitored throughout the year with final results again documented in the database. Targeted areas are reviewed annually with administration as part of the Annual Planning process. Both the Administrative Team and the Board hear reports on retention, affiliated rates on a recurring basis, and have the ability to intervene if such rates are seen to be lagging.</p> <p>It is unclear whether any faculty are on these teams. Southeast may have the ability to move from aligned to the next level by involving faculty in the processes of planning and monitoring for meeting targets for persistence.</p>
<p>Selecting tools, methods and instruments to assess</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech may describe its process for selecting tools, methods analyzing information on student retention,</p>

<p>retention, persistence and completion</p>	<p>persistence, and completion as being at the <b>systematic</b> level. The Institute follows methods which enable it to make internal historical comparisons, state mandates, and to external benchmarking groups. The data are centrally managed by the IR office, which makes disaggregated and special reports available as needed.</p> <p>The Administrative Team, Council and Board conduct the approval of measures. The IR has included benchmarks with IPEDS, NCCBP and MSC data to create external comparisons. Student subgroups are also an additional point of analysis to provide an additional measure of how effectively the Institute is addressing the needs of these subgroups. The Institute uses Internal Retention Rates and Comparison Retention Rates to track and analyze retention, persistence and completion.</p>
<p>Other identified processes</p>	

2R2	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
<p>Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      Southeast Tech uses national (Perkins, IPEDS, NCCBP, NSC) and statewide measures to show that it has positive retention, persistence, and completion results. The summary of data concerning retention, persistence, and completion of cohort students is presented in Tables 2R2.1, 2R2.2 and 2R2.3.</p> <p>The retention for these groups are displayed to show three years of data, however, only the data for the Fall-to-Fall retention (2011 – 2015) was presented in the report and exceeded the established target in the last year reported. In the Perkins Student Retention or Transfer result (Table 2R2.2), the college exceeded the 40% target in all three years presented.</p> <p>All three data sets are presented in a manner that yields trend data and lends itself to comparative measures in some areas. Further segmentation of this data may shed light on specific student groups who may not be persisting at the targeted rate. This represents a systematic level of maturity.</p>
<p>Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      The report indicates external targets using IPEDS, NCCBP, NSC and State Reports for Technical Institutions data, which permit of comparisons both column wise (by year) and row-wise (by control or target variables). The comparison of two-</p>

	<p>year college results yielded with IPEDS data presents a critical step in the maturity level of the institution as they begin to identify more comparison opportunities.</p> <p>To move from <b>systematic</b> to the next level of maturity it may be helpful for the Institute to identify strategies for action steps to be taken because of the insights gained from these comparative analyses.</p>
<p>Interpretation of results and insights gained</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech may describe its interpretation of results and insights gained on student retention, persistence, and completion as being at the <b>systematic</b> level. Southeast Tech states its actions in recent years have played a significant role in improving retention rates. However, the data do not appear to support this conclusion, as rates have not changed substantially for many groups.</p>

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<p><b>Evaluation of Improvement Efforts</b></p>
<p>Southeast Tech states it has a long history of tracking retention, persistence, and completion rates, which has allowed it to utilize external benchmarking more effectively and incorporate results into the decision-making process. Its institutional results are among the best in the country for two-year institutions. The Institute is to be commended for achieving very high percentile rankings in its NCCBP data on student persistence (as high as 97% in some analyses).</p> <p>Southeast Tech indicates a need to continue to improve its use of National and local benchmarking, incorporate more retention results into their decision-making process and look for more effective ways to align their retention efforts to key student groups to identify more specific opportunities for these students. Overall the areas for improvement in 2P2 appear to be process-focused, stemming from the results, however the Institute is moving forward in its efforts to collect and respond to actionable data aligned to student outcomes, to aid them in movement to the next level in its CQI journey. It might consider developing targets that differ for different demographic groups, although its desire that all groups achieve the same high level is admirable.</p>

**2.3 Key Stakeholder Needs**

Key Stakeholder Needs focuses on determining, understanding and meeting needs of key stakeholder groups, including alumni and community partners.

**2P3** Describe the processes for serving the needs of key external stakeholder groups. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

2P3	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
Determining key external stakeholder groups (e.g., alumni, employers, community)	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      Southeast Tech may describe its process for determining key external stakeholder groups (alumni, employers, community, and more) as being at the <b>systematic</b> level. Prior to summer 2016 the process was largely distributed across the Institute to departments mostly likely to fulfill arising needs; now, the Institute uses an External Stakeholders Relationship Team (ESRT) comprised of leaders and key players across the variety of functions the Institute performs. Southeast Tech’s ESRT determines key stakeholders through responding to Career Connections input; reviewing local, state and regional scans; holding sector breakfasts; and connecting with advisory committees.</p> <p>Key stakeholders include (Table 2P3.1): city and state organizations and agencies; state legislature; federal departments of education and labor; school district; Southeast Tech Foundation; colleges and universities; HLC, among others. The ESRT may determine new categories of stakeholders. This is a new process just implemented during the 2016-17 year, and has yet to have its efficacy evaluated.</p>
Determining new stakeholders to target for services or partnership	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      The External Stakeholder Relationships Team is responsible for determining key external stakeholder groups as well as possible new stakeholder groups. This team then makes recommendations to the Administrative Team to determine possible new outreach programs for new external stakeholder groups.</p> <p>Aside from determining new categories of stakeholders (if any), the ESRT also identifies new potential members of current stakeholder categories being served by Southeast Tech. The Institute’s Career Center becomes the hub of such work and uses the NACE Simplicity software and other data tools to keep track of the Institute’s outreach. This is a new process just implemented during the 2016-17 year, and has yet to have its efficacy evaluated.</p>
Meeting the changing needs of key stakeholders	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      Once stakeholders are identified the college has a Develop, Deploy, Evaluate, Publish, and Reflect process in place that assists them in meeting the needs of key stakeholders. Southeast Tech may describe its process for meeting the needs of key stakeholders as being at the <b>systematic</b> level. Individual departments are responsible for engaging with identified stakeholders that have been referred to them in order to develop specific plans of action to meet stated needs.</p>

	<p>Should stakeholders' needs change (example: a student who completes ESL training now becomes interested in a certificate program), the Career Center and ESRT can coordinate the transition to another Institute department that can respond. The stakeholders, processes, current needs, and relationship champions are tracked in order to monitor progress. While the ESRT reviews stakeholder survey results to ensure that these needs are being met there is no mechanism for managing relationships that touch multiple areas of the institution.</p>
<p>Selecting tools, methods and instruments to assess key stakeholder needs</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  Southeast Tech may describe its process for selecting tools, methods, and instruments to assess key stakeholder needs as being at the <b>reacting</b> level. The ESRT Team selects the relevant tools, methods, instruments and targets (often based upon existing or past approaches), and the Systems Portfolio notes, "...as new relationships are built or new services are offered, any necessary assessments and targets are developed at that time and are used to determine effectiveness" (page 65).</p> <p>The Institute may want to consider creating a process that recognizes different categories of methods that depend upon stakeholder type; for example, agencies and organizations require different delivery methods than do individuals; government agencies require delivery methods that document compliance; student stakeholders seek delivery methods that ideally respond to their individual needs.</p> <p>Rather than assign a new stakeholder to a single department, such a process may enable the Institute to recognize occasions when expertise across departments is needed to properly respond to a new stakeholder. Detailing who is responsible, what is the frequency, how the results are distributed, for example, would improve the Portfolio response and assist the reviewer in understanding the maturity level in this area.</p>
<p>Assessing the degree to which key stakeholder needs are met</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  The college appears to use indirect measures to determine the degree to which the needs are met. They have acknowledged that they need to work on additional direct measures, and appear to be working from a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.</p> <p>The System Portfolio states, "Southeast Tech currently tracks and analyzes the following outcome measures for determining if key external stakeholder needs are being met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employer Surveys</li> <li>• Graduate Placement Surveys" (page 65)</li> </ul> <p>However, the methods presented are limited to only</p>

	<p>addressing what is used (surveys), not how it’s done (process). Without clear identification of targets, goals and methodologies the Institute will not be able to ensure they are accurately assessing if stakeholder needs are being met.</p> <p>The Institute may want to also consider the variety of evidence that its stakeholders expect as demonstration that the Institute is meeting their needs; a partial list might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government agencies – timely and complete compliance reporting and audit processes</li> <li>• Employers &amp; labor boards – referrals and successful placement processes</li> <li>• School Board and Southeast Tech Council – ongoing financial and program integrity processes</li> <li>• Colleges and Universities – credit articulation and lifelong learning processes</li> <li>• Students – timely and targeted formative and summative feedback on their individual progress within programs</li> <li>• Accrediting organizations – quality control and improvement processes</li> </ul>
Other identified processes	

2R3	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)	<p><b>Reacting</b> As indicated earlier, the results currently used are indirect measures from employer surveys. The college has acknowledged the need for additional, more direct measures, making these results <b>reacting</b>.</p> <p>Southeast Tech presents survey data that shows the employer survey results from 2007-2015. The only results from employer surveys presented here are that the overall grade for graduate performance was between 91.91% and 92.79% during the period of data collection.</p> <p>Without the number of respondents to the survey, claims of high levels of graduate performance cannot be confirmed. Southeast has an opportunity to improve its tools and measures in order to gain valid and meaningful data to assess meeting stakeholder needs.</p>
Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks	<p><b>Reacting</b> Targets are limited to feedback from the employer survey. Although this is an important measure, it does not provide a complete assessment of how Southeast Tech is meeting</p>

	<p>stakeholder needs at a macro-level. While internal targets are included and usually met, there is nothing mentioned about external benchmarks. This is a <b>reacting</b> level.</p>
<p>Interpretation of results and insights gained</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  The Institute reports that these results were excellent and that the External Stakeholder Relationship Team has been effective in its efforts to build better stakeholder relationships. Although Southeast Tech officials are happy with the results, the process involving the External Stakeholder Relationships Team is new, so insights are few.</p> <p>Despite its excellent result, it is important for the Institute to identify actions for continued improvement as well as specific ways in which this group has been effective to move forward in its maturity in this area of CQI, placing this at a <b>reacting</b> level. Southeast may benefit from presenting a more closely associated data summary, complete with relative comparisons and interpretation.</p>

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<p><b>Evaluation of Improvement Efforts</b></p>
<p>Southeast Tech is to be commended for implementing a new process for meeting stakeholder needs. This significant step will it is hoped, yield positive results. A key step in the process will be to determine accurate and robust measures to assess progress in this area. The External Stakeholder Relationships Team along with greater use of the Career Connections should enhance this function in the future. It is not clear that certain stakeholder relationships are being addressed sufficiently. One example of this lack of clarity is with workforce development clients or potential clients.</p> <p>The institution reports good practices and that it intends to adjust program offerings based upon employer survey response and increase key stakeholder relations. The creation of the External Stakeholders Relationship Team is a well-defined model which if improved as planned as part of a new AQIP team could provide Southeast with the ability to execute a proven method to use as they continue to devise methods to meet key stakeholder needs. The institution could also benefit by focusing on establishing clear processes that includes internal and external stakeholders analyzing relevant, meaningful data to drive decisions. The first step would be to determine what needs to be measured, selecting a valid instrument, and consistently gaining a response rate high enough to support insights from the data.</p> <p>The Institute may want to consider creating a process that recognizes different categories of methods that depend upon stakeholder type; for example, agencies and organizations require different delivery methods and metrics than do individuals; government agencies require delivery methods that document compliance; student stakeholders seek delivery methods that ideally respond to their individual needs. Rather than assign a new stakeholder to a single department, a process based on the suggestion above may enable</p>

the Institute to recognize occasions when expertise across departments is needed to properly respond to a new stakeholder.

**2.4 Complaint Process**

Complaint Processes focuses on collecting, analyzing and responding to complaints from students or key stakeholder groups.

**2P4** Describe the processes for collecting, analyzing and responding to complaints from students and stakeholder groups. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

2P4	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
Collecting complaint information from students	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      Southeast Tech states it groups appeals with formal complaints to address the most student concerns. Students either can follow the formal complaint process or may make a more informal complaint through various mechanisms. The catalog and other sources identify the process by which student may file a formal complaint.</p> <p>Formal complaints by students are recorded on software systems within the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs; periodically this data is aggregated, analyzed, and reported by the Institutional Research Office.</p> <p>Informal student complaints and concerns are recorded on the Southeast Tech cares software system by the Institute’s professional staff (frequently Student Success Advisors) and are used by the Student Success Team and the Retention Office, as part of the Institute’s Retention Process.</p> <p>Southeast Tech clearly takes student complaints seriously, although the process, by which this entire process are reviewed and evaluated is not clear. This is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
Collecting complaint information from other key stakeholders	<p><b>Reacting</b>                      Stakeholder complaints are processed using the Career Connections software and are handled by the Career Center Advisor. This system receives, tracks, and documents complaints and solutions. It is not clear, though, how these outside stakeholders know about this resource for this purpose.</p> <p>There is no information on how Third Party complaints are captured or processed, nor how to locate Consumer</p>

	<p>information and the process for filing complaints on the website. It also seems unlikely that outside stakeholders would “settle” for such an automated process to register their complaints. This process is at a <b>reacting</b> level.</p>
<p>Learning from complaint information and determining actions</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech may describe its process for learning from complaint information and determining actions as being at the <b>systematic</b> level. Regarding student complaints, the Student Success Team discusses cases collected in the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs to determine whether actionable patterns may exist; if so, problem-solving team explore the matters and propose solutions to policies, practices, and procedures.</p> <p>Patterns identified by the Student Success Team become an actionable item to bring about the needed changes. Data are also collected to determine if the Institute has been effective in addressing complaints and establishing if needed appropriate Action Projects to address any needed process improvements. The Portfolio does not disclose what if anything has been learned (or corrective actions taken) resulting from any of the few complaints from other (non-student) stakeholders over the years.</p>
<p>Communicating actions to students and other key stakeholders</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech may describe its process for communicating actions to students and other key stakeholders as being at the <b>systematic</b> level. The Institute communicates a final determination of a formal complaint to the individual who registered it, whether student or other stakeholder.</p> <p>Actions taken on informal complaints are said to be communicated orally to students when visiting employees, or by email. Besides these notifications to complainants, the Portfolio states, “The administrator addressing the complaint shares the complaint/appeal and resolution with the relevant internal parties (faculty and staff), including the reasons for the decision. By doing so, Southeast Tech employees can better assist students in the future, solving issues prior to them reaching the formal complaint/appeal stage” (page 68).</p> <p>However, it is unclear how the process for complaints are communicated to students and staff within the Institute. Additionally, this overall process is not reviewed on a regular basis.</p>
<p>Selecting tools, methods and instruments to evaluate complaint resolution</p>	<p><b>Aligned</b>                  Southeast Tech may describe its process for selecting tools, methods, and instruments to evaluate complaint resolution as being at the <b>aligned</b> level. Southeast Tech’ Student Success Team identifies and selects the tools, methods and</p>

	<p>instruments used to evaluate the complaint resolution process. Any changes, which are determined, are identified during the annual summer planning and reflection process. The process is reviewed annually.</p> <p>The team works with the IR office and administration to implement the necessary changes, based upon the following metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in the Total Number of Formal Complaints/Appeals</li> <li>• Reduction in the Chosen Focus Areas for Improvement;</li> <li>• Appropriate Response Time;</li> <li>• Student Satisfaction of the Complaints/Appeals Process</li> </ul>
Other identified processes	

2R4	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)	<p><b>Reacting</b>                      Southeast Tech has created multiple measures to track complaints, including the number, the type, and the days to resolution, capturing data from 4 key areas and providing the results in Table 2R4.1, 2R4.2, 2R4.3 and 2R4.4. The total number of complaints had dropped by 30% while the number of days to resolution of the complaints showed an increase over the years tracked against the target of 10 days. All of these metrics are compared to a 9-12 average, which makes it difficult to determine how much progress, if any, is truly being made.</p> <p>Readers of the portfolio cannot assess whether there were outliers that skewed the data, or if the numbers were relatively flat during the time-period. Southeast Tech may benefit from using caution when using averages in this way, as it can give the appearance of attempting to “hide” data, particularly when it is not presented in this in other section of the portfolio.</p> <p>Other stakeholders (non-students) present no similar table of results for complaints. The Institute acknowledged challenges in its resolution of appeals/complaints and are looking for methods to improve on this result. This is <b>reacting</b>.</p>
Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks	<p><b>Reacting</b>                      The Portfolio presents the results from one student survey item from the Ruffalo-Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory</p>

	<p>(SSI) for 4 cycles (2005, 2008, 2011, and 2014): “Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available” (Table 2R4.4, page 70), containing also the Institute’s internal target score plus the national sample average which the Institute consistently exceeds. No non-student stakeholder complaint data, targets, or external benchmarks are presented.</p> <p>The Institute reports a need to work on their outcomes for student satisfaction with the process because of a recent low result in this outcome. The Institute has developed a Decision Board, which is an arm of Student Government to allow students to take their issues to faculty, staff, administration and peer students to discuss and devise a course of action. It is unclear how this process will be managed or what data will be collected to inform their actions other than surveys, making the level of maturity in results as <b>reacting</b>.</p>
<p>Interpretation of results and insights gained</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b></p> <p>Although Southeast Tech offers plausible explanations for some seemingly negative pieces of data, it’s difficult to ascertain the extent to which this is occurring due to the Institute comparing yearly numbers to a 4-year average. The college tracks complaints, and makes the claim that it is improving, yet there is no statistical evidence or analysis done that proves this, causing this to be at a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.</p> <p>The Portfolio reports that “Southeast Tech used this [formal appeal] information to launch an action project and committee to develop processes to improve communications with students who stop attending classes but fail to complete an official termination. This process has helped Southeast Tech address and resolve these student issues before a complaint/appeal is necessary (2R3)” (page 68). The Institute also reports the formation in 2016-17 of a “Decision Board” to take issues, concerns, and complaints known to the Student Government Association to faculty, staff, or administrators to pursue remedies.</p> <p>The Institute may want to consider how informal ‘fixes’ as responses to complaints will preclude a wider awareness of issues within institutional systems and procedures that could rightly become matters for teams to address in quality improvement initiatives. It may be beneficial for the college to identify more comprehensive measures, and along with them complete statistical analysis on the data in order to identify its relevance.</p>

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### Evaluation of Improvement Efforts

Southeast Tech has instituted improvements in student housing, technology, and policy based upon its analysis of the student complaints. The Institute also plans to improve on the communication process through Southeast Tech cares to be more responsive to addressing student concerns. The Institute does have an opportunity to improve on the methods used to communicate the complaint process to its students, which were not clearly articulated in the report. The use of Southeast Tech Cares and the Decision Board are two new improvements in processes. However, it's notable that none of the described changes are due to complaints from key external stakeholders. This may be due to the limited data collection methods that exist in this area, making for a prime opportunity for improvement for Southeast Tech. The institution might consider how to collect, analyze, and respond to complaints to stakeholders other than students.

The Systems Portfolio discussion on complaints versus appeals states, “Southeast Tech welcomes student views, concerns, and complaints. Formal complaints, however, are infrequent. In order to focus on the most opportunities for improvement and assure Southeast Tech responds to the most student concerns, the Institute documents formal student appeals as part of its formal complaint process, *even though appeals may not be actual complaints*. [emphasis added] For example, a student may request a refund on a course or a "W" grade instead of an "F" grade. In most instances, the student is not issuing a formal complaint but is requesting an appeal given the situation's circumstances” (pages 66-67). The distinction between complaints and appeals – even with the example – is still not clear, since in both cases students experience processes or outcomes different from what they wanted or expected, and are seeking some kind of remedial action by the Institute.

Under Category One under the section for Academic Program Integrity, the Portfolio states:

1. “Southeast Tech has a formal grievance procedure for students or employees who believe a violation has occurred of the Institute's Code of Conduct, Harassment, Discrimination or other such policy. The Institute has had only a handful of student formal grievance incidents over the past five years.” (page 37); and
2. “Southeast Tech monitors employee grievances. Over the past five years, Southeast Tech has had four formal grievances brought forward, which have been vetted through the Institute's grievance procedures and have been dealt with accordingly.” (page 37); and
3. “Over the course of a year, Southeast Tech may experience around 5 to 8 student integrity issues that have moved up to an administrative level for review. These issues are generally in the form of cheating or plagiarism and are handled on a case-by-case basis.” (pages 37-38)

These three seem to be distinct categories (interpersonal conflicts, employment grievances, and student academic misconduct). Item (3) seems to belong under Category One, whereas items [1] and [2] would appear to fall under the Category Two section that concerns “... complaints from *students or other key stakeholder groups*” [emphasis added]. However, the column headers for Table 2R4.3 “Complaints by Type and Year” (page 69) do not seem to account for items [1] and [2] above, while introducing what might be considered the special consideration of disputes involving students’ money at stake: namely “Course Issues:

Refunds..”; Housing: Refunds...”; “Laptop/IT: Refund...”; “Balance Due: Remove [it]...”; “Other:... Scholarship.” The improvements upon which the Institute remarks in 2I4 of the Portfolio (page 70) appear to relate to disputes that involve money.

In sum, the Institute may want to consider its overarching typology in this area, focusing specifically upon complaints made by any stakeholder that challenge the Institute’s policies, procedures, or practices, since those are the intended focus of AQIP’s quality improvement processes. The Institute may also want to consider any challenges it has to integrating its tracking data for quality improvement purposes, given that most formal complaints are documented in the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs while informal complaints and concerns are captured in the Southeast Tech Cares software system (page 67).

### 2.5 Building Collaborations and Partnerships

Building Collaborations and Partnerships focuses on aligning, building and determining the effectiveness of collaborations and partnerships to further the mission of the institution.

**2P5** Describe the processes for managing collaborations and partnerships to further the mission of the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

2P5	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
Selecting partners for collaboration (e.g., other educational institutions, civic organizations, businesses)	<p><b>Systematic</b> Although Southeast Tech uses its External Stakeholder Relationship Team to oversee the Institute’s collaborations, the formal process by which departments and programs select partners and build collaborations is not well described with any degree of specificity. This is <b>systematic</b>.</p> <p>The Portfolio notes that the Institute uses its Career Connections software to maintain an online directory of business contacts who may want to interact with the Institute. It also notes that the External Stakeholder Relationships Team that oversees the Institute’s collaborative work ensures these contacts are properly maintained and strengthened.</p> <p>Based on the information available in the Portfolio, it appears that many projects involving joint work with external organizations are largely siloed within departments. Partnerships requiring contractual agreements or Institute resources need administrative approval.</p>
Building and maintaining relationships with partners	<p><b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech may describe its process for building and maintaining relationships with partners for collaboration as being at the <b>systematic</b> level. The External Stakeholder Relationship Team has identified a set of Institute “Champions” to be at the forefront of maintaining and</p>

	<p>improving relationships with external stakeholders.</p> <p>The Portfolio states the Institute is cognizant that partnerships likely reside at one of two levels: the institutional level and the department/program level. While the Institute has established such responsibility, Southeast Tech may want to consider what common processes are used across all potential and current collaborations to build and advance such work.</p> <p>The process by which relationships with partners are built and maintained is not clear. For example, the Institute states that documenting partnerships through the External Stakeholder Relationships Team provides an opportunity to communicate the collaboration across campus. Although this may be wise to do, it is not connected back to the actual relationship with the partner. It is also unclear whether there are any defined processes in place that can readily be monitored and assessed for improvement.</p>
<p>Selecting tools, methods and instruments to assess partnership effectiveness</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  Southeast Tech’s External Relationship Team determines the tools that are utilized to assess effectiveness of its partnerships however, no information on methodology, development of tool or implementation of process was provided. This is a new process just implemented during the 2016-17 year, and is at a <b>reacting</b> level.</p>
<p>Evaluating the degree to which collaborations and partnerships are effective</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  Southeast Tech may describe its process for evaluating the degree of effectiveness of its collaborations and partnerships as being at the <b>reacting</b> level. The Portfolio states the Institute currently uses four measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employer Survey Relationship Results</li> <li>• Career Connections Memberships</li> <li>• High School Student Dual Credit Enrollments</li> <li>• High School Dual Credit Graduates Attending Southeast (page 71)</li> </ul> <p>The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> metrics above pertain to one partnership only. The 2<sup>nd</sup> metric is a tally of database contacts, and the 1<sup>st</sup> is a global attribute of the Institute made by employers. Methods for evaluating the efficacy of these collaborations and partnerships are not articulated in the report. The Institute may want to consider modifying its set of measures to include attributes common to all successful partnerships: speed to startup, goals-attainment, cost effectiveness, etc.</p>
<p>Other identified processes</p>	

2R5	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      Southeast Tech may describe its summary results of measures for its collaborations and partnerships as being at the <b>systematic</b> level. The bi-annual Employer Survey results are displayed in Table 2R5.1, and over 5 separate surveys, the “Relationship” item has exceeded the Institute’s internal target. It may be added that the Portfolio does not explain scale scoring (“4” on a scale of ? to ?) nor does the Institute make clear whether the Employer Survey is sent to all the organizations with whom the Institute has collaborations (such as the high schools where the Institute runs dual credit courses).</p> <p>Data also appear to be incomplete without the total numbers and any possible segmentation included. Data reported in Table 2R5.2 and 2R5.3 demonstrate positive results in the recruitment of more employers and improved enrollment of high school students reflects a positive outcome for the Institute. Although these are favorable outcomes the Institute may find that looking for ways to systematically capture and track actionable data on building relationships will support more cost effective and focused efforts and move their process to a higher level of maturity.</p>
Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks	<p><b>Reacting</b>                      Southeast Tech has set and met some internal targets. The current four measures of partnership effectiveness each has reported the Institute’s internal target. As noted above, though, the Institute has not cited an outcome measure for its key partnership with secondary schools, and other stakeholders identified in Table 2P3.1 who may have active partnerships do not have outcome metrics stated. Additionally, no external benchmarking is provided. This process is at a <b>reacting</b> level.</p>
Interpretation of results and insights gained	<p><b>Reacting</b>                      Southeast Tech identifies its area of focus to be how to best accommodate increased requests for Career Connections membership by local businesses. A key to a successful process to that end would potentially begin with a structured process for identifying which employers the Institute can provide graduates for and formalizing a process for their enrollment. The Institute indicates its strategic plan will be utilized for this process but does not articulate the specific methods which will be adopted. This process is <b>reacting</b>.</p>

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**Evaluation of Improvement Efforts**

Although Southeast Tech displays a clear desire to meeting the needs of both students and other key stakeholders, there do not appear to be clear processes documented for how this occurs. This may be why there are few direct measures used to evaluate the effectiveness of these processes. By creating clear processes for collecting and analyzing feedback, the Institute will be able to determine clear metrics than can be used to evaluate effectiveness in this area. Additionally, a key to making future improvements will be to create measures that directly assess the effectiveness of partnerships. Without this step, any conclusions and insights will be based upon limited and anecdotal data.

Southeast Tech puts its Career Connections membership at the center of its external partnership discussion. While there is dramatic growth in the Career Connections program since its inception, perhaps more information could be provided in terms of how this growth is strengthening all of Southeast Tech’s partnerships. The Portfolio notes, “Career Connections also allows members to sponsor a student or develop a scholarship, rent Institute facilities, register a complaint or a suggestion for improvement, request training from the Institute, request tours or speakers to attend their work site or their school, and receive communication updates from the Institute regarding Institute happenings and upcoming events” (pages 71-72). As stated in the comments for 213, it is not certain how workforce development is involved.

These activities suggest that membership is a way to request services from or to participate in Institute activities, rather than become a co-equal with the Institute in designing and delivering services. By the same token it could be stated that every student who enrolls in an Institute program is in a partnership with Southeast Tech, too.

Note that in such cases the partner also makes a commitment of organizational resources for cooperative activities with the Institute. The AQIP prompt in this area references “other educational institutions, civic organizations, businesses.” The Portfolio notes that any partnership requiring Institute resources or contractual agreements requires Southeast Tech administrative approval. Surely, Career Connections membership registration does not require such approval.

Such “business-to-business” (B2B) joint agreements and work would certainly include the Institute’s delivery of dual credit courses in area high schools, as well as the occasions of customized employee training for local businesses. The Institute may want to consider its processes and metrics for these B2B deals in ways kept distinct from “business-to-customer” (B2C) offerings. Definitions for workforce issues seem to relate predominantly to degree-seeking students, and it is unclear as to how inclusive this is of the non-credit work of workforce development.

**Category 3: Valuing Employees**

Category 3 explores the institution’s commitment to the hiring, development and evaluation of faculty, staff and administrators.

**3.1: Hiring**

Hiring focuses on the acquisition of appropriately qualified/credentialed faculty, staff and administrators to ensure that effective, high-quality programs and student support services are provided. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 3.C. in this section.

**3P1** Describe the process for hiring faculty, staff and administrators. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

3P1	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
Recruiting, hiring and orienting processes that result in staff and administrators who possess the required qualification, skills and values	<b>Aligned</b> As depicted in Figure 3P1.1 Southeast Tech has an eight step, explicit process for recruiting, hiring and orienting qualified employees which begins with the determination of the need, review of position description, posting of the open position, review of candidate’s background and credentials, approvals, hiring, onboarding and orientation. This process is <b>aligned</b> .
Developing and meeting academic credentialing standards for faculty, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortia programs	<b>Aligned</b> Faculty credentials are developed in accordance with the state’s expectations and processes. Exception is cited for part-time and dual credit faculty, who are not required to submit to state credentialing. However, the eight-step process used for faculty credentialing also ensures that all faculty meet the same position requirements as fulltime faculty within each respective field. In addition to the state’s processes, Southeast Tech’s Credential Committee oversees renewal processes on a five-year cycle. This process is <b>aligned</b> .
Ensuring the institution has sufficient numbers of faculty to carry out both classroom and non-classroom programs and activities	<b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech has a data-informed process, as part of its Annual Planning process, to maintain the appropriate level of faculty personnel. This process includes not only anticipation of upcoming retirements, but makes allowances for unexpected and sudden changes as well. This process is <b>systematic</b> .
Ensuring the acquisition of sufficient numbers of staff to provide student support services	<b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech’s administrative team works with faculty and staff to plan for acquisition of personnel in lieu of retirements, terminations, illness and major changes within the programs at the Institute. The Institute has a few stopgap measures in place to address unplanned changes in staffing needs so that support services and classroom impact are minimal. The Institute did not articulate the data sources used for this

	planning process to ensure sufficient staff to provide support for students and other institutional services. This process is <b>systematic</b> .
Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools	<b>Reacting</b> While the Institute has historically made use of the College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS), it has identified 4 response items that appear to fall short of providing insightful and actionable data. Southeast Tech states that it is developing new measures, but does not identify the process by which that will take place. This process is <b>reacting</b> .
Other identified processes	

3R1	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)	<b>Systematic</b> The data presented in Tables 3R1.1 – 3R1.4 demonstrate institutional capacity for data collection, though the data sets themselves seem to be inadequate for drilling down into the finer points of appropriate credentialing, ensuring that staff and administrators possess the necessary skills, and that there is a sufficient complement of employees in any given discipline or work unit. Tracking has begun, but falls short of what’s needed to support effective decision making. This process is <b>systematic</b> .
Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks	<b>Reacting</b> Although they are above the national benchmark for the most recent year, only two data points are provided for each item, which makes it difficult to determine if progress is being made in these areas. Additionally, no data were presented for 2008, 2010, and 2012. Southeast Tech has an opportunity to improve its data utilization by setting targets and benchmarks for its processes. This process is <b>reacting</b> .
Interpretation of results and insights gained	<b>Reacting</b> While Southeast Tech has made strides in improving its efforts for valuing employees, the institution has an opportunity to improve its data collection and analysis. While using a standardized survey tool that permits external benchmarking, the Institute relies upon one type of metric (satisfaction) rather than multiple tools which might include

	<p>some forms of direct measure.</p> <p>Additionally, the Institute indicates that because it has maintained high levels of satisfaction with salaries and benefits that no further action is planned to ensure these are maintained. There is also no planned action to ensure these satisfactions are maintained. It may be beneficial for the institution to explore additional measures. This process is <b>reacting</b>.</p>
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<b>Evaluation of Improvement Efforts</b>
<p>Over the past seven years, Southeast Tech has enhanced their STInet TASK system to improve communications on new hires and updated its personnel action forms so that one form provides HR and the Business Office with all the necessary information to complete the hiring process. This is an area where a more nuanced evaluation program could benefit the Institute, as it could allow it to determine what elements of the hiring process are working and which ones may need improvements. The measures provided within the Systems Portfolio only look at high-level measures and may mask opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>The Institute has several initiatives in its plans to improve the hiring, mentoring, processing and survey participation, which will be essential in aiding the Institute in obtaining some measurable internal data on its Human Resources processes. Continuing to explore methods to improve hiring practices that demonstrate how it values employees can help drive the mission, and can help position the Institute to continue to improve the student learning experience.</p>

**3.2: Evaluation and Recognition**

Evaluation and Recognition focuses on the assessment and recognition of faculty, staff and administrators’ contributions to the institution. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 3.C. within this section.

**3P2** Describe the process for that assess and recognize faculty, staff and administrators’ contributions to the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

3P2	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
Designing performance evaluation systems for all employees	<b>Aligned</b> Southeast Tech uses a comprehensive process

	<p>for the design of performance evaluations, reflected in a six-component process that differs in execution based on the employee’s role at the Institute:</p> <p>1) Capture, which employs use of action goals, professional growth goals and three cycles of evaluation. 2) Develop and Decide, with standard probationary tracks for faculty and a 30 and 60-day evaluation of new staff and administrators. 3) Deploy, which encompasses a two cycle evaluation process and mid-year review for administrative staff. 4) Evaluate Goal Progress, which occurs at the end of the fiscal year and involves employee input to their managers on their goal progress, along with two evaluations for the classroom for faculty. 5) Communicate and Publish in which all the evaluations are submitted to human resources for faculty and staff and 6) Reflect which employs the use of surveys and SSI data as well as faculty response as a part of the agreement process.</p> <p>All Individual evaluation objectives align with departmental, institutional and strategic goals and values. This process is <b>aligned</b>.</p>
<p>Soliciting input from and communicating expectations to faculty, staff and administrators</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b> Staff are evaluated on an annual basis, with faculty being evaluated based on the negotiated agreement. There is no evidence that a formal process exists to solicit input on a regular basis and it is not evident that faculty participate in goal setting. This process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Aligning the evaluation system with institutional objectives for both instructional and non-instructional programs and services</p>	<p><b>Aligned</b> Southeast Tech ensures that institutional objectives are reflected in the evaluation process for both instructional and non-instructional employees through the inclusion of Action and Development Goals, specifying that such goals be tied to strategic goals via a “drop-down” menu used in the evaluation form. The form further requires description of goal, as well as purpose and measures to be associated with the</p>

	<p>individual goal. This process is <b>aligned</b>.</p>
<p>Utilizing established institutional policies and procedures to regularly evaluate all faculty, staff and administrators</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  While the process used to evaluate faculty is documented in the Faculty Handbook as negotiated, there does not appear to be an institutional policy that supports and guides the annual process used to evaluate staff and administrators.</p> <p>It is also not clear how often faculty meet with supervisors to discuss results and possible improvements. This process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Establishing employee recognition, compensation and benefit systems to promote retention and high performance</p>	<p><b>Aligned</b>                  Southeast Tech has a formal employee recognition committee, called BLUE (Bold, Leadership, United, Excellence), who through recommendations submitted through the STInet service recognize employees at all campus monthly meetings. This process is presently being re-established. Years of service are recognized at five-year intervals beginning in Year Five with service pins. Annual events planned by the In-Service Committee and Campus Climate Team provide ways in which retention efforts are manifested.</p> <p>The Institute compensation and benefits packages are tied to the Sioux Falls School District and are highly competitive according to the Institute. With the dismantling of unions at the State level in March of 2017 the Institute is currently preparing ways to maintain its competitive offerings without union influence. This process is <b>aligned</b>.</p>
<p>Promoting employee satisfaction and engagement</p>	<p><b>Aligned</b>                  Southeast Tech relies on its Campus Climate Committee to identify opportunities for improvement to the work climate and employee satisfaction. This committee works through a clearly defined process of data review leading to action design and deployment that are evaluated annually to optimize efficacy.</p>

	Table 3P2.2 lists 15 distinct committees, their purpose and membership as evidence of employee opportunity for engagement. This process is <b>aligned</b> .
Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools	<b>Reacting</b> Southeast Tech is piloting a process for tracking individual staff goals, as related to the strategic plan. It does not appear, at this time, that benchmark goals have been established for this process. The portfolio does not indicate how faculty evaluations are measured and/or reported. This process is <b>reacting</b> .
Other identified processes	

3R2	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)	<p><b>Systematic</b> Results depicted represent 10 areas of focus for the institution. Data were not presented for these results for the years 2008 – 2012 and those that were reported indicate an opportunity in the area of Southeast Meets the Needs of Employees, Employees Empowered to resolve problems, and Spirit of Teamwork and Cooperation as the target goals were not met at a level of significance.</p> <p>The Institute acknowledges the need to address this stagnate result and has proposed some approaches to address the results, however the action plan presented did not indicate any measures or indicators of success that will be used to determine if these new action plans will proactively address the results in the long run. This process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks	<p><b>Systematic</b> Aside from the data presented in Table 3R2.10, in which Southeast Tech’s employee departure rate is compared against the National Community College Benchmarking Project ranking, however no external benchmark target has been identified. Additionally, it does not appear as though internal targets were identified prior to data collection. This</p>

	process is <b>systematic</b> .
Interpretation of results and insights gained	<b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech acknowledges the need to improve its use of data in regards to internal promotions. It may need to revisit its established targets in the areas of opportunity to better identify ways to ensure the Institute is moving toward that target. This process is <b>systematic</b> .

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<b>Evaluation of Improvement Efforts</b>
<p>Southeast Tech acknowledges its challenges in sustaining efforts associated with employee performance evaluation and employee recognition in the wake of the state’s disbanding of the professional bargaining units. Where specific contract language may have articulated what was to be done and how it was to be done, the Institute is now working to develop those processes and infrastructure support most valuable for the alignment of employee and institutional goals, maintaining quality of workforce, and recognizing employee contributions to the institution’s mission and strategic plan.</p> <p>Regarding employee empowerment, the Portfolio refers to an insight / action plan idea expressed as the “Why Not Give It a Try” philosophy (page 89). The Institute may want to consider carefully the context in which that sentiment is proposed as an approach to quality improvement. If it is a tactic in response to felt or expressed resistance by employees to newly-proposed empowerment ideas, then an honest exploration of the issues may give rise to substantive reasons to proceed rather than a mere “why not.” If the “why not” philosophy is merely meant to encourage openness to innovation in general, the Institute might consider whether the result could be efforts spent on unplanned, uncoordinated experiments that employees feel free to conduct without the usual context of deliberation and tracking that is the hallmark of team-based quality improvement efforts.</p>

**3.3: Development**

Development focuses on processes for continually training, educating and supporting employees to remain current in their methods and to contribute fully and effectively throughout their careers at the institution. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.C. and 5.A. in this section.

**3P3** Describe the process for training, educating and supporting the professional development of employees. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

3P3
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Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
<p>Providing and supporting regular professional development for all employees</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      Southeast Tech has processes in place to collect the need for training and professional development at three levels: Department/Program (team meetings), institutional level (in-service committee or collected through performance evaluations), and externally from stakeholders.</p> <p>Departmental training is funded at that level and can typically be accommodated within program training budgets. All employees are invited to attend campus-wide in-service days, which have funding allocated during the annual planning process. This process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Ensuring that instructors are current in instructional content in their disciplines and pedagogical processes</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      Southeast Tech utilizes an Advisory Committee to inform faculty and administration of training needs based on industry requirements and anticipated needs for the future. As part of the Annual planning process anticipated needs are allocated for in the budget proposal and through communication with their respective supervisors and administration staff and faculty make plans to ensure that all training takes place, which is monitored and recorded by the Institute Credentialing committee.</p> <p>In-service days also provide another opportunity for staff and faculty to engage in professional development activities. However, it is unclear what processes are in place to assess the effectiveness of these initiatives. This process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Supporting student support staff members to increase their skills and knowledge in their areas of expertise (e.g. advising, financial aid, etc.)</p>	<p><b>Aligned</b>                      Southeast Tech is proactive in soliciting input on professional development needs for its staff from multiple sources, and uses that input to inform decision making as part of its annual planning process to ensure that such activities are prioritized and occur.</p>

	<p>Similar to instructional staff, training and development is funded through the department budget whenever possible, with larger funding requirements requested through the annual planning processes.</p> <p>Training opportunities are prioritized based upon employees goals established through the annual performance evaluation, as these goals are aligned with the strategic plan. This process is <b>aligned</b>.</p>
<p>Aligning employee professional development activities with institutional objectives</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Institutional and departmental professional development activities are determined through the institution’s annual planning process, which helps align them with institutional objectives. Additionally, professional development goals are part of the annual performance review process and require correlation to institutional goals. However, it is unclear if data are used or processes are in place to assess the effectiveness of the Annual Planning or evaluation process. This process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  Southeast Tech limits its tracking of outcomes in this area to CESS results in Adequate Professional Development Opportunities and Adequate Training Opportunities. It may also be meaningful to track how these opportunities are identified and what respective gaps these fill when training is identified, developed and deployed for staff and faculty to determine if the activities were successful in their intended goal. This process is <b>reacting</b>.</p>
<p>Other identified processes</p>	

<p>3R3</p>	
<p>Results</p>	<p>Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement</p>

<p>Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  Tables 3R3.1 and 3R3.2 provide results on employee satisfaction with adequate training and professional development opportunities, respectively. Results are limited to those two measures and feature only data from the past two reporting cycles, making the establishment of trends difficult. This process is <b>reacting</b>.</p>
<p>Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  Comparison of data is limited to internal targets against CESS results. Internal targets appear to be identified by default to whatever the national mean is, which makes it unclear if there is a process to identify pre-established targets. No external benchmarks are cited for comparison.</p> <p>Though Southeast Tech is beginning to make inroads in key areas, it is encouraged to engage in data collection from a larger span of external sources to measure its competitiveness relative to support offerings, development opportunities, and compensation. This process is <b>reacting</b>.</p>
<p>Interpretation of results and insights gained</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  Southeast Tech has invested a significant amount of resources and support for valuing employees. However, there is a disconnect between processes, measures, and a development of targets. Focusing on collecting and monitoring additional data beyond the satisfaction surveys may provide the Institute additional and more comprehensive processes for its allocation of resources and CQI journey. This process is <b>reacting</b>.</p>

<p>313</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of Improvement Efforts</b></p>
<p>Southeast Tech has expanded its efforts in providing meaningful professional development in light of its strategic and annual plans, enhancing mentoring programs for new employees, and dedicating funds to support needed training.</p> <p>The Institute has plans to improve employee onboarding, strengthen the process of tying individual employee goals to institutional goals through the new evaluation process, and identify additional metrics to track the efficacy of its professional development activities.</p> <p>Southeast Tech has implemented several improvements over the past few years,</p>

including expanding mentoring programs, increased training opportunities, and increased funding for attendance at national conferences. Despite this important progress it is also important to note that Southeast Tech acknowledges that training budgets are still limited. Additional improvements planned for the next few years are important steps in the process of demonstrating the Institute’s commitment to valuing employees.

**Category 4: Planning and Leading**

Category 4 focuses on how the institution achieves its mission and vision through direction setting, goal development, strategic actions, threat mitigation and capitalizing on opportunities.

**4.1: Mission and Vision**

Mission and Vision focuses on how the institution develops, communicates and reviews its mission and vision. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 1.A., 1.B. and 1.D. within this section.

**4P1** Describe the processes for developing, communicating and reviewing the institution’s mission, vision and values, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

4P1	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
Developing, deploying, and reviewing the institution’s mission, vision and values	<b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech’s formal process to develop, deploy, and review its mission, vision, and values a minimum of once within every AQIP reaccreditation cycle is a <b>systematic</b> process. This is replicable and encompasses strategic planning, annual planning, assessment documentation, and employee evaluation processes. However, there is no evidence that the process itself is periodically evaluated.
Ensuring that institutional actions reflect a commitment to its values	<b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech has a formal process in place to review all value policies annually with employees, which includes having faculty and staff signing a statement indicating they will adhere to them. These policies are reviewed every three years, with responsibility for ensuring they are followed resting with the Administrative Team. Because there is no evidence that this process itself is evaluated, this overall process is <b>systematic</b> .
Communicating the mission, vision and values	<b>Aligned</b> Southeast Tech communicates its mission, vision, and values to internal and external stakeholders in multiple formal and informal ways. The Institute states that its most effective means of communications is through “walking the talk,” and

	believes its institutional performance provides sufficient evaluation that this process is successful. This process is <b>aligned</b> .
Ensuring that academic programs and services are consistent with the institution's mission	<b>Aligned</b> The institution ensures academic programs and services are consistent with the mission in multiple ways. First, new programs are checked to ensure they adhere to the mission. Second, all programs and services are reviewed annually through the Annual Planning Process to ascertain mission fidelity. These <b>aligned</b> processes are further strengthened by the oversight provided by the South Dakota State Board of Education, which provides external validation.
Allocating resources to advance the institution's mission and vision, while upholding the institution's values	<b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech allows employees to provide input into the budgeting process and requires that expenditures be directly related to the strategic plan and the institution's mission and vision. Although the Institute notes over half of its operating budget is directed to instructional costs, this assertion falls short of providing evidence that its resources advance the mission and vision, resulting in this process being viewed as <b>systematic</b> .
Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools (e.g. brand studies, focus groups, community forums/studies and employee satisfaction surveys)	<b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech uses multiple measures to track if it is fulfilling its mission. The opportunity to identify deeper and more meaningful data, and because it is not stated how often these measures are tracked nor if this process is itself evaluated, places this process's maturity as <b>systematic</b> .
Other identified processes	

4R1	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)	<b>Reacting</b> Southeast Tech has identified its ability to collect, present, and summarize data on multiple measures of student learning, graduate placement, student retention, and stakeholder satisfaction. However, with the exception of the employee responses given as part of the CESS and the survey given in 2017 when the new mission and vision statements were developed, the remaining results are related more to other categories, particularly category 1. It is unclear how institutionalized the review and summarization of data related to developing, communicating, and reviewing the

	institution’s mission, vision, and values are, placing the process at the <b>reacting</b> level.
Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks	<b>Reacting</b> Although the majority of internal targets have been met or achieved, it is not clear how the measures identified coincide with what is stated in the mission, vision, and values processes nor are external benchmarks identified. It is also not clear how these results are made available to stakeholder groups nor how these data are used in the departmental or divisional planning process. These results are at the <b>reacting</b> level.
Interpretation of results and insights gained	<b>Reacting</b> Southeast Tech has used institutional performance and satisfaction survey results to initiate several changes, including implementing new recruitment software, conducted “sector breakfasts” to clarify further employer expectations on how graduates’ soft skills could be improved, and revised the employee onboarding and engagement plans. However, because insights are largely based upon indirect measures, this process is rated at the <b>reacting</b> level.

<b>4I1</b>
<b>Evaluation of Improvement Efforts</b>
<p>Southeast Tech’s formalization of an annual plan to review the mission, vision and values statements, standardization of its review process, and increased stakeholder participation in these processes is commendable. However, it is difficult to see how these improvements flowed from the results that were provided.</p> <p>As the Institute looks for opportunities to integrate more fully the mission statement documents into institutional processes and operations, it may wish to consider including it in new employee orientation, incorporating it into position descriptions and meeting agenda documents, and identifying ways to make it visually inescapable throughout the facilities and website.</p>

**4.2: Strategic Planning**

Strategic Planning focuses on how the institution achieves its mission and vision. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 5.B. and 5.C. in this section.

**4P2** Describe the processes for communicating, planning, implementing and reviewing the institution’s plans and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

4P2	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
Engaging internal and external stakeholders in strategic planning	<p><b>Integrated</b>                      Southeast Tech has a comprehensive system to engage both internal and external stakeholders. The Institute’s universal process model (steps: capture, develop, decide, and communicate) is used with both internal and external stakeholders, including governance bodies at the local and statewide level, providing input and approval.</p> <p>The strategic plan – done at least once every 8 years or more often as needed – stems from the school’s mission and in turn drives annual operational and budgetary planning. Plan details, opportunities for input, and ongoing progress are communicated to stakeholder groups throughout the planning process through open meetings, records of minutes, the Institute’s website and a variety of meetings, causing this process to be viewed as <b>integrated</b>.</p>
Aligning operations with the institution’s mission, vision and values	<p><b>Aligned</b>                      Beginning with a review of the mission, vision, and values, all subsequent strategic planning components flow through administrative and departmental levels in a way that drive student learning initiatives and support system advancement, with the Administrative Team consolidating and coordinating elements of planning. This displays an <b>aligned</b> process.</p>
Aligning efforts across departments, divisions and colleges for optimum effectiveness and efficiency	<p><b>Aligned</b>                      The completed strategic plan is presented to stakeholders for final comment, with annual plans derived following board approval. Department and divisional leaders deploy these annual operational plans and make best use of resources in support of the institutional plan. Monthly meetings of the administrative software module managers, academic and student support personnel with support staff, administrative team, and student government support this work. This work is also tied to the budgeting process and reviewed by the Futures Team. This process is <b>aligned</b>.</p>
Capitalizing on opportunities and institutional strengths and countering the impact of institutional weaknesses and potential threats	<p><b>Aligned</b>                      The Institute conducts a SWOT analysis as part of the school’s strategic planning process, with adjustments made as needed to address any concerns. Support documentation and justification</p>

	are needed for any major increases in spending, with Southeast Tech’s practice of maintaining 20% of its budget in reserves protecting it against most emergencies. This process is <b>aligned</b> .
Creating and implementing strategies and action plans that maximize current resources and meet future needs	<b>Aligned</b> The same processes used to address opportunities and strengths are also used to meet future needs. The strategic and annual processes facilitate the creation and implementation of strategies to meet these needs, with action plans being created and implemented at the departmental and division level. Accountability for the results start with the President and are reported to the Board and Council annually. This process is aligned.
Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools (e.g. achievement of goals and/or satisfaction with process)	<b>Reacting</b> Southeast Tech acknowledges its establishment of strategic goals and annual plan targets provide recent improvements in its ability to track outcomes. Although they have identified overarching goals (strategic plan and annual plan targets), these have not yet been deployed. This process is <b>reacting</b> .  It might be helpful to provide some specific examples of the outcomes/measures that are tracked and also describe which tools are utilized and how they were chosen.
Other identified processes	

4R2	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)	<b>Reacting</b> Southeast Tech provides few results that directly relate to communicating, planning, implementing, and reviewing the institution’s operational plan. In addition, is not clear how the identified targets relate to this planning process. The results are at the reacting level.
Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks	<b>Reacting</b> A comparison of progress toward past years’ priority areas’ results so far are largely limited to internal targets, with the exception of the CESS. No external benchmarks were provided. The results are at the reacting level.
Interpretation of results and insights gained	<b>Reacting</b> Southeast Tech’s interpretation of results and insights gained

	<p>from its published results are at the reacting level. Lessons learned from the most recent five years of planning efforts have resulted in a deeper appreciation for the benefits associated with a formal strategic planning process, including involving all its stakeholders and incorporating strategies related to expected outcomes. The school is proactively working to craft a new approach that incorporates these insights.</p>
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<b>412</b>
Evaluation of Improvement Efforts
<p>Southeast Tech has developed a more comprehensive strategic planning process that utilizes repeatable processes, better annual planning, a clearer connection to the mission and vision, new software, improved integration of data, and increased stakeholder involvement. Its greatest opportunity may yet be found in formal training of the Administrative Team, Council and Board on the identification of quantifiable metrics to ensure a shared understanding and vision of what will constitute measurable success for the strategic goals and annual plan targets.</p> <p>While the data presented in Tables 4R2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 represent improvement in clear and appropriate metrics over the past 5 years, progress may yet be had by identifying direct measures that will evaluate the effectiveness of the strategic and annual planning processes as many of the measures presented are not necessarily indicators of planning success.</p>

**4.3: Leadership**

Leadership focuses on governance and leadership of the institution. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 2.C. and 5.B. in this section.

**4P3** Describe the processes for ensuring sound and effective leadership of the institution, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

<b>4P3</b>	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
<p>Establishing appropriate relationship between the institution and its governing board to support leadership and governance</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech has three bodies that have a regular oversight role: the South Dakota Department of Education, the Sioux Falls School Board, and the Southeast Tech Council. Southeast Tech’s Administrative Team is involved with all three on a regular basis and one Board member serves on the Council, although it would be helpful if a chart were developed to clarify the areas of overlap, distinctiveness, and coordination among the three bodies</p>

	<p>and with the Institute’s administration. It appears that although there is routine interaction between the Board and Administrative Team, this is the result of mandated procedures by the state with little additional interaction being routinely accomplished. It may be beneficial for the Institute to identify additional processes that would ensure enhanced relationships between the Board and the Administrative Team. This process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Establishing oversight responsibilities and policies of the governing board</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  The School Board Policy Manual and the Southeast Tech Council By-Laws describe the roles of each body and how they defer to Southeast Tech’s leadership for management of the institution. However, it is not clear what means are used to ensure oversight responsibilities or what types of policy issues are legislated. In addition, there is no boundary given regarding judgments the Board renders in response to publicly raised issues or how Board and Council members are oriented to their overall responsibilities. This process is at <b>systematic</b> maturity level.</p>
<p>Maintaining board oversight, while delegating management responsibilities to administrators and academic matters to faculty</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech’s policies stipulate the oversight role of the Board and the management role of the President. The President provides supervision by, when appropriate, delegating decisions to his/her leadership team based on the category of the issue in question. Daily decisions are often within the scope of individual staff members and faculty. Faculty-led committees in conformance handle curriculum and credentialing issues with established guidelines by the State Department of Education, the Higher Learning Commission, and program accrediting bodies. This process is at the <b>systematic</b> level. The school may want to consider the value of a periodic self-evaluation of board functioning conducted by board members themselves to help identify any challenges and opportunities for improvement in fulfilling their role.</p>
<p>Ensuring open communication between and among all colleges, divisions and departments</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech though a relatively flat organization has developed formal and informal channels to foster communication that is downward, upward, and horizontal for all colleagues to ensure that people receive information they need and are able to provide feedback. This communication process and its ownership are outlined in (Table 4P3.1). However, the process deployed to ensure that the open communication exists including feedback are not articulated beyond the identification of where communication may occur. This process is at the <b>systematic</b> maturity level.</p>

<p>Collaborating across all units to ensure the maintenance of high academic standards</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech has identified the role of various teams in maintaining high academic standards (Table 4P3.1). The composition of each entity fosters collaboration across administrative units. Although this process is <b>systematic</b>, the Institute assumes its meeting structures will increase its capacity to ensure collaboration takes place among departments and divisions. The Culture of Quality approach may hold promise for encouraging collaboration, although the Institute neglects to articulate exactly how such collaborations are noted or evaluated for efficacy in mission achievement.</p>
<p>Providing effective leadership to all institutional stakeholders</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b> Southeast Tech’s process to provide effective leadership to all institutional stakeholders is at the <b>reacting</b> level. Although the institution identifies team and committee levels (Table 4P3.1), it does not appear as though the Institute has a process for the evaluation of leadership efficacy as this table appears only to show organizational structure.</p>
<p>Developing leaders at all levels within the institution</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b> With the 2016-2017 year, the Institute implemented a new leadership development initiative whereby leadership of all teams and committees was assigned to individual faculty and staff – although it is too soon to determine the effectiveness of this system. The institution should be commended for assessing this system after its first year, with feedback on this change prompting the Institute’s Futures Team to offer leadership training for chairs and co-chairs and acknowledging they need to provide additional leadership training. However, beyond this it is unclear if there is any specific plan in place, beyond encouraging employees to take additional training, to ensure the development of leaders. Southeast Tech may want to consider implementing a leadership mentoring program as well, so that team leaders receive ongoing guidance from members of the Administrative Team. This process is at the <b>reacting</b> maturity level.</p>
<p>Ensuring the institution’s ability to act in accordance with its mission and vision</p>	<p><b>Aligned</b> Southeast Tech combined state mandated oversight with internal planning processes and action projects to ensure the institution is acting in accordance with its mission and vision. These systems start at the state level and cascade throughout the organization. This process is at the <b>aligned</b> level.</p>
<p>Tracking outcomes/measure utilizing appropriate tools</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b> Southeast Tech utilizes CESS as its primary tool to assess leadership efficacy. The institution outlines 6 key areas of focus they will track, although most of these questions are focused only on communication and not on additional</p>

	aspects of leadership. These results also do not delineate what the target goals are and how the results will be used in decision-making or execution of processes to improve their leadership effectiveness. This process is at the <b>reacting</b> maturity level.
Other identified processes	

4R3	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)	<b>Reacting</b> Southeast Tech provides results from CESS, although these are limited to one aspect of leadership; communication. Because they are not more encompassing to include other aspects of leadership effectiveness, this process is at the <b>reacting</b> maturity level.
Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks	<b>Reacting</b> Southeast Tech has identified this as an area of concern. Internal targets have been set for CESS results, although no external benchmarks are provided even though this is a national survey. This process is at the <b>reacting</b> maturity level.
Interpretation of results and insights gained	<b>Reacting</b> Southeast Tech recognizes issues with their measures and is looking into ways to make improvements. The Institute also understands communication needs to improve, especially in light of new developments regarding negotiated agreements. Although these are good insights, the results are not sufficient to make interpretations for this area. This process is at the <b>reacting</b> maturity level.

4I3
Evaluation of Improvement Efforts
<p>Southeast Tech is commended for the improvements it has made to its leadership processes, including changing the composition for some of the management/advisory groups and the development of its leadership-training program. Southeast Tech may want to consider how leadership is demonstrated in the workplace beyond having formal designation for chairing meetings of work groups.</p> <p>Assessment may be needed to measure employee engagement, sense of comfort, and ease of use with such enhancements, in order to identify opportunities for widespread adoption of such communications tools. Southeast Tech may want to consider what research and rationales underlie leadership assessment tools available in the literature to</p>

expand the definition of leadership beyond communication, to include leadership at all levels of the organization.

**4.4: Integrity**

Integrity focuses on how the institution ensures legal and ethical behavior and fulfills its societal responsibilities. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 2.A. and 2.B. in this section.

**4P4** Describe the processes for developing and communicating legal and ethical standards and monitoring behavior to ensure standards are met. In addition, identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

4P4	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
Developing and communicating standards	<p><b>Aligned</b> Southeast Tech has a comprehensive process to ensure the development and communication of standards. Policies regarding legal and ethical behavior are developed by the cross-functional Policy Committee within prescribed timeframes, which includes a period for public comment. Multiple sources of communication are used to ensure new and revised policies are distributed to appropriate stakeholders. New employees and students are oriented to the existence of institutional policy. This process is at the <b>aligned</b> maturity level.</p>
Training employees for and modeling ethical and legal behavior across all levels of the institution	<p><b>Systematic</b> Policies related to legal and ethical behaviors are reviewed annually with all employees, with the modeling of these behaviors expected of the Board and all employees. Investigative processes exist to identify and address violation of policy. Board members also model integrity by indicating any conflicts of interest prior to any Board action. This process is at the <b>systematic</b> maturity level. A more active approach to training and modeling, as opposed to reviewing documents, might be considered.</p>
Operating financial, academic, personnel and auxiliary functions with integrity, including following fair and ethical policies and adhering to processes for the governing board,	<p><b>Systematic</b> Although Southeast Tech has a number of policies designed to define ethical behavior across the breadth of institutional operations, it is not clear if the process provides for the ability to assess its effectiveness. This process is at the <b>systematic</b> level.</p> <p>While acknowledging that providing further detail in the Systems Portfolio could present a privacy issue, to reach a</p>

administration, faculty, and staff.	higher level of maturity on this dimension the Institute may want to consider how it can present internally and externally a set of suitably masked data that demonstrate accountability and provide a basis for making future process improvements. The Institute may want to consider detailing the detection tools it uses to identify potential ethical violations, laying groundwork for determining how the use of those tools might be improved.
Making information about programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships readily and clearly available to all constituents	<b>Aligned</b> Southeast Tech’s website and catalog cover the relevant topics and help assure compliance to Institute and federal standards. This information is reviewed and updated each year and monitored by the Vice President of Academics and the Vice President of Student Affairs. This process is at the <b>aligned</b> maturity level.
Other identified processes	

4R4	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)	<b>Reacting</b> Because no results are provided, this appears to be at the <b>reacting</b> level.
Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks	<b>Reacting</b> Because no internal targets or external benchmarks are provided, this appears to be at the <b>reacting</b> level.
Interpretation of results and insights gained	<b>Reacting</b> Because no results are provided, the interpretation of results appears to be at the <b>reacting</b> level.

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Evaluation of Improvement Efforts
Southeast Tech has developed a plan to provide training in integrity and legal issues. They have also identified the need for, and the plan to implement, the process of reviewing and revising policies on a 3-year cycle. To further improve upon the plans for “integrity topics” training, Southeast Tech may want to explore best practices in orienting all employees to the key components of the Clery Act and FERPA to promote coordination and communication among all units when it comes to a shared understanding of expectations for

ethical behavior. The Institute may also want to measure, in an aggregated way, how often violations of ethical behavior or integrity occur and document the outcomes of these cases.

Southeast Tech could benefit by expanding its definition of leadership beyond communication to include all aspects of leadership, including how it presents itself at all levels of the organization. In addition, it is important to be intentional about results and for the data to be varied in nature so they do not come solely from one source/survey when evaluating progress on this category.

**Category 5: Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship**

Category 5 addresses management of the fiscal, physical, technological and information infrastructures designed to provide an environment in which learning can thrive.

**5.1: Knowledge Management**

Knowledge Management focuses on how data, information and performance results are used in decision-making processes at all levels and in all parts of the institution.

**5P1** Describe the processes for knowledge management, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

5P1	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
Selecting, organizing, analyzing and sharing data and performance information to support planning, process improvement, and decision making	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      For the institution as a whole, data are selected based upon their relationship to the Key Performance Indicators, which were established by the Southeast Tech Council and Board with extensive stakeholder input. This is part of the Strategic Planning process. The Office of Institutional Research (IR) organizes these data in ways that are easily understood and accessible. These institutional data are also disaggregated by units and provided along with other more unit-specific information to the end users.</p> <p>IR also provides an initial analysis which units utilize as a basis for additional analysis. IR shares new data in the fall that support the budgeting process and which units in turn share with their stakeholders (e.g. advisory committees). The program/department data, however, are only provided every fall semester, which is not frequent enough to guide true data-informed decision-making. In addition, the ability to access the “every day” operational data that employees need to perform their jobs is limited, as only Module Managers are able to do this. Finally, without a component in place for evaluating the efficacy of this process, it is at a <b>systematic</b> maturity level.</p>

<p>Determining data, information, and performance results that units and departments need to plan and manage effectively</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  The Office of Institutional Research (IR) disaggregates data related to the Key Performance Indicators for each unit and department. IR also supports unit-specific data when requested to do so. This section, however, emphasizes strategic data, which, while critical to the Institute’s success, are only part of the data employees need to be successful. Operational data and reports might also be helpful to determine daily tasks, such as which students advisors should reach out to students that day or how many new employees may need to sign up for benefits. This is a <b>systematic</b> maturity level.</p>
<p>Making data, information, and performance results readily and reliably available to the units and departments that depend upon this information for operational effectiveness, planning and improvements</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  The responsibility for making information readily available to the appropriate departments and units rests with the IR Office. The IR Office frequently serves on planning committees and teams, and maintains a clear process for data requests, data collection and analysis, with both the Institute’s Sharepoint site and the Planning and Assessments database serving as accessible repositories for storage and retrieval. Because the current process for making data available to employees relies heavily on the IR office, this might limit the ability to make all necessary data available to employees. The institution might be well served by finding additional ways to empower employees to create reports that provide the data they need to increase operational performance. Also Southeast Tech fails to assess the efficacy this process. This is a <b>systematic</b> maturity level.</p>
<p>Ensuring the timeliness, accuracy, reliability and security of the institution’s knowledge management system(s) and related processes.</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  The Institute’s IT department takes typical steps to ensure computerized systems have good bandwidth and disaster recovery. While the Portfolio discusses routine password-protected systems access, it does not discuss security processes such as steering students and employees clear of phishing attempts (identify theft), nor does it discuss processes for protecting privacy by structural safeguards around access to sensitive personal information such as, student academic and financial information, or employee personnel information (evaluations, payroll, disciplinary data) whether stored in electronic or paper form.</p> <p>Processes for identifying attempted security breaches are not discussed, and there is no indication by which the Institute attempts to learn how to improve its processes in this area. This is a <b>systematic</b> level of maturity.</p>
<p>Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools (including software</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b>                  Southeast Tech appears to have identified a very limited set of tools for tracking its outcomes/measures in knowledge management. The Institute may consider adding in the</p>

platforms and/or contracted services)	means to measure staff engagement (do they understand how sharing knowledge benefits the institution), staff adoption (how many opportunities did the team have to share knowledge versus the number of times they actually did it), knowledge quality (does the format make the knowledge easy to consume), time to competency (the number of days it takes a new team member to work independently in accessing data), and rework effort (what percentage of the total work time spent is in repetitive effort in gathering/accessing data). Identifying tools that would rise above responding to immediate needs in favor of anticipating future needs would do much to take this from <b>reacting</b> to the next level of maturity.
Other identified processes	

5R1	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)	<b>Reacting</b> The results provided by Southeast Tech address only the technology used in knowledge management. They do not address the selection, organization, and usefulness of the data. It is a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.
Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks	<b>Reacting</b> No comparison data were provided in the report. It is a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.
Interpretation of results and insights gained	<b>Reacting</b> Southeast Tech’s insight that it “has developed a knowledge management system that provides...data to its stakeholders effectively and efficiently” is not supported by the results provided. It is a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.

5I1	
Evaluation of Improvement Efforts	
Southeast Tech has improved its data warehousing process through increased bandwidth, implementation of VMWare to support virtual needs 24/7, implementation of Southeast Tech Cares, recruitment software package, lecture capture, and increased data security and more maintenance that is consistent. The institution plans to improve its assessment process through the use of a software package so that it can address the need to better integrate data and identify more appropriate targets and related actions. Managing all data, including providing additional results for the knowledge management process, itself,	

in a more effective manner will assist the institution in its continuous improvement journey to mature in knowledge management processes.

**5.2: Resource Management**

Resource Management focuses on how the resource base of an institution supports and improves its educational programs and operations. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 5.A. in this section.

**5P2** Describe the processes for managing resources, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

<b>5P2</b>	
<b>Process</b>	<b>Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement</b>
Maintaining fiscal, physical and technological infrastructures sufficient to support operations.	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      Southeast Tech works in conjunction with the Sioux Falls School District to manage infrastructure common to both entities in a shared services approach to: accounting, purchasing, treasury, employee benefits, and operations. While the Institute enjoys certain efficiencies of scale within this shared services model, it also maintains its own processes to ensure the support of its institutional operations in strategic planning, budgeting, capital improvement/equipment planning, and technology planning. Such plans are conducted annually, involving internal and external constituent groups in the process. These planning processes appear to be understood, repeatable and transparent in their ultimate documentation, but are lacking in periodic evaluation for improvement. This is a <b>systematic</b> level of maturity.</p>
Setting goals aligned with the institutional mission, resources, opportunities and emerging needs.	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      Southeast Tech has clear budget guidelines and goals in place for each new fiscal year, which it uses to guide the annual and budget planning processes. These guidelines tie directly to the strategic plan. No evaluative measure is identified for the efficacy of this process, rendering it <b>systematic</b>.</p>

<p>Allocating and assigning resources to achieve organizational goals, while ensuring that educational purposes are not adversely affected.</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b> The resource allocation decision-making process is mission- and vision-driven. The priorities set are directly focused on the educational purposes of the Institute. Operating budgets are adapted annually and drive resource allocation decisions incorporating Southeast Tech’s 5-Year Capital plan. The response, though describing the budgeting process generally, does not specifically address how Southeast Tech balances its resources in a way that ensures educational purposes are not adversely affected while other organizational goals are achieved. This is a <b>systematic</b> level of maturity.</p>
<p>Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b> Balance budgets, reserve levels, and educational expenditures are important indicators but are not sufficient to affirm that Southeast Tech manages its resources in ways that improve its educational programs and operations. Some additional indexes of organizational health (e.g., quality of facilities and equipment) might be helpful in providing a fuller evaluation. This is a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.</p>
<p>Other identified processes</p>	

<p><b>5R2</b></p>	
<p><b>Results</b></p>	<p><b>Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement</b></p>
<p>Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b> The results for balanced budgets, reserve levels, and educational expenditures are positive and highly relevant, but are not sufficient information. Some additional indexes of organizational wellness might be helpful in providing a fuller evaluation. This is a <b>reacting</b> level.</p>
<p>Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b> With respect to fiscal allocations to physical, technological, and academic purposes, Figure 5R2.2 2016 Expenditure Composition shows 4% spent on physical plan, 4% spent on data processing, and 32% spent on instruction (with an additional 3% spent on instruction support). The Institute only surpasses its internal goal of spending the majority (50%+) on instructional purposes by including as part of that bundle the category of “Facilities Acquisition” (44%, the largest of any category). Also there are no external benchmarks provided. This is a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.</p>

Interpretation of results and insights gained	<p><b>Reacting</b></p> <p>Although Southeast Tech explains the financial results as indicating the institution’s conservative approach to budget allocation places it in a fairly strong financial position overall, there are no insights that would foster continuous improvement. This is likely due to the limited scope of measures that are tracked. This is a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.</p>
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<b>5I2</b>
<b>Evaluation of Improvement Efforts</b>
<p>Southeast Tech states that it has made recent improvements in its accounting structure and its annual budget documentation format, with updates made to its Facility Lifecycle Costing and Capital Outlay Operations/Maintenance Plan. It also cites intent to improve program and department-level key performance indicators through the use of goals measures and accomplishments.</p>

**5.3: Operational Effectiveness**

Operational Effectiveness focuses on how an institution ensures effective management of its operations in the present and plans for continuity of operations into the future. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 5.A. in this section.

**5P3** Describe the processes for operational effectiveness, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

<b>5P3</b>	
<b>Process</b>	<b>Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement</b>
Building budgets to accomplish institutional goals	<p><b>Systematic</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech has a budgeting process that is tied to the strategic planning process and mission of the institution. The level of maturity could be enhanced by a periodic evaluation of this process. It is a <b>systematic</b> level of maturity.</p>
Monitoring financial position and adjusting budgets	<p><b>Systematic</b></p> <p>Recurring monthly budget reports are provided to the Board, and cost center managers receive their reports on request. The Administrative Team reviews finances weekly, and the VP for Finance shares such information monthly in all-employee meetings. Policy provisions allow for administrative adjustments (transfers) in the budget in \$1K-\$10K range, and</p>

	<p>adjustments over \$10K are approved by the Board. This <b>systematic</b> level of maturity could be enhanced by a periodic review of this process.</p>
<p>Maintaining a technological infrastructure that is reliable, secure and user-friendly</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech has taken multiple measures to ensure the reliability and security of the institution’s software systems. The degree to which the systems are user-friendly, however, is not entirely clear as there is no discussion of this outside remote access and the LMS. In particular, as a large amount of data are stored within the Institute’s ERP, such as student and employee data, it is also critical for employees to have easy access to these data as well. This is a <b>systematic</b> level of maturity.</p>
<p>Maintaining a physical infrastructure that is reliable, secure and user-friendly</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b> The Board and Administrative Team work a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan that addresses ongoing facility needs. Security is described in terms of key-card access controlled from the President’s office and the hiring of sheriff’s deputies for security personnel; however, the Portfolio does not describe security evaluation and improvement processes or the involvement of employees or students in practices to ensure safety. On the issue of user-friendliness, the Portfolio states that facilities are ADA-compliant, without explaining what user-friendliness constitutes for those stakeholders not protected by ADA. This is a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.</p>
<p>Managing risks to ensure operational stability, including emergency preparedness</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech has opted to base its Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) on the Department of Homeland Security’s National Incident Management System. The EOP is reviewed as a program within the three-year rotation of the Institute’s policy review process. Emergency communications to internal constituents occur via an emergency alert system. The Portfolio does not mention any employee or student training via drills (including fire drills) or other periodic testing of these systems to determine whether improvements are needed. This is a <b>systematic</b> level of maturity.</p>
<p>Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b> Satisfaction measures from three separate stakeholder groups are utilized but no performance indicators generated from the relevant processes are used (such as elapsed time for evacuating the building during a fire drill). This is a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.</p>

Other identified processes	
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5R3	
Results	Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement
Summary results of measures (including tables and figures when possible)	<b>Reacting</b> The results, although positive, are limited in scope and are only indirect measures of effectiveness. Southeast Tech might continue to explore additional measures in this area. It is a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.
Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks	<b>Reacting</b> The results in 5R2 indicate that Southeast Tech has been successful in staying within its annual budgets in recent years. CESS data suggest that stakeholders are satisfied at close to the national average with the resource management of the institution. No other external benchmarks or objective internal measures are provided. It is a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.
Interpretation of results and insights gained	<b>Reacting</b> Survey results indicate that stakeholders are generally satisfied with operational effectiveness, yet the satisfaction survey approach does not easily lend itself to identifying specific areas needing improvement; thus actionable insights are limited. This is a <b>reacting</b> level of maturity.

5I3
Evaluation of Improvement Efforts
<p>Southeast Tech continues to devise methods to be more efficient in its financial planning and budget processes. The institution plans to engage a new method to assigning overhead to better reflect program costs and manage resource allocations. Southeast anticipates this model will be further integrated into all their processes within the next one to three years to better inform decisions about allocation of fiscal resources to various areas of need within the infrastructure.</p> <p>It might consider ensuring that its measures and tracking tools are sufficiently specific and direct to evaluate these improvements. For example, if Southeast Tech operates an IT Help Desk, it could measure the elapsed time to respond and resolve user issues, the average number of requests opened as a percentage of users, and trend data on such</p>

metrics to support the idea of greater efficiency and quality. Another option to explore is considering customizing some of the SSI questions to more specifically relate to the AQIP template.

**Category 6: Quality Overview**

Category 6 focuses on the Continuous Quality Improvement culture and infrastructure of the institution. This category gives the institution a chance to reflect on all its quality improvement initiatives, how they are integrated and how they contribute to improvement of the institution.

**6.1: Quality Improvement Initiatives**

Quality Improvement Initiatives focuses on the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) initiatives the institution is engaged in and how they work together within the institution.

**6P1 Describe the processes for determining and integrating CQI initiatives, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:**

6P1	
Process	Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement
Selecting, deploying and evaluating quality improvement initiatives.	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      Southeast Tech has maintained a TQM focus for over two decades and articulates the process by which QI initiatives are selected according to four primary feeder levels: institutional, AQIP team-led, program/departmental, and committee. Initiatives must be tied to strategic planning, annual planning and budgeting, and/or AQIP aligned to institutional priorities and evaluated by KPIs utilizing the Deploying Actions Process (Figure 6P1.1). Approval thereof varies in accordance with the level of impact.</p> <p>The Futures Team oversees the overall process to assure alignment and implementation. Although this process appears to be well established and replicable throughout the organization, it seems to be lacking the periodic evaluation that would move this process from its current level of <b>systematic</b> maturity to a higher level.</p>
Aligning the Systems Portfolio, Action Projects, Comprehensive Quality	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      Southeast Tech’s quality culture starts with the Board and Council who adopt overarching strategic goals, key performance indicators, and a strategic plan. The</p>

<p>Review and Strategy Forums</p>	<p>administration then works with programs and departments to set targets and assessments that are tied to these goals. Departments and program teams then implement actions. The AQIP Futures Teams oversee the big picture and coordinates efforts of the External Stakeholder Relations Team, the Celebrating Learning Team, the Education Design and Delivery Team, the Student Success Team, and the Campus Climate Team.</p> <p>Southeast Tech’s Futures Team is responsible for ensuring alignment exists between the four AQIP planning mechanisms and assigning the selected initiatives to specific teams and committees, which implement the work utilizing the “deploying actions process”. The process specifics, however, remain unclear as to how it accomplishes this alignment. Given the manner in which much of the Institute’s planning has been redefined in 2016-2017. Alignment is conducted through informal procedures and habits indicative of a <b>systematic</b> level.</p>
<p>Other identified processes</p>	

<p><b>6R1</b></p>	
<p><b>Results</b></p>	<p><b>Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement</b></p>
	<p><b>Systematic</b>                      Southeast Tech presents 13 distinct statements of results and lessons learned for each of six Action Projects, spanning from 2012 to 2016. The clear manner with which the Institute articulates initiative purpose, results and lessons learned demonstrates its capacity to operate at a <b>systematic</b> level. Although performance tracking has yielded some trend data, it does not appear as though the results have had sustained benefit over time, nor provided promotion of opportunity for growth in collaboration across units.</p> <p>The Institute, in addition, has not developed separate measures to assess the effectiveness of its continuous quality improvement initiatives, and instead relies on the results of the individual initiatives to demonstrate progress. The Institute could move beyond the <b>systematic</b> level of maturity by creating separate measures that encompass the broader quality improvement framework.</p>

<b>611</b>
<b>Evaluation of Improvement Efforts</b>
<p>Southeast Tech is commended for its decades-long work developing the “deploying actions process” used to implement new quality initiatives. This has enabled the institution to demonstrate a history of initiating and completing projects to help improve its operations, which is an important achievement. The Institute’s processes could be further strengthened by developing measures to evaluate the overall quality improvement framework and to develop a mechanism to assess the current process used to select quality initiatives, as it is not clear if one currently exists. The use of the Deploying Actions process has served the institution well however, including external benchmarks could provide the Institute with an even broader perspective on its improvement efforts and subsequent impact.</p> <p>Southeast Tech has made great strides in its accomplishments in student retention and success, data-informed strategic planning and the reduction of process siloes, capitalizing on its long-standing Deploying Actions Process to do so. The Institute acknowledges the strengthening of this process over the years, and articulating how it evaluated the process in order to identify the improvements it made would assist its relevant constituent groups in a more comprehensive understanding of how Southeast Tech measures and addresses its efficacy in designing and executing quality improvement initiatives.</p>

**6.2: Culture of Quality**

Culture of Quality focuses on how the institution integrates continuous quality improvement into its culture. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 5.D. in this section.

**6P2** Describe how a culture of quality is ensured within the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

<b>6P2</b>	
<b>Process</b>	<b>Comments on Process Maturity and Improvement</b>
Developing an infrastructure and providing resources to support a culture of quality	<p><b>Aligned</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech has developed a system (Figure 6P2.1) to support a culture of quality through a continuous improvement process that is linked to the mission, strategic plan, and AQIP. The institution’s quality culture starts with the Board and Council who adopt overarching strategic goals, key performance indicators, and a strategic plan. The administration then works with programs and departments to set targets and assessments that are tied to these goals. Departments and program teams then implement actions. The AQIP Futures Teams oversees the “big picture” and</p>

	<p>coordinates efforts of the External Stakeholder Relations Team, the Celebrating Learning Team, the Education Design and Delivery Team, the Student Success Team, and the Campus Climate Team. The Institute also defines the necessary resources to achieve these initiatives and makes them available through the annual and budgeting processes.</p> <p>The Institute may want to make explicit the instances in which its processes have resulted in cross-fertilization showing that insights and improvements gained in one area of operations has cascaded into unrelated areas. Initiatives in this approach, may find equitable consideration and processing, regardless of whether the proposal comes from an individual constituent, a constituent group, recognized committee, or program/departmental/institutional planning efforts in an <b>aligned</b> manner.</p>
<p>Ensuring continuous quality improvement is making an evident and widely understood impact on institutional culture and operations</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech relies on the Futures Team to communicate information about teams, committees and accomplishments to those internal and external to the institution. The Futures Team reports to the Administrative Team, who has the responsibility for reporting to the Council and Board. The Futures Team is also responsible for communicating across the Institute and uses its own Annual Report, emails, Monthly Meeting presentations, Tech Times and President's Report articles, and external stakeholder communications through Career Connections, press releases and Advisory Committee minutes as springboards.</p> <p>Southeast Tech ensures that continuous quality improvement is making an evident and widely understood impact through its planning infrastructure and communications processes. Requiring that initiative and results reporting funnel through the Futures Team and out to a variety of pathways provides admirable opportunity for all constituent groups to have access to data and information in ways that support effective decision making, planning and collaboration. The institution will need to migrate to program/departmental metrics designed for aggregation at the institutional level in order to move from <b>systematic</b> to a more advanced level of maturity.</p>
<p>Ensuring the institution learns from its</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b>                  Southeast Tech's key method stated for achieving insights is Reflection (one of the Institute's Process Steps) and the key</p>

<p>experiences with CQI initiatives</p>	<p>forum is the Institute’s summer retreat. The Institute may wish to consider promoting multiple contexts and methods to obtain CQI insights. The Institute may also want to consider how to strengthen its ability to interpret its series of performance metrics in order to more readily identify areas for improvement. It is unclear the method which is used to share these lessons learned with all relevant stakeholders. This process is <b>systematic</b>.</p>
<p>Reviewing, reaffirming, and understanding the role and vitality of the AQIP Pathway within the institution</p>	<p><b>Systematic</b> Southeast Tech focus on reflection on its accomplishments throughout the year underemphasizes the evidence of institutional alignment found in other portions of the AQIP Systems Portfolio. A description of how the Institute involved and informed its constituencies in the development of its systems portfolio would have done much to underscore the degree to which the role and vitality of the AQIP Pathway is reaffirmed and understood and edify the reviewer on exactly how it is accomplished within the reflection process and the subsequent stakeholder impact. A direct discussion on the benefits of the AQIP pathway during these retreats and broad-based forums may prove beneficial in the Institute’ CQI journey as they move beyond the <b>systematic</b> level.</p>
<p>Other identified processes</p>	

<p><b>6R2</b></p>	
<p><b>Results</b></p>	<p><b>Evaluation of Results and Systems Improvement</b></p>
<p>What are the results for continuous quality improvement to evidence a culture of quality?</p>	<p><b>Reacting</b> Southeast Tech has shown in numerous examples that its CQI work demonstrates breadth and continuity and that many employees are involved in AQIP strategy forums (internal) and CQI training. However its CESS results show that the level of appreciate for CQI is below the institution’s target. While many of its quality measures have been stated with internal targets and external benchmarks, a number of these measures do not directly measure results of the targeted processes.</p> <p>The Institute provides measures of the perception employees have, along with the numbers of individuals trained in CQI. It is not clear how the institution measures the impact and overall learning gained in the training sessions. The Institute only provides two years of data on perception and it is not</p>

	<p>apparent how targets have been identified in this area. The perception has decreased from year one to year two, although the statistical significance of the change is unknown.</p>
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<p><b>612</b></p>
<p><b>Evaluation of Improvement Efforts</b></p>
<p>Over the last two years, Southeast Tech has improved its process through the establishment of the External Stakeholder Relationships Team and the involvement of more non-administrative positions in leadership roles on teams/committees. The Institute’s intent is to place the continuous quality improvement process directly in the hands of all internal stakeholders in order to enhance and strengthen the quality culture</p> <p>The Institute’s use of satisfaction survey outcomes brings the benefit of having a standardized, repeatable process with quantifiable results that permit of clearly stated internal targets and comparative external benchmarks. While these aspects of the evaluation process are commendable, when satisfaction surveys are the primary or singular means by which the Institute evaluates success or failure of a process, the factors driving those outcomes are difficult to ascertain with any confidence. Satisfaction surveys can reflect “cohort” effects, wherein fluctuations in ratings may be influenced by group attitudes unrelated to the activities being evaluated. The use of two or three measures for each evaluated process helps ‘triangulate’ and validate the reasons driving the results observed.</p> <p>Southeast Tech acknowledges its opportunities to accelerate its progression into the higher levels of maturity that would normally be associated with an institution involved in AQIP for two decades. It looks to its Futures Team to lead efforts to increase employee appreciation and ownership of a continuous quality improvement culture as a means of moving the institution’s culture more firmly away from reacting – systematic, into aligned and integrated levels.</p>

## APPENDIX C Criteria for Accreditation & Core Component Evidence Screening

### Criterion 1. Mission

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

Core Component	Evidence	Screening Feedback
<p><b>1.A.</b> The institution’s mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>2. The institution’s academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.</p> <p>3. The institution’s planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.</p>	<p><b>1.A.1</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech has formal processes in place for developing deploying and reviewing its mission, vision, and values. The processes are repeated, occurring in conjunction with every new Strategic Plan development. There are also opportunities on an annual basis to consider additional formal reviews should the Futures and Administrative teams deem it necessary.</p> <p><b>1.A.2</b></p> <p>The Institute uses several processes to ensure that programs, both new as well as changes to existing programs, adhere to the mission, vision, and values of the college. Consideration is given regarding mission alignment whenever a new program or service is developed. Annual reviews evaluate these programs or services thereafter to ascertain mission fidelity.</p> <p><b>1.A.3</b></p> <p>The Institute uses the budgeting process to ensure that resource allocation and funding fit the mission, vision, and values. Expenditures must be directly related to the strategic plan and the institution’s mission and vision, with over half the annual budget directed to instructional costs.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>
<p><b>1.B.</b> The mission is articulated publicly.</p> <p>1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such</p>	<p><b>1.B.1</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech uses multiple methods to ensure the mission, vision, and values are communicated to all stakeholders, including in-service days, meetings, weekly publications, website, employee orientation,</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

<p>as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.</p>	<p>employee evaluations, and its planning and budgeting activities.</p> <p><b>1.B. 2</b></p> <p>The mission review process is repeated, occurring in conjunction with every new Strategic Plan development. There are also opportunities on an annual basis to consider additional formal reviews should the Futures and Administrative teams deem it necessary. The core value statements provide an explanation of the emphasis of the institution’s activities</p> <p><b>1.B.3</b></p> <p>The mission statement clarifies that its intention is to educate individuals for work and lifetime success and meet workforce needs within the region.</p>	
<p><b>1.C.</b> The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.</p> <p>1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.</p> <p>2. The institution’s processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.</p>	<p><b>1. C.1</b></p> <p>The Institute shows awareness of the human and cultural diversity of a global society by incorporating this element into its Professionalism CLO. The lessons are included in instruction as learning outcomes within the Social Issues general education course, individual program coursework, and the Student Success Seminar course. Diversity events, activities, and/or awareness campaigns are provided annually. In order to have a more diverse student body, a Diversity Action Project Committee (AQIP) has been recently formed (Category 1, Page 3).</p> <p><b>1. C.2</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech notes in 1P2.3 that diversity events and/or communications about diversity are provided annually.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

<p><b>1.D.</b> The institution’s mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.</p>	<p><b>1.D.1</b></p> <p>The Institute uses the budgeting process to ensure that resource allocation and funding fit the mission, vision, and values, with over half the annual budget directed to instructional costs. This process helps ensure projects and items funded are aligned with these areas and are also connected to the strategic plan.</p> <p><b>1.D.2</b></p> <p>The annual planning process requires institutional targets and assessment be directly related to the mission, values, and vision.</p> <p><b>1.D.3</b></p> <p>The mission articulates the Institute’s purpose is to meet workforce needs. The institution surveys employers to ensure they are appropriately meeting this objective.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>
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**Criterion 2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct**

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

Core Component	Evidence	Screening Feedback
<p><b>2.A.</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>2.A</b></p> <p>The Institute has policies in place that ensure adherence to ethical practices. These policies include nondiscrimination policies, Conflict of interest and authority policies for Board members and employees, Auditing systems.</p> <p>The college also has implemented processes for individuals to register concerns, along with policies for investigating potential violations. Policies regarding legal and</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

	<p>ethical behavior are developed by the Policy Committee and communicated to all stakeholders through the website.</p> <p>These policies are also emphasized for new employees as part of the onboarding process, with an annual review of these policies occurring with all employees.</p>	
<p><b>2.B.</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.</p>	<p><b>2.B</b> Southeast Tech provides information on programs and requirements through its website and catalog.</p> <p>The information contained on the website and in the catalogs are reviewed and updated each year, and monitored by the Vice President of Academics and the Vice President of Student Affairs.</p> <p>Accreditation information is provided a special link and all information is reviewed as part of several review processes.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>
<p><b>2.C.</b> The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.</p> <p>1. The governing board’s deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>	<p><b>2.C.1</b> As dictated by the School Board Policies, the Board has policymaking authority, reviews policy recommendations from the college President, and acts as the judicial body when requested by the President.</p> <p><b>2.C.2</b> The board also sets policy, approves budgets, hires and evaluates the president, and monitors the strategic plan.</p> <p><b>2.C.3</b> The board policy documents the roles of the board and the Southeast Tech Council, but does not address how the board preserves its independence from the undue influence of external stakeholders.</p> <p><b>2.C.4</b> Southeast Tech’s policies stipulate the oversight role of the Board and the management role of the President. The Board delegates management to the</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

<p>be in the best interest of the institution.</p> <p>4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.</p>	<p>President, who then in turn delegates the management through a cascading system, to the Administrative Team, then to Managers, and then down to employees.</p> <p>The President provides supervision by, when appropriate, delegating decisions to his/her leadership team based on the category of the issue in question. Daily decisions are often within the scope of individual staff members and faculty.</p> <p>Faculty-led committees in conformance handle curriculum and credentialing issues with established guidelines by the State Department of Education, the Higher Learning Commission, and program accrediting bodies.</p>	
<p><b>2.D.</b> The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.</p>	<p><b>2. D</b></p> <p>The Institute has a published and board-supported policy concerning academic freedom and freedom of expression; however, the prior policy that was incorporated into union contracts for instructors is now defunct since the state abolished such unions at its Institute as of 7/1/2017.</p> <p>In this regard, the Institute did not present evidence about its recent experiences with grievances (if any) or state that none have occurred.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>
<p><b>2.E.</b> The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students, and staff.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>2. E.1</b></p> <p>The Institute could be clearer about its actual enforcement of educational honesty and integrity by summarizing those infractions that occur apart from informal detection and correction. The Institute mixes its descriptions of infractions with the activities it conducts for academic (grade) appeals which are of a decidedly different nature. Cases are reported only in ranges (being in the handfuls) and no case outcomes, insights gained, or improvements made are described. (Category 1, Page 32)</p> <p><b>2.E.2</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

<p>2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.</p> <p>3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.</p>	<p>The Institute’s English composition class includes an information literacy unit for students on the topic of research and academic integrity that meets South Dakota Board of Regents requirements (1P5.2).</p> <p><b>2. E.3</b></p> <p>The Institute describes its expectations for faculty enforcing student academic honesty via its Code of Conduct. Procedures for enforcement are included in 1P5.2 and 1P5.3</p>	
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**Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

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

Core Component	Evidence	Screening Feedback
<p><b>3.A.</b> The institution’s degree programs are appropriate to higher education.</p> <p>1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.</p> <p>2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.</p> <p>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).</p>	<p><b>3. A.1</b></p> <p>Strong policy and practices govern the development of programs and courses, with high levels of involvement and collaboration among internal and external stakeholders (including state agencies and local employers). Learning activities are tied directly to institutional mission, incorporate Institute-wide expectations (Common Learning Outcomes), are frequently mapped onto specialized accreditation requirements, and are routinely assessed.</p> <p><b>3. A.2</b></p> <p>The Institute’s educational offerings are solely at the level of the first and second undergraduate years, also known as “lower division.” The Institute did not provide evidence to distinguish that the learning goals for its programs are not set too low (secondary-school level) or too high (upper-division or graduate-level).</p> <p><b>3. A.3</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

	<p>Online delivery at the Institute shares the above-described systems with its traditional on-ground courses.</p>	
<p><b>3.B.</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.</p> <p>1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>3. B.1</b></p> <p>General education is an integral but complimentary component of the AAS and Diploma offerings of the school, aligning with the school mission to educate for employment (1P1.1 and 1P1.2). Southeast Tech requires the prescribed minimum of general education credits for all AAS degrees and diploma programs.</p> <p>Components of study include composition, mathematics, sociology, and psychology intended to build student skills in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information and developing the ability to succeed as lifelong learners. Many Common Learning Outcomes are delivered through program courses. (1P1.1 and 1P1.2).</p> <p><b>3. B.2</b></p> <p>The content and intended learning outcomes of the Institute’s general education expectations are reflected in its Common Learning Outcomes (CLOs). CLOs have been based on the 2000 Department of Labor SCANS Report, employer surveys of graduates, faculty and Program Advisory Committee input, and CLO’s at peer institutions.</p> <p>In 2005 the set of CLOs was reduced from eight to four, although the framework for doing so was not described.</p> <p>The Institute has not presented its framework or statement of philosophy envisioning the knowledge and skills to be possessed by college-educated persons that the Institute’s CLOs are designed to impart. (Category 1, Page 2ff).</p> <p><b>3.B.3</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

<p>4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>The Institute's AQIP Education Design and Delivery and AQIP Celebrating Learning teams discuss the appropriateness and relevance of shared Common Learning Outcomes (CLO) used throughout the curricula. A course mapping matrix helps ensure appropriate coverage.</p> <p><b>3. B.4</b></p> <p>The topic of the human and cultural diversity is embedded within the Professionalism CLO and taught in the Social Issues general education course. Diversity events, activities, and/or awareness campaigns are provided annually.</p> <p><b>3. B.5</b></p> <p>The Institute notes that its faculty and students are not charged with producing original (basic) research. The Institute may benefit from checking for its evidence reflecting potential contributions to "applied" scholarship and practice insofar as one of its seven institutional values is <u>Innovation</u>: <i>"Southeast Tech values creative solutions and continuously seeks new, flexible and responsive ways to achieve its mission and goals."</i></p>	
<p><b>3. C.</b> The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.</p> <p>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</p>	<p><b>3. C.1.</b></p> <p>The college employs a variety of data to determine if it has sufficient faculty to meet student needs. In fact, it takes measures to anticipate faculty needs several years into the future. It also has plans in place to address unanticipated needs. It may be meaningful to also track data, which reflects student to faculty or staff to student ratios.</p> <p><b>3.C.2.</b></p> <p>The Institute has clear and well-utilized policies for recruiting, screening, hiring, orienting, mentoring, and supporting qualified faculty and student support staff.</p> <p>The South Dakota Department of Education's Credential Board sets the credentialing standards for faculty. These standards are</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

<p>assessment of student learning.</p> <p>2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.</p> <p>3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>reviewed annually. All Southeast Tech faculty, both full-time and part-time, must meet the following criteria: hold a degree appropriate to their field and/or appropriate work experience of 3+ years (general education instructors must have a master’s degree and 18 credits in the specific field) and maintain instructor credentials through the State of South Dakota that is renewed every five years.</p> <p><b>3.C.3.</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech’s annual process for evaluating its employees is comprehensive, explicit, repeatable, and provides opportunity for participant feedback (self-appraisal).</p> <p>There is defined criteria for all evaluations and each employee is required to prepare a self-evaluation as a part of the process.</p> <p>The evaluation process which is documented in the faculty handbook is collaborative as staff, faculty and their managers review performance in course delivery, expertise in the field, contributions to the program, curriculum, student focus and alignment to instructional and non-instructional goals</p> <p>The college believes that employee evaluation is about assessing how the employee contributes to the overall performance of the Institute. This contribution not only includes fulfilling job performance as outlined in the job description and the Institutional Employee Code of Conduct, but also includes meeting agreed upon goals and completing professional development activities.</p> <p><b>3. C.4.</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech receives internal and external stakeholder input regarding professional development topics. Funding coming from the annual operational budgets allows for faculty and staff to attend conferences. In addition, institutionally sponsored in-service training is ongoing.</p>	
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	<p>Advisory committees guide faculty about the current industry practices. The institution encourages training to respond to these practices</p> <p><b>3. C.5</b></p> <p>No specific evidence of a documented policy or process could be located in the portfolio for this item.</p> <p><b>3. C.6.</b></p> <p>Ensuring high quality non-academic support services requires that Southeast Tech hire qualified staff, train staff effectively, and provide them with the necessary support structures to meet department and support area goals. The following areas highlight this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Hiring Non-Academic Support Staff:</b> Southeast Tech relies on the hiring process to assure new hires meet required job qualifications, including appropriate credentials and work experience.</li><li>• <b>Staff New Hire Training:</b> Southeast Tech recognizes that its process for new hire staff training has been inconsistent; leaving some new staff to receive training that is below the Institute's standards. Therefore, Southeast Tech is developing a stronger new staff-training program that better meets these needs.</li><li>• <b>Staff Evaluation:</b> their immediate supervisor evaluates new staff within the first 60 days of employment to assure that proper training and support are being provided and that job responsibilities are being full-filled. All full-time staff are then evaluated on an annual basis. In 2014-2015.</li><li>• <b>Professional Development:</b> Southeast Tech believes in continuing professional development, and therefore provides funding and training options for support staff throughout their career at the Institute. Each functional area develops a professional development budget and determines how</li></ul>	
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	<p>that funding is used to support staff development. Additionally, the staff evaluation process includes professional development as part of the annual review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Staff Expectations:</b> Southeast Tech has defined and documented its expectations for staff in its Code of Conduct policy. These expectations are reinforced as part of the mentoring program, in department (weekly or biweekly) and all-campus meetings (monthly), during yearly evaluations, and on an as-needed basis.</li> <li>• <b>Internal Program Review:</b> Southeast Tech is currently piloting an internal program/department review process as part of the Institute's Annual Planning process.</li> </ul> <p>Southeast Tech employs a variety of data to determine if it has sufficient staff to meet student needs. In fact it takes measures to anticipate staff needs several years into the future. It also has plans in place to address unanticipated needs (3P1.4). Southeast Tech relies on the hiring process to ensure that new staff hires meet required job qualifications, including appropriate credentials and work experience.</p> <p>Their immediate supervisor to ensure that proper training and support are provided evaluates new staff. The nature of staff development flows from each individual's annual evaluations. These trainings are connected to the institution's strategic plan. This tie in to the member's annual goals should make the actual participation in this training more likely</p>	
<p><b>3.D.</b> The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.</p> <p>1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.</p>	<p><b>3.D.1</b></p> <p>Student issues and needs are generally handled at the lowest administrative level possible; the Southeast Tech Cares software track student issues and problems to enable specialists from across the school to respond. Many of the school's AQIP Action Projects in past years have addressed</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

<p>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.</p> <p>3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.</p>	<p>various areas in which student support needed improvement.</p> <p><b>3.D.2</b></p> <p>The Institute's pre-academic coursework, peer tutoring, Academic Recovery course, and Student Success lab are all resources to help students are capable of succeeding in their course placements. The Student Success Team handles much of the academic and personal advising students need at the Institute.</p> <p>The Retention Office and Student Success Team determine the services that are needed. Once support services are established, ongoing deployment becomes the designated responsibility of an existing office, including the student success center, disability and tutoring services, and the career center office. Student Success Seminar courses also provide orientation to key coping skills for students' academic journeys, and a variety of targeted supports are provided including personal counseling, tutoring, and success coaching.</p> <p><b>3.D.3</b></p> <p>The Institute has well-defined procedures for recruiting, qualifying, hiring, orienting, mentoring, and supporting faculty to perform duties needed to meet the school's educational mission.</p> <p>A Student Success Team advises students with added support from specialists such as financial aid, tutoring, and other functions, relying upon the Southeast Tech Cares software system to monitor needs and progress.</p> <p>Faculty evaluations (previously specified by the union contract) are to parallel those of other Institute staff, which requires tying job goals to institutional mission and priorities.</p> <p><b>3.D.4</b></p>	
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	<p>The college has a well-defined and fully deployed process for communicating with students about support services. Timeframes have been identified for the student lifecycle milestones associated with pre-enrollment, early enrollment, and ongoing enrollment. Each of these times has associated methods of communication.</p> <p>Multiple channels used are inclusive of face-to-face individual and group settings, print, school website, social media, and telecommunications (including texting). The Student Success Team oversees the communication process, which is reviewed during the Retention process reflection time at the Institution. The Institute actively plans improvements in its services and communicates with its student beneficiaries to encourage their use.</p>	
<p><b>3.E.</b> The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.</p> <p>1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution’s mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>3. E.1</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech currently has 16 student organizations. The Institute will pilot a reporting process that details how these organizations reinforce program-learning outcomes.</p> <p>The Institute provides co-curricular opportunities for students having the time and inclination to participate. Structures and operating requirements for student clubs and activities are well defined.</p> <p><b>3. E.2</b></p> <p>Currently the Institute has no pre-determined learning expectations tied to its student clubs and organizations, whose purpose is career exploration and networking as described by the Portfolio.</p> <p>In 2017-18, Southeast Tech will be piloting a self-report process whereby each club documents outcomes from a minimum of one annual service-learning event.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

	<p>The self-report will also provide details on other organization/club accomplishments and activities and how the group reinforces CLO or PLO development. The Portfolio did not describe any related evaluation process planned other than these self-reports.</p>	
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**Criterion 4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement**

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

Core Component	Evidence	Screening Feedback
<p><b>4.A.</b> The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.</p> <p>1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.</p> <p>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</p>	<p><b>4. A.1</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech programs are charged with conducting program assessments on a regular basis. The Institute has a suitable structure for conducting academic program reviews, although evidence in the Portfolio suggests that in recent times fewer programs are completing them, or doing so less frequently, or both. Evidence that program reviews have been conducted in all programs as expected or, why some (if any) have not done so was not provided.</p> <p><b>4.A.2</b></p> <p>The general criteria for recognition of transcribed credits are clearly stated, yet the Portfolio has scant information on how such processes are actually conducted and what the results are from these processes.</p> <p><b>4.A.3</b></p> <p>The general criteria for recognition of prior learning and transfer credits are clearly stated, yet the Portfolio has scant information on how such processes are actually conducted and what the results are from these processes.</p> <p><b>4.A.4</b></p> <p>The Institute has some experience with dual credit offerings, which are delivered only by faculty who fully meet the Institute’s</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

<p>programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.</p> <p>5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.</p> <p>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).</p>	<p>requirements expected of all its faculty. Dual credit courses are the same as regularly delivered at the campus. Although the replacement to the union contract for faculty is not yet clear, faculty have historically had final authority over the Institute’s curriculum.</p> <p><b>4.A.5</b></p> <p>Many programs have won and maintained specialized accreditation. The Portfolio did not provide evidence on the decision-rules used by the Institute to determine whether to apply for and to maintain such accreditation; currently the decision appears to be based on whether program faculty happen to be so interested.</p> <p><b>4.A.6</b></p> <p>The Institute conducts school-wide tracking of program completion rates and graduate employment information. Licensure and certification test results for graduates (where available) often exceed national norms, but the results of internal metrics are less clear since the Portfolio indicates they would take too much space to explain.</p>	
<p><b>4.B.</b> The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.</p> <p>1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.</p>	<p><b>4.B.1</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech articulates its commitment to learning through general education purpose statements, and syllabus templates include Common Learning Outcomes and Program Learning Outcomes information, as well as CLO assessment results.</p> <p>Learning Outcomes are published in the Institute’s catalog, which is available on the Institute website, as well as being published in course syllabi. Faculty and advisers discuss the learning outcomes with students (1P2.4). Learning goals are developed using</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

<p>2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.</p> <p>3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>extensive internal and external data and wide stakeholder input. The Celebrating Learning Team has a leadership role in assuring goals align with school mission and reflect suitable, measurable outcomes.</p> <p><b>4.B.2</b></p> <p>The Celebrating Learning Team oversees the learning outcomes assessment process. The CLOs are assessed on a rotational schedule. Program faculty in their respective areas assesses the PLOs. No evidence was presented that the assessment of CLOs or PLOs has been directly connected to the activities conducted by student clubs and organizations, although some initial steps are planned for 2017-18 via self-reports.</p> <p><b>4.B.3</b></p> <p>The Institutional Research Office aggregates CLO and PLO data for the Celebrating Learning Team to review. Outcomes results are published; the Portfolio describes institution-level learning outcome summaries (1P1.8).</p> <p><b>4.B.4</b></p> <p>Common Learning Outcomes (CLO) are embedded within Program Learning Outcomes (PLO); in the Portfolio CLO summaries are more prevalent than PLO rollups. With a focus in the Portfolio on assessing institution-level outcomes, the variances in those outcomes at the program and course levels are obscure.</p> <p>The Portfolio did not provide evidence of how faculty members identify at the program or course levels those particular student-learning outcomes that warrant attention and improvement. Accordingly, the examples of changes made to improve learning as cited in the Portfolio have not been explained in terms of the outcome data analyzed; thus, the changes appear to be random.</p> <p>Many institution-level indicators show successes achieved; to demonstrate it is</p>	
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	<p>“closing the loop” the Institute has an opportunity to present direct evidence that its improvements in delivery are followed by better assessed results in CLOs and PLOs .</p>	
<p><b>4.C.</b> The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.</p> <p>3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.</p> <p>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</p>	<p><b>4.C.1</b></p> <p>Institute goals for student retention are clearly defined (68% Fall-to-Fall enrollment), and is done for completion rate (goal of 34% based on the IPEDS 150% framework). The Institute also tracks its performance against norms from the National Community College Benchmarking Program (NCCBP).</p> <p>The school has an integrated Student Success Center to promote student retention, and in 2017 was recognized with the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Retention Excellence Award for innovative work to help student succeed. Institutional success is further evidenced by its exemplary trend in student retention.</p> <p><b>4.C.2</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech has an internal database managed by the Southeast Tech IR office, which tracks a wide variety of cohorts, disaggregated by program and student demographic groups. Data are also collected from IPEDS and NSC for retention and completion rates and from NCCBP for persistence rates.</p> <p>Reports are made available the enables ready access to data, which supports the decision-making process. Reports are available on an as needed basis and persistence data is being collected and reported via STInet so that all employees have access.</p> <p>The predominant metrics here are institutional and key student group retention and graduation rates, disaggregated where possible by program of study, to indicate the degree to which it is meeting student needs.</p> <p><b>4.C.3</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

<p>measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)</p>	<p>The Administrators use analyzed retention data for their weekly reporting process. Analyzed data are also used as a part of the Annual Planning process. Evidence on how these reports and retention information are used to make improvements was not documented.</p> <p><b>4.C.4</b></p> <p>Processes and methodologies for the collection of and analysis of retention, persistence and completion data do reflect good practice. However, there is no evidence that this good practice relative to process informs any key decisions made because of these data collection processes.</p> <p>There is no evidence the loop is closed in the analysis of this data. Lack of benchmarks limit the ability of the institution to use this data effectively to facilitate targeted improvements decision making.</p>	
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**Criterion 5. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness**

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

Core Component	Evidence	Screening Feedback
<p><b>5. A.</b> The institution’s resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>2. The institution’s resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes</p>	<p><b>5. A.1.</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech works in a cooperative arrangement with the state of South Dakota and the Sioux Falls School District in a shared services approach to accounting, purchasing, treasury, employee benefits, and operations to share common resources and uses state funding for individual needs</p> <p>The Institution demonstrates efficiencies of scale within this shared services model, maintaining its own processes to ensure the support of its institutional operations in strategic planning, budgeting, capital improvement/equipment planning, and technology planning.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

<p>are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.</p> <p>3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.</p> <p>4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.</p> <p>5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expenses.</p>	<p>Planning is conducted annually, involving internal and external constituent groups in the process. These planning processes appear to be understood, repeatable and transparent in their ultimate documentation.</p> <p><b>5. A.2.</b></p> <p>Evidence that the resource allocation decision-making process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by allocations to other areas by adhering to the following procedures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allocates resources consistent with the goals and objectives of the strategic plan;</li> <li>2. Allocates resources to create a culture of continuous improvement and service excellence in support of Southeast Tech's mission;</li> <li>3. Optimizes the quality of budget information available to decision makers;</li> <li>4. Engages stakeholders at all levels and provide avenues for input;</li> <li>5. Evaluates historical revenue performance and cost center expenditures;</li> <li>6. Allocates resources efficiently, effectively, and equitably across the Institute;</li> <li>7. Incentivizes revenue innovation and new program development;</li> <li>8. Maintains existing reserves and aligns requested expenditures with projected revenues.</li> </ol> <p>These steps confirm institutional engagement in the resource allocation process however; it does not provide evidence of a specific process and its supporting methodology and metrics that are used to support each activity.</p> <p><b>5. A.3.</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech has clear guidelines and goals in place for each new fiscal year, which it uses to guide the annual planning processes. (See procedure listed above in</p>	
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	<p>5.A.2). These steps provide evidence that the allocation and planning of all forms of resources occur in support of the mission, vision, and strategic plan.</p> <p>Operating budgets are adopted on an annual basis incorporating elements of Southeast Tech’s 5-year Capital Plan, which assures that infrastructure improvements, repair and maintenance projects, and equipment additions and replacements are scheduled, reviewed, revised, and updated annually.</p> <p><b>5 .A. 4.</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech has processes in place to collect the need for training and professional development at three levels:          Department/Program (team meetings),          institutional level (in-service committee or collected through performance evaluations),          and externally from stakeholders.</p> <p>Departmental training is funded at that level and can typically be accommodated within program training budgets, with larger funding requirements made through the annual planning process. All employees are invited to attend campus-wide in-service days, which have funding allocated during the annual planning process. Campus-wide in-service days provide additional opportunities for professional development. All training opportunities are prioritized based upon employees goals established through the annual performance evaluation, as these goals are aligned with the strategic plan.</p> <p><b>5. A.5.</b></p> <p>A multi-level review and decision (AP3) process is used to ensure budgets reflect adopted guidelines and support stated goals and objectives. The Budget Committee, consisting of the Administrative Team and a faculty and staff representative, review the</p>	
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	<p>final budget and make additional adjustments.</p> <p>The Council begins the process of reviewing and approving the budget during its April meeting. The budget is reviewed by the board in April and approved in July. Once adopted, the budget is deployed by the immediate supervisor and the cost center employees. Cost center managers receive their reports on request.</p> <p>The Administrative Team reviews finances weekly and the VP for Finance shares such information monthly in all-employee meetings.</p> <p>Policy provisions allow for administrative adjustments (transfers) in the budget in \$1K-\$10K range, and the Board must approve adjustments over \$10K.</p>	
<p><b>5.B.</b> The institution’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>5.B.1</b></p> <p>The board acts upon recommendations of the President relating to policy, appointments, programs salaries, financial reviews, and other important aspects of the institution. It regularly receives updates on the financial health of the institution.</p> <p><b>5.B.2</b></p> <p>The roles of various entities in the overseeing of the institution are set in the by-laws of Southeast Tech Council and the School Board Policy Manual. These give direction on oversight by the various groups for the institution.</p> <p>The board acts upon recommendations of the President relating to policy, appointments, programs salaries, financial reviews, and other important aspects of the institution.</p> <p><b>5.B.3</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

<p>3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.</p>	<p>All internal stakeholders are adequately informed about major issues and have sufficient opportunity to provide input, particularly through the strategic and annual planning processes</p>	
<p><b>5.C.</b> The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.</p> <p>1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.</p> <p>2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.</p> <p>3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.</p>	<p><b>5.C.1</b></p> <p>Aside from input from departments and divisions provided by the representative Strategic Planning Committee, the completed strategic plan is presented to stakeholders for final comment. After Board approval, annual plans are then derived from the strategic plan.</p> <p>Annual Plans are aligned to the budgeting process and include all aspects and entities of the institution. Each entity has a role to play in the annual plan development and implementation. Afterwards the Administrative Team finalizes the annual plan, which is then shared with the Council and board for approval. The Futures Team, the Council and the Board review this process.</p> <p><b>5.C.2</b></p> <p>Southeast Technical College has a comprehension, well established system for strategic and annual planning. These systems ensure active input and participation from all stakeholders. These processes are designed to ensure all strategic and annual plans fit within the defined mission, vision, and values.</p> <p><b>5.C.3</b></p> <p>All internal stakeholders are adequately informed about major issues and have sufficient opportunity to provide input,</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

	<p>particularly through the strategic and annual planning processes.</p> <p><b>5.C.4</b> The annual review of the strategic and annual plans provide an opportunity to take into account changing circumstance such as decreased revenue and/or increased expenses and to make adjuncts.</p> <p><b>5.C.5</b> Opportunities and potential threats are considered in the planning process. The Information Technology is particularly involved with monitoring trends within technology.</p>	
<p><b>5.D.</b> The institution works systematically to improve its performance.</p> <p>1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>5. D.1.</b></p> <p>Communication about quality initiatives flows among the teams and administration, facilitated by the Futures Team. The Futures Team is also responsible for seeing that all internal and external stakeholders are aware of quality accomplishments.</p> <p>Southeast appears to have a clear process for deployment and selection of improvement projects; however, there is no clear evidence on how these are evaluated to provide clear evidence of its impact on operations. The Institute uses indirect (activities) and at times anecdotal measures to evaluate its performance.</p> <p>While Southeast Tech appears to work systematically to improve its performance through consistent application of tis Deploying Actions Process, it has a limited set of metrics by which its documents evidence of performance in a majority of its operations.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the Futures and Administrative teams to assure that the Institute's CQI process is making an evident and widely understood impact on the Institutional culture and operations. The</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear and well presented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but could be improved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or incomplete</p>

	<p>reporting by all teams/committees to the Futures Team assures that the Team is aware of all initiatives and their status from across campus.</p> <p><b>5. D.2.</b></p> <p>Southeast Tech demonstrates its ability to readily articulate actionable insights gained toward improvement of institutional effectiveness, though it frequently struggles to tie data and metric results to those insights in a way that would show direct connection between the process component of reflection and the sequential component of planning for improvement.</p> <p>Reflection is the key to learning from CQI initiatives; therefore, reflection is part of the Deploying Actions Process (6P1) for every individual initiative. To assure that teams/committees also reflect on the processes used within the team/committee, summer retreats are frequently used to not only set the course for the next academic year but to reflect on the accomplishments and opportunities for improvement from the previous academic year. Evidence in closing the loop on this reflection activity, however, is an opportunity for the Institute.</p>	
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