

# **Assurance Argument**

# Northwood Technical College

**Review date: 9/19/2022**



# Northwood Technical College



Grit and resilience were resounding themes we heard when conducting focus groups with our students to choose a mascot representing the student body in early January of 2020, traits that have embodied our students over the course of the College's 110-year history. Little did we know then how the pandemic would test those skills and the College. We are proud to say that not only did Northwood Technical College staff and students quickly pivot and adapt to the stressors of the pandemic, building supports for faculty and students to succeed in its mission of prioritizing "Learning First", the College also continued on its vision of "An Innovative Journey", advancing the College and innovating how we provide supports and programming for students.

In the midst of the pandemic, the College successfully evolved its name, rebranding as Northwood Technical College and adding a mascot, Blaze the Bear. We built a digital badging system and worked with UW-Superior to create University Transfer Degree Associate of Arts and Associate of Science programs. We renovated administrative office space into a Health Education Center with the latest technology in simulation that will be used by students across the District. We created an Innovative Technology and Learning Center to better serve students with tech, research and supports while helping faculty adapt to technological tools to enhance their teaching. We sought competitive grants in collaboration with local partners to invest in advanced manufacturing mobile training labs to reach targeted populations to help fill the skills gap. We expanded our apprenticeships and dual credit options for high school age students and all while maintaining high ranking and ratings on the quality of our education and student outcomes. We have taken on the challenge of redeveloping collegewide outcomes and prioritizing assessment strategies. That culture of grit and resilience that resonated so strongly with students has provided the backbone to continue to blaze the trail in support of our mission and vision, so our students and staff truly "Experience. Success."

- Northwood Technical College President Dr. John Will

# 1 - Mission

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

## 1.A - Core Component 1.A

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The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

## Argument

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### 1.A.1

The Northwood Technical College [mission](#) was created with the goal of serving all residents across the 11-county region of northwest Wisconsin. The process involved a [wide variety](#) of the public it serves along with College staff. Students, advisory committee members, business and industry representatives, community agencies, staff and faculty provided input through surveys, dialogue groups, and steering committees. By [unanimous vote](#), the Board of Trustees (Board) adopted the mission, validating it every two years as part of its [review process cycle](#).

The [current mission](#) was reviewed and [adopted](#) by the Board in 2021. Following a comprehensive strategic planning process, the College mission statement was approved by the Board. The [mission, vision, values, and College tenets](#) (MVVTs, see [Acronym Dictionary](#)) were reviewed at public forums and other meetings to solicit stakeholder input. Feedback is reviewed by College leadership for potential revisions and recommendations to the Board. During the last review, the Board suggested a minor modification to the mission statement, changing the word 'effectiveness' to 'growth.' The definition of 'personal growth' is clearer than 'personal effectiveness.' Based on this recommendation, a modification was made to the mission statement:

*Mission statement after June 2021: Learning First- Learning is our passion. As Northwest Wisconsin's leader in technical education, Northwood Technical College creates dynamic opportunities for career preparation and personal **growth**. We are committed to making each and every experience with us meaningful and professional.*

### 1.A.2

Northwood Tech's [MVVTs](#), and [strategic plan](#), approved in June 2021, explain the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of the College—in particular, as identified in the [Board's ENDS policy](#) as providing the regional economy with an educated, skilled, diverse, and dynamic workforce that is worth the expenditure of resources. The mission and related documents align with the academic program offerings and support services specific to the students, focused on career preparation, personal growth, quality, and the regional economy.

The MVVTs, reviewed on a [two-year cycle](#), are revised and approved by the Board. Additional input is gathered regarding the mission during [strategic planning cycles](#), with the MVVTs being reviewed at public forums and other meetings to solicit stakeholder input. The feedback is evaluated by College leadership for potential revisions and recommendations to the Board. The Board also monitors the College's performance on the [ENDS policy](#) each year as required by District Board Policy to ensure Northwood Tech maintains proper emphasis on education for the workforce in the economic region. Under Board policy, the [ENDS goal](#) aligns with the mission, vision, and values of the College.

The strategic plan, supporting the mission of the College, is updated regularly (e.g., [2015-2018](#), [2018-2021](#), [2021-2023](#)) to ensure relevancy and to consider changing organizational, economic, and community needs. The [current strategic plan](#) identifies strategic actions, goals, and measurable outcomes within five themes, all of which advance the mission to *create dynamic opportunities for career preparation and personal growth* and to reflect the vision of *education is a lifelong journey of learning and discovery*. Progress on the strategic plan actions are [monitored by College leadership](#), reviewed annually by the [Board](#), and [shared with faculty and staff](#). The [College Effectiveness Measures](#), linking the strategic plan with metrics for key College operations, is updated and reviewed annually by College leadership and the Board to monitor performance related to learning opportunities and services at Northwood Tech.

### 1.A.3

Northwood Tech's [mission](#) identifies the College as "*Northwest Wisconsin's leader in technical education...for career preparation and personal growth*," indicating individual learning takes priority through hands-on technical education serving all residents of the 11-county region in northwest Wisconsin. Consistent with the mission, the College offers academic [programs](#) including two-year associate degrees, one- and two- year technical diplomas, short-term technical diplomas, certificates, apprenticeships, industry credentials, adult basic education, and customized training to meet the specific needs of regional business and industry.

Documents related to the mission statement also identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents. In particular, the [strategic plans](#) and annual budgets ([FY21](#), [FY22](#), [FY23](#)) guide and fund the College's operations, aligned with the mission. Alignment of the budget and mission related statements is required by [Board policy](#) with the expectation that budgets follow the ENDS priority of "Northwood Technical College exists to provide the regional economy with an educated, skilled, diverse, and dynamic workforce that is worth the expenditure of resources committed." The [College Effectiveness Measures](#), shared on the [website](#) specifically identify constituents served by the College through its learning opportunities and services, allowing leadership to monitor performance in key mission-driven areas within the College.

### 1.A.4

Northwood Tech's academic offerings, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission of "*Learning First.*"

### ***Academic Offerings***

Consistent with the mission of creating "*dynamic opportunities for career preparation and personal growth,*" Northwood Tech's academic offerings are developed to meet the varied needs of the students in the 11-county region in northwest Wisconsin. As of Spring 2022, the College offers [95 programs](#), including 24 Associate of Applied Science degree programs; 1 Associate of Science in Liberal Arts (AS); 1 Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts (AA); 9 two-year Technical Diploma programs; 27 one-year Technical Diploma programs; 15 less than one-year Technical Diploma programs; 11 technical certificate programs; and 7 apprenticeship programs. [Career pathways](#) identify entry and exit points in each program, with 9 [pathway certificates](#) (pg. 33-36) available. Northwood Tech is actively engaged in workforce training throughout the region. The Workforce and Community Development Division (WCD) offers continuing education opportunities, [customized training](#), certification courses, [seminars](#), [personal enrichment](#), and technical assistance to a [businesses](#) and community members throughout the region. Additionally, the College provides opportunities for [adult basic education \(ABE\)](#), [English language learner \(ELL\)](#), and [high school diploma/GED/HSED courses](#) throughout the region, including specialized courses such as the GED Bootcamps that provide a fast-track preparation for GED testing.

Northwood Tech provides programming and services both on- and off-campus. The College offers programs, courses, and services across the region at four campuses and four centers. Campuses include the [Ashland](#) Campus in Ashland County, [New Richmond](#) in St. Croix County, [Rice Lake](#) in Barron County, and [Superior](#) in Douglas County. Centers include the Balsam Lake Outreach Center, Hayward Outreach Center, and the Health Education Center in Shell Lake. The new, centrally located [Health Education Center](#) in Shell Lake will also provide the latest simulation equipment to students across the entire eleven-county district. In addition to College facilities, regional high schools host dual enrollment courses and academies. Additionally, Northwood Tech meets the needs of students through multiple course [delivery options](#), including remote or online programming. As articulated in the College's [vision statement](#), the College embraces "*innovative theories, techniques, and technologies to ensure success in a changing world.*" While Northwood Tech has a long history of using technology for remote learning, the COVID-19 pandemic rapidly expanded [alternative delivery](#) to meet changing student needs. In 2020, [instructional delivery options](#) were reviewed and revised the definitions to better communicate the various options that students have for attending class.

Guided by the mission, expanding access to programming to meet the regional workforce and student needs is a priority at Northwood Tech. Program offerings mirror [regional economic and workforce needs](#). Northwood Tech's introduction of the University Transfer Degrees-AA/AS in fall 2021 enables students to earn 200-level general education credits in preparation to transfer to a four-year university. Additionally, as part of the [2015-2018](#) and [2018-2021](#) Strategic Plans, the College has focused on developing [transfer agreements](#) with 30 different four-year institutions for students to continue their education.

As stated in the mission, the College provides "*dynamic opportunities*" throughout the 11-county region, including high school students. As a growing segment of Northwood Tech's enrollment profile, the College [collaborates with regional high schools](#) to offer advanced standing ([articulated credit](#)), [Start College Now](#), and [dual credit](#).

### ***Student Support Services***

Northwood Tech's offers a variety of support services to help students succeed both remotely and at all campus locations. Services include: academic advising, [academic services](#), [adult education](#) and College preparation, career development, accommodations, financial aid, health services, the [library](#), student life, [technology assistance](#), and more. Such support services evolve with the changing needs of students. For example, the Innovative Teaching and Learning Center (iTLC), created in 2021, aids the students in their technology and research ventures, as well as supports them in their academic goals (iTLC [Organizational Chart](#), [Services Flyer](#), [Website](#)). Support services are described in detail in 3.D.

### ***Enrollment Profile***

The [enrollment profile](#) is consistent with the College's mission. In 2020-2021, Northwood Tech's unduplicated headcount was 13,723, resulting in a total of 2,043 FTEs. Of these FTEs, 68% were enrolled in associate degree programs, 22% in technical diplomas, and 11% in continuing education trainings, courses, or seminars. Most students, 79%, reside within the 10,000 square mile, 11-county region in northwestern Wisconsin. The [population of the region](#) was estimated to be 330,323, growing approximately 2.6% over the past 5 years. Currently, one out of every 24 residents receive some type of training or service from the College.

The Fall and Spring FTE and Enrollment Reports provide insight into the enrollment profile of Northwood Tech's undergraduate students. In Spring 2022, 87% of [Northwood Tech students](#) (pg. 7) were white and 13% were students of color. The percentage of minority population served is slightly higher than the minority population across the region (7%). The northwestern Wisconsin region lags the State of Wisconsin in [educational attainment](#); about 27% of the district's population has a bachelor's degree or higher compared to approximately 31% across the state (U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts). Furthermore, in Spring 2022, 45.5 % of Northwood Tech program students are first generation, and 56% of students report being economically challenged.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Northwood Tech data shows that more [students](#) are attending college part-time than full-time. In response, Northwood Tech introduced a [#FitMyLife](#) marketing campaign to highlight course scheduling that offered consistent evening or online core courses. With the growth in part-time students, new part-time schedule options like the [Nursing Part-Time program](#) and part-time curriculum checklists (e.g., [Accounting](#), [E-Child](#), [EMT-Paramedic](#), [Paramedic Technician](#), [Human Resource Management](#), [Leadership Development](#), [Nonprofit Leadership](#), [IT-Web and Software Developer](#)) have been created to show students pathways to degree completion

#### **1.A.5.**

Northwood Tech clearly articulates the College mission through public information. To encourage awareness, the MVVs are regularly featured in College publications, signage, and communications. The mission is posted in the buildings, [catalogs](#) (pg. 6), the [College website](#), [reports](#), and [presentations](#), allowing students, staff, community members and other stakeholders to view during daily activities and events. Additionally, students encounter the mission in the [Student Handbook](#) (pg. 3) and College [catalog](#) (pg. 4). Faculty and staff find the mission statements in the [Employee Handbook](#) (pg. 6) and [employee onboarding](#) (pg. 3) and [training materials](#). In addition to the website, the mission is shared with the public through documents such as the [strategic plans](#), [Board Policies and Procedures](#), and [Fact Book](#) (pg. 9). Even with a [name change](#) in 2021, the [mission of "Learning First"](#) remains unchanged and is articulated with stakeholders as such.

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## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

### Argument

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#### 1.B.1

The actions and decisions by Northwood Tech demonstrate its educational role to serve the public. Guided by its [mission, vision, and values \(MVV\)](#), the College works collaboratively with employers, community members, taxpayers, legislators, and other agencies to ensure the needs of students are being met and to support the larger community. Fundamental to the mission statement is "*Learning First*," which focuses the College's efforts on offering a wide variety of courses to meet the educational demands of individuals and employers in Northwest Wisconsin. The vision of education being a "*lifelong journey of learning and discovery*," coupled with the core values of empowerment, excellence, innovation, integrity, and collaboration, reinforce the College's focus on the public good and are reflected in the [strategic plan](#) themes of Transferability, Program Optimization, Perception, Rebranding, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion.

Part of Northwood Tech's mission states "*As Northwest Wisconsin's leader in technical education, Northwood Tech creates dynamic opportunities for career preparation and personal growth.*" To serve 1 in every 24 residents, the College gathers [input from stakeholders](#) through program advisory committees, ad hoc community groups, participation in community events, [listening sessions and forums](#), committees, chambers of commerce, and economic development boards. Success in serving the public is captured through individual responses in the [Graduate Follow-up Reports](#) and [Five-Year Follow-up Survey](#)

Courses and training are available and accessible to residents and businesses of northwest Wisconsin and beyond through traditional and virtual options, including offerings available through our outreach centers. The College conducts [needs' assessment surveys](#) to capture the needs and offer appropriate training from adult basic education and short-term continuing education certificates to technical diploma and associate degree programs. The Strategic Plan, needs assessments, advisory committees, student surveys, and Employer Impact Survey Results are all used to guide programming. The Workforce and Community Development (WCD) division also develops and offers [training and assessments](#) with short turnaround times based on business and industry immediate workforce demands.

Education is provided through [Academic Programs and Certificates](#) in efforts to reach all in our service area through our Adult Education and GED/HSED Training along with our Associate

Degree, Technical Diploma, and Certificate Programs. Based on [community input](#) (pgs. 181-192) the recent addition of [AA and AS Transfer Agreements](#) allows Northwood Tech to provide transfer opportunities to the University of Wisconsin (UW) System, creating more options for education within northwest Wisconsin.

To further serve the public, Northwood Tech offers continuing education programming, including [personal enrichment, College for Kids, and senior programming](#) through our WCD Division Continuing Education (CNED) Class Information. WCD also offers [workforce training options](#) (pg. 12) for businesses of all sizes which includes customized training, technical assistance, consortium training, and open enrollment professional development seminars.

Northwood Tech staff serve on [17 workforce boards, economic development corporations, and other community organizations](#) to better understand business and community needs and develop training partnerships with local and regional entities. Another example of serving the public includes a partnership between Northwood Tech College’s New Richmond campus and the City of New Richmond. Collaboratively, the College and the city have run the public, education, and government [cable channel \(TV6\)](#) since 1985 to supply local programming.

The College serves the public by providing space for community activities such as poll-worker training, voting, food distribution, and recycling. Staff and students aid in regional [community service efforts](#) by taking part in events such as road-side cleanups, and collections for local food shelves and families in need. Northwood Tech has also shared resources and facilities to provide [vaccination clinics, financial aid assistance,](#) and many [other community events](#).

Although Northwood Tech is one of 16 Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) institutions, the College has significant autonomy in identifying how to best serve the public as demonstrated by the existence of a local [Board](#), tied to the communities it serves.

### 1.B.2

As a public technical college supported through local and state funding, Northwood Tech prioritizes its educational responsibilities as reflected in the [MVV](#). The College does not focus on generating financial returns for investors or contributing to a parent organization or other external interests. Supporting the mission of “*Learning first,*” the College is intentional in delivering quality educational programming and services, accessible throughout the 11-county region we serve. Guided by the Board [ENDS policy](#), “*Northwood Technical College exists to provide the regional economy with an educated, skilled, diverse, and dynamic workforce that is worth the expenditure of resources committed.*”

Northwood Tech’s budget expenditures reflect the prioritization and commitment to its educational mission, with the primary use of its funds for educational programs, services, facilities, and equipment with the remainder servicing the College debt and funding enterprise activities.

*Table 1.B.2 Educational Expenses*

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Educational Expenditures</b>	<b>Budgeted Educational Expenditures</b>	<b>Percent of College Budget</b>
2021	65,705,949	67,699,727	87.93%

2020	66,336,102	67,660,328	86.96%
2019	68,232,857	67,660,328	86.96%

Source: [Actual Expenditures Summary](#)

As a public institution, three major revenue streams support Northwood Tech, as outlined under Wisconsin State Statute Chapter 38: [tuition and fees](#), [state aid](#), and [local property taxes](#). The budgets developed from the revenue streams to create “[creates dynamic opportunities for career preparation and personal growth](#)” are regularly monitored, with financial information disclosed to the public in annual budgets (e.g. [2020-2021](#), [2021-2022](#), [2022-2023](#)), actual income and expenditures in audited financial statements (e.g. [2019](#), [2020](#), [2021](#)), [board meetings](#), Northwood Tech’s [website](#), and other communication channels reaching various public groups.

### 1B3

Northwood Tech actively engages with and responds to the needs of external constituents. While there are a variety of purposes and partnerships, the over-arching purpose of this engagement is to meet the needs of students. Engagements are guided by the [Ends Policy Statement](#): “*Northwood Technical College exists to provide the regional economy with an educated, skilled, diverse, and dynamic workforce that is worth the expenditure of resources committed.*” and the [College’s mission](#) of “*Learning First.*” External engagement is primarily focused on four major segments: business and industry/employers, regional boards and nonprofit organizations, institutions of learning, and the community.

Fulfilling the needs of regional employers in business and industry involves a variety of engagement techniques. For example, [advisory committees](#) provide a way for faculty and staff to engage with business representatives to gather input on curriculum, programming, and assessment results. These committees consist of employers and others related to each program area to advise the program and ensure graduates are meeting competencies for local jobs to meet employers' needs. Some specific examples from advisory committee minutes include the [Welding program](#), with regional companies contributing funding for necessary equipment and direct support of students with scholarships to meet unmet needs, the IT- Network Specialist program starting an [IT-Cybersecurity Specialist](#) degree, and the [Diesel program](#) with [advisory committee members](#) providing space for hands-on learning. Additionally, the College’s WCD division engages with business and industry to provide customized workforce training and technical assistance, tailored to meet the specific needs and date, time, and location of local businesses. In the past five years, the division has provided training to [473 companies and technical assistance](#) to 43 companies. Additionally, through the WCD division, the College offers a broad array of [seminars and conferences](#) (pg. 12) throughout the 11-county region.

Northwood Tech also engages its external constituencies in area regional organizations that support community development. Economic development boards, workforce committees, and other organization and board partnerships provide critical two-way communication regarding regional and industry trends. College staff are involved and/or members in [over 90](#) local, regional, and state level of Economic Development Councils (EDCs), chamber of commerce/main street organizations, workforce and apprenticeship boards, emergency government/public safety organizations, and other organizations. Partnerships with industry sectors and nonprofits provide [clinical](#) and [internship sites](#). The [Alliance Agreement](#) with Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) provides another

example of engaging with external agencies and organizations.

Fulfilling the needs of Northwood Tech's educational partners involves collaborations with regional school districts, and colleges and universities throughout the state and country. The College collaborates with [K-12 districts](#) throughout northwest Wisconsin to provide career information and career opportunities to their students. These collaborations yield access to Northwood Tech College credit for high school students through multiple credit-earning options including Start College, dual credit and advanced standing, and youth apprenticeship. The [WTCS Fact Book](#) (pg. 10) reports that 1,754 high school students earned 6,928 credits at Northwood Tech. Additionally, the College has agreements with 12 regional school districts to provide [driver's education training](#) to students, serving 3069 students in 2020-2021.

Partnerships with other institutions of learning provide opportunities for a larger audience of students to benefit from courses and training at Northwood Tech. College and university partners, including WTCS colleges and other 2 and 4-year colleges and universities, develop [transfer and articulation guidelines and agreements](#) as well as [new and updated degrees](#). As part of [strategic planning](#), transfer agreements were developed to other colleges and universities for each of Northwood Tech's associate degree programs. The College's collaborative efforts with the new Associate to Bachelor's/Arts and Associate to Bachelor's/Science (AA/AS) degrees has earned [recognition from a partner university](#).

Active engagement with community members and organizations to meet their needs is another critical link that supports the College's mission. The strategic planning process includes research and [input from multiple stakeholder groups](#), including the greater community. Staff and students support [local community/charitable organizations](#), such as the Northwood Tech Foundation, Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, plus community homeless shelters, community clinics, food and winter coat drives and animal shelters. ABE training is offered at each campus and outreach center, as well as county jails, the International Center for ELL, Division of Vocational Rehab (DVR) and affiliated agencies. An example of engaging external constituencies throughout the communities in the region Northwood Tech serves includes the recent name change of the College. A multiphase process, [input](#) (pgs. 5-6) was gathered from over 1500 community members, alumni, employers, and community influencers. Engaging with the College's external constituencies is a [core value of collaboration](#): *"We value partnerships that enhance learning, promote economic development, and improve quality of life."*

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## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

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The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

### Argument

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#### 1.C.1

As appropriate within the mission of "*Learning First*," Northwood Tech encourages curricular and cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success. The College's vision provides guidance in preparing students: "*Education is a lifelong journey of learning and discovery. We embrace innovative theories, techniques, and technologies to ensure success in a changing world.*" The encouragement of curricular activities begins with understanding the communities and employment needs within the College's 11-county region. These needs drive curricular programming, [aligning credentials with workplace opportunities](#), ensuring students gain competencies needed for workplace success. Through its 95 [academic programs and certificates](#), the College acknowledges and embraces the complex and varied communities it serves, and the multi-faceted needs of a demographically and economically diverse student body.

Northwood Tech identifies broad categories of knowledge, skills, and abilities students are expected to develop and perform because of their overall experiences at the College called Employability Essentials (EEs). Learning activities and assessments from courses mapped to the EEs demonstrate how faculty develop and [assess](#) these skills so students are prepared for a multi-cultural and changing workplace and society. Occupational programs map these skills along with their program outcomes in program curriculum maps and assessment details, as described in Component 4.B.1.

Multiple efforts within courses support the mission, connecting student learning with [informed citizenship](#) and work place success through [student internships, clinical experiences](#), capstone projects, externships, and practicums. Additionally, the introduction of High Impact Practices (HIPs) into the general studies courses as part of the College's AA/AS degrees introduce students to global awareness, undergraduate research/scholarship, and writing-intensive courses in preparation of informed citizenship and workplace success. The HIPs are used for the AA/AS assessment, as outlined in 4.B.1. Additionally, [curricular activities](#) that include the use of Handshake job positing tool, career fairs, resume writing, and interviewing skills support workplace success.

In addition to curricular learning activities and assessments, students have many co-curricular opportunities to support and encourage the development of informed citizenship and workforce success. Northwood Tech has a history of providing quality co-curricular [student activities and organizations](#). Defined as activities that support the curriculum, co-curricular activities provide

students with opportunities to develop leadership skills, gain insight, serve the community, acquire competence and experience, strengthen occupational preparation, learn, and apply democratic procedures, and explore worthwhile leisure activities. Central to co-curricular activities at each of the campuses are 4 Student Life Coordinators, 40 co-curricular club advisors, and 3 extra-curricular [club advisors](#) at the College. A wide variety of events and activities focus on providing opportunities on each campus to develop the EEs. Even throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic, [co-curricular activities](#) were developed that support civic engagement and future workplace success. For example, activities such as [A Peace of My Mind](#), highway cleanup, [Student Senate](#), Constitution Day Display, and speakers on domestic violence, veterans' issues, and diversity, as well as donation drives, support civic engagement. Student Services leadership and the ASL Team established the goal of assessing EEs within co-curricular activities in 2021-2022, starting with Communicate Clearly. Survey [results](#) will be shared with advisors, faculty, and ASL Team to use in planning and improvements in Fall 2022.

### 1.C.2

Northwood Tech's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations. Reflected in the [strategic plan](#), the College seeks to "create an environment welcoming to everyone through diversity awareness and removing barriers in the learning and working environment." The College is committed to providing equal access and equitable experiences through its activities for all its students, employees, and community members.

The College maintains [multiple policies and procedures](#), that guide processes and activities, ensuring respect of the unique needs of all individuals. These policies and procedures are available to staff, students, and the community on the College's [website](#), [Student Handbook](#) (pg. 178), and [Employee Handbook](#) (pgs. 9-10). Staff also have access to all policies on the internal intranet, the Connection. The College also provides contact information for discrimination and other complaints on the [website](#), [Student Handbook](#), and Employee Handbook. Furthermore, the Marketing and Communications department requires all documents and student resources to include the [Equal Employment Opportunity & Non-Discrimination Notice statements](#).

Through institutional policies, its organizational structure, and its personnel, the College demonstrates its inclusive and equitable treatment. In the spring of 2019, the [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion \(DEI\) Team](#) was formed to lead a collegewide plan aimed at fostering inclusive practices across the organization. [Twelve workgroups](#) were established, meeting several times throughout the year to achieve the goals of the [Five-Year Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Plan](#) (2019-2024). With an extensive list of deliverables, the progress of the Five-Year Plan is measured annually through the WTCS Client Reporting System, a data system that collects information about student and employee populations. The work of the DEI Team aligns with the College's [strategic plan](#), which identifies diversity, equity, and inclusion as a strategic theme.

Under the leadership of the DEI Team, a [Local Equity Report](#) was created in 2020 to look at gaps in access and success for Northwood Tech students and staff along with a short-term (one year) and long-term (four year) plan to address the equity gaps and advance inclusion across the district. [Collegewide segmented success data](#) shows that some segments of the Northwood Tech student population are not as successful as others. For example, Northwood Tech's FY21 undergraduate enrollment percentage of 12.57% was greater than the 10.72% of minorities represented in the overall 11-county district population; however, program 3-year completion rates and retention rates of minority students lags that of white students. The [Local Equity Report](#), coupled with the College's [Perkins V Plan](#), details these data along with targets, plans, and activities designed to close

achievement gaps, as described in detail in Subcomponent 4C.

Activities and processes within the Student Affairs division demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations. For example, in 2018, the College adopted an [open access admissions model](#), moving away from mandatory entrance assessment scores for a majority of programs. Resources and services ranging from [accommodation support services](#), which supports students with accommodation plans, to the [Veterans Services Resource Center](#), which helps veterans with their benefits and the transition to academic life, exist to meet the wide range of student needs. Multiple campus and outreach locations have been designated as [dementia friendly environments](#). Direct student engagement opportunities exist as well, including various [student organizations and clubs](#). Specific examples of resources supportive of inclusive and equitable treatment of students include mental health counseling resources; privacy rooms for nursing mothers, minor medical administration (e.g., insulin shot), meditation, prayer, or a quiet space; veterans advocacy, rooms, and resources; and student life organizations and activities that support diversity.

Inclusive and equitable treatment occurs within the classroom. *Practicing inclusivity*, one of four key [EEs](#), or collegewide outcomes at Northwood Tech, are part of academic programs. Courses across Northwood Tech's general education curriculum incorporate diversity-related competencies and are outlined in greater detail in Component 4.B.1. and 3.B.3. Universal design for learning is used as a framework to design learning environments that are accessible. To ensure information is accessible to all populations in the classroom, the College deployed Blackboard ALLY software in the fall of 2020 to check accessibility in its Blackboard courses and added closed captioning to its videos. The DEI Team provides [resources](#) on the College's website to educate and support the college community.

The employees of Northwood Tech play a key role in supporting processes and activities that demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations beginning in the hiring process. [Implicit Bias Training](#) is required annually of those serving on recruitment teams. Diversity training is an activity that begins when staff and faculty arrive and continues through their career with the College. During the [onboarding process](#), new staff complete an activity on culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Professional Development Office coordinates with the DEI Team to provide [professional development opportunities](#) for faculty and staff that support inclusion and equitable treatment of students and other College community members.

Many of Northwood Tech's [state and federal grant projects](#) address the unique needs of diverse populations through initiatives focused on equity and inclusion. Examples in grant funding include:

- Expansion of student support services to include targeted success supports for economically disadvantaged, single parent, and first-generation students.
- Addition of [Multicultural Student Success Advisor](#) to work with students of color, providing assistance in navigating the college experience and a college-wide mentorship program
- Increased services in Employability Skills and ABE offered to incarcerated individuals at local jails.
- Increased financial assistance in childcare, fuel support, and utilities expenses to historically underrepresented populations.
- Provision of grant funding for students in careers in which their gender is underrepresented.

### 1.C.3

Northwood Tech has created a structure that provides a foundation to foster a climate of respect among diverse students, faculty, staff and administrators through its [mission, vision, values, and](#)



[tenets](#). These foundational documents provide an overarching theme of respect, influencing policies, procedures, activities, and behaviors in the College. Respect is implicitly and explicitly stated in these foundational documents. For example, at the core, is the mission of “*Learning First*,” emphasizing the importance of “*making each and every experience meaningful*,” inferring a respectful climate. Respect is also implied throughout each of the College’s [value statements](#).

Additionally, the [College Tenets](#), the principles developed to guide continuous improvement efforts and support the mission and vision, help develop a climate of respect. “*All individuals are valued*,” “*Diversity is respected and embraced*,” and “*Dialogue takes place in a safe, open, empathetic, and respectful environment*” explicitly state support of fostering a respectful climate.

In 2017, Northwood Tech adopted On Course as a framework of respect for the culture of the College due to the [direct alignment](#) with the Northwood Tech Tenets. On Course, developed by Skip Downing in the early 1990s, is built on the recognition that “People who are successful (by their own definition) consistently make wiser choices than people who struggle.” Downing believes that every situation offers choices and identifies [eight principles](#) that lead an individual to make wise choices. On Course was presented as [professional development for staff](#) over a five year period and the [outcomes](#) showed an improvement in each of the eight principles. On Course provides a common framework between students and staff. Every new hire completes professional development on the On Course principles as part of their onboarding program, and the On Course framework is provided to students in general studies courses and in the Academic Support Center (ASC).

The [2021-2023 Strategic Plan](#) supports a climate of respect, by identifying diversity, equity, and inclusion as a key strategic theme. The strategic goal is to create an environment welcoming to everyone through diversity awareness and removing barriers in the learning and working environment. Strategies include improving access and outcomes for all learners, especially populations with demonstrated gaps in student success. Recruitment and retention efforts for students and staff focus on creating an inclusive environment that is welcoming and accessible for all.

The College continues to implement strategies on addressing improvement for underserved populations specifically through the [Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment \(CLNA\)](#) which is designed to guide a college through a critical look at their career and technical education programs with a focus on equity. Through this process the College engages stakeholder groups to identify areas for improvement and examine equity gaps in program enrollments, employability skills, career pathways, career fields, diversity of faculty, staff, students, and advisory committees. Student populations are identified in the [Perkins CLNA](#) who need more support and/or barriers removed for improvement. Northwood Tech’s [Perkins Plan for FY20-23](#) focuses on how the College will resolve the identified gaps.

The climate of respect is fostered through operational processes and activities. Policies and procedures ([G-112](#), [G-113](#), [G-134](#)) related to equal opportunity, harassment, and non-discrimination provide consistency and accountability within operational processes, supporting a respectful climate. Results from the [College Employee Satisfaction Survey \(CESS\)](#) help gauge the college climate. In the category of [Campus Culture and Policies](#) (pg.18), staff identify top areas of satisfaction as “*This institution promotes excellent employee-student relationships*,” and “*Faculty, administrators, and staff take pride in their work*,” receiving ratings above 4 on a 5-point scale. Furthermore, satisfaction scores on the [Work Environment category](#) (pg. 23) show high ratings, indicative of a respectful climate. For example, “*My supervisor pays attention to what I have to say*” scored 4.14 out of 5, “*The work I do is appreciated by my supervisor*” score 4.13, and “*The work I do is valuable to the institution*” scored 4.09.

In the classroom, the [Student Code of Conduct](#) (pg. 194) establishes guidelines for respectful student behavior. Elements of respect are embedded within the EEs, assessed as part of the student learning. For example, the EEs of *“Demonstrates Professionalism-Develop relationships, engage in workplace activity, and apply ethical standards. Display self-determination with recognition of one’s relation to the world and others;”* and, *“Practice Inclusivity-Recognize and acknowledge social and cultural complexities. Demonstrate a commitment to respecting and embracing a diverse society”* support a climate of respect. Students recognize the College’s efforts in fostering respect with diverse populations. According to the [Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventories](#) (SSI) (pgs. 8-9), Northwood Tech students indicate progressively higher satisfaction on the scale of Responsiveness to Diverse Populations with each survey administration, rating satisfaction 6.28 out of 7 in 2022.

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- Northwood Tech Assessment Handbook 8-2022
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- Tenets aligned with On Course Principles
- Three-Year Perkins Grant Summary
- Veteran Students Resource Center webpage

## 1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

### Summary

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Northwood Technical College's mission of "Learning First" guides all aspects of the College's operations. The mission and related documents are clearly stated and publicly articulated. Developed through a comprehensive process, the mission reflects the context of Northwood Tech, a public institution meeting stakeholder needs' throughout Northwest Wisconsin. College priorities align with the mission, vision, values, and tenets, including the strategic plan and budget. The programs and services offered align with the mission, meeting the needs of the students throughout Northwest Wisconsin.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

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

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The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

### Argument

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#### 2.A.1

The Northwood Tech Board adopted the current [MVVTs](#) statements in [June 2021](#). In accordance with the [Board Policy: Annual Board Monitoring Schedule](#) and [Board Policy: Governance Mission, Vision, and Values](#), the statements are formally reviewed by the Board for relevancy and reaffirmation on a two-year cycle. The mission and related documents, originally developed by the institution through a process with input from students, staff, faculty, advisory committee members, business and industry representatives, and community organizations, are traditionally reviewed during the strategic planning cycle. The strategic planning cycle allows for pertinent data and feedback (e.g., [Environmental Scanning](#), [SWOT Analysis](#)) from stakeholders to be collected and signal any necessary changes to the Board.

#### 2.A.2

Northwood Tech operates with integrity, reflected in its [core value](#) of integrity: "*We value honesty, accountability, and diversity in an open and ethical environment.*" The emphasis on integrity is embodied within the financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

The College has established [institutional policies and procedures](#) to guide expectations of fair and ethical conduct across the organization, complying with regulations and requirements upheld by WTCS, the state and federal government and associated agencies, Higher Learning Commission (HLC), and other accrediting bodies. The successful operation and reputation of the College is built upon the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct of its [governing board](#), [employees](#), and [students](#) (pg. 194). These policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and published on the College's internal website, the Connection, the College's [website](#), the [District Board Policies](#), the [Employee Handbook](#), the [Student Handbook](#) (pg. 192) and other College publications. The practices, expectations, and guidelines help the College operate with integrity, providing guidance to the governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

#### *Financial Functions*

Northwood Tech works diligently to uphold its financial integrity. This diligence has resulted in the College maintaining an [Aaa from Moody's Investors Services](#), the highest rating attainable. Guided by [fiscal management policies and procedures](#), ethical behaviors are modeled at all times throughout Administrative Services and Business Services. All transactions and decisions are processed and considered within the framework of accuracy, proper accounting treatment, and independence in relation to objectivity, using the [WTCS Financial and Administrative Manual \(FAM\)](#). While the standard of ethical behavior can be met by following policies and procedures, it is even more beneficial to understand the value of the rules and the basis behind them. This allows for consistency in how ethical dilemmas are approached and the resulting decisions.

To aid in mitigating the risk of unethical behavior, as well as ensuring processing and reporting accuracy, the department segregates the duties of various tasks, especially as they relate to the custody of assets and payroll. All transactions go through an approval process of at least one level, and many through multiple levels. This includes all cash disbursements, transfers, deposits, procurement contracts, vendor maintenance, budget controls, and payroll changes. All processes reflect Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) accounting principles. Additionally, to mitigate unethical financial behaviors, College leadership disclose investments and businesses annually through a [Statement of Economic Interests](#) to the Wisconsin Ethics Commission as required by [Wisconsin Statute Chapter 19.43 and 19.44, Code of Ethics](#).

Review of financial data occurs on an ongoing basis and includes [biweekly reporting](#) of operational budget versus actual data, [monthly reporting to the board](#) of general fund comparative data to the Board, as well as numerous [divisional specific financial reports](#) that are disseminated to the applicable parties for monitoring and review. Assessment of the College financial data includes an annual financial audit (e.g. [2020](#), [2021](#)) and A-133 audit (e.g. [FY20](#), [FY21](#)) which is conducted by a contracted independent accounting firm. During this annual audit, transactional testing is completed to test internal controls. Additionally, staff can be selected for interview by the audit firm to determine if gaps in internal controls exist. Over the course of the past 10 years, the College has received unqualified audit opinions.

Northwood Tech complies with federal, state, and institutional requirements in the receipt, disbursement, and reporting of financial aid data and funds. This is guided by [specific standards and procedures](#) including those for compliance with FERPA, maintenance of institutional eligibility, determination of student eligibility, and verification of satisfactory academic progress. This is verified through annual audits. The College maintains an approved [Program Participation Agreement](#) with the Department of Education (DOE).

### *Academics*

Integrity is foundational to academics at Northwood Tech, as affirmed by the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Outlining student behavioral expectations inside and outside the classroom, this code of conduct promotes academic honesty and provides students with a process for addressing concerns. Prohibiting dishonest activities such as cheating and plagiarism, the code of conduct is published in the [Student Handbook](#) (pg. 194) and in a [standardized syllabus section](#). Academic integrity includes ensuring fair treatment through student due process rights, expressed in [Academic Appeals](#) and [Student Complaint](#) policies, published in the [Student Handbook](#) (pg. 202,199) and the College website. Grade appeal and [complaint](#) information is analyzed annually to ensure that policies are relevant and fair, as well as to gain a holistic picture of trends.

In addition to policy, the College has adopted and integrated tools and training to support academic

integrity. To encourage academic integrity in testing environments, the College uses [Respondus Lockdown Browser](#), a custom browser that locks down the testing environment within Blackboard, the College's learning management system (LMS). Another tool used to support integrity in the classroom is [SafeAssign](#), a tool used to prevent plagiarism and to create opportunities to help students identify how to properly attribute sources. [Plagiarism awareness tools](#) are also available to students. Northwood Tech has also purchased the services of [Grammarly](#) which also serves as a plagiarism detector and assists in improving writing skills.

The College's value of integrity can be found within academics at the program and course level. A number of programs align ethical behaviors with program outcomes (e.g., [Criminal Justice Studies](#), [Dental Assistant](#), [Health Information Technology](#), [Medical Coding Specialist](#)). A number of courses focus on ethics and integrity. For example, the College offers an [Introduction to Ethics: Theory and Application](#) course, embedded in the University Transfer Degrees - AA and AS. [Students recognize](#) the College's efforts in operating with integrity, with SSI results relating to Criterion 2A showing increasing ratings over the past six administrations.

### ***Human Resources and Auxiliary Functions***

Northwood Tech works to ensure integrity in relationships with its employees. The [Employee Handbook](#) details a number [employment practices and expectations](#) for College staff and faculty. Employees are expected to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct, and to always exhibit a high degree of personal integrity.

Human Resources upholds fair and ethical behavior through the determination, advocacy, and communication of employee issues and concerns per [Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Sexual Violence Complaints Policy](#) and [Non-Discrimination/Non-Harassment Compliance Policy](#). Additionally, Human Resources provides a comprehensive and interactive [accommodations process](#) that follows ADA and applicable state and local laws.

The recruitment process at Northwood Tech encourages ethical behavior on the part of hiring managers and hiring committee members. An example is the [recruitment process](#), which includes guidelines for composition of recruitment teams, roles and responsibilities of team members, and sample scripts. [Standardized forms](#) are used for the screening and interview processes to provide equal consideration as shown in this sample recruitment packet. Additionally, all hiring team members are required to participate in an online [Unconscious Bias Training](#) prior to serving on a recruitment team. These standards ensure an equitable process for all candidates, and ethical behavior of team members. Additionally, Human Resources maintains [job descriptions](#), [occupational qualifications](#), and [task lists](#) for all budgeted positions at the College. All job descriptions contain standardized cultural competencies that reflect the MVVTs, and On Course Principles.

In addition to the policies and procedures described, the College maintains various practices to guide critical functions, such as employee recruitment, training and development, employee relations, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. One of the ways Northwood Tech fulfills its Mission of Learning First is by [communicating](#) all professional development opportunities to all staff. New hires are first exposed to the College's MVVTs through an [online orientation course](#). This course also includes lessons relating to fair and ethical business practices include, but are not limited to: Title IX, Accommodations, Affirmative Action and EEO. In addition to this orientation course, all employees complete [mandatory training curriculum](#), which includes the following topics: Harassment

Prevention, Records Retention, FERPA and workplace safety. Upon hire and annually, each employee is required to review and indicate understanding of all areas and expectations outlined in the [Handbook and Appendices](#) and this is tracked in the staff learning management system, Maestro. Handbook and Appendices are reviewed semi-annually, and updates are approved by CLT and Board and communicated via email to all staff. Additionally, College leadership discloses investments and businesses annually through a [Statement of Economic Interests](#) to the Wisconsin Ethics Commission.

Northwood Tech maintains integrity in its operations by providing stakeholders with a mechanism for providing feedback and resolving complaints. The college has an established employee [complaint resolution procedure](#) and [process for complaints related to discrimination or harassment](#) for staff and students. The college maintains a systematic process for collecting, tracking, and resolving complaints. An [annual report](#) is analyzed and submitted to the WTCS. Additionally, Human Resources run EOE/AA compliance reports annually, with results used as the documentation in the [Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Plan](#).

Individual departments, offices, and projects within the college adhere to a variety of other guidelines related to integrity. Northwood Tech's administrative policies and procedures are updated as necessary and at a minimum are reviewed by appropriate divisions and departments on a [five-year cycle](#). Revision and deletion recommendations are submitted to the CLT for review and staff are notified via email of approved updates.

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- Task List Template
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- WTCS Financial and Administrative Manual

## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

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The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

### Argument

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#### 2.B.1

Northwood Tech takes care to ensure the accuracy of its representation to the public and students. Multiple forms of communication mechanisms allow the College to present itself clearly and completely, including the [College website](#), [news media releases](#), [advertising](#), informational print materials (e.g. [College Viewbook](#), [Impact magazine](#)), and [social media channels](#), reviewed by the Marketing department. Comprehensive communications such as the [College Catalog](#) provide information about the College's academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, governance and accreditation. In all materials, the [College ensures accurate information](#) is provided, presenting Northwood Tech's brand.

Northwood Tech's [website](#) is the primary source for providing transparent information about the College to the public including governance and the [Board policies, agendas and minutes](#), [financial and budget reports](#), [administrative policies](#), [student policies](#), [accreditation information](#), and a searchable [staff directory](#), providing contact information for all faculty and staff.

The College identifies and presents the most up-to-date, comprehensive information about [academic offerings on the College website](#) including program descriptions (e.g., [Accounting](#), [Nursing](#), [Welding](#)), [admission requirements and process](#), [curriculum checklists](#) (e.g., Accounting, Ag Power, Welding), [student and graduate outcomes](#), location and delivery mode of classes, [estimated costs](#), and [accreditation information](#). Also found on the website is the [College Catalog](#), [updated annually](#) by the College's Curriculum Office and Marketing department. Some [programs have a handbook](#) specific to the program that clearly states policies related to program entry and re-entry requirements, academic standards when they differ from the general student handbook.

To ensure the accuracy and currency of information, regular reviews of information occur by various College stakeholders. For example, all academic program materials are [updated annually through the curriculum modification process](#) by the Curriculum Office. This process includes updating the College Catalog, program pages on the website, specialized accreditation, and recruitment materials. The website is reviewed regularly by various College stakeholders as guided by the Marketing Department to ensure accuracy and compliance with accessibility standards. Owners of information or data on the website provide website updates through a ticketing system on the Northwood Tech intranet for assignment and completion. To further ensure accuracy of information, [administrative policies are reviewed](#) a minimum of once every five years by the CLT, with [some policies reviewed](#)

[annually by the Board](#). Student Affairs updates all support information, [student handbook](#), and student policies annually or in response to changing compliance requirements. [Annual financial reports](#), [security reports](#), [professional licensure](#), and student achievement are updated by departmental data owners annually.

## **2.B.2.**

Northwood Tech ensures evidence is available to support claims made regarding the educational experience at the College. With the mission of “[Learning First](#)” and the marketing tagline of “*Experience. Success.*”, Northwood Tech has developed a reputation for career-focused [degree and certificate programs](#). Aligned with regional occupational needs, the academic offerings impact the educational experience and student success (Graduate Follow-up reports: [FY21](#), [FY20](#), [FY19](#)), supporting its mission and brand on College's website. Additionally, the [College monitors](#) key indicators demonstrating its commitment to “*Learning First.*”

The educational experience at Northwood Tech expands beyond academic programming. Within the Northwood Tech region, [one out of every 24 people](#) are served by the College. [Customized training](#) for businesses and a wide array of [personal and career enrichment courses](#) provide evidence of the College's commitment to address workforce training needs in the 11-county district. Quality faculty, with credentials and real-world experiences, also contribute to the educational experience claims made by the College. A successful educational experience requires the employment of [qualified faculty](#) (pgs. 244-249), professional development opportunities, maintenance of equipment and facilities, program evaluation, and the assessment of student learning. (See Criterion 3.A, 3.C, 4.A and 4.B for details).

Northwood Tech provides experiential learning opportunities to students to support the educational experience. Many programs at the College provide learning opportunities with essential hands-on experiences within their chosen career field. Over the past 3 years, 2,836 students completed an [internship, practicum, or clinical experience](#), helping students build connections with employers. Additionally, co-curricular activities support the educational experience through the multiple opportunities to experience an enriched educational environment. These include programs and services offered through [Student Life](#) and other [student clubs](#) allow students to [connect with peers and engage outside the classroom](#) while focusing on academic and career interests.

Employer relationships are essential to the mission of Northwood Tech, with these relationships supporting community engagement and economic development throughout the service region of the College. The WCD Division at the College, using [Contract Training Guidelines](#), provides customized training to employers and offers continuing education courses to the community, with [key metrics monitored](#) as part of the College Effectiveness Measures. [Program advisory committees](#) support College engagement within the community. Currently, 66 advisory committees consisting of 772 members guide programs to help develop a prepared workforce for northwest Wisconsin. [Regional employers report](#) satisfaction with Northwood Tech and its students. These [reports are publicly shared](#). Additionally, to support regional economic development, Northwood Tech staff serve on [17 workforce boards, economic development corporations, and other community organizations](#) to better understand community needs and develop training partnerships with local and regional entities.

## **Sources**

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- Annual Security Report 2021
- Board meeting agendas and minutes webpage.pdf
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- Brand Style Guide
- Campus Living Rice Lake Campus webpage
- CNED catalog samples Sp 2021-Su 2022
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- Print ad samples
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- Regional Employer Reports
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- Students engaged in academic and career interest samples

## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Argument

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#### 2.C.1

The Northwood Tech's [District Board](#) consists of nine-members that serve three-year staggered terms per Wisconsin Statutes as outlined in the [Board Appointment General Information](#). Each year, three members are appointed by a committee consisting of the county board chairpersons of the counties within the College district. The Board is composed of two employers, two employees, three additional members, one school district administrator, and one elected official who holds a state or local office. The Board officers are elected at the annual organization meeting of the Board on the second Monday in July per Wisconsin Statutes [Chapter 38 Sec. 38.08\(3\)](#) and detailed in District Board-Governance Process [Policy II.E.- Board Officers](#).

The Board approves College goals, is a liaison to College stakeholders, and is responsible for the review and adoption of the [College's strategic plan](#) and [budget](#). The [District Board Policies](#) related to the Board's fiduciary responsibilities are documented specifically in policies IV.A., IV.C., IV.D., IV.E., IV.F. The Board service ranges from months to 30+ years, ensuring continuity, with the leadership of long-serving members while providing College leadership the autonomy to make decisions related to programming, budget initiatives, and community service.

All new Board members are required to attend new [Board member orientation](#) and have additional training opportunities that include: [District Board Association](#) meetings, the [Association of Community College Trustees Leadership Congress](#), and the [National Legislative Summit](#). Ongoing opportunities exist for Board members to learn about College programs, services, and students. For example, in 2022, Board members learned about services and student experiences through an [interactive scenario](#). Additionally, Board member training on all legal responsibilities is provided at the bi-annual [Wisconsin District Boards Legal Issues Seminar](#) (see also [Legal Responsibilities of Boards](#)).

#### 2.C.2

The Board's deliberations reflect the College priorities through its annual review of the [College's MVV](#) and through the approval and monitoring of the [College's Strategic Plan](#). The Board shows priority in enhancement of the institution through monitoring of essential College functions and priorities as outlined in the [Board Monitoring Schedule](#). According to [Board Policy: Board Responsibility](#), the primary responsibility of the board is to provide strategic leadership while employing the President for oversight and administration of the institution. Specific responsibilities of the board include serving as the official governance link between the College and the community; employing and assessing the President; enacting governing policies; and, monitoring College effectiveness. Examples of specific board actions taken to preserve and enhance the institution include [review and approval of the College's strategic plan](#); adoption of the [College's budget](#); and, [approval of the new AA/AS degrees](#) and the new [Electricity Construction Apprentice program](#).

Board meetings, held on a monthly basis, are open to the public and subject to the [Wisconsin Open Meetings Law](#) (see [Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 38](#) Sec. 38.04, 38.08, 38.10, 38.12, 38.14). The news media is alerted to all meetings and [meeting minutes](#) are published in the newspaper of record within 45 days. The Board's deliberations and actions are posted publicly in its meeting minutes.

### 2.C.3

The Board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations. Per the District Board-Staff Relationship [Policy III.C.- Monitoring College Effectiveness](#), the Board monitors College effectiveness through internal and external reports, and direct Board inspection.

Annually, the Board reviews its Monitoring Schedule (see 2C2 above) to identify monthly internal reports that will keep Board members apprised of the College priorities. These monthly reports include staff and student ambassador presentations (see [student ambassador questions](#) and [minutes](#) from the 02-15-2021 Board meeting), and other periodic Board-related events (see [Board's Events Schedule](#)). Board members have opportunities to meet with district legislators through an open invitation to the Board meetings (see [Board agendas](#) and [legislative invite](#)) and additionally throughout the year (see Board's events schedule above) (see [March 2021 Board Meeting Minutes](#), [October 2019 Board Meeting Minutes](#)).

The Board allows for public audience recognition on agenda and non-agenda items (see District Board [Policy ILL – Audience Recognition](#)). [Meeting agendas and minutes](#) along with meeting dates, times, and locations are posted on the website and are distributed widely to inform internal and external constituencies of decision-making deliberations and board topics. Feedback from constituencies are used in the decision-making process by board members. For example, receipt of input from multiple internal and external stakeholders during the College's rebranding review resulted in a College name change in August of 2021 (see [Name Change and Rebranding](#) web page, [Resolution 21-08](#)).

Board members interact regularly with district stakeholders by participating in a variety of meetings and events. For example, Board members attend Joint Review Board meetings to represent the interests of District constituents inasmuch as TID/TIF use has long and short run impacts on region's property valuations, property taxpayers, and economic development (see Administrative [Policy D-602 – Tax Incremental Districts; Joint Review Board Membership and Responsibilities](#)). This policy is reviewed annually in June (see [June 2021 Board meeting minutes](#)). Furthermore, board members participate in College activities such as commencement ceremonies, Foundation events, and various other campus engagements with the community.

## 2.C.4

The Board commits itself to ethical and businesslike conduct as outlined in District Board [Policy III.I – Board Member’s Code of Conduct](#). Members must avoid conflict of interest with respect to their fiduciary responsibility, must disclose relationships which would have an appearance of conflict of interest, and voluntarily refrain from participation in Board activities where there is a conflict.

Annually, per Wisconsin State Statutes [§19.41 through §19.59](#), the Board reviews its prior designations and either confirms or adopts a new resolution designating non-clerical positions that report directly to the College President (see October 18, 2021 [Board Code of Ethics Resolution](#)). In addition, [Statements of Economic Interests](#), are filed with the Wisconsin Ethics Commission. Board member training on all legal responsibilities is provided at the bi-annual [Wisconsin District Boards Legal Issues Seminar](#) (see also [Legal Responsibilities of Boards](#)).

## 2.C.5

The Board abides by its overarching governing philosophy as outlined in District [Board Policy II.A](#). All Board authority assigned to staff is delegated through the President ([Board Policy III.A](#)). In case of incapacity of the President, the Vice President of Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer is responsible to make all executive decisions ([Board Policy IV.A](#)). Additional day-to-day management responsibilities delegated to the President are outlined in District Board [Policies III.B and IV.G](#).

The President, with [authority to employ staff](#), aligns the leadership and decisions with the College's mission and strategic plan, with the assistance of the CLT. The [CLT](#) consists of the following members: President; Executive Assistant to the President & Board; Associate Vice President, Marketing & Communications; Vice President, Academic Affairs; Vice President, Administrative Services; Vice President, Institutional Effectiveness; and, Vice President, Student Affairs. The CLT and their [respective teams](#) carry out day-to-day operations of the College independent of direct board supervision.

The College’s [faculty responsibilities](#) (pg. 41) include academic oversight through curriculum updates, setting commencement requirements, leadership of program review, practicum and fieldwork coordination, and service on collegewide committees. Specific committees where the purpose includes academic matters are the [Assessment of Student Learning Team](#), [Program Implementation Team](#), and [Course Evaluation Team](#).

## Sources

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- Board Appointment General Information Sheet
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- Board meeting agendas and minutes webpage.pdf
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- Board of Trustees webpage
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- Board Policy III.A Delegation to the President
- Board Policy III.C Monitoring College Effectiveness
- Board Policy IV.A General Executive Constraint
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- College Name Change Info webpage
- Course Evaluation Team approval form
- D-602 TID Joint Review Board Membership and Responsibilities Policy
- DBA-Legal Responsibilities 10-2019
- District Board Policies
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- Legislator Invite 2021-22
- Mission Vision Values Tenets webpage
- National Legislative Summit webpage
- Northwood Tech Organizational Charts 06-01-22
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- Statements of Economic Interests webpage
- Student Ambassador Questions
- WI District Boards Legal Issues Seminar webpage
- WI Open Meetings Law Compliance Guide - May 2019
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- Wisconsin State Statute Chapter 38.08
- Wisconsin State Statute Chapters 19.41 to 19.59
- WTCS Board Policy 100 - District Board Appointments
- WTCS District Boards Association webpage
- WTCS Manual for the Appointment of WTCS Board Members



## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

### Argument

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#### 2.D.

Northwood Tech is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. The pursuit of truth by students, faculty and staff is an expectation shared across the College and is supported by the [Learning College Tenets](#), including the tenets of "Diversity is respected and embraced" and "Dialogue takes place in a safe, open, empathetic, and respectful environment."

A formal commitment to academic freedom and expression is visible in the [academic responsibilities](#) that the College assigns to [faculty and its support](#) (pg. 43) of [faculty development](#). The [Employee Handbook](#) (pg. 52), protects the freedom of inquiry, research, teaching, and expression:

*The freedom of every instructor to present the truth as he/she understands it in relation to his/her area of competence, consistent with course outline, is essential to the purpose of the College and society. Northwood Tech encourages teaching, investigating and publishing findings in an atmosphere of freedom and confidence. As a result, students are exposed to a variety of opinions and beliefs, which leads to greater knowledge and critical thought. Academic freedom should not be utilized as a shield for an instructor's lack of competence, poor performance or general unwillingness to comply with policies and procedures outlined by the College (p. 52).*

Northwood Tech encourages and supports the creative and intellectual efforts of its faculty and staff. The College has created an [intellectual property rights policy](#) (pg. 31), applicable to all faculty and staff. The intention is to [clarify the intellectual property rights](#) (pg. 29) of the individual and the College and what constitutes a copyrightable work.

Further supporting the College's commitment to academic freedom in teaching, faculty play a key role in determining the curriculum, identified in the [administrative policy](#) on curriculum and assessment documentation. As such, faculty have freedom to use the appropriate teaching methods and assessments for their courses; assuring students achieve learning outcomes and complete appropriate assessments. Additionally, faculty select and [order textbooks](#) appropriate to the course and program.

In addition to its commitment to the freedom of expression and pursuit of truth in teaching, Northwood Tech is also committed to the freedom of expression and pursuit of truth in the learning process. The Student Handbook outlines the [Student Code of Conduct](#) (pg. 194), including information on behavioral and academic standards at the College. The [Student Complaint Process](#) and the [Employee Complaint Resolution](#) (pgs. 55-58) process allow students, faculty, and staff with concerns about violations of freedom of expression or hindrances to the pursuit of truth to be reviewed and addressed.

## Sources

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- Instructor job description
- Learning College Tenets
- OER 101 Champion Certificate staff listing and course description
- Policy I-300 Curriculum and Assessment documentation
- Student Complaint Process
- Technology Acceptable Use Handbook April 2020
- Technology Acceptable Use Handbook April 2020 (page number 29)
- Textbook ordering training screenshot

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Argument

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#### 2.E.1

As a two-year college, Northwood Tech's primary focus is [career preparation](#). While the College currently does not coordinate or act as a fiscal agent for any research projects or research grants, it encourages and supports the scholarly endeavors of students, faculty, staff, and educational researchers. Northwood Tech's support of basic and applied research maintains professional standards and provides oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability. Oversight begins with policies: the [Student Code of Conduct](#) (pg. 194) requires students to behave ethically in their educational experiences. The [Employee Code of Ethics](#) guides faculty and staff while acquiring and disseminating knowledge. The process of acquiring and disseminating knowledge requires all students, faculty, and staff to [abide by fair use provisions](#) (Technology Handbook, pg. 28) of the United States [Copyright Act](#) of 1976, with additional [policies governing paper and digital materials](#).

The application of knowledge, an important function at a technical college, requires professional standards. The onboarding process for all staff provides [information on compliance](#) (e.g. FERPA, Cleary), ethical behavior, and fiscal accountability appropriate to the position function at the College. For faculty, the onboarding process helps ensure instructors understand and [support academic integrity in the classroom](#). The College also provides training to faculty in basic research and analysis methods in a [Data and Evidence Analysis module](#).

The College supports research through its Institutional Effectiveness division. Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for research conducted about the College, such as [student demographics](#), [satisfaction](#), [program data](#), [retention](#), [persistence](#), and completion/graduation ([FY21](#), [FY20](#), [FY19](#)). In gathering data and reporting results, IE follows data reporting methodologies and [data definitions](#). When reporting data to external agencies, the College complies with reporting requirements, such as those for [IPEDs](#) or [WTCS](#).

While the focus of the College is on career preparation, Northwood Tech has a procedure for internal and external researchers who wish to conduct research that includes at the College. All [research studies](#) must be [approved by the Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#). The pursuit of scholarly work and research often involves the use of human subjects for data collection and analysis. Northwood Tech's

IRB [evaluates research proposals](#) involving human subjects. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, performing administrative functions of the [IRB](#), serves as the official oversight office for human subject research at Northwood Tech, serving as the central point of contact for investigators, research subjects and regulatory agencies and assuring that the human subject research undertaken is compliant with federal, state, and campus policies.

## 2.E.2

Northwood Tech provides services to support the ethical learning and research practices of students and staff. The Library, available to students and staff, provides guidance on the ethical [use of information resources](#), as well as training on database use and appropriate searching techniques. Resources and books are available for check-out or quick reference on research. The iTLC also maintains [citing resources](#) with style guide information, and tools to assist with attributions required by APA for students and staff. Resources about academic integrity are provided to students during [New Student Orientation](#) and [communications](#) to all new students, referencing the Academic Misconduct Policy. Northwood Tech has also purchased the services of [Grammarly](#) which also serves as a plagiarism detector and assists in improving writing skills.

The [Writing Lab](#), [Math Lab](#), and [Science Lab](#) assist students in the academic pursuits in person and virtually. [Course guides](#) and guides specific to programs (e.g., [Early Childhood Education Guide](#)) are available to assist students in finding scholarly and reliable sources online. These course guides recommend databases, online collections, online books, and other tools that can help students conduct research. Additionally, the [ASC](#), offering support to all students to meet their educational and career goals, provides students with research and study assistance.

Faculty are supported with specific tools to ensure academic integrity. The [Respondus Lockdown Browser](#) "locks down" a computer while accessing Blackboard, [preventing students](#) from accessing other programs or websites while taking an exam. The College also uses [SafeAssign](#) in the Blackboard learning management system to detect plagiarism.

## 2.E.3

Northwood Tech provides guidance to students and staff to ensure integrity of scholarly practice. This guidance begins with the College establishing ethical expectations through a framework of policies. The [Student Code of Conduct](#), published in the [Student Handbook](#) (pg. 194) details ethical behavior for students. [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) (pg. 191) defines and provides examples of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism), consequences of such actions, and an explanation of the appeals process. The Employee Conduct Code, published in the [Employee Handbook](#) (pg. 27), explains integrity expectations of staff, including [ethical use of information](#) (pg. 33) through [Intellectual Property Rights](#) (pg. 31).

New Student Orientation (NSO) provides foundational information to students to ensure integrity. Available in person or online, NSO reviews pertinent information for students new to the College including the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and [Academic Misconduct](#). These modules establish guidance on ethical behavior early in a student's time at the College.

Many resources and services within the iTLC offer guidance related to ethical use of information resources. The [Resource Guide](#) provides tools, tips, and strategies in conducting research. Academic Support provides documented resources (e.g., [APA Formatting](#)), [Course Guides](#); [homework assistance](#) with instructors in the Math, Writing, and Science Labs; and, other writing resources,

such as [Grammarly](#).

Policies within the [Syllabus Guidelines](#) (pgs. 6-7) provide guidance to faculty related to developing syllabi that include information on academic integrity, academic support, and technology support. This information, in turn, provides guidance to students through the [course syllabus](#), which include information on academic integrity. Instructors review these policies and guide students to use methods of research and construction that will meet college expectations. Northwood Tech uses the Worldwide Instructional Design System (WIDS) to create and house its curriculum and to create and store all syllabi. This allows the College to ensure consistency among courses, as well as to ensure various course, program, and institutional policies and supports are included on all syllabi, as applicable to the specific course.

Additionally, specific courses include guidance on ethical use of information resources as part of the curriculum. For example, [English Composition 1](#) require students to learn how to use APA and use proper research practices as part of the course.

#### **2.E.4**

Northwood Tech enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity. The [Student Code of Conduct](#), included in the Student Handbook on the College website and syllabi, outlines the expectations of academic honesty and integrity that all students are expected to know and abide by. This includes the Academic Misconduct Policy. The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) (pg. 191) defines and provides examples of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and creating unfair advantages), consequences of such [actions](#) (pg. 192), and an explanation of the [appeals process](#) (pg. 193).

Enforcing academic honesty and integrity requires a collaborative approach between multiple divisions and departments at Northwood Tech. All policies are reviewed and updated on a regular schedule, with changes reflected in the Student Handbook. Faculty play an important role in enforcing Northwood Tech's policies on academic honesty and integrity. Information on academic integrity is included in [syllabi](#) and shared by instructors in classroom activities. Through technology services, faculty are further supported in efforts to promote academic honesty and integrity. For example, tools such as [Respondus Lockdown Browser](#) ensures honesty during online assessments by preventing students from accessing other programs or websites, and [SafeAssign](#) ensures integrity by detecting plagiarism in written assignments. The physical structure of distraction free testing rooms on each campus, established for computer-based testing, also enforces academic honesty and integrity in testing environments. Finally, data about academic integrity incidents are gathered and analyzed for trends annually by CLT, with only one incident recorded in the past three years. Conversations have started with college leadership to determine if the data accurately reflects incidents.

## **Sources**

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- Academic Support homework webpage
- APA Formatting webpage
- C-500 Policy Research Activity
- C-500A Procedure Research Activity
- College Mission
- College Research Requests 2017-2022

- Course and Resource Guides webpage
- Early Childhood Guide webpage
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- FQAS Data and Evidence Analysis 2022
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- Student Demographics Data
- Student Respondus LockDown Browser
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- Technology Acceptable Use Handbook April 2020
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- Technology Acceptable Use Handbook April 2020 (page number 33)
- WILM and Northwood Tech Data Definitions
- Writing Lab webpage

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

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

### **Summary**

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Northwood Technical College conducts its operations ethically and responsibly. Governed by an independent and autonomous board, the College establishes policies and procedures to guide fair and ethical behavior of the District Board of Trustees, college leadership, faculty, staff, and students. Integrity is a value of the College: "We value honesty, accountability, and diversity in an open and ethical environment." This value is reflected in transparent communications with students and the public, policies about academic honesty, and guidance provided to students and staff on ethical practices. Additionally, academic freedom and the pursuit of truth is valued by the College. Northwood Tech encourages and supports the creative and intellectual efforts of its faculty, staff, and students.

### **Sources**

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*There are no sources.*

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

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

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

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The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

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

### Argument

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#### 3.A.1

Northwood Tech's courses and programs are current and require students to perform at levels appropriate to the credential awarded. Through policy, well-developed systems and processes, the College creates, maintains, and improves the currency and rigor of its offerings. Programs at Northwood Tech follow standards defined and authorized by the WTCS under the [Wisconsin Statute 38.001](#), focusing on degrees and training below the baccalaureate level, including associate degrees, technical degrees, certificates, training of apprenticeships and customized training. The College follows credential credit guidelines established by [WTCS](#), [HLC](#) (pg. 27), and [College policy](#) in terms of the number of credits included in associate degree programs and the proportion of general education courses as part of such degrees.

Northwood Tech currently offers [95 degrees](#) at the following levels: 24 Associate of Applied Science degree programs; 1 Associate of Science in Liberal Arts; 1 Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts; 9 two-year Technical Diploma programs; 27 one-year Technical Diploma programs; 15 less than one-year Technical Diploma programs; 11 technical certificate programs; and 7 apprenticeships. Program and course information, including the general level and expectations of the programs, can be found in the [academic College catalog](#) published on the [College website](#). Program development is guided by a [standardized process](#), built on [WTCS](#) and [College policies](#), which include assessment of industry need; analysis of the labor market; documentation of program feasibility; approval of the district board, WTCS board, and HLC; and, program implementation (e.g., [Electrician Apprentice](#), [Customer Service Manager](#), [Drafting Technician](#)).

New courses are also developed through a standardized process. After approval from their dean, faculty meet with the Curriculum Office to develop new courses, using [guides and checklists](#). New courses are then entered into WIDS. Northwood Tech uses the WIDS to create and house its curriculum. Use of [WIDS](#) is required to clarify course descriptions, competencies, learning objectives,



assessment strategies, create and store all syllabi. This allows the College to ensure consistency among courses, as well as to ensure various course, program, and institutional policies and supports are included on all syllabi (e.g., [English Composition 1](#), [Social Gerontology](#), [Medication Assistant](#), [Guest Relations Fundamentals](#)), as applicable to the specific course.

Programs and courses are reviewed and improved by faculty annually to maintain currency and rigor. Modifications are made based upon changes in industry standards as determined by employers or advisory committees, changes in specialized program accreditation requirements, changes throughout the WTCS (for system-wide curriculum), or changes in standards by the WTCS. Through the annual academic program review process, [faculty review programs](#) and courses with the purpose of developing improvement plans (e.g., [Accounting](#), [Automated Packaging Systems](#), [Gerontology-Aging Services](#)) that affect student learning. The review process also ensures consistency of content and outcomes across delivery modes and location.

In addition to the program review process, Northwood Tech faculty continually update their curriculum. The curriculum [modification process](#), based on [WTCS](#) (pg. 41) and [College policy](#), entails working with the Director of Curriculum and Assessment to ensure modifications meet best practices in curriculum design ([Syllabus & Schedule](#), [Assessments](#), [COS](#), [Learning Plans](#)), and are entered correctly into the College's curriculum-management system, WIDS. As a regularly occurring practice, the College allocates an [annual budget](#) to compensate faculty for curriculum development. Not all faculty seek compensation for curriculum modifications, yet still follow the process the College has established.

Faculty also maintain program currency through connections with industry experts through [advisory committees](#). Advisory committees, comprised of [over 760 members](#) meet annually at a minimum to review and provide input on curriculum, assessment and program outcomes (TSA), articulation agreements, equipment, trends, future opportunities and more. [Minutes are taken](#) at each advisory committee meeting and filed in the Curriculum Office (e.g., advisory minutes regarding [program quality](#), [multiple locations](#), [delivery modes](#)).

The College consistently places graduates in jobs, as evidenced in the annual Graduate Follow-Up Survey ([FY21](#), [FY20](#), [FY19](#)). The most recent survey of 2020-2021 graduates reveals that 93% of graduates in the labor market are employed, same as the previous few years. Additionally, the College conducts a survey of employers ([2022](#), [2017](#)) every four years to collect feedback from employers regarding the skill, knowledge, and overall preparedness of Northwood Tech graduates. Ninety-five employers identified by the 2020-2021 graduates state 86% of graduates meet or exceed mastery of skill and knowledge in the field; 89% meet or exceed the ability to perform technical skills of the profession; and 90% of graduates meet or exceed relevant skill and knowledge base in relationship to real world applications.

A number of external reviewers review evidence regarding academic currency and rigor. Accrediting agencies review evidence of academic currency and rigor as part of the accreditation process (e.g., [Veterinary Technician](#)). For example, Northwood Tech programs maintain [specialized accreditation](#) for 11 programs in which program outcomes are determined and validated to align to state or national standards. Twenty-three additional programs require [professional licensure and certification](#). Professional licensure and certification may require testing with an outside agency, with outcome data available (e.g., [EMT-Paramedic](#), [HIT](#), [Nursing](#)).

The WTCS reviews evidence of student learning through the Technical Skills Attainment (TSA) initiative, which requires each program to assess student achievement of industry-relevant program

outcomes (see Component 4.A.6). Other higher education institutions also recognize the currency and rigor of Northwood Tech's courses and programs through [transfer agreements](#), providing students opportunities for career laddering and further education.

### 3.A.2

Detailed information on all College programs are provided in the [College catalog](#) and on program webpages (e.g., [Accounting](#), [Criminal Justice Studies](#), [Automation for Industrial Systems](#)). The program information outlines program learning goals.

All certificate, technical diploma, and associate degree programs offered at Northwood Tech are developed based on requirements and guidelines from the WTCS Educational Services Manual (ESM) (pg. 9). [Certificates](#) (pg. 32) are WTCS-approved certificates awarded to students completing a sequence of courses within a single program that can lead to employment (e.g., [Dementia Care](#); [Group Child Care Essentials](#); [Tax Preparer Assistant](#)) [Technical diplomas](#) are WTCS-approved programs that focus on hands-on learning of occupational skills, varying in length from less than a year (2 -25 credits) to one-year (26-54 credits) to two-years (55 -70 credits) (e.g., [Dental Assistant](#), [Nursing Assistant](#), [Welding](#), [Agriculture Power and Equipment Technician](#), [Associate of applied science degrees](#) (pg. 10) are two-year programs to prepare students for an occupation, with coursework including general education (15+ credits) and technical studies (36+ credits) (e.g., [Accounting](#), [IT](#), [OTA](#)). The AA and AS Degree, or [University Transfer Degree](#) (pg. 11), prepare students for transfer to accredited bachelor-degree-granting institutions with a minimum of 60 credits. All programs provide curriculum checklists and webpages that identify required courses (e.g., [Accounting Curriculum Checklist](#) and [Accounting Webpage](#)).

Northwood Tech identifies goals known as "program learning outcomes" for every program, which are validated by advisory committees and approved by WTCS. All program outcomes are mapped in the curriculum management system, WIDS. The Curriculum Office works with programs to identify where program outcomes are introduced, practiced, and assessed within program courses (e.g., [Business Management](#), [Machine Tool Operation-CNC](#), [Nursing Assistant](#)). Some programs are [system-wide](#) (pg. 101) and therefore have standard curriculum and program learning outcomes, [across the entire WTCS](#). The College informs students of program outcomes through the academic catalog and program webpages. Additionally, a number of programs have added program outcome alignments to program courses, allowing students to see program outcomes are focused on in individual program courses (e.g., [Social Gerontology](#)).

In addition to the program outcomes, every course at Northwood Tech has defined learning outcomes, known as course competencies, that adhere to [WTCS standards](#) (pg. 47). These competencies are detailed on course outcome summaries (COS), which are provided to students as part of the syllabus (example: [Physical Aspects of Aging](#)). Course outcome summaries are developed in WIDS where faculty may access the WTCS Curriculum Repository for any similar curriculum already developed at other technical colleges in the state. With this repository, courses within the state's technical college programs remain consistent and are continuously reviewed by faculty throughout Wisconsin. COS, including course competencies, are consistent across all instructors, locations, and delivery methods. Specific course descriptions are available in the [academic college catalog](#) and on the [general studies webpage](#).

### 3.A.3

Program and course outcomes at Northwood Tech are consistent regardless of delivery mode or

location. The College uses a variety of [instructional delivery modes](#) to best meet the needs of a diverse student population across an expansive geographical region. The College's primary instructional delivery types include: onsite (face-to-face scheduled meetings in a classroom setting); online; online live (internet live classes); Your Choice (choice of attending online live, onsite, or recorded sessions); flex (individualized workshop environment); hybrid (courses delivered via a combination of modes); and, work-based learning. Courses are scheduled 4-week, 8-week, 12-week, or 16-week time periods, and are offered at one of Northwood Tech's campus locations, area high schools, or other workforce partner sites. [Course completion rates](#) indicate consistency among the different delivery modes and locations, with all students and distance learning students outperforming [national completer success rates](#).

Northwood Tech employs several strategies to ensure program quality and consistency of learning goals across delivery modes and locations. Consistency begins with the Curriculum and Assessment Office, which provides extensive resources to faculty to ensure curriculum is developed according to consistent standards, such as course shells in WIDS; [syllabus checklist](#); [templates](#) for syllabi, [COS](#), [learning plans](#), and [assessments](#); and, [Blackboard minimum standards](#). Faculty also work directly with the Director of Curriculum and Assessment on all curriculum projects, which must be approved by the director. Curriculum is entered into WIDS, the College's curriculum-management system, which requires various areas to be completed before approval. WIDS also serves as the syllabi generator for the College, with all faculty creating syllabi in WIDS. The WIDS Syllabus Generator serves as a syllabi template, which ensures all required information (i.e., instructor information, course competencies, course schedules, College policies, etc.) are included in all Northwood Tech syllabi. All WTCS Colleges use WIDS to ensure syllabi consistency across modalities and locations (e.g., [Criminal Justice - Introduction Syllabi](#)).

Another strategy to ensure consistency and quality is the implementation of the [iTLC](#) at the College. The [iTLC](#) enhances learning by implementing standards and best practices for course design, technology innovation, assessment, student-centered instruction, facilitation, training, and technical assistance, while providing an adaptable environment that is responsive to institutional and instructional goals. With the implementation of the [iTLC](#), the College hired two [instructional designers](#) to work with faculty on a number of projects, from ensuring online courses are consistent and include the necessary rigor, to using various technologies to enhance teaching and learning.

Technology at each campus supports consistency and quality in teaching and learning. Through a cross-divisional summit and series of [townhall meetings](#) in May 2017, Northwood Tech created the Next Generation of Learning ([NGL](#)) process. Based on the feedback, it was determined that we needed to increase our distance learning capabilities and have consistent technology in classrooms throughout the College. In a three-year process, [classrooms](#) were updated to include consistent equipment. Based on additional feedback, another phase of the [NGL](#) process has begun and includes audio upgrades.

To further ensure quality of programs and courses, Blackboard LMS is used for all courses, creating a consistent and predictable experience for students and faculty. Blackboard allows students to view course materials and grades, complete assignments and assessments, or communicate with faculty and other students from any computer or mobile device with an internet connection. Both students and faculty have access to [Blackboard training resources](#). To ensure the quality of online coursework using Blackboard, Northwood Tech used Quality Matters, a nonprofit organization that specializes in quality assurance of online courses. After several years, the College has adopted its own rubric, which calls for [minimum requirements for all Blackboard courses](#). Additionally, the College has

recently adopted the [Blackboard Exemplary Rubric](#) for all courses. Using the [College's standards](#) and the Blackboard Exemplary Rubric ensures consistency among Northwood Tech's online courses and all courses that require a Blackboard shell.

Northwood Tech will be moving all courses to Blackboard Ultra beginning in the Fall of 2022. In order to ensure quality courses a professional development course called "[Getting Started with Ultra](#)" was created to prepare faculty for this transition. All full-time faculty and some adjunct faculty are required to take this course along with Academic Leadership. This course was launched in January 2022 and faculty have until June 2023 to complete the 5 modules. [Module 5](#) focuses on evaluating your course quality. In addition to the course being reviewed by an instructional designer, Module 5 includes an assignment for a [peer review](#) of the course. Currently, 189 staff are taking the course and the plan is to continue using this course for all new faculty.

Faculty also have access to [Blackboard Help](#). This site provides step-by-step instructions and instructional videos that can assist faculty with building their courses and general troubleshooting for all versions of Blackboard. This site is available from within Blackboard Ultra course with a contextual help link on most pages. Blackboard Help is also a [resource for students](#). As with the instructor site, step-by-step instructions and how-to videos are available for both Learn Original and Ultra.

The Academic Program Review Process, which includes data analysis by delivery mode and location, is also used to ensure consistency and quality. [Program data dashboards](#) contain information on student persistence, course completion, retention, and graduation by delivery mode, location, and student demographics. Faculty review and develop improvement plans based on the data (See Criterion 4 for details.)

To support consistency and quality, Northwood Tech uses qualified and trained instructors. All instructors who teach a course must have the academic credentials consistent with HLC requirements as outlined in Assumed Practice B.2 and the work experience and currency required by [WTCS Faculty Quality Assurance System](#) (FQAS). These requirements are consistent for all faculty (including adjunct and dual credit) and across all locations and delivery modes. In programs with specific accrediting and licensing organizations, additional qualifications for occupational coursework may also be required. See Component 3C2 for details.

Finally, Northwood Tech employs strategies to ensure the quality of programs and courses within Dual Credit. Curriculum and rigor expectations are identified in dual credit agreements and identified in the [Articulation Handbook](#). Dual credit instructors are assigned [faculty mentors](#) from the College. Northwood Tech [faculty mentors](#) work with dual credit instructors to ensure course competencies are taught within the dual credit classes by providing curriculum resources and support throughout the academic year. All [syllabi are reviewed](#) (pg. 9) on a three-year cycle for quality and consistency. Training is provided to dual credit instructors (e.g., [CNED flyer](#)) focused on course quality. Additionally, Northwood Tech offers a [Dual Credit Day](#) each fall, which includes mentor meetings and training. In Fall 2022, dual credit instructors will receive training on accessing and using WIDS to create syllabi for spring semester 2023.

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## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

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The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

## Argument

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### 3.B.1

Northwood Tech's commitment to general education is apparent within the College's Purposes ([College Catalog, pg. 6](#)), stating the College provides "general studies courses to empower learners to become active and productive members of society."

Northwood Tech adheres to the General Education Philosophy from the WTCS. [General education in the WTCS](#) "provides a core of knowledge that imparts the common skills, intellectual concepts, and attitudes that every educated person should possess." WTCS includes the following broad skill categories in its general education policy statement: communication, critical thinking/problem solving, ethics, global awareness, inclusive social interaction, mathematical principles, science and technology, and self-determination.

Additionally, general education helps fulfill the missions of the WTCS and college. The [Wisconsin statutes](#) calls for WTCS colleges to "provide occupational education and training and retraining programs, including the training of apprentices, that enable residents to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment at a technical, paraprofessional, skilled or semiskilled occupation. Such programs include general education courses to facilitate student achievement in occupational skills training. The district boards should maintain courses at standards acceptable to national, regional and professional accrediting agencies and associations."

Northwood Tech follows the requirements for General Education courses outlined within the [WTCS' Educational Services Manual \(ESM\)](#) (page 36), which includes a list of approved [General Education Courses](#). General Education courses are systemwide courses that reflect foundational competencies necessary to be successful in subsequent postsecondary coursework in the Communication (801), Mathematics (804), Science (806), and Social/ Behavioral Science (809) areas.



Students enrolled in Northwood Tech's University Transfer Degrees-AA/AS programs must take at least 61 credits in [transfer courses](#), including English (6 credits), Speech (3 credits), Humanities (12 credits for AA and 6 credits for AS), Social Science (12 credits for AA and 6 credits for AS), Health/Wellness/Physical Education (1 credit), Diversity/Ethnic Studies (3 credits), Math and Natural Sciences (10 credits for AA and 20 credits for AS), World/Foreign Language (4 credits), and Electives (10 credits for AA and 12 credits for AS). The program outcomes for the [AA](#) and [AS degree](#) are based on the WTCS General Education identified categories. AAS degrees are required to have a minimum of 15 credit hours of general education courses which must come from the [WTCS Systemwide General Education list](#).

Northwood Tech's four [EEs](#)-Communicate Clearly, Demonstrate Professionalism, Practice Inclusivity, Think Critically also align with The [WTCS General Education categories](#). The EEs serve as Northwood Tech's collegewide outcomes.

Given the importance of general education, Northwood Tech articulates the purpose, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements in numerous publications, including the [Academic Catalog](#) (pg. 26, 36-38); the [college website](#); and program pages for the University Transfer Degrees-[AA](#) and [AS](#). Required general studies courses are identified for each program on its curriculum checklist (e.g., [Machine Tooling Technics, Administrative Coordinator](#)), on the program webpage (e.g., [Machine Tooling Technics, Administrative Coordinator](#)), and in the Academic Catalog. Information on EEs is also published in the [Academic Catalog](#) (pg. 5), and on the [college website](#).

### 3.B.2

The general education philosophy at [Northwood Tech](#) stems from the WTCS General Education framework: *"General Education in the Wisconsin Technical College System provides a core of knowledge that imparts the common skills, intellectual concepts, and attitudes that every educated person should possess."* This framework is comprised of eight broad categories of General Education including Communication, Critical Thinking, Ethics, Global Awareness, Inclusive Social Interaction, Mathematical Principles, Self-determination, Science and Technology. WTCS maintains a the WTCS General Education System [Course List](#), identifying general studies courses to be used as part of general education. All Northwood Tech Associate Degree students are required to complete a minimum of 15 credits in [general studies courses](#), supporting the college's efforts to impart broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to each student receive an Associate Degree.

As part of an [HLC Assessment Academy project](#) in fall 2019, a general education framework was to be adopted by the college. The [CLT](#) and the [ASL](#) Team approved the WTCS framework as Northwood Tech's [general education philosophy](#) within their respective meetings.

From 2007-2016, the WTCS eight broad categories of general education were integrated into practices and assessments through Collegewide Outcomes. Rubrics (e.g., [Oral and written communication rubric examples](#)) were developed and used by faculty in programs. During this time, Collegewide Outcomes consisted of the following components:

- Communicate Effectively
- Demonstrate Critical Thinking Skills
- Apply Mathematics
- Use Science/Technology
- Practice Social Interaction

- Enhance Local/Global Perspectives

In 2016, Northwood Tech began a review of the Collegewide Outcomes (CWOs). Based on feedback from faculty, advisory committees, and academic leadership. The decision was made to streamline the CWO assessment process and to integrate input from area employers, leading to the development of three new CWOs called EEs and the [associated rubrics](#): *Communicate Clearly*, *Think Critically*, and *Demonstrate Professionalism*. A fourth Employability Essential, *Practice Inclusivity*, was developed in 2020 to make global awareness and appreciation of diversity a central and assessed component of our general education philosophy. The ASL Team has aligned the [WTCS framework with the EEs](#) developed at Northwood Tech. This philosophy is grounded in preparing students for success in an increasingly multi-cultural and global workplace and society, requiring skills in communication, critical thinking, and appropriate behaviors.

The four EEs will be integrated into curriculum as appropriate, thus building a strong base for students' academic and personal success. The Curriculum and Assessment Office collaborates with the faculty to [integrate the EEs](#) into all one-year, two-year, and associate degree programs through a detailed curriculum and assessment development process, using WIDS to link these outcomes, program outcomes, and courses. Each [EEs includes criteria](#) for faculty to accurately assess and measure the competency. Some EEs are linked directly to the technical program outcomes, while others are met through general studies offerings or [co-curricular activities](#). More detail on the assessment of the EEs using the rubrics will be discussed in 4.B.

### 3.B.3

Recognizing human and cultural diversity is a priority at Northwood Tech. Historically, the college has demonstrated this recognition. Student satisfaction with Northwood Tech's [responsiveness to diverse populations](#) outscored cohort institutions with consistently high reported satisfaction scores. Currently, as part of the [2021-2023 Strategic plan](#), diversity, equity and inclusion are prioritized as a strategic theme: “Create an environment welcoming to everyone through diversity awareness and removing barriers in the learning and working environment.” A number of specific [strategic activities](#) for this plan with the goals of improving access and outcomes for all learners, especially populations with demonstrated gaps in student success; and attracting, recruiting, hiring, onboarding, training, and retaining a diverse staff that mirrors student and county populations of the region. The [DEI Team](#) developed and implemented action items to support the strategic plan based on findings from the [Local Equity Report](#). The DEI Team collaborates with Professional Development, Student Life, and Workforce and Community Development to offer faculty, staff, students, and the [community speakers and workshops](#) on specific issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. In addition, all faculty must complete the [Embracing Diversity](#) FQAS course that helps faculty create an inclusive and effective learning environment.

The education offered by Northwood Tech recognizes human and cultural diversity, with the college providing students growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world through its programs, courses, services, and student life activities, evidenced by [increasing student satisfaction](#) ratings over the past decade. The integration of strategies to promote diversity and inclusive perspectives are a core component in several programs (e.g., [Human Services Associate](#), [Gerontology](#), and [Early Childhood Education](#)). The University Transfer Degrees - AA/AS programs have a [diversity/ethnic studies requirement](#) ([College Catalog, pgs. 202-205](#)). Several general studies courses incorporate critical competencies that recognize diversity (e.g., [Introduction to Diversity Studies](#), [Oral/Interpersonal Communication](#), [Introduction to Sociology](#), [Introduction to American Government](#)). Additionally, many programs require field experience (practicum, internship,

externships) that acclimate students to diverse work environments, connecting the students to people of different ages, social norms, or beliefs. Finally, the recent adoption of the fourth Employability Essential, *Practice Inclusivity*, provides the opportunity to further strengthen student growth opportunities related to personal awareness and cultural complexities as it is [integrated](#) into the curriculum of all one-year and two-year programs.

The college recognizes the diversity of its students, with programming and services to meet the diverse needs of the students served. For example, the [ABE programming](#) serves the academically disadvantaged, and the [ELL programming](#) is for students who speak limited English. Northwood Tech also supports students enrolled in non-traditional occupations (NTO) through career counseling and retention services specifically designed for the unique challenges NTO students face. WTCS provides [grant funding](#) for Northwood Tech students in non-traditional occupations, striving to increase diversity of the student population by participation in and cooperation with agencies that support veterans, multicultural students, displaced workers, single parents, displaced homemakers, and individuals with disabilities. Finally, the college recognizes the needs of students unique to the region. The college, serving an expansive geographic territory, offers [courses](#) and [programs](#) in [rural communities and virtually](#) to address the educational needs of students.

The Northwood Tech [Student Life program mission](#) is to “engage students by providing out-of-the-classroom opportunities that will assist them in their personal growth and development. Students are offered [speakers and workshops](#) that give them information and experiences with diversity and multicultural perspectives. Additionally, students have the opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities that support and encourage development of personal, workplace, and technical skills in multicultural environments ([pg. 6-10](#)), such as service learning, field trips, and leadership experiences.

### 3.B.4

As a two-year technical college primarily focused on career preparation of students, traditional research and publication scholarship are not central to faculty's work. While processes such as those used by research institutions to track faculty and student contributions to scholarship and discovery of knowledge do not exist, many examples demonstrate how faculty and students contribute to the scholarship, creative work, and discovery of knowledge as appropriate to [Northwood Tech's mission](#). Each program at Northwood Tech provides hands-on application in the classroom and the community, providing opportunities for [scholarship, creative contributions, and discovery of knowledge](#). Faculty also contribute to scholarship through [conference presentations and educational training events](#), [degree attainment](#), [recognition and awards](#), and [professional memberships](#).

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## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. 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, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. 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.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

## Argument

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### 3.C.1

Northwood Tech is committed to attracting faculty and staff that support and deliver academic programming and services to meet the diverse needs of our students. The commitment to [equal opportunity](#) is evident in the recruitment, selection, transfer, promotion, and team appointments throughout the College. Through analysis of Affirmative Action reporting and recruitment data, Northwood Tech has identified strengths and opportunities in ensuring diverse employment within the College. The Northwood Tech [2020-2021 Affirmative Action Plan Annual Report](#) reveals the Disability All Staff population and the overall Race/Ethnic Administrative population remain not representative of our district population. However, both population percentages have increased slightly. In an effort to gain more accurate demographic data from our job applicants, Human Resources has updated the language on the [Voluntary Demographics](#) page that follows each job application to 1) express the importance of understanding the demographics of our applicants and 2) explain that demographic information has no impact on the outcome of recruitment searches and is not seen by recruitment team members.

The College combines action items from the [Local Equity Report](#), [Strategic Plan](#), and [Affirmative Action Plan](#) to direct the work of an established [DEL Team](#). This team meets regularly to fulfill the goals of the Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Plan. Goals from this plan relating to composition of faculty and staff at the College include:

- Goal 1: Emphasize an educational and work environment that reflects, appreciates and celebrates a diverse society.

- Goal 5: Analyze and address employment of staff at the College to match availability percentages for race, sex and disability categories in the general population of the District.
- Goal 6: Create additional outreach to individuals with military service and veteran status.
- Goal 7: Program specific goals will be met to respond to identified protected/underserved populations that exist within the Northwood Tech District to address student and employee recruitment and retention.

Several activities demonstrate the College's commitment to ensuring that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves. In 2022, Human Resources implemented an [HR-specific Facebook](#) page, allowing for a more targeted approach in recruitment advertising. Additionally, a list of key contacts from [area diversity organizations](#) who have agreed to post and share jobs has been compiled and HR emails these contacts directly with information about each external job posting.

All [recruitment team members](#) at Northwood Tech must complete an online [Unconscious Bias training](#) before screening or interviewing candidates. The College plans to add depth to this training using a similar, recently released WTCS training as a resource. Human Resources also developed a [recruiting resource](#) to explain how veteran skills translate to Northwood Tech job qualifications.

### 3.C.2

Northwood Tech maintains sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty and staff members ([Employee Roster](#)). In the 2021-2022 academic year, the College employed 158 full-time faculty and 146 part time or adjunct faculty members. The College has a 12:1 ratio of students to instructor in the program courses. Fifty-nine percent of courses are taught by full-time faculty. Full-time faculty at Northwood Tech have an average of eight and a half years of service.

*Table 3.C.1 Annual Institutional Staff Data 2020-2022*

	<b>July 2022</b>	<b>July 2021</b>	<b>July 2020</b>
Full-time Faculty	154	154	155
Part-time Faculty	553	585	555
Full-time Administration	89	85	89
Part-time Administration	12	12	13
Full-time Staff	119	118	119
Part-time Staff	167	115	224
Turnover Rate	16.86%	6.60%	19.04%

*Resource: Human Resources Department*

*Note: Employees may be duplicated within this chart if they serve more than one role at the College.*

[Full-time faculty contracts](#) for the instruction of credit courses (UGRD/EXED) are compensated based on a total of 1,330 hours with a standard 35 hour, Monday through Friday, work week covering the Fall and Spring semesters. Included within the weekly 35 hours are 22 hours for instruction (also referred to as contact hours) and 13 hours for non-instructional activities including grading,

curriculum management, instructional preparation, meeting attendance, mentorship, and office hours. Faculty divide their time between student contact and other professional responsibilities, such as curriculum development, program direction, assessment, and team or committee work.

The WTCS [state administrative code TCS 3.04](#) establishes the minimum academic, occupational, and teaching requirements for technical college instructors. Northwood Tech incorporates these instructor requirements into its [Instructor Job Description](#) and [Occupational Qualifications by Position](#) document.

### 3.C.3

Northwood Tech adheres to the instructor qualification standards set by HLC and the [WTCS's Administrative Code TCS 3.04](#). The Northwood Tech [Minimum Qualifications of Instructional Staff Teaching for Academic Credit](#) policy outlines how both General Education and occupational instructors meet the standards set by HLC and WTCS to ensure instructors are qualified to teach students enrolled in credit-bearing courses. All faculty job postings include these credentialing standards. Faculty supervisors complete a [Faculty Qualifications Rationale Form](#), indicating how each faculty member meets the instructor qualifications. [Verification of Employment forms](#) confirm and validate a faculty members' occupational experience before their employment at the College.

HR is responsible for all faculty credentialing reviews and maintaining all required documentation required. The [Faculty Credentialing Guide](#) ensures consistency and compliance with the policy. [Qualification Expectation Agreements](#) are created for faculty lacking required credentials as a condition of continued employment at the College. Currently, there is one faculty member at Northwood Tech with an active Qualification Expectation Agreement. Dual credit instructors at regional high schools must meet the same qualifications as full-time and adjunct faculty members as outlined in the [Articulation Handbook](#). Currently, 12 of the 175 dual credit teachers across the district are in the process of earning degrees required to teach Northwood Tech dual credit courses. The College has [received an extension](#) to 2025 from HLC for dual credit instructors to meet qualifications. Northwood Tech received a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development to help dual credit teachers meet HLC standards for faculty qualifications through tuition reimbursement.

### **3.C.4.: Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.**

Northwood Tech annually evaluates all full-time and adjunct instructors per established [policies and procedures](#). The purpose of the evaluation process is to support and encourage dialogue between the instructor and their supervisor(s) on job performance, goals, and personal growth with the ultimate goal of improving success for students. The emphasis of the Faculty Performance Process goes beyond narrowly defined job responsibilities, including cultural competencies, program and course outcomes, student feedback, annual goals, Development Plans, and developing a collaborative working relationship with others.

The [performance evaluation process](#) has a yearlong timeline which follows a fiscal year cycle, beginning with a fall goal setting, mid-year check in and end of year evaluation. The evaluation process steps are the same for all Northwood Tech employees and all evaluations are documented in Maestro. Each individual job group (e.g., faculty, managers) are evaluated on separate competencies. Faculty competencies align with the [faculty job description](#).



In addition to the performance evaluation, all faculty have a classroom observation. Instructional supervisors are expected to observe credit instructors at least once each fiscal year to evaluate lesson plans, materials and resources utilized, student engagement, instructor response, and more. The supervisor completes the classroom observation form and meets with the instructor to provide feedback. This form is then attached to the annual performance evaluation. The supervisor also reviews the instructor's [Blackboard course](#) and [course syllabus](#).

Dual credit instructors have annual classroom observations conducted by a dual credit mentor, who provides instructional feedback. Dual credit instructors are also evaluated by students at the end of each course using the Blue course evaluation system like other full-time and part-time faculty. Additionally, each dual credit course undergoes a full review every three years to ensure that curriculum and learning resources are current.

### 3.C.5

Northwood Tech, as part of the WTCS, follows the guidance of the Wisconsin State Statute (Chapter TCS 3) to support faculty professional development through a program called FQAS. As part of FQAS, [New Faculty Orientation](#) (NFO) is required of all new full-time faculty. After NFO, faculty move to a mentoring and initial professional development stage where they are assigned a faculty mentor for two semesters. Mentors follow processes in the [Mentoring Toolkit](#) when meeting weekly with their mentee.

All new faculty members instructing credit courses must complete the FQAS professional development requirements. Northwood Tech has developed a [Faculty Professional Development Plan](#) based on the administrative code containing two stages: initial coursework and ongoing professional development. The coursework stage currently includes [seven courses](#): 1. Course Design 2. Assessment 3. Teaching Methods & Technology 4. Behavior Management 5. Student Success 6. Embracing Diversity and 7. Data & Evidence Analysis. Full-time faculty have 3 years to complete this initial coursework and part-time faculty have 5 years to complete the initial coursework. Each faculty member is assigned the complete learning plan (all seven courses) in Maestro.

Faculty can [complete](#) the requirements by taking courses at Northwood Tech, submitting an experiential learning portfolio or by [credit for prior learning](#). Northwood Tech will also accept FQAS coursework completed at another WTCS technical college.

After the coursework stage is completed, faculty move to the continuing education stage where full-time faculty are required to document 40 hours of continuing education and part-time faculty are required to document 10 hours of continuing education annually. The faculty member must complete [continuing education](#) in each of the following areas: Instructional Excellence, Student Success, and Currency in their field. Each faculty is responsible for documenting all FQAS activities they have completed into Maestro.

The [Collegewide calendar](#) includes four days dedicated to faculty professional development. The professional development office, in collaboration with the Collegewide Professional Development team and the AALT plans all professional development offerings, including [Faculty Professional Development Days](#). A dedicated collegewide professional development budget funds these activities. The topics for each year are thematic and have focused on under-resourced students, accessibility, diversity, and increasing student engagement

Additionally, each Program Dean has a professional development budget to support specific program

professional development needs for their faculty. Since 2018, this has been budgeted at \$350 per full-time faculty headcount. This amount will be increasing to \$400 per full-time faculty headcount in fiscal year 2023. Deans can pool funds and rotate faculty to support attendance to conferences that require travel. As programs update equipment, [bids](#) include vendor provided training such as with the new simulation equipment in the Health Education Center. Additionally, the Northwood Tech Foundation provides annual [professional development grants](#) to support faculty and staff and the Professional Development Office has purchased [online content](#) housed in Maestro to support faculty and staff professional development.

### 3.C.6

Per the [Northwood Tech Employee Handbook](#) full-time faculty must have a minimum of 8 office hours per week. These hours may include activity hours and can be used to prepare for classes if students have access to the instructor during the designated time. All office hours and instructor contact information (e.g., phone and email) should be posted on the course syllabus and in Blackboard.

Faculty must schedule office hours at times that encourage students to take advantage of their availability. Faculty must also express willingness to make special appointments for students who cannot use scheduled office hours. Faculty are encouraged to inform their students of purpose of holding office hours to clarify that it is an option to consult with faculty for additional assistance outside of the classroom.

As referenced in the [2017](#) and [2021](#) CCSSE Reports, office hours with student-instructor interaction included email communication, opportunities to discuss assignments and grades, and work on other course related items. Students at Northwood Tech rated their faculty interactions as 54.4 (2017) with a mean ranking of 52.4 (2017). In 2021, over 99% of students used e-mail to communicate with their instructor over the last academic year and this was highlighted as one of the "Highest Aspects of Student Engagement" in the CCSSE's Executive Summary.

### 3.C.7

Northwood Tech management and support staff who provide student services are appropriately qualified based on pre-determined qualifications in the [Occupational Qualifications by Position Guidebook](#). The College has specific professional development plans for both [managers](#) and [support staff](#). These plans contain three stages: onboarding, skill-building, and continuing education. The Professional Development Office (PDO) assigns professional development plans on an annual basis and provides ongoing online and synchronous professional learning opportunities. Every new hire must complete compliance courses in the areas of FERPA, safety, collegewide orientation, record retention and specific collegewide technology like Microsoft Teams. A Collegewide professional development budget supports these activities.

Financial Aid Advisors complete the collegewide Support & Technical Development Plan and complete professional development specific to their role. All new Financial Aid Advisors complete Federal Student Aid (FSA) training, which has learning tracks for general student eligibility, verification student withdrawals and [FSA basic training](#) for new staff and they also complete a FAFSA on the [FAFSA demo site](#). Experienced Financial Advisors also conduct training for new staff members on College specific processes. After onboarding, Financial Aid Advisors complete continuing education (webinars, online and/or face-to-face classes) offered by the National Associations of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) and Wisconsin Association of

Student Financial Aid Administrators (WASFAA).

The PDO plans collegewide inservice and other professional development events for all Northwood Tech staff. An [annual schedule of events](#) is shared with staff at the beginning of the fiscal year as well as a monthly [professional development update newsletter](#) to notify all staff of upcoming opportunities. Registration and tracking of event completion is processed through the staff learning management system, Maestro. All employees can self-report training conducted outside of Northwood in Maestro. The PDO also tracks the completion of required training such as safety courses in Maestro.

The PDO in collaboration with subject matter experts create courses specific to the College. Examples include: [Academic Advising](#), Student Referrals and [Co-curricular](#) training. Finally, the College annually sponsors selected employees' participation in both local leadership training (e.g., Leadership Barron County, Leadership Washburn County) and in the [Wisconsin Leadership Development Institute](#) (WLDI). WLDI combines the internationally recognized Chair Academy leadership program with the strengths of the WTCS system.

## Sources

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- 2017 CCSSEE Report - Student-Faculty Interaction
- 2019 - SPA TotalCAREiQ Agreement
- 2021 CCSSE Report - Student-Faculty Interaction
- 2021\_2022 Northwood Tech Articulation Handbook
- 2021-2022 Northwood Tech Articulation Handbook
- 2021-2023 Strategic Plan EVOLVE
- Academic Advising Maestro Training
- Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Plan Annual Update FY21.pdf
- Blackboard Minimum Content Requirements.pdf
- Co-curricular Club Maestro Training
- Diversity Equity and Inclusion Team Charter
- Dual Credit Instructor Observation Form
- Faculty Credentialing Guide
- Faculty Qualification Rationale Form Guide and sample form
- Faculty VOE
- FAFSA CPS Web App Demo System webpage.pdf
- Five Year Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Plan 2019-2024
- FQAS Course Competencies
- FQAS Coursework Completion Options
- FQAS Ongoing Professional Development Guidelines - Final
- FQAS Professional Development Plan v3
- FQAS WI Administrative Code
- FSA Training Center webpage.pdf
- FY22 Foundation Prof Dev Grants-Guidelines and Application
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- FY22 Professional Development Calendar
- FY23 College Calendar
- G-113 J-121 Unlawful Discrimination Harassment Policy
- G122 G122A FQAS CFPL Policy and Procedure

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- General Employee Handbook - Section 2.8.pdf
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- Guidelines for Composition of Recruitment Teams
- HLC Dual Credit faculty qualification ext to 09-2025
- Inclusive Interviewing hiring committee training info
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- Northwood Tech Employee Roster.pdf
- Northwood Tech Jobs Facebook page
- Occupational Qualifications by Position
- Percipio Search Results
- Performance Evaluation Process
- Qualifications Expectation Agreement
- Regional diversity organizations listing
- Support and Technical Professional Development Plan
- Syllabus Checklist.pdf
- Understanding Military Experience
- Voluntary demographics panel in job application
- WLDI Foundation Brochure 22-23

## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

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The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

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

## Argument

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### 3.D.1

Northwood Tech provides support services suited to the needs of students it serves. Based on [student demographic data](#), notable characteristics of students include a large part-time student population with financial challenges. In FY21, 55% of Northwood Tech program students were economically disadvantaged, 62% enrolled part-time, 65% female, and over 75% received [financial aid disbursements](#). The College collects information about students and their needs through a variety of mechanisms including formal surveys (e.g., [COVID-19 Surveys](#), Community College Survey of Student Engagement (2017, 2021), Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory Survey (2018, 2022) and specific College data (e.g., financial aid data; Pell Grant percentages; student self-reported data on economically challenged, academically challenged, and disabilities). Based on data and findings, the College provides student support services to meet students' needs.

Many of the services provided support multiple populations of students and are accessible in person, virtually, and via phone for students located across an 11-county region. Services are outlined on [Northwood Tech's website](#), [MyNorthwoodTech](#), and in the [Student Handbook](#) (pgs. 163-166). Students also learn about services available through printed and electronic informational [materials](#) through the various stages of admissions and enrollment using the [Customer Relationship Management \(CRM\) system](#) (pg. 159). To promote success of students, NSO is provided [in-person](#) and [virtually](#) to connect students with academic, financial, and ancillary support services as they begin with the College. Key student support services include counseling services, financial support, health services, and accommodations support.

The College provides many [services through its counselors](#) in Student Services. Each campus offers counseling office hours by phone, in-person, and virtually, to assist students with academic, career, and/or other college-related issues. Counseling services include career counseling, interest and personality assessment, and educational guidance, and overcoming personal barriers that stand in the way of educational success. A [Student Referral System](#) is in place to assist student who are struggling academically, behaviorally, or find themselves needing additional assistance to complete their program of study. [Referrals](#) can be made to the counseling staff, accommodations specialists, and/or the ASC via the CRM link placed in Blackboard. Counselors may refer students to other internal

College resources or [community resources](#) for more intensive support and assistance. Additionally, the College promotes and provides [virtual mental health services](#). This service provides unlimited access to doctors and therapists and on-demand crisis counseling to students free of charge. Finally, the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) ([Student Handbook, pg. 163](#)) promotes and maintains the safety and well-being of students, faculty, and staff through positive, proactive, and practical risk and threat assessment. The BIT meets to review, document, and provide a [systematic response](#) to College situations involving students showing signs of serious distress or engaging in harmful or disruptive behaviors.

The College works to proactively provide financial support information to students. Financial Aid Advisors at each campus provides students and potential students with assistance to complete their FAFSA and set up the FSA IDs. Northwood Tech hosts College Goal WI each year at the Ashland, New Richmond, and Rice Lake campuses. [College Goal WI](#) is a statewide program in which anyone can receive help completing their FAFSA. Students can also access [Chatbot](#), artificial intelligence technology, to answer financial aid questions 24 hour per day, 7 days per week. In 2020-2021, over \$10.3 million in [financial aid](#) was disbursed to Northwood Tech students. To support students facing financial challenges, the Northwood Tech [Foundation](#) provides students with emergency grants and loans. Since 2018, the [Foundation has provided](#) 112 emergency loans. and over \$64,000 in gas cards, grocery cards, and nutrition assistance. In addition, the [Foundation awards scholarships: 512](#) scholarships were awarded totaling \$212,640 in FY22. Results from the SSI results regarding student satisfaction with financial support since FY10 compared to cohort institutions indicate Northwood Tech [students report increase in satisfaction with financial support](#) over the past six survey administrations and greater satisfaction scores than other WTCS colleges and national benchmark colleges.

[Health Services](#) on each campus works with students in-person and virtually to enhance the educational process by modifying or removing health-related barriers to learning, promoting optimal wellness, and enabling individuals to make informed decisions about health-related concerns. Sample services provided include Basic First Aid, Mantoux Testing, COVID-19 testing, and alcohol, depression and diabetes screenings. The Health Services also provide [wellness activities](#) and coordinate with local healthcare and county agencies to provide additional services.

[Accommodation Services](#) provides academic accommodations to students with learning, sensory, emotional, or physical disabilities to ensure equitable access to academic programs, activities, services, and employment. Accommodations Specialists meet with students in-person or virtually to make reasonable accommodations and to help determine student options for equitable access utilizing alternative media, assistive technology, and other community supports. Additionally, the college expanded student accessibility in Blackboard in FY21 through a software enhancement called Ally. [Faculty trained in Ally](#) create documents that are more accessible to students. This training resulted in 132 courses updates with an accessibility score of 85% or higher.

[Veteran Services](#), with a veteran student advocate, assists military veterans with applying for benefits, such as the G.I. Bill®, navigating the college experience, and providing academic and non-academic support (e.g., [resume assistance](#)). Northwood Tech, designated as a Military Friendly School, provides priority registration for military veterans and military transfer credit review.

Additional support services provided to students include the [Bookstore](#), available on campus and online for students can purchase textbooks, tools, gear and supplies, complete price comparisons, rent textbooks, or [sell textbooks](#). [Career Services](#) assist students and graduates in writing cover letters and resume; developing interview skills; learning about the workplace through workshops, [employer](#)

panels, and job fairs; exploring educational options through college transfer fairs; and, accessing a repository of electronic job postings in the state. Finally, Student Life and other student organizations make up co-curricular programming at Northwood Tech. The organizations offer student events, and provide opportunities for students to develop leadership skills, gain competence, and participate in experiences related to their career area.

### 3.D.2

Student Services and the iTLC play key roles in providing learning support and preparatory instruction to meet the needs of Northwood Tech students.

Addressing the academic needs of students begins in Student Services. In 2018, Northwood Tech implemented an open access model, eliminating entrance assessments for admissions to most programs. Analysis of data following implementation of the model showed no significant change in successful course completion. All students enrolling in technical diploma or associate degree programs are required to complete an admissions meeting with a counselor. Counselors assist with determining the best academic path for students, including preparatory classes or other services prior to program entry. Additionally, every program student is required to take an online precollege survey to identify perceived obstacles to success. Survey results, including the identification of the student's comfort level with reading, writing, and arithmetic, are discussed during the in-person or virtual admissions meeting, allowing for referrals and sharing of appropriate resources.

For the small number of programs that require an entrance assessment (e.g., Nursing, Veterinary Technician, Dental Assistant (Catalog pg. 30), the College uses the ACCUPLACER or ACT assessment results and multiple measures (high school GPA, college coursework completed, etc.) to determine skill levels and to place students in courses and/or programs where they will succeed academically. Online resources and ASC instructors are available virtually and in-person to help students prepare for the assessment. Students who have successfully met the ACCUPLACER or ACT assessment requirements within the last five years or who have earned an associate or baccalaureate degree are immediately accepted for course placement and/or program admission. If students do not place into the College level courses required by their program, they are instructed to work with ASC to work on skill building. Students are then allowed to retest a minimum of 10 days after first assessment. Students may need to complete additional work with the ASC if unable to achieve program entrance assessment requirements.

An outcome of the admissions meeting may lead to the student taking preparatory classes. The College offers adult education courses to students who are looking for additional support in areas of math, reading, and writing. These foundational courses are offered to any students and can be taken prior to entering a program or while students are enrolled in a program. Another option offered are co-requisite courses that lead to college level course work as part of an Accelerated Learning Plan (ALP) model. Using this model, students take a Writing Essentials class while they are in the English Composition 1 class, thereby receiving the supports needed at the time they need it versus taking each class at a different time. The ALP model help students develop necessary academic skills while completing degree requirements. Finally, during the admissions meeting counselors encourage all new students to attend NSO in-person or virtually.

Students report high levels of satisfaction with the assessment and course placement processes at Northwood Tech. Student satisfaction data shows an increasing satisfaction score with assessment and course placement since 2010. Northwood Tech students gave satisfaction scores greater than other WTCS colleges and national benchmark colleges over the same time period.

The iTLC houses key functions that provide learner support and preparatory instruction for students. Formed in 2021 with the combination of formerly siloed departments, the iTLC offers online and campus-based [academic, library, and technology support](#) for students. Academic support begins with the [ASC](#), providing a wide range of assistance with course work and study skills. The ASC offers workshops to groups of students in specific areas of need such as study skills, Accuplacer prep, dose calculations, and employment preparation virtually and on each campus location. The ASC also provides adult education or foundational courses in the areas of math, reading, and writing. Additionally, ELL and GED/HSED preparation are provided in the ASC. In FY22, 688 students and community members were served by the [ASC](#). Additionally, peer tutoring is available to students through the ASC. Peer tutors are trained, paid, and selected from students who have previously taken the class or are proficient and knowledgeable in the program's content.

Another key component of the iTLC are the [Math](#), [Science](#), and [Writing](#) Lab, which provide students the opportunity to work with teaching specialists [in-person or on a virtual drop-in basis](#). In the labs, students receive guidance with daily assignments, test preparation, research papers, and other projects. Academic coaches are also available within the iTLC to assist students with time management, learning styles, study skills and strategies, accountability, test-taking anxiety, and note-taking strategies. Academic coaching is available to students through referral.

Technology plays an important role in student learning. Within the iTLC, the [Learning Technology Center \(LTC\)](#) provides a virtual and onsite space for students to get help with online learning, use of mobile devices, access to computer labs where technology specialists are available, and educational technology software resources support. There is support for use of our learning management system, accessibility, and other technology requirements such as Cengage, MS Outlook, Northwood Tech online applications, online resources for classes, computers or personal devices, software installs and [resources](#). Students can also use the center's lab to access printers, copiers, and scanners.

Finally, each campus has a [Library](#) within the iTLC to support student learning. The [Library](#) [provides](#) access to computers, printers, scanners, books, journals, newspapers, and research help. Additionally, students can access the library catalog, journal databases, eBooks, streamed videos and FAQ for 24/7 support online. Additionally, the Library staff create [course guides](#) for individual programs to connect students with resources most applicable to their coursework.

### **3.D.3**

The purpose of academic advising at Northwood Tech is to support students in setting and achieving their personal, academic, and [professional goals](#). To meet student needs, the College takes a comprehensive approach to academic advising, beginning with the student's first contact at the College and continuing through graduation.

[Admissions Advisors](#) provide advising related to program choice, guiding potential students through the admissions process with information about programs, admissions requirements, and course schedules; providing tours and arranging shadow experiences; and directing students to appropriate College resources. An Admissions Advisor is available on each of the four campuses to assist students in-person or [virtually](#) throughout the admissions process. All students are required to complete an [admissions meeting](#) with a counselor, who assist with determining the best academic path for students, including preparatory classes or other services prior to program entry (see 3D2). Counselors also provide guidance on enrollment, career counseling, community support resources, changing or adding programs, credit for prior learning, and course sequencing (e.g., [curriculum checklists for full-time and part-time enrollment](#)). Upon admittance to a program, every student is



assigned an [Academic Advisor](#) and notified through MyNorthwoodTech, the student portal. The [portal](#) also provides students with many resources to assist in the advising process.

Faculty serve as the primary Academic Advisors to Northwood Tech students. [Training, resources, and scheduled non-instructional time](#) (pg. 44, Section 6.6) allow faculty to assist students with course selection; monitor academic progress toward graduation; identify students experiencing academic or personal difficulties for referral; and, provide relevant insights about chosen career field. Program faculty often are assigned to advise students enrolled within the programs they teach, creating deliberate connections through regular interaction, one-on-one and with groups of students in the classroom. The AA/AS degree advising is managed by a designated counselor at each campus, who follows the student from admission to graduation. In a recent pilot project in spring 2022, general studies faculty served as the academic advisors for pre-nursing and business students. [Plans exist](#) to continue this practice based on feedback.

A student referral system, or early alert system, is in place to assist students who are struggling academically, behaviorally, or find themselves needing additional assistance to complete their program of study. [Referrals](#) can be made to the counseling staff, accommodations specialists, or the ASC instructors to [initiate support services](#) to students in need through the CRM tool, Salesforce. In 2021-2022, faculty submitted over 1800 [referrals](#) for students to receive support from various student service departments.

Students have consistently rated satisfaction high with [academic advising effectiveness](#), with item ratings higher than the WTCS and national benchmark colleges.

### **3.D.4**

Northwood Tech provides students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning. The [College's 4 campuses](#), 3 outreach centers, and additional health education center house occupational and science lab space, libraries, and student resources, with state-of-the-art technology. Additionally, the College maintains [clinical/internship practical sites](#) at remote locations.

[Each campus](#) features traditional and collaborative classrooms, standardized across the College with [furniture](#) and technology to encourage student interaction. [Quality spaces](#), including program specific laboratories/shops, provide industry-specific settings for students to achieve program and course level learning outcomes and meet specialized accreditation requirements (e.g., [EMT-Paramedic](#), [Health Sciences programs](#)). Some lab space is common across all campuses, such as computer labs and science labs. Other types vary by location depending on the academic programming. Major equipment is crucial to many programs, with appropriate [funding to support](#) and maintain it.

The College provides students with 21 open computer labs with nearly 110 [applications](#), along with technology-equipped huddles rooms as well as other study and lounge areas throughout each campus. Throughout the district, over 100 [NGL classrooms](#) are equipped with projection displays, computers, document cameras, and distance learning technologies that support both in-person and virtual instructional delivery across a large geographic area. Online learning technology resources include the Blackboard learning management system and Bluejeans video sharing platform that provides a robust remote learning environment to supplement face-to-face delivery, hybrid, or fully online courses.

[Technical support](#) is available on each campus through campus support technicians, and virtually

through MyHelp, the technical help desk. MyHelp provides technical support for a variety of applications through Instructional Technology, iTLC staff, Human Resources, Scheduling, Institutional Research, and Professional Development staff. In FY21, over 23,000 [help desk requests](#) were addressed through this system.

The iTLC, consisting of the ASC, LTC, and Library, [provide resources](#) to students and faculty for excellence in teaching and learning. The purpose of the iTLC is to ensure student success by improving instruction, services, and student-centered instructional practices through education, application, and coaching. The [ASC](#) provides students with foundational coursework, adult education, and study skills virtually and at campus location. The [LTC](#) assists students with Northwood Tech online applications, online resources for classes, use of computer and mobile devices, and software installation. The Library, located on each campus, has a [comprehensive collection of resources](#) to support the learning goals of each program. The Library provides access to journal databases, eBooks, streaming videos, and technology resources including computer, printers, scanners, and laptops for checkout.

The iTLC provides faculty support for teaching and curriculum development. Experts are available to support effective [teaching and learning design](#) for all instructional delivery modalities. Support is also available in curriculum development, learning assessment, online learning, and technology applications. Support is available in-person or virtually via MS Teams. Professional development and [individualized training](#) also support faculty. Additionally, staff within the iTLC support curriculum design using the WIDS software, guiding faculty in designing high-quality curriculum using a standardized performance-based design model.

Planning is crucial to providing the infrastructure and resources for effective teaching and learning. Northwood Tech's Facilities and Procurement department manages the [College's three-year Facilities Plan](#). The College is required to prepare a three-year plan to the WTCS Board. The plan is first approved by the District Board and submitted to WTCS. The plan is reviewed and accepted by the WTCS Board; however, no action is taken as each project continues to be subject to individual review and approval basis pursuant to [Wisconsin Statute 38.04\(10\)](#).

As part of the [annual budgeting process](#) (pg. 63), Northwood Tech conducts a capital equipment request process. Faculty work with program directors and deans to compile the equipment and technology needed for successful teaching and learning costing over the \$5000 threshold for capital equipment (e.g., [FY20](#), [FY21](#), [FY22](#)). Collaboratively, items are prioritized and submitted to the CLT for review and approval.

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## 3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

### Summary

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"Excellence" and "Innovation" are two of the values held by Northwood Technical College:

- Excellence - We value high quality training, professional development, and customer service in a dynamic learning environment.
- Innovation - We value flexible delivery options and embrace the latest theories and technologies to meet individual learners' needs.

These values ensure a commitment to high quality education across the institution. High quality education begins with current and relevant programs and courses. Standardized processes supports consistency of learning goals across all modes of delivery and all locations. Program advisory committees with industry expertise and currency contribute to the process, ensuring program outcomes prepare students for future work. Furthermore, quality education requires the recognition of human and cultural diversity in an ever-changing world.

Quality education also requires qualified faculty and staff. Northwood Tech's are highly qualified. Established processes and procedures ensure employees have appropriate qualifications and sufficient numbers of faculty and staff are available to meet the needs of students wherever and however offerings are delivered. Excellence and innovation requires employees have access to professional development opportunities and training, particularly related to delivery options and technologies.

Quality education requires student support. Northwood Tech provides a rich array of services to students, in-person and virtually, to support student success. The infrastructure, including 4 comprehensive campuses, outreach centers, and distance education technology, provides a robust learning environment whether students access courses or services face-to-face or online.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

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

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The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials 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.

### Argument

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#### 4.A.1

Northwood Tech's [Academic Program Review Process](#), focused on student learning, provides for an annual program review with action based upon findings using a Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) framework. The review process, revised in 2019-2020, begins with an analysis of data and review of effectiveness measurements, then progresses to identification of trends, root cause analysis, and exploration of best practices. Finally, improvement plans are created and implemented, followed by a period of monitoring and adjusting.

The Institutional Research (IR) Office develops and publishes program dashboards (e.g., [Accounting](#), [Welding](#), [General Studies](#)) for all academic programs and general studies areas at the college. In Northwood Tech's annual program review process, faculty and deans analyze the dashboard data, including student outcome data such as course completion, program completion, retention, and graduation data. Information on student demographics, enrollments and FTE, program outcomes (TSA), course completion by delivery modality, and WTCS benchmark data is also included. IR staff guide faculty through the program dashboard as well as EMSI labor market projections (e.g.,

[Accounting, Welding](#)) pertinent to the program. The program dashboards include [data definitions](#) to help faculty understand the metrics and data sources.

Faculty and deans develop [improvement plans annually](#) (pg. 3) using a [workbook](#) available on The Connection. Beginning in January, faculty use the program dashboards to review program data, course data, and improvement plans that are in progress. Based on the review, improvement plans are developed by May 31 to be implemented in alignment with the upcoming fiscal year (July 1- June 30), allowing any activities with budget ramifications to be built into the budget. Program [improvement plans](#) include objectives, action items, timelines and resources, assessment measures, monitoring reports, and results. Objectives requiring more than one year to complete may be carried over into the next improvement plan. Deans review, approve, and share all improvement plans with academic leadership. Monitoring occurs throughout the plan, with faculty completing documentation twice per year.

In FY22, 47 [program and general studies reviews](#) were completed and acted upon. For example, the Accounting program created an improvement plan to increase successful completion of Financial Accounting I. The outcome of actions taken increased completion rates from 60% to 78%. Programs with smaller embedded programs (e.g., Administrative Coordinator/Office Support Specialist) are reviewed concurrently to provide a holistic review of data. Northwood Tech has several programs required to maintain professional or specialized accreditation or licensure requirements, for which [program accreditation reports](#) are accepted as part of the program review.

#### 4.A.2

Northwood Tech acknowledges that students may have prior work and learning experiences equivalent to college courses. Students may be granted course credits for knowledge and skills previously mastered and which directly relate to their program curriculum, as outlined by the WTCS [ESM Credit for Prior Learning \(CFPL\) requirements](#) (pg. 68) and aligned with WTCS State Board [Policy](#). All credit awarded to students undergoes a standardized review process as outlined in the [CFPL Handbook](#), the [website](#) , and the [Student Handbook](#) (pg. 146).

Up to 75% of credits toward a degree completion may be earned through various types of CFPL, with at least 25% of technical studies credits in an associate degree program, occupational-specific credits in a technical diploma program, or technical certificate credits earned at the College.

The process for evaluating credit from nationally recognized exams (e.g., [Advanced Placement](#), [CLEP](#), [IB](#), [DSST](#), [industry certifications](#))([pg. 5](#)), challenge exams ([pg. 5](#)), experiential learning portfolios ([pg. 8](#)), or skill-based assessment ([pg. 11](#)), and military experience ([pg. 7](#)), is detailed in the CFPL Handbook. When evaluating [military experience](#), the College reviews ([pg. 7-8](#)) Joint Services Transcripts and Air Force CCAF Transcripts based on the recommendations of the American Council on Education. Students may appeal CFPL decisions through an appeals process ([pg. 12](#)).

Finally, Northwood Tech awards students credit for successful completion of college-level courses through [Advanced Standing](#) high school courses. [WTCS guidelines](#) form the basis of the College's policy ([pg. 148](#)) to ensure quality in credits awarded from high school Advanced Standing credit courses. Articulation agreements (e.g., [Amery](#), [New Richmond](#), [Hayward](#) High Schools) are developed with individual high schools. Requirements for these high school courses are explained in the [Student Handbook](#) (pg. 148) and [website](#), with a [list of courses](#) online.

### 4.A.3

Northwood Tech ensures the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer. The [Student Handbook](#) (pgs. 146-148) and the [website](#) provide details the transfer policy. The College also uses [Transferology](#) to provide information on credit transfer. The College awards credit from nationally and regionally accredited institutions, with coursework evaluated for competency equivalency and the extent the credits meet program and general studies requirements. The process is overseen by the Registrar, who evaluates students' official transcripts to determine courses eligible for transfer. Conditions for course transfer include:

- Student Services must receive an official transcript.
- Coursework must have minimum grade point of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- Credit is on a semester credit basis, with quarter credit will be converted to .67 semester credit.
- 25 percent of credits must be earned through coursework taken at the College.

### 4.A.4

Northwood Tech maintains authority over all aspects of the curriculum, student learning, learning resources, and faculty qualification. The Curriculum and Assessment Documentation [administrative policy](#), aligned with WTCS requirements ([pg. 32](#)) guides program and course development. Program development includes a review of labor markets, planned program content, an ad-hoc advisory committee outline of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that graduates will need, and approvals from the WTCS and Northwood Tech Boards. All program courses are developed as a direct result of this process so that rigor and expectations of student learning are aligned.

Curriculum and instructional design are centralized processes, overseen by the Curriculum and Assessment Office and supported by the iTLC. Faculty and deans determine program and course prerequisites working with the Curriculum Office and using a [detailed guideline and checklist](#). Instructional rigor is maintained using the top levels of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating) and through the tracking of program and course level assessments. Course competencies and program outcomes are supported through WIDS curriculum development, ensuring consistency of outcomes for all students regardless of instructor, mode of delivery, or location. All program outcomes, course competencies, performance standards, and learning objectives for the course are documented in WIDS, and faculty use WIDS to create standardized syllabi.

Northwood Tech also exercises authority over learning resources for students to be successful in courses. Every credit course has a Blackboard shell to provide access to learning resources to students. [Blackboard Minimum Content Requirements](#) ensures students have access to the learning resources needed for each course.

The College exercises authority and ensures faculty are qualified to teach courses through the Minimum Qualifications of Instructional Staff Teaching for Academic Credit [Policy](#), as described in detail in 3.C.2. This policy is aligned with [WTCS Administrative Code TCS 3.04](#) and outlines specific requirements for General Education and Occupational Program instructors to be qualified by either credential or equivalent experience. A [faculty qualification rationale form](#) is maintained for each instructor, including for dual credit courses.

The process for ensuring equivalent outcomes and quality standards for dual-enrollment courses are



established with articulation agreements (e.g., [Amery](#), [Hayward](#)), as well as set forth in [Articulation Handbook](#). For dual credit courses, the learning objectives are identical to the corresponding courses offered at the College. These guidelines ensure that qualified high school teachers obtain access to course curriculum and materials to teach in district schools. High school teachers are paired with Northwood Tech instructors, or [mentors](#), to serve as a resource to ensure consistency of quality and delivery. A three-year [review process](#) for dual credit courses is in place to assure consistency with updates.

#### 4.A.5

[Eleven programs](#) maintain specialized accreditation that reflect industry standards. Accredited programs ensure quality and enhance their credibility through accreditation self-studies (e.g., [Medical Assistant](#)). Faculty, program directors, and deans are responsible for fulfilling the requirements of accreditation partnerships with external regulatory agencies. Northwood Tech publishes details about program accreditations on its [website](#) and program webpages (e.g., [Nursing](#), [EMT-Paramedic](#)). All of Northwood Tech's specialized accreditation relationships are in good standing.

#### 4.A.6

Northwood Tech evaluates the success of its graduates through three surveys: the Graduate Follow-Up Survey, the Longitudinal Graduate Follow-Up Survey, and the Employer Satisfaction Survey. WTCS requires evaluation of graduate success through these surveys.

Northwood Tech administers an annual Graduate Follow-Up Survey ([FY21](#), [FY20](#), [FY19](#)), approximately six months after students graduate. The main objectives of this survey are to identify the current employment status of program graduates, determine the extent to which this current status is related to the graduates' educational programs, and identify the level of satisfaction with the education. The survey provides data to facilitate program planning and evaluation. [Survey results](#) from the most recent administration of 2020-2021 graduates found 93% of graduates were either employed or furthering their education six months after graduation; 96% of graduates were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their education; and, the average annual salary was \$46,453. Results from the survey are reported to WTCS, with aggregated data allowing benchmarking among the WTCS institutions. The compiled [report](#) is presented to the Board, published on the [website](#) and The Connection, and used in multiple processes such as [Academic Program Review](#) and [Strategic Planning](#).

The Longitudinal Follow-Up Survey, conducted every four years, assesses and traces a graduate's career progression through total jobs, jobs in the field of degree, promotions, and additional completed education. The results from the survey are reported to WTCS, compiled in the [Five-Year Longitudinal Follow-Up Report](#), presented to the Board, published to the [website](#), and reviewed by leadership and faculty to understand career progression and transfer options.

The Employer Satisfaction Survey, conducted every four years at the direction of WTCS, assesses whether employers who hire Northwood Tech graduates feel the education their employees received adequately prepared them for entry-level work and asks how satisfied the employer is with the graduate's education. The results from the survey are reported to WTCS, compiled in the [Employer Satisfaction report](#), which is presented to the [Board](#), published on the [College website](#), used as a data point in the strategic planning process, and reviewed by academic leadership and faculty in program review.

Graduate [transfer data](#) is another measure of graduate success, and is a focus theme identified in the [Strategic Plan](#). Northwood Tech develops and maintains articulation agreements with many four-year institutions, with [transfer guides](#) providing direction to students on transfer pathways. The [program dashboards](#) include information about the percentage of students and graduates who are continuing their education.

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## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

### Argument

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#### 4.B.1

Assessment of student learning occurs at the course, program, and collegewide levels and in co-curricular college programming. Documentation of the college assessment process is established by college [administrative policy](#). College faculty have regularly and consistently assessed student learning at the program and course level. The development and assessment of collegewide learning outcomes has been a [strategic priority](#) with [original attempts](#) made over twelve years ago. The college's assessment plan has evolved over the past five years with numerous attempts to determine the best practice for the college.

In 2019, the College enrolled in the HLC Assessment Academy with a need and intention to develop and implement the comprehensive process to assess collegewide student learning outcomes. Through the Academy, Northwood Tech has

- created an Assessment of Student Learning (ASL) Team,
- approved the four of the collegewide learning outcomes called Employability Essentials (EEs)
- developed and approved rubrics to assess the EEs,
- established faculty assessment champions,
- examined collegewide use of TSA assessment in the program-review process,
- developed a process to use TSAs to assess the EEs,
- ensured that the College is assessing general education within various degrees and programs, and
- developed a process to assess co-curricular activities.

To effectively communicate the assessment processes to multiple stakeholders, the HLC Assessment Academy team—with guidance from the College's Assessment Academy's mentor—developed an [Assessment Planning Guide](#) that outlines a long-term, sustainable plan for assessment of student learning.

The [Assessment of Student Learning \(ASL\) Team](#) was approved by the College Leadership Team during the Fall 2019 semester with the first meeting held in January 2020. The Team, which meets monthly, consists of members from Academic Affairs, faculty, Student Services, and Institutional Effectiveness (IE). Since its inception, the original team has expanded membership. The ASL Team

advises the student learning and outcome assessment process and supports efforts to initiate and continue assessment of student learning. Specifically, [ASL Team is responsible](#) for determining strategies for the assessment of student learning, receiving and reviewing student assessment data, and recommending actions and changes related to assessment processes and reports.

Since its inception, the ASL Team developed the process for the assessment of the College's EEs. Additionally, the Team facilitated the development of the College's fourth EE, Practice Inclusivity, using [faculty input](#). The Team assisted in the development and approval of the [rubrics](#) to be used for the four EE assessments and guided the development of the process for [assessing co-curricular activities](#). The ASL explored, developed, and implemented the use of the TSA assessment in assessing the EEs and approved the Assessment Planning Guide.

Course, program, and collegewide outcome assessment [aligns](#) with the WTCS General Education framework. The General Education curriculum ensures a core of knowledge that conveys the common skills, intellectual concepts, and attitudes graduates should have. General Education provides essential lifelong skills required for success in careers, at home, in a community, and in society. There are eight broad categories of General Education including:

- Communication,
- Critical Thinking
- Ethics
- Global Awareness
- Inclusive Social Interaction
- Mathematical Principles
- Self-determination
- Science and Technology

Assessment of the general education competencies occurs at the course level using rubrics created by general education faculty.

### **Course Level Assessment**

Course learning outcomes, also known as competencies, are the major skills students must learn and demonstrate in a course and are listed in the Course Outcome Summaries for all courses. Competencies are measurable and observable, demonstrating what a student should be able to do upon completion of a course. Course outcomes are identified when a course is developed/modified based on program advisory committee and faculty input. Course outcomes are documented in the WIDS, the College's curriculum-management system, and communicated to students in course syllabi. Faculty use the Performance Standards developed in WIDS when creating and administering [course-level assessments](#). Faculty develop course-level assessments based on the performance standards through [individual projects](#) and Performance Assessment Tasks ([PATs](#)). PATs are developed through WIDS to ensure assessments meet course criteria. Faculty assess learning outcomes continually using formative and summative assessments. Course level assessment is used to identify when students are mastering the course competencies. During the program review process, faculty use course level data to make changes to curriculum to ensure students are achieving learning outcomes. For example, during the program review process, the Business Management faculty [created an action plan](#) to review the Introduction to Business course curriculum, sequencing, and assessment and implement revisions in the next semester.

### **Program Level Assessment**

Individual course competencies are linked to program outcomes. Program level assessment is conducted at the course level annually. All programs have outcomes that can be found on the college website and in the college catalog (e.g., [Architectural Commercial Design](#), [Industrial Maintenance Technician](#)). Program outcomes are established using input from industry representatives during the new program development process. Program advisory committees that meet annually review [program outcomes](#). Programs with state-aligned curriculum have outcomes developed at the statewide level. For 69 technical diploma and associate degree programs, the TSA program outcome assessment, a WTCS system-wide process, is used to assess the [attainment of program outcomes](#) (pg. 52). Currently, five programs are developing TSAs. The TSA process ensures graduates [possess the skills](#) needed by employers. Each semester, faculty use standard scoring rubrics to guide their summative assessment of program outcomes. Rubrics include program outcomes, rating scale, scoring standard, and a [scoring guide](#). As part of required reporting, the college IE department reports TSA assessment data to the WTCS. The TSA results for each program have been added to the program dashboard and are incorporated into the program-review process. In lieu of the program review process, specialized accredited programs [use self-study processes](#) established by the accrediting bodies for program level assessment. For all programs, faculty review the results with stakeholders, including advisory committee members. On a three-year rotating schedule faculty share course and program level assessment outcomes and action plans with the ASL Team.

## Collegewide Assessment

Initial collegewide outcomes were adopted in 2007 after college staff attended an HLC Assessment Academy. From 2007-2016 college-level assessment used the collegewide outcomes. For programs with 30 or more credits, the college assessed Communication, Critical Thinking, Mathematics, Science/Technology, Social Interaction, and Local/Global perspectives. The College transitioned, in 2016, from collegewide outcomes assessment to a model of assessing Employability Essentials focused four key areas: Communicate Effectively, Think Critically, Be Socially, Responsible, and Be Professional.

In 2019, Northwood Tech adopted four EEs as the Institutional Learning Outcomes. EEs are assessed in technical diploma and associate degree programs. The College's Employability Essentials are:

- Communicate Clearly
- Demonstrate Professionalism
- Think Critically
- Practice Inclusivity

Development of the EEs [involved Northwood Tech faculty and staff](#). After the EE development, College faculty in all technical and associate degree programs completed [program-mapping](#) to align the first three of the EEs with one course. Program mapping for Practice Inclusivity will take place in 2023. The College developed [definitions](#) for the four EEs. The definition was developed by the Assessment Academy Team and [approved by the ASL Team](#) in April 2022. The definitions appear on Northwood Tech's iTLC assessment website.

The process to begin assessing the College's EEs was approved by the ASL Team in January 2020. While initially the College planned to begin the institution-wide assessment in 2020, complications from the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the start of the assessment until the Fall 2021 semester. Between May of 2020 and August of 2021, the Director of Curriculum and Assessment met with all faculty divisions taking part in the upcoming assessment. The College created and provided training for conducting the [assessment through Blackboard](#), the college LMS. Since January 2020, the

College has provided continued training on the [EE assessment](#) at every January, May, and August faculty in-service session. Though the pandemic delayed the start of the EE assessment, the College piloted the assessment, in three programs-Administrative Professional, Machine Tool Technician, and Medical Assistant. The pilot allowed the College to determine steps needed to conduct the assessment and develop the process to collect data. During the 21-22 academic year, all one- and two-year programs assessed students for Communicate Clearly using the rubric approved by the ASL Team. The [Team reviewed collegewide results](#) from the assessment in June 2022. The results will be presented to the faculty in August 2022, as part of an assessment workshop.

After attending the 2022 HLC Annual Conference and meeting with the College's HLC Assessment Academy Mentor, The HLC Assessment Academy Team proposed a modified process for assessing the EEs to include the use of the TSA data. The curriculum staff, program deans, and the ASL Team analyzed TSA data and discovered 37 of the College's programs using TSA assessments [align with all four of the College's EEs](#). Because TSA data is gathered each semester in most program, assessment of student learning is conducted regularly at the course, program, and college level for programs with TSAs. For those programs without TSAs, the ASL Team developed a schedule for annual assessment using representative samples. Practice Inclusivity will be aligned to each program by the 22-23 academic year. Effective 2022, the EEs will be assessed each year using the program TSA or the developed [EE rubrics](#) in identified courses according to an assessment schedule. During the 2022-23 academic year, Communicate Clearly, Demonstrate Professionalism and Think Critically will be assessed in a pilot using the College's TSA results. By the 2023-24 academic year, all four of the College's EEs will be assessed each academic year using the [rubrics or the TSA process](#). Results reporting will be based on a [three-year rotating schedule](#). Modifications may be made to the timeline as Northwood Tech seeks improvements to its process and results.

### **Co-Curricular Assessment**

Co-curricular activities, defined as activities designed to support the academic curriculum, are assessed at Northwood Tech. There are [37 active co-curricular clubs](#) at the college. A process to designate whether an activity supports the curriculum and thus is considered a co-curricular activity was created by a [sub-committee](#) of the ASL Team, and the [ASL Team approved the final process](#). Students who participated in co-curricular activities complete a [post-activity survey](#) aligned with the EEs to self-report if the activity supported the opportunity for students to build the EE skills. Survey results are [shared with the ASL Team](#). The deans of students share the survey results with club advisors with the goal of creating improvement plans for co-curricular activities to ensure the EEs outcomes are met.

### **4.B.2**

#### **Course Level Assessment**

Information gained from course level assessment is used by individual faculty and program faculty groups to inform teaching & learning decision-making. Course competencies are assessed every semester. Course level data is used during the program review process, along with other program dashboard data, to improve student learning. For example, during the program review process, the Business Management faculty [created an action plan](#) to review the Introduction to Business curriculum, sequencing, and assessment and implement revisions in the next semester. Course completion rates increased from 60.5% in FY19 to 77% in FY21. In 2021, the Industrial Mechanic program faculty identified [course completion rates](#) of general education courses as an area for improvement. In the action plan, program faculty collaborated with general studies faculty to create

joint assignments and contextualize general education course curriculum. Results will be assessed in the January 2023 program review process.

### **Program Level Assessment**

TSA results for each program are included in the program-review dashboard and are included in the academic program review process as outlined in 4.A.1. Program faculty develop action plans using the data from the dashboard. The Medical Administrative Professional Assistant Program faculty reviewed the TSA data for outcomes not met to identify potential barriers for student success. While the faculty determine the sample size was too small to inform decision-making, the faculty developed a plan to [continue to monitor](#) to look for patterns. In the Gerontology program, review of the TSA data identified a program strength of [100% of students assessed met the TSAs](#). The program faculty are using the TSA lens to question other student success data and to develop the action plan. The program curriculum was updated to ensure competencies and learning objectives reflect alignment with feedback from stakeholders and are aligned with national Accreditation for Gerontology Education Council standards. The Individual course assessments were aligned with accreditation standards, program goals, and competencies/learning objectives. The College assessment process will incorporate EE and TSA assessment results presentation to the ASL Team for each program following three-year rotational schedule. The results will be reviewed to determine whether students in those programs are meeting the EEs outcomes, and programs will develop action plans for improvement based on the results, if applicable.

Northwood has allowed accredited programs to use their accreditation process in lieu of completing the Annual Program Review. The Nursing program uses end of program student learning outcomes (EPSLOS) to assess student learning as outlined by the accrediting body. To maintain currency in the curriculum, the faculty review EPSLO data to determine needed revisions. Faculty meet in course groups annually in May and review course reports and test item analysis to identify trends in EPSLO achievement and determine if any revisions are needed. Changes made to each course are reflected in the course reports which are completed for each course at the end of every semester. Data is shared with the [program advisory committee](#) while soliciting input from committee members for program improvement. The EPSLO assessment methods identify areas of improvement and areas of strength which help guide ADN faculty in making changes to [positively impact](#) the ADN Program.

The AA and AS degrees utilize HIP assessments (e.g. [General Anatomy and Physiology HIP assignment, rubrics, presentations](#)) to promote effective teaching and learning practices for transfer students. Assessment of student learning is conducted at the course level to analyze student learning and maximize high quality education delivery in preparation for successful transfer. Course descriptions are available in the College catalog and on the [general studies webpage](#). In June 2022, the ASL Team reviewed the results of the 2021-2022 AA/AS assessments. The results will be reviewed by the General Education faculty during program collaboration days in August to determine where improvements to teaching and learning can be made, if applicable. Future review will be conducted annually by General Education faculty.

### **Collegewide Assessment**

Previously, [collegewide outcomes assessment data](#) was reviewed by the ASL with action plans developed to improve student learning. In the new EE assessment process, data from the EEs will be made available in the program dashboard. Program faculty will have the [EE assessment results](#) for students from each program available at the start of academic years. For example, the first Communicate Clearly assessment results from the FY22 pilot will be shared with faculty at the



August 22, 2022 professional develop day. A workshop led by the Director of Curriculum and Assessment and the Assessment Champions will focus on analyzing the data and using the information to create action plans as part of the annual program-review process. Preparing faculty to use the EE data to improve student learning is the final step of the collegewide assessment planning process. Once trained, program leads will use their program data to provide a verbal presentation of the results of the EE assessment and TSA assessment with action plan to the ASL Team on the [three-year schedule](#).

### **Co-curricular Activities**

The results of the co-curricular assessment for the 21-22 academic year were first reviewed by the College's ASL Team at its May meeting. The ASL Team formed a subcommittee to decide how to better evaluate and use the results. The co-curricular results will be presented to the faculty at the August in-service when the report of the EEs is presented to faculty. The deans of students will provide workshops for faculty co-curricular advisors to develop strategies using the results to improve student learning within co-curricular activities.

### **4.B.3**

As stated in the Employee Handbook [Section 6.16](#) (pg. 49), student learning assessment is a foundational component of the Academic Affairs Division with faculty playing a critical role in the implementation of assessment of student learning. Assessment is a key responsibility of all faculty (e.g., [ADN faculty position description](#)). All program faculty participate in the program review process. During the program review process, assessment data is reviewed and action plans are created for program changes. The curriculum office staff assist faculty and academic affairs leaders with the development of curriculum and corresponding TSAs. Co-curricular assessment is led by Student Affairs Division staff and IE staff.

During the [required NFO](#), all newly hired faculty learn about the College's assessment plan. The following topics are included in the orientation: criteria, aligning criteria with assessments, using checklists and rubrics, and how to scaffold assignments. The [NFO session](#) prepares new faculty to conduct EE and TSA assessments.

All instructors at Northwood Tech complete courses on performance-based assessment and data and evidence as required by the FQAS process. The assessment course explores formative (process-based) and summative (product) measures of student learning. Participants create assessment tools and then formulate a strategy to communicate the assessment results to students. These results are further analyzed to improve course delivery strategies and student success moving forward. An overall assessment plan is created to communicate to stakeholders how learning will be measured in a course. In the data and evidence course, instructors obtain the skills to analyze Program Dashboard Data so they can apply the information to the programs they teach.

During the FY22, 3 faculty volunteered to serve as Assessment Champions. The champions, part of the College's efforts to improve its assessment process, meet on a scheduled basis. Input from the champions guided the development of the [Assessment Handbook](#). Additionally, those faculty serve on the ASL Team and will serve as leaders in assessment efforts.

Recent faculty in-service sessions providing assessment professional learning include:

- [August 2021 in-service](#): Update on the College's AA/AS assessment and EE assessment with faculty workshops on using Blackboard and general questions for EE assessment

- [January 2022 in-service](#): Faculty workshops on using Blackboard and general questions for EE assessment
- [May 2022 in-service](#): Update on EE assessment plans for the 2022-2023 academic year
- [August 2022 in-service](#): Update on results of EE Communicate Clearly and AA/AS assessment from 2021-2022 academic year. Update on co-curricular assessment results from 2021-2022 academic year. Update on iTLC website's addition of an assessment page, which includes College's assessment planning document and draft of Northwood Tech's Assessment Handbook.
- [August 2022 in-service](#): Faculty Assessment Day workshop on using the results of the 2021-2022 Communicate Clearly assessment to improve writing withing programs.

The College has created [training documents](#) for faculty.

The ASL Team includes staff from AALT, Student Services, IE, and faculty from multiple disciplines. Numerous faculty and staff have attended assessment workshops recently including:

- HLC Assessment Academy (October 2019)
- HLC Assessment Academy (October 2021)
- HLC Annual Conference (April 2021)
- HLC Annual Conference (April 2022)

Northwood Tech recently created a [public assessment site](#) within the iTLC website that all Northwood Tech students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders with access to the college's assessment of student learning process. The website is in a state of continual development and contains resources on best practices, documents, videos, and tutorials that assist faculty in the assessment process. The College's [Assessment Planning](#) Document and [Assessment Handbook](#) will be housed on the site.

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## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

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

### Argument

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#### 4.C.1

Northwood Tech established goals for student retention, persistence, and completion as part of the 2009-2012 Strategic Plan. Since that time, such goals were identified on the [Collegewide Metrics](#) and pertinent Divisional Metrics (e.g., [Academic Affairs](#), [Student Affairs](#)) and published to The Connection, the college's intranet. The key metrics were defined according to [data definitions](#) identified in the WTCS Continuous Improvement Indicators Library. Goals for student retention, persistence, and completion were established with [three-tiered signal values](#) with green signal values indicating desired goals, yellow signal values indicating values slightly below desired goals, and red signal values indicating values significantly below desired goals.

#### *4.C.1 Retention, Persistence and Completion Signal Values/Goals*

<b>Metric</b>	<b>Green Signal Values</b>	<b>Yellow Signal Values</b>	<b>Red Signal Values</b>
Retention – Fall to Spring	> 78%	75% - 77.9%	< 75%
Retention – Fall to Fall	> 73%	70% - 72.9%	< 70%
Persistence	> 83%	80% - 82.9%	< 80%
Course Completion	>81%	78% - 80.9%	<78%

Goal data is updated annually, with annual and trend data reviewed by divisional and college leadership, and communicated with college faculty and staff. College leadership also reviews signal values annually to ensure goals are ambitious, attainable, and appropriate. If a goal is not met, the CLT, in collaboration with other divisional leadership teams, develop strategies to improve retention, completion, or persistence. Future goals and/or signal values may be adjusted as needed.

While the Collegewide and Divisional Metrics have been in place for over a decade, the COVID-19 pandemic brought new challenges. In an effort to understand the effects of COVID-19 on service areas of the college, college leadership developed the [College Effectiveness Measures](#) in conjunction with the [2021-2023 Strategic Plan](#). These focused measures identify areas of performance based on comparison and benchmark data from other WTCS institutions. Additionally, through the strategic planning process, successful course completion (81%) and term-to-term retention goals have been [specifically included](#) in the current strategic plan. Reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees (e.g., [2022](#), [2021](#)) and CLT, the College Effectiveness Measures are directly linked to the strategic themes in the current strategic plan and supplement the long-standing Collegewide and Divisional Metrics.

Along with establishing college wide goals, Northwood Tech also develops [program-based and course completion goals](#) to support student success. Faculty conduct annual program reviews to develop continuous [improvement plans](#) (pg. 3) using program level retention, persistence, and completion data included on a [program dashboard](#). Additionally, Perkins grant indicators also guide the college in setting goals to improve persistence, retention, and completion within programs. Final Agreed Upon Performance Level ([FAUPL](#)) measures related to grants also show college progress in specific areas related to student retention, persistence, and completion as well as WTCS goals. The grant also targets retention, persistence, and completion of [underrepresented students](#).

#### **4.C.2**

Northwood Tech collects information on student retention, persistence, and completion at the institutional, program, and course level. Data is collected using PeopleSoft, with most reports for analysis generated through PeopleSoft or COGNOS, a data warehouse. The Institutional Research Office staff provides many of the reports needed for data analysis. Faculty and staff analyze the information as part of state and federal requirements, strategic planning, grants and initiatives, and in the academic program review process.

At the institutional level, Northwood Tech collects and reports retention, persistence, and completion data as required at the federal and state level (see Table 4.C.2). These data are reported for IPEDS ([2021](#), [2020](#), [2019](#)) and within WTCS client reporting. Institutional data visualizations are generated through the WTCS Student Success Center, allowing [institutional analysis](#) of demographic factors and impact on program completion, [general education course success](#), [retention](#), [new student credit completion](#), and [grade point average](#). These required data submissions and reports provide key information to various internal and external stakeholders as well as the public. This data provides baseline for critical funding formulas; establishes formal comparison to other postsecondary institutions across the state and nation; and contributes to the strategic planning process. Additionally at the institutional level, the Board of Trustees and CLT [annually review](#) the [College Effectiveness Measures](#), a component of the [Strategic Plan](#) that includes a focus on retention, persistence, and completion.

#### *4.C.2 Retention, Persistence and Completion Data*

<b>Metric</b>	<b>FY19</b>	<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY21</b>
Retention – Fall to Spring	82.8%	83.7%	77.9%
Retention – Fall to Fall	67.3%	71.2%	70.7%
Persistence	67.9%	70.7%	60.4%
Course Completion	76.9%	79.6%	74.0%

Through grants and initiatives, the College collects and analyzes retention, persistence, and completion data for programs and courses. For example, student course completion rates are collected and analyzed as part of the Perkins grant process. The WTCS provides data to the college for each program (e.g., [Business programs](#)) to target areas for grant funds to improve completion and retention rates based on state-defined [performance targets](#). A cross-functional [college team](#) develops an [improvement plan](#) based on the data, and analyzes the data (e.g., [presentation](#), [local need assessment](#)). Grant funding supports interventions focused on improving retention, persistence, and completion rates within specific courses and programs, and also supports under-performing student groups, with grant managers analyzing data on grant actions. The DEI Team also reviews and analyzes retention, persistence, and completion data through an equity lens using the [Local Equity Report](#) and as part of actions and goals in the strategic plan, emphasizing "[term-to-term retention](#) for all students, including underserved and special populations".

As discussed in 4.A.1, all academic programs and general education disciplines are reviewed annually through an academic program review process. Program faculty review course data and program level [metrics](#) including completion, retention, and persistence. Improvement plans are developed, implemented, and monitored based on the analysis. Reports on [outcomes of actions](#) are shared and discussed annually with the AALT.

### 4.C.3

The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion to make improvements as warranted by the data through program review improvement plans, grant strategies, college initiatives, and action items within the strategic plan.

Northwood Tech uses the academic [program review process](#) to organize, analyze, and act on matters of student retention, persistence, and completion. As mentioned in 4.A., annual program reviews allow faculty to determine improvement plans using data from [program dashboards](#) to improve retention, persistence, and completion rates. To support faculty in understanding, analyzing, and using metrics to support continuous improvement and student success, the College requires all faculty to complete a [Data and Evidence Analysis course](#). This course provides four modules of training pertaining to statistical data analysis, course data and evidence analysis, program data and evidence analysis, and collegewide data and evidence analysis. Faculty monitor and report progress on program goals two times per year. The AALT reviews and [monitors progress](#) as a team in the fall term and deans [review progress](#) with faculty in January and May each year. Examples of improvement plans based on analysis of retention, persistence, and completion data include:

- The [Financial Services](#) program noted concern over fall-to-fall retention rates. The process for academic advising was enhanced to increase emphasis on moving forward in the program curriculum.
- The [Early Childhood Education](#) program studied their course completion rates in 10-307-179 Child Development. With a completion rate lower than 70% since FY 2017, faculty set out to add more support through the creation of video content and referrals to Academic Support Center, increasing rates to 100% by FY19. Moving the course online during COVID-19 negatively impacted completion rates. Based on analysis, additional strategies have been developed, including offering onsite sections of the course in FY23.
- In the [Machine Tool Operation](#)–CNC Technical Diploma, an increase in retention from 75 – 85% between the first and second semesters was desired. A plan to realign courses to run consecutively rather than concurrently was put into action.

In support of program improvements in the areas of retention, persistence, and completion, Northwood Tech actively pursues grant funding through several sources including the Perkins V Act. Perkins V indicators are reviewed to identify where the support can make the greatest impact. WTCS aggregates data and submits a Perkins Report card (e.g., [IT programs](#)) each year to the college which identifies any improvement plans required. The Perkins Grant [Achieving Student Success](#) provides direct support services to meet the needs to student populations experiencing gaps in student success outcomes including students with disabilities, student of color, military service members, economically disadvantaged, and first-generation. The Perkins Grant [Strengthening Career and Technical Education Programs](#) is used to improve performance outcomes including course completion for specific credit programs through targeted supports. For example, the Business Management program noted dropping course completion rates in the Introduction to Business course between 2018 and 2020. This course, typically taken by students just entering the program, was revised to feature smaller but more frequent projects. The college's student referral system was used to identify students earning less than a C in the course. The referral triggered a meeting with a counselor and contact from a facilitator. An online facilitator was hired to work with students in the areas of organization and time management. As of fiscal 2021, course completion improved.

The [WTCS Completion Grant](#) allows the College to create, expand, and/or implement innovative strategies through direct services for students experiencing gaps. The primary goal is to support students experiencing gaps in student success outcomes, which may include but is not limited to students with disabilities, students of color, student parents, military service members, and first-generation students through course completion, completion of subsequent semesters, and completion of programs or WTCS Pathway Certificates. For example, prior to implementing grant strategies in 2020, economically disadvantaged and single parent students had lower course completion rates than all students. A strategy to close the gap included having a retention specialist proactively reached out to the identified "at-risk" students through targeted communications and financial supports.

Analyzing persistence, retention, and completion data has led to strategic college initiatives. In the [2018-2021 Strategic Plan](#), the cross functional [Holistic Student Success Team](#) was formed to "ensure collaboration and communication among divisions for strategic initiatives related to student learning, retention, and student success." The team, regularly [reviewing data](#) facilitated several actions from the strategic plan, including implementation of the [student referral system](#), assessment of student success with the new [open admissions model](#), and supported the implementation of Salesforce, a CRM cloud-based software that integrated with the Blackboard LMS. Implementation of the CRM allows faculty using data analysis tools within LMS to quickly refer students in any course for assistance through counselors, academic coaches, or ASC faculty. Another example of using

information to make improvements through [strategic planning](#) is the development of the [Academic Support Team](#). Charged with increasing retention and student success in the ASC, the department established student support labs in the areas of math, writing, and science. Since the implementation, in-person and virtual labs serve more than 300 students per semester and provide over 1000 hours of service.

The COVID-19 Pandemic required Northwood Tech to quickly shift priorities and increase remote instruction. [Student surveys](#) during the pandemic provided information on student support needs that could affect retention, persistence, and completion. [Federal relief funds](#) were allocated to support students based on feedback. College leadership monitored week to week (e.g., [COVID-19 Response Data Reports](#)) changes in course delivery, student drops and withdraws, and overall completion rates to make decisions to best support students and staff.

#### 4.C.4

Northwood Tech uses standardized data systems, definitions, and resources in the collection and analysis of information on student retention, persistence, and completion. IR within the [Institutional Effectiveness Division](#) is responsible for processes and methodologies that reflect good practice for data collection and analysis. Data on retention, persistence, and completion is primarily derived from student enrollment, retention, and completion data collected and stored in PeopleSoft ERP and COGNOS data warehouse. The college utilizes standardized WTCS methodologies for data collection, [aligning data definitions](#) with [WTCS Client Reporting](#) requirements. As one of the 16 WTCS institutions, Northwood Tech provides comprehensive data and information to the state office. In turn, WTCS provides the College with a data portal, data cubes, and [dashboards](#) showing college and program performance, benchmarked against other WTCS colleges. Grants or accrediting agencies may identify alternative data definitions. These alternatives are accommodated with the data being collected and analyzed as required. Additionally, the College follows IPEDS definitions for external reporting. All reports provided by IR identify data definitions and data sources to facilitate understanding of the information.

Northwood Tech belongs to [WILM](#), a consortium of three technical colleges committed to collaborating to improve and enhance systems and processes through best technology practices. The colleges share resources to develop reports using a standard data systems and data definitions, following WTCS guidelines. Through the consortium, standardized data validation procedures support accurate and consistent reporting.

IR supports and guides staff and faculty through the use of data to help make decisions and increase student success. The office works to provide easy access to information [through The Connection](#), auto-delivered reports (e.g., [Executive FTE and Headcount Report](#)), [monthly data reports](#), and providing resources for faculty and staff such as Academic Program Review [Program Dashboards](#), [Collegewide Metrics](#), [Divisional Metrics](#), and guiding survey development and distribution. IE provides information to a variety of teams throughout the college review and analyze retention, persistence, and completion data including CLT, Academic Affairs Leadership, Student Affairs Leadership, DEI Team, and faculty and deans in program review. In addition to standardized reports, information on program completion, course completion, retention, and other performance data can be accessed through data request using MyHelp. IR also manages employees' access to the WTCS Data Portal and COGNOS, monitoring permission closely to ensure data integrity.



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## 4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

### Summary

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Northwood Technical College is committed to ensuring the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services. This commitment is demonstrated through the continuous improvement process of Academic Program Review. Established policies and procedures provide authority over credit it transcripts, credit it accepts in transfer, course rigor outcomes, and faculty qualifications, including dual credit. To further demonstrate responsibility for the quality of its programs, specialized program accreditation is maintained for pertinent programs. Additionally, the College evaluates the success of its graduates through an annual survey.

Quality educational programs require ongoing assessment of student learning. Northwood Tech has a long history of conducting assessment at the course, program, and institutional level, with its strengths within course and program assessment. Committed to continuous improvement of its processes, the College has committed to HLC's Assessment Academy, providing the framework to focus efforts on co-curricular and collegewide level.

Northwood Tech measures and evaluates student performance with defined goals for retention, persistence, and completion, with special emphasis on term-to-term retention and course completion in the 2021-2023 strategic plan. Processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing data follows good practice, using aligned data definitions, consistent reporting, and readily available data to faculty and staff to be used in program improvement, grants, and other initiatives.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

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

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Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

### Argument

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#### 5.A.1

Shared governance at the Northwood Tech begins with policies that articulate the Board's [governing philosophy](#). The Board engages the College through a policy governance model, setting [ENDS](#) that align with the MVVs and giving operational decision-making [authority to the President](#). The Board engages administration, faculty, staff and students through campus events, reports, and presentations. [College policy](#) allows for a [collaborative approach](#) by using [formal districtwide teams](#) throughout the college offering employees and students opportunities to engage in the institutions planning, quality, and overall mission.

Northwood Tech [organizational chart](#) reflects the formal management structure of the college. The President is responsible for day-to-day oversight. The College is led by the [CLT](#), comprised of the President, four Vice Presidents, Associate Vice President, and Executive Assistant. Focused on the strategic direction of the College, [CLT meets](#) two times per month at a minimum to coordinate and monitor all college operations, including decision-making regarding strategic plan, budget, staffing, and updates of administrative policies. Members of CLT also oversee the primary divisions of the College. Deans, directors, and other managers oversee professional, support, and custodial staff members within the functional units across the primary divisions. The College's clearly delineated structure enables communication across the various divisions of the college.

Key college teams include divisional leadership teams, comprised of managers within the division meeting on a [regular basis](#). The [AALT](#) focuses on building curricula that supports student learning; employing a variety of delivery methods based on best practices for student success, creating supportive partnerships within the education and public communities, and demonstrating

commitment to improvement through program reviews, assessment, and accreditation. [Student Affairs Leadership Team](#) is responsible for providing services to students related to recruitment, admission, enrollment, financial aid, retention, student life, graduation, and employment assistance. [Administrative Services Leadership Team](#) oversees all financial, human resources functions, technology infrastructure and distance education network for the College. [Institutional Effectiveness Leadership Team](#) oversees accreditation, research and surveys, data reporting, academic program and divisional unit reviews, program viability, divisional and collegewide metrics, professional development, resource development, and strategic planning. [WCD Leadership Team](#) oversees a wide array of programming, specialized training and workforce development options, and personal enrichment courses.

Each campus has a [Regional Leadership Team](#), ensures the College maintains community focus by engaging in regional activities and relationship development. The team, consisting of managers from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, WDC, and facilities, meets two times per month to share divisional updates while also attending to the immediate needs of students, staff, faculty and administrators addressed with campus-based decisions. Additionally, this group determines how to address requests of external community partners related to representation of the College within the community organizations and events.

[Approved district teams](#), inclusive of faculty and staff, develop as the result of strategic goals (e.g., [Adult Recruitment](#), [Digital Badging Implementation](#), [DEI](#), [K12 Partnership](#), [Market Research](#), [Program Implementation](#), [Rebranding](#), [University Transfer](#) Teams. Cross-college membership ensures that administration, faculty, and staff are part of the planning and implementation of key college initiatives. Results ([2021-2023 plan report](#), [2018-2021 final plant report](#)) from the teams' work have been summarized, evaluated, and used in further action plans. Other [cross-functional teams](#) (pg. 2) support college operations, with over 250 employees serving on the teams. Ongoing operational teams include:

- [ASL Team](#) facilitates the planning, organization, recommendations, communication, and overall leadership for the college's assessment of student learning.
- [Benefits Review Team](#) reviews annual rate proposals for employee benefits and provides benefit recommendations to CLT.
- [Perkins Team](#) analyzes Perkins data to identify areas of improvement within courses and programs.
- [Professional Development Team](#) plans, implements, and evaluates professional development activities for all staff and faculty.
- [Safety and Security Team](#) develops and implements the Collegewide Safety Plan and Emergency Procedures, coordinates safety and security measures, and establishes training programs for the district.
- [WILM District Leadership Team](#) is responsible for identifying and pursuing collaboration opportunities related to the WILM consortium in the areas of information technology, human resources, finance, institutional research and effectiveness, student services, and teaching and learning. The team also assist in the communication, planning, and issue resolution of the WILM activities.

Besides approved teams, Northwood Tech engages internal constituencies through planning processes. At the center of all process development and decision-making at Northwood Tech is the Strategic Planning. This process uses a [variety of tools](#) including town hall meetings, Q&A sessions, brainstorming, [SWOT analysis](#), [environmental scan](#), surveys, and focus groups, with input collected

at all levels within the college. The results of the year-long process are then organized into a framework for action reflecting the needs and requests of all stakeholders, and the foundation upon which all college planning and decision-making is based. The [annual budget and equipment planning](#) engages faculty, staff, and leadership. Additionally, the facility master planning [process includes faculty, staff, and managers](#) to plan for facility improvements.

Student input is encouraged overall and specifically sought for several college initiatives and decision processes. Organizations such as Student Senate and the Campus Activities Board (CAB) empower students to influence the student experience and culture at a campus level, while also serving as the [student voice](#) for collegewide initiatives such as the recent [rebranding project](#) which rolled out in August 2021 and facilities decisions regarding [student spaces](#). Broader student input is regularly collected through tools such as the [CCSSE](#) and the Graduate Follow-up Survey. Presidential [listening sessions](#) with students and staff provided feedback to inform decision-making processes.

### 5.A.2

Northwood Tech administration intentionally uses data to inform decisions in the best interests of the college and its constituents. The emphasis on informed decision-making begins with the President and CLT members, and is infused throughout all levels of the College. In [annual in-services](#), monthly [all-staff meetings](#), and other [presentations](#) and [communications](#) to the college community, President Will and other leaders regularly reference key performance metrics. IR provides a [monthly comprehensive data report](#) to CLT, academic and student services leaders that includes enrollment, retention, completion, and financial information. Data that is easily accessed supports informed decisions across the College. For example, [enrollment reports](#), detailing the enrollment funnel (applications, admitted, enrolled) are shared with all employees each week, and monitored by Student Services, Enrollment Management, Marketing, and CLT. The Enrollment Management Team uses this report, highlighting specific areas, to [develop plans](#) to drive enrollment or increase percentages.

Administration's ongoing monitoring of financial data relative to budget informs decisions to effectively allocate resources while maintaining a fiduciary responsibility to taxpayers. Budget allocations recommended for Board approval are collaboratively recommended by CLT and their staff. Ongoing monitoring throughout the fiscal year by budget managers and CLT are facilitated by [various reports](#). Examples of decisions made with this data includes monitoring of HEERF resources available for student support and pandemic support; reducing conference center and food service staffing during the pandemic to reflect minimal in-person activity but staffing and meal costing to provide operations for student and staff on campus that rely on such availability; reallocation of forecasted financial surplus to expand services to areas in need versus building an additional surplus; and, funding of flexible staffing arrangements to meet the needs of the College and its stakeholders.

Administration also uses data to develop strategic priorities. As part of the [strategic planning process](#), environmental scanning data ([FY21](#), [FY17](#)), WTCS data, WILM data warehouse reports, PeopleSoft data, IPEDS, US Census information, and labor market data, inform decisions while building a strategic plan. Data is also needed in assessing the progress of [strategic actions](#). The [College Effectiveness Measures](#), which include WTCS benchmark data, provides important context when assessing institutional performance. Data also informs operational decision-making by administration related to program expansion or reductions. For example, labor market data was recently used to support the decision to add Veterinary Technician and Truck Driving programs.

Key to informed decisions is using valid data sources, such as PeopleSoft data, WTCS data, data warehouse reports, IPEDS, and CRM data. The College's has formalized processes for collecting

quantitative and/or qualitative constituent feedback (e.g., [Noel-Levitz SSI](#); the [CCSSE](#); [Graduate Follow-Up Report](#)), support decision-making in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.

### 5.A.3

As part of the WTCS, many academic requirements, policies, and procedures are already defined. However, collaborative structures exist for faculty, staff, and students to contribute using Northwood Tech's organizational structure, existing teams, and ad hoc committees.

Administrative [policy](#) assigns responsibility for continuous refinement, improvement, and updating of curriculum and assessment documentation to faculty and deans. As such, faculty determine program and course prerequisites and corequisites, working with the Curriculum Office. Curriculum standards are established with faculty input. For example, Blackboard Ultra Conversion Input Team (BUCIT) consists of 17 faculty members who informed the planning and development of the conversion to Blackboard Ultra. Volunteer faculty serve on the team, [meeting monthly](#) to ensure ideas meet faculty needs, fit into existing Academic Affairs division schedules, and provided faculty with adequate resources for conversion. Some BUCIT members also serve as Blackboard Ultra Conversion (BUC) champions. The champions lead training efforts, have early access to training materials to provide feedback to professional development, and have first choice at conversion to pilot classes in the new system. Another team, the ASL Team, provides an opportunity for faculty and staff to recommend, facilitate, and supports policies, processes, and practices used by the college for assessing student learning. During [monthly meetings](#), the team determines strategies for the assessment of student learning, reviews reports and data related to assessment, discusses best practices of student-learning assessment, and recommends policies on assessment and reporting of data.

Faculty and staff are involved in setting requirements, policy, and processes in additional ways. Annually, all employees have the opportunity to give feedback on the employee handbook. The [Emerging Issue process](#) allows all employees to provide local, divisional, or collegewide ideas that help strengthen the College's overall effectiveness. [Academic program review](#) and [non-instructional unit review](#) provides faculty and staff the opportunity to drive improvement activities and collaborate with administration. Staff also provide input needed in establishing requirements, policy and processes through the Noel-Levitz CESS (2020, 2016). Initiatives and new processes need faculty, staff, and student input. Examples include the [town hall sessions](#) held to gather faculty, staff and student input as the College moved forward on the NGL strategic initiative. In 2019, technology services launched a [Technology Services 360 Assessment](#) to obtain student feedback to ensure that the College was offering and supporting technology that met the needs of students. In June 2020 and August 2020, [students were surveyed](#) to provide feedback on the College's response to COVID-19. Based on student feedback, academic leadership reduced the number of [delivery modes](#) and redeveloped the descriptions of each mode for better student understanding.

Student input is gathered and considered in setting policy and process through various means including the SSI ([FY22](#), [FY18](#), [FY16](#)) and the CCSSE ([FY21](#), [FY17](#), [FY15](#)). Results from each survey are uses as data points in [decision-making](#), with [results shared](#) with internal college stakeholder groups and used to identify areas of improvement.

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## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

### Argument

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#### 5.B.1

Northwood Tech maintains four campuses and four outreach centers offering both onsite and online educational opportunities throughout an 11-county region in Northwestern Wisconsin. It has sufficient staff and infrastructure to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

#### Qualified and Trained Operational Staff

Northwood Tech has [sufficient staff and faculty](#) to support its operations. The College has established job descriptions, task lists, and [minimum qualifications](#) for all positions. Board approved and budgeted vacancies are reviewed and discussed by the CLT after considering college resources, managers' personnel justifications, and board policies and adds permanent employees in response to increased funding and or enrollments. The [organizational chart](#) illustrates the divisions that support college operations and education. Temporary call-staff, adjunct faculty, and permanent faculty who elect to teach overloads for hourly pay carry out additional work when needed.

Professional development plans exist for each employment group ([Managers](#), Faculty (see 3.C.5.) , [Support & Technical](#), Accommodations Specialist/Counselor) that detail ongoing learning and development expectations for staff and consist of three stages: onboarding, skill-building, and continuing education. The PDO assigns professional development plans on an annual basis and provides ongoing online and synchronous professional learning opportunities, and tracks completion in Maestro. Every new hire must complete compliance courses in the areas of FERPA, safety, collegewide orientation, and record retention. Specific collegewide technology like Microsoft Teams training supports staff working in geographical dispersed campuses. [Required annual or cyclical training](#), such as FERPA, Preventing Harassment and Discrimination with Title IX/Cleary, and Data Security & Privacy, are available to staff online through Maestro. Additionally, specialized training for specific positions (e.g., safety topics for custodians, FSA training for financial aid advisors (see 3.C.7) course design and assessment for faculty (see 3.C.5) are completed annually by relevant staff. A collegewide professional development budget supports these activities.

The PDO plans collegewide in-service and other professional development events for all staff. An

[annual schedule of events](#) is shared with staff at the beginning of the fiscal year as well as a monthly [professional development update newsletter](#) to notify all staff of upcoming opportunities. Employees also set individual and professional goals as part of the performance review process each year, determining priorities for training. Professional development is available for staff through local and national conferences, journals, webinars, and professional organizations. For example, the College has sponsored over [50 staff](#) in [WLDI](#).

### Sufficient Infrastructure

Supporting a sufficient infrastructure at Northwood Tech is a priority, evidenced by the 2021-2023 Strategic Plan Theme of Program Optimization: “Cultivate innovative teaching and learning practices using emerging technology, methodologies, facilities and equipment.” To support these efforts, the College creates responsible budgets and exercises sound financial management following requirements in [Chapter 65](#) of Wisconsin Statutes, the [WTCS Financial and Administrative Manual \(FAM\)](#), and board policies. Doing so ensures adequate financial resources to support operations.

Even with the volatility in state aid, property tax levy, GASB requirements, and enrollment during the last decade, the college has maintained balanced budgets ([FY23](#), [FY22](#), [FY21](#)) and [financial stability](#). It has maintained a healthy net position from 2011 to 2021. Moody’s Investors Services has recognized Northwood Tech with an Aaa rating.

The College maintains four comprehensive campuses and three outreach centers in counties where it operates. The [current facilities](#) comprise 678,343 square feet at a value of \$91.8 million. Current facilities include space for classrooms, state-of-the-art labs and simulation centers, libraries, offices, study spaces, common spaces, dining areas/cafeterias, conference centers, and meeting rooms. Northwood Tech’s facility improvements and project sequencing is included in the annual budget document which details zoned and non-zoned, required financing and the repayment of financed projects. The College’s Three-Year FY22-FY24 [Facilities Plan](#) addresses anticipated capital expenditures, purchase of land, new construction, and remodeling, to maintain the physical infrastructure to support operations.

*Table 5.B.1 Campus Locations*

Campus	Location (address)	Site Size in Acres	Building Sq. Footage	Building Value
Ashland	2100 Beaser Ave., Ashland WI 54806	30.6	74,912	\$19,947,044
New Richmond	1019 S. Knowles Ave., New Richmond WI 54017	37.5	144,932	\$34,380,253
Rice Lake	1900 College Drive, Rice Lake WI 54868	34.5	172,005	\$36,180,567
Superior	600 N. 21 <sup>st</sup> St., Superior WI 54880	8.6	124,934	\$35,255,361

Northwood Tech provides sufficient technological infrastructure to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered. IT ensures the College maintains efficient and effective information systems to support employees and students, with IT investments driven by the strategic planning, academic planning, assessment of student learning, budgeting, and professional development. The technology infrastructure consists of 2,041 end user computers, 212 iPads, 84 servers, and 1 Linux. The College has 267 IP phones, 520 Teams phone users, 6 routers, 110 switches, 196 Meraki wireless access points, 28 network closets, and 1 firewall. Additionally, the campuses and outreach centers house a total of 21 open computer labs with nearly 110 applications; technology-equipped huddles rooms; and, over 100 NGL classrooms equipped with projection displays, computers, and document cameras. Distance learning technologies, including Blackboard LMS and Bluejeans video sharing platform, provide a robust remote learning environment to supplement face-to-face delivery, hybrid, or fully online courses. Over the past five years, the college has invested approximately \$1.9 Million in these assets, which are kept up to date through a 4-year replacement cycle for laptops and a 5-year replacement cycle for desktop computers.

Additionally, the College has focused on reducing its infrastructure footprint and eliminating barriers created by geographical location by expanding its cloud environment with Azure and Microsoft365 and becoming more SaaS and IaaS dominant. Comparing the College's physical technology topography to the logical (virtual) technology topography, Northwood Tech looks like one large campus rather than eight physical locations. Not only does this allow the College to create a more dynamic and modern learning environment across the campuses and outreach centers but is also inclusive of students learning remotely.

Since the College has always operated as geographically separated campuses serving a large territory, Northwood Tech has been a leader in innovative technology. Both instructional programming and services are offered using multiple [delivery modes](#). A large district that includes onsite and remote learners and staff requires technological support.

The college is part of WILM, a three-college consortium, which provides additional support for technology infrastructure as well as shared applications. WILM hosts a physical data center and has equipment and staffing to provide support for a shared PeopleSoft ERP system, data warehouse, SharePoint, as well as other shared applications and services. WILM's shared governance model ensures it continues to meet the technology needs of the colleges, strengthening and providing resiliency for critical infrastructure supporting Northwood's operations.

### **5.B.2**

The College's [strategic plan](#), with its five strategic themes, is aligned with the MVVTs and [Board ENDS](#). Strategies with goals, specific actions, and effectiveness measures are established for each strategic theme that consider Northwood Tech's organization, resources (e.g., [budget](#)), and opportunities. Institutional Research assists CLT by providing data and alignment support to establish realistic targets for effectiveness measures for each theme in the strategic plan. [Effectiveness Measures](#) include trend and benchmark data.

In prior strategic plans ([2015-2018](#), [2018-2021](#)), Northwood Tech developed and organized teams around the strategic themes and activities. These strategic teams were responsible for planning and implementing activities. Through regular [monitoring reports](#), team progress and data was shared with the Board, college leadership, and staff. The current strategic plan uses existing teams and departments within the college divisions to plan, budget, implement, and report progress on specific actions in each theme. This process of resource allocation ensures that strategic activities are

incorporated into the budget and staff are identified to champion efforts (e.g., [Student Affairs Strategic Actions](#)). demonstrating realistic goals incorporated into the mission. The College has an annual operating budget of \$44.6 million (FY23) and an annual capital budget of \$8.2 million (FY23) and plans for the resources needed to provide educational opportunities based on student, employee, and stakeholder needs, including strategic actions.

### 5.B.3

Northwood Tech has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and monitoring finances. The College adheres to the overarching policies for maintaining fiscal and physical infrastructures set by the WTCS. The budgets comply with Chapter 38 and Chapter 65 of the Wisconsin Statutes as well as with [Policy D-212](#) and [Policy D-240](#) in the Administrative Policies. The accounting, fiscal reporting, and general financial management systems comply with requirements in the [WTCS FAM](#).

The [budget planning process](#) begins each year in October with the CLT setting parameters for requests. The budget process includes requests from staff, reviews by CLT, a public hearing, final approval by the board and submission to the WTCS before July 1 when the fiscal budget year begins.

Improvements to the budget process starting in 2020 include [template](#) completion meetings with the District Controller and Program Deans prior to review with the Vice President of Academic Affairs as well as meetings between the District Controller and divisional Vice Presidents. These meetings maintain consistency and compliance within the required funds and functions as required by the WTCS FAM. The ease of use of Excel workbooks allows for budget iterations and tracking of budget requests. Once budgets are implemented, Northwood Tech follows the WTCS Uniform Financial Fund Accounting System (UFFAS) to record and control finances. The UFFAS applies the GASB pronouncements and standards.

Managers have access to [budget reports](#) through Cognos at any time. Additionally, the Administrative Services Division publishes bi-weekly summary reports for the general fund. The reports help monitor department budgets. Faculty and staff can purchase supplies and materials, per guidelines and limits established in the [Procurement Guide](#). The College uses College Marketplace for many purchase. College Marketplace is an electronic portal used to provide compliance to state procure guidelines, with vendors vetted for compliance. Purchasing items from the College Marketplace requires an associate dean or manager to review prior to purchase. Purchases made with VISA purchasing cards are reviewed by the supervisor after the purchase.

The board oversees college finances using a [monthly statement](#) in the Consent Agenda at each board meeting for the prior month which compares general fund actual expenditures to budgeted expenses for the current and prior fiscal year.

Northwood Tech has always been transparent in its budget plans and controls. Each year, the CLT updates board members with monitoring reports as the budget is developed. The budgeting process includes a public hearing before board approval.

The college [publishes annual budgets](#) with projected financial information and a budgeting process description. It publishes annual financial audit reviewing actual financial information and budget implementation. In compliance with WTCS audit requirements, independent auditors and WTCS administrators review Northwood Tech's finances, presenting independent audits, single audits, and WTCS reviews. Auditors have rendered clean opinions and approvals every year except 2019. Northwood Tech took corrective action in 2019 and has remained in compliance ever since.

#### 5.B.4

Northwood Technical College's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved. The use of resources for educational purposes is consistent with the mission of "learning first" and with the Evolve 2021-2023 Strategic Plan. As reflected in an [independent audit](#) (pg. 28), most of college operating expenses (Table 5.B.4) in the general fund are for the educational purposes.

*Table 5.B.4. Instructional Operating Expenses vs Total Operating Expenses*

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Instructional Operating Expenses</b>	<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>Percentage of Expenses for Educational Purposes</b>
FY21	\$40,203,577	\$58,490,316	68.7%
FY20	\$42,438,747	59,707,090	71.1%
FY19	45,187,908	61,407,949	73.6%

The college's resource allocation process protects its educational purposes through various layers of planning and approval. The formal budget development process begins in October. The President and Administration forecast expected revenues and expenditures based on a status quo operation with historical trend increases or decreases. The CLT then organizes requests and modifications and reviews them [in March](#). The CLT assesses opportunities and challenges and prioritizes them according to the strategic plan. Prioritization occurs until May, when the Board is presented with a preliminary budget recommendation and the notice for the budget hearing is published. Throughout this process, Administration updates the Board on its progress with respect to the budget. The Board conducts a [budget hearing](#) at its regular meeting in June. Following the budget hearing, the Board considers the [budget](#) for final adoption.

Northwood Tech has a diversified funding base composed of property taxes, state aid, student fees, federal and state grants, and institutionally-generated revenues. This diversity of available resources and sound fiscal management will continue to provide the ability to fulfill Northwood Tech's mission without significant changes in the level of services provided. The 2022/2023 [budgeted revenue](#) include 47% state aid, 17% taxes, 13% institutionally-generated revenues, 12% federal, and 11% student fees.

Instruction is the priority for the college's general fund budgeted expenses by function. The 2022/2023 budgeted operational expenses by function include 57.4% instruction, 20.5% general institutional, 11.7% student services, 7% physical plant, and 3.4% instructional resources.

In addition to the Operational Fund the district also budgets for capital expenditures. In FY23, approximately \$8.3 million in capital expenditures (movable equipment and physical infrastructure) is budgeted in its Capital Project Fund. Instruction and instructional resources functions comprise of 38.2% and 6.0%, respectively with Physical Plant making up the largest capital budgeted for at 44.4%.

Most functions of Northwood Tech are financed through governmental funds. The acquisitions, uses and balances of the College's expendable financial resources and related liabilities, except those recorded in proprietary funds, are accounted within governmental funds. The measurement focus is

based upon the determination of changes in financial position rather than upon determination of net income.

Northwood Tech aggressively pursues and efficiently utilizes grant opportunities. During FY22, the College was [awarded \\$14,866,733 in funds](#) for use in FY22 and FY23. Programs across the college work with the Grants and Resource Development staff to identify, apply for, implement, and document grant funding. Grant funding is directed specifically to efforts that ensure educational purposes are achieved (e.g., increasing education opportunities in jails, increasing retention rates, offering industry recognized credentials).

Northwood Tech monitors its finances across the college through the use of program and department specific reporting. The budget is managed and monitored by a reporting system consisting of reports that are available to staff, which compare actual expenditures and revenues with the budget.

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## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

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The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

### Argument

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#### 5.C.1

Financial, facility, technological, and human resources are needed to fulfill the College's mission of "Learning First." Using systematic and integrated planning, the mission and strategic themes guide Northwood Tech's allocation of resources. In the budget process, intentional efforts are made to link desired goals from the strategic plan to the actual day-to-day activities of the College. As identified 5.B.4, the majority of resource allocations are related to instructional and student support costs. Actual expenditures in [FY21](#) show that the college used 68.7% of funds on instructional expenses in direct support of the mission. Capital allocations also align with the mission and strategic plan. Faculty and staff requests for capital equipment require descriptions, justifications, and facilities impact information. College leaders prioritize these requests (e.g., [FY23 requests](#) based on the contribution to fulfilling the college's strategic and operational priorities, with the [Board approving](#) the final annual budget. Spending is monitored throughout the year by budget managers and CLT to ensure spending continues to align with the budget and strategic initiatives.

Additionally, grant initiatives align with the college's strategic plan. For example, the [WTCS Completion Grant](#), tied to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity strategic theme, funds a Multicultural Student Success Advisor to support retention underrepresented populations. The [Developing Market Grant](#) supported the development and implementation the AA and AS degrees, supporting the strategic theme of Transferability. The [HOMES Grant](#), linked to the Program Optimization theme, increases access to advanced manufacturing training to students through mobile training throughout the region.

Consistent with the financial allocations, the College values its staff, and works to align its human resources with strategic priorities and mission. Through the Job Requisition process, supervisors develop a position proposal and justification, analyzing college need and budget. Staff and faculty reflect on their contributions to the fulfillment of the mission and strategic plan during the annual performance review process within the job area subsection "Northwood Technical College [Cultural](#)

[Competencies](#).” The [CESS Survey](#) indicates staff and faculty feel part of the mission and are part of something meaningful.

Northwood Tech's allocation of facility resources is also defined by the college's strategic priorities, supporting the mission of “Learning First.” The District's [Facilities Assessment](#) and the Three-Year [Facilities Plan](#) reflects the missions and strategic plan by providing a project sequence for maintaining, repairing, and improving current facilities related to programmatic needs, modifications, or additions. An example is the remodeling of the Shell Lake additional location to serve as the [Health Education Center](#). This space will enhance student learning and support program accreditation requirements.

Finally, Northwood Technical College's allocation of technological resources aligns with the college's mission and strategic priorities, as clarified by the [Technology Plan](#). Ratings on IT metrics in the Administrative Services Divisional [Metrics](#) indicates the IT Department is effectively executing projects, and supporting students and staff.

## 5.C.2

Northwood Tech links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting. Each year, academic programs develop Academic Program Improvement Plans as part of the Academic Program Review Process (See Component 4.A for details). The process incorporates assessment of student learning results and other program data to build plans in which faculty identify the resources, staff, and time needed to implement improvements. The process [timeline](#) allows for deans to approve the plans and incorporate any costs associated with the improvements into their divisional budgets.

[Grant initiatives](#) directly link assessment of student learning, planning and budgeting. For example, the College's Perkins Team analyze Perkins data to identify best practices and address areas in need of improvement to create action plans and funding requests (e.g., [Student Success](#), [Strengthening Programs Grant](#)).

The College also links evaluation of operations with budget and planning. In 2018, a pilot project began with non-instructional departments conducting the [Non-instructional Unit Review Process](#) to evaluate and improve operations. Feedback from the pilot departments indicated the 5-year process to lack agility to address needs in a timely fashion and the process itself to be difficult. An adhoc team revised the process in 2019; however, due to the pandemic the roll-out was delayed. In fall of 2021, a [new annual](#) non-instructional unit review process was implemented, with the purpose of departments identifying improvement opportunities and needed resources. The improvements are integrated into department/divisional budgets during the budget planning process.

At the institutional level, the [EVOLVE XXIII](#) Strategic Plan action items link to divisional activities, planning, and budget. In the EVOLVE XXXIII action items, divisions and college teams (e.g., [Academic Affairs](#), [Student Affairs](#), and [IE](#) Strategic Plan Actions) identify the activities, link them to the strategic plan, and identify operational, human, and capital resources. Divisional Vice Presidents incorporate the costs of resources into their divisional budgets.

Improvement plans from the Academic Program Review and Non-instructional Review and action items from the strategic plan form the basis for many budget requests. In the annual [budgeting process](#), managers justify and prioritize requests through connection to strategies and continuous improvement, with CLT developing the final budget.

### 5.C.3

The College's strategic and operational planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspective of internal and external constituent groups, including the Board of Trustees, CLT, academic programs, operational and administrative units, advisory committee members, and students. These processes incorporate data and evidence collected related to both internal and external constituencies, guiding the college and individual departments in the development of plans.

The Board holds an annual "Board Forward meeting" each year, where trustees review the previous year's goals. The Board and leadership review an Environmental Scan, prepared annually. Northwood Tech's strategic planning process provides an opportunity for constituent groups to provide input through surveys or meetings to develop 2- or 3-year strategic plans.

In establishing strategic plans that guide the college as a whole, Northwood Tech's goals strives to align the plan with its missions and respond to the needs of its constituencies, considering performance data about academic programming and divisional operations. A variety of tools are used to identify internal and external constituencies' needs. For [EVOLVE XXIII](#) the college used an [environmental scan](#), [SWOT Analysis](#), perception [survey results](#), and a compression planning process. Additionally, for the Twenty-Four by Twenty-One [Strategic Plan](#), the college conducted town hall meetings for students, staff, and community members, and used [strategic priorities surveys](#). Strategic plan implementation [teams in 2018](#) identified and oversaw tactics to achieve each of the strategic goals. The Board and college leadership monitor progress with an annual report ([FY19](#), [FY20](#), [FY21](#), [FY22](#)), summarizing activities and measures.

Operational planning occurs within departments at the divisional level, reviewing the perspective of internal and external constituencies. Supervisors collaborate with staff to identify plans annually, which are then funneled into divisional plans. CLT reviews planning drafts, budget impact, and connection to the strategic plan, as CLT is responsible for strategic goals, while working within the divisions to establish action items to support the plan. Information from internal and external constituents is evaluated on an ongoing basis. For example, advisory committees offer insight into industry trends and employer needs.

Although divisional operational budget plans focus on the work of individual departments, the plans often consider the perspective of the constituent groups served by those departments. In the APR process, faculty conduct background research of external and occupational trends, review student demographic data, and review performance data (See Component 4.A.). Annual monitoring of college approved teams, departments, and divisions requires review of impact of actions on stakeholders outside the team completing the [form](#).

### 5.C.4

Northwood Tech's sound understanding of its current capacity provides the basis for which plans are developed. In order to maintain fiscal stability, the College uses [conservative estimates](#) when forecasting revenues, ensuring the College can absorb the financial impact of unplanned fluctuations in revenue and enrollment. Forecasts consider statutory limitations on state aid, tuition and fees, and borrowing. The College's vigilant fiscal approach allows programs and services to continue when enrollments decline or revenue decreases.

The College has a diversified revenue base ([pgs. 52-65](#)), including state aid (42.9%), local property taxes (20.1%), grants (19.5%), student fees (11.7%), customized instruction/technical assistance

contracts with business and industry (2.4%), and auxiliary/miscellaneous income (3.5%). A diversified revenue base and conservative revenue forecasting helps the College respond to fluctuations in revenue and enrollment. Revenues remain stable from year to year as state aid is the College's largest revenue source. For example, revenues were relatively consistent throughout the pandemic although enrollments declined in FY21 ([pg. 40](#)).

In addition to operational funding, the College uses debt-funding to pay for a majority of capital expenditures ([pgs. 111-122](#)). Northwood Tech structures its debt to maintain a stable tax levy within the debt service fund and looks to repay its debt within three to seven years for capital equipment borrowings and five to ten years for capital projects borrowings. Capital planning ([pgs. 95 -108](#)) consists of a Comprehensive Facility Plan, equipment replacement schedules, and identification of new capital equipment needs in future years. These plans are reviewed concurrently with the strategic plan, budgeting process, and academic programming plan to ensure alignment of all plans and processes and updated annually.

The College maintains fund balance reserves ([pg. 49](#)) consistent with [Board Policy](#) for prepaid expenditures and inventories, operations, capital projects, debt service, student organizations, student financial assistance, and funds designated for subsequent years. The Designated for Operations account in the fund balance can be accessed for emergencies and to help with cash flow to avoid short-term borrowing. Similarly, an account is maintained in the special revenue - operating fund to be used for additional match for grants if the budgeted levy for the year is insufficient for new grants that may be available during the year. Northwood Tech's [pro forma balance sheet](#) supports strong fund balances for each specific fund throughout the College. Additionally, the pro forma balance sheet shows low liquidity rate (3.24% for FY23) which indicates that Northwood Tech is maintaining stable cash reserves.

A number of tools and resources further understanding of the College's current capacity. The President provides a [financial position](#) at each Board meeting, showing expenses and revenues compared to the budget and providing information about potential fluctuations in enrollment or revenue. The Overall Student Enrollment [Dashboard](#) provides an overview of FTEs and enrollments compared to previous years. IR provides deans, enrollment managers, and CLT a monthly comprehensive [report](#) that includes enrollment, retention, course completion, and financial information. All staff receive weekly [funnel reports](#), showing the applicant, admitted, enrolled, and wait list numbers.

As a result of careful planning and management of resources, Northwood Tech has operated with strong fiscal responsibility, maintained an adherence to planning budgets, and has developed strong reserves.

### 5.C.5

With the mission of "Learning First," Northwood Tech considers how evolving external factors affect students' learning. The [strategic plan](#) establishes college priorities and initiatives based on research and data (e.g., [Environmental Scan](#)), market research [surveys](#), [SWOT Analysis](#), [Graduate follow-up](#), compression planning, [Employer Survey](#)), that provides insight into evolving external factors.

A key example of anticipating evolving external factors includes the [name change process](#). In early 2020, the College hired a nationally-recognized market research firm to objectively evaluate the brand, perception, and name of the College. Residents, both within the College district and nearby; alumni; community influencers; current students and employees were surveyed. Results indicated

"Indianhead" was not broadly recognized as a geographic region, especially among younger stakeholders and those outside the district. "Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College," and its short initials, "WITC," caused confusion on what type of college WITC was and whether it was even a college. A [taskforce](#) consisting of both internal and external stakeholders, led the process of identifying and implementing the new Northwood Tech name and developing more sophisticated branding that is better aligned with stakeholder perceptions.

During the 2021-2023 strategic planning process, social unrest and the pandemic caused unprecedented uncertainties. The strategic theme of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion emerged from stakeholder feedback, along with [strategies and actions](#) to "create an environment welcoming to everyone through diversity awareness." COVID-19 affected all aspects of planning at the College. Northwood Tech worked to provide continuity in courses and services while maintaining a safe learning environment. [Survey data](#) helped inform college planning as the pandemic progressed.

Anticipation of evolving factors in planning processes exists throughout the College. The IT department [plans](#) for emerging technology and its impact on operations. For example, even prior to the pandemic, IT anticipated changes in distance education technology, creating the [NGL taskforce](#), to facilitate in upgrades to distance education delivery technology in over 100 classrooms. IT also anticipated the current migration to cloud-based Office 365 for added security and storage.

At the program level, technology and equipment continually change based on resource availability and industry trends as identified by faculty, deans, and advisory committees. For example, the [HEC](#), focuses on simulation and interdisciplinary communication in the health sciences. It will alleviate pressure on clinical partner while positioning the College to address documented workforce shortages related to the region's aging population.

### 5.C.6

The MMVT, ENDS, and strategic plan provide overarching guidance in the development of operational plans throughout the College. The strategies and goals within the [strategic plan](#), which represent how the College plans to address the Board's ENDS, drive the initiatives and activities. Divisional plans ([Academic Affairs](#), [Student Affairs](#), [IE](#)) outline goals and priorities aligned with the strategic plan. Most college-approved [teams](#) also have plans aligning with the strategic plan. For example, DEI initiatives are another area where the College is allocating resources to make improvements based upon segmented student success data, diversity demographics of faculty and staff, and cultural/societal awareness of systemic inequities and biases. The DEI Team and new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator, [develop practices](#) and strategies, linked to the strategic plan, that foster inclusion across the organization while also developing strategies to identify and close student achievement gaps.

Strategies and team progress are monitored with [annual reports](#) showing progress towards strategic and other planning goals shared with the Board, college leadership, faculty, and staff. The monitoring process employs a [form template](#) that gathers data about the progress of activities, as well as team feedback on future opportunities for improvement. [College Effectiveness Measures](#), directly linked to the strategic themes of the current strategic plan, also measure progress and provide comparison data to assess the effectiveness of plan activities, which in many cases include student outcomes.

Northwood Tech's annual budget is also prepared in alignment with the strategic plan. Operational and capital budget plans are reviewed concurrently with the strategic plan and academic

programming plan in the budgeting process to ensure alignment of all plans and processes. Because of this planning alignment, the College is able to project required funding in future years to maintain and/or improve its programs and services. Overall, the strategic plan allows Northwood Tech to live its mission of "Learning First," serving the residents of Northwest Wisconsin.

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

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

### **Summary**

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Northwood Technical College's resources, structures, processes, and planning sufficiently fulfill its mission of "Learning First." Financial, facility, technological, and human resources are needed to improve the quality of its educational offerings and services, and to respond to future challenges and opportunities. Engaging internal constituencies through a team-based, collaborative structure, the College is able to reach informed decisions. Faculty and other staff are involved in these many cross-functional teams to engage in the work of the College.

The operation of the College is supported by qualified and trained staff and sufficient infrastructure. The College's stable resource base and established processes and procedures support the effective delivery of educational offerings and services to residents throughout an expansive geographical region. Using systematic and integrated planning, the mission and strategic themes guide Northwood Tech's allocation of resources. Well-developed processes for budgeting, monitoring initiatives, and engaging stakeholders ensure educational purposes are achieved.

### **Sources**

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*There are no sources.*