Higher Learning Commission

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June 12, 2023

Dr. Sonya Williams
Chancellor
Eastern Iowa Community College District
101 West Third Street
Davenport, IA 53801

Dear Chancellor Williams:

Attached is a copy of the Multi-location Visit Report completed following the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) visit to Eastern Iowa Community College District (the institution). As detailed in the report, the pattern of operations at the locations visited needs attention. However, the institution can be expected to follow up on these matters without monitoring by HLC.

Within the Multi-location Visit Report, you will find brief comments on instructional oversight, academic services, student services, facilities, marketing and recruitment and adequacy of assessment of student performance. Please consider these comments as advice for continued improvement of the additional locations.

Per HLC policy, completion of these visits and fulfillment of the requirement will be noted in your institution's history record, and the completed report will be included in your institution's permanent file.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the Multi-location Visit or the attached report, please contact accreditation@hlcommission.org.

Sincerely,
Higher Learning Commission

cc: Erin Snyder, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Jamie Stanesa, HLC Staff Liaison

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

FORM

Multi-Location Visit Peer Review Report

Institution:

Additional Locations Visited:

Location Name	**Location Address** *(street, city, state and ZIP code)*	**Date Reviewed**
Maquoketa High School	600 Washington Street, Maquoketa, IA 52060	March 22, 2023
The Button Factory	215 W. Mississippi Dr., Muscatine, IA 52761	March 21, 2023

Peer Reviewer

Name: Frank Gersich

Institution: McPherson College Title: Professor of Business

Instructions

In order to document effective administrative systems for managing multiple additional locations, please complete the following. For each item, check **adequate** or **attention needed**, and indicate in Comments the institution's strengths and/or opportunities for improvement in controlling and delivering degree programs off-campus. If comments pertain to a specific location, they should be included along with the identity of that location.

Submit the completed report as a PDF file at hlcommission.org/upload. Select "Final Reports" from the list of submission options to ensure the institution's materials are sent to the correct HLC staff member. The report is due within 30 days after the last additional location is visited.

Overview Statement

Provide information about current additional locations and the institution's general approach to off-campus instruction. Describe the growth pattern at the institution since the last review of off-campus instruction. Provide information about the involvement of external organizations or other higher education institutions.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate ☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

Eastern Iowa Community Colleges (EICC) serves students in the counties of Clinton, Jackson, Muscatine, and Scott along with portions of Cedar and Louisa Counties. The District offices, located in Davenport, IA, provide oversight for three community colleges. Off-campus sites are used to provide high school students and those in rural areas of the district with educational opportunities closer to their homes than the existing campuses. The institution currently has six additional locations and is planning to open a seventh beginning with the 2024 academic year.

A March 2021 bond referendum was approved to allow building three new Career Advancement Centers to extend the institution's career and technical education (CTE) programs and high school academies. The two currently operational are the Clinton, IA and Muscatine, IA campuses. The third location (opening planned in 2024) will be in Dewitt, IA. Prior to the bond referendum, the institution's leadership worked with the school districts and employers in its service region to obtain information about the CTE training needs during the planning horizon. The background work led to the commitment by area school districts to annually enroll 350 students in the Career Academies.

Institutional Planning

What evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively plans for growth and maintenance of additional locations? Identify whether the institution has adequate controls in place to ensure that information presented to students is adequate. Describe whether the financial planning and budgeting process has proven effective at additional locations.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate ☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

EICC reports that it uses its existing curriculum and program oversight processes to evaluate if a location will meet the needs of students and uphold its curricular standards. Faculty structure the courses within its programs to meet appropriate industry and accreditation standards. Internal structures are in place to review courses on a 4-year cycle during which suggestions for revising courses are brought by faculty to the Educational Program, policies, and Curriculum committee. Each semester, program advisory committees meet to review a program's curriculum and to identify emerging industry needs and trends which may suggest revisions are appropriate to ensure graduates are appropriately prepared.

During meetings with institutional leadership it was reported that there are no current plans to expand its off-campus offerings. However, these may be considered if student-interest increases for their programs and if the organizations that employee EICC graduates indicate a need to expand certain programs. If a new program is proposed, the planning process looks at whether a certificate or degree program is envisioned. The K-12 institutions in the service area would be asked if they desire to partner with the institution for the new program. Once a K-12 partner is identified the budgetary – capital and operating – planning processes would begin to evaluate whether the program is viable.

Facilities

What evidence demonstrates that the facilities at the additional locations meet the needs of the students and the curriculum? Consider, in particular, classrooms and laboratories (size, maintenance, temperature, etc.); faculty and administrative offices (site, visibility, privacy for meetings, etc.); parking or access to public transit; bookstore or text purchasing services; security; handicapped access; and other (food or snack services, study and meeting areas, etc.)

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate ☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

The EICC administration reported that the course and program curriculum identify a program's equipment and facility needs. In the conversation with Academic administration it was clear that a program offered at an additional location was no different than the same program offered at one of its campuses.

During a meeting for the Button Factory Location it was reported, during the assessment conversation, that a freeze dryer was purchased for the kitchen this year and a new gelato machine was purchased with Perkins funding. Both of these pieces of equipment will add to the capability of the Button Factory facility to provide Culinary Arts students with the ability to use different food preparation equipment. During the Button Factory facilities tour it was clear the culinary students had a space that definitely met their needs. It was equipped with appropriate food storage equipment, prep space, cooking equipment, utensils, that every small restaurant would have available. In the faculty meeting it was noted that student parking is sufficient. Students discussed how they were able to use their creativity in developing new dishes with the wide variety of equipment that was available.

The Maquoketa High School location has classes for the Welding program and classes to support Associate of Arts and Associate of Science programs. During the building tour, the welding facility on the high school campus had a significant amount of equipment and tools that supported learning different welding techniques. The faculty member noted that part of the course was for the students to understand how to maintain the equipment and clean-up the shop after their work was done for the day.

Instructional Oversight

What evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively oversees instruction at the additional locations? Consider, in particular, consistency of curricular expectations and policies, availability of courses needed for program and graduation requirements, faculty qualifications, performance of instructional duties, availability of faculty to students, orientation of faculty/professional development, attention to student concerns.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☐ Adequate ☒ Attention Needed

Comments:

EICC reported that enrollment capacity is set at the course and program level – space limitations may require adjustments to those capacities, however. In general it is the courses and programs that are consistently promoted and not a specific location. The overall capacity is set at the course level to ensure

the pedagogy adopted by the department for a course/program can be delivered to all students who enroll in the course, no matter where it is taught. Enrollment is monitored by the Deans, faculty, and the Senior Leadership Team at all locations to ensure there is sufficient enrollment to continue with the offerings.

Oversight of the Button Factory location is through EICC's Muscatine campus and Maquoketa's oversight is through the Clinton campus. The specific oversight of the Culinary Arts program is through the Scott campus which supports an Associate' degree in Culinary Arts. The Academic Leadership reported that the Culinary Arts program in Muscatine is a one-year certificate program. If students desired the Associate's Degree they would need to enroll in another campus/location that offered the additional coursework to complete that degree.

The Maquoketa Academic leadership noted that the base level for concurrent classes is normally 5 – 7 students (which is the same number for new programs). If there is an unplanned deviation from this base,

1. the high school administration is notified,
2. the departmental liaison is consulted, and
3. a meeting with the instructor is held to discuss the situation.

The Muscatine Academic leadership noted that the normal number of students in the Culinary Arts program has been 5 to 8 since the program started in 2017. This year the number is 3. The leadership reported that the maximum enrollment that could be supported with the present facilities is 12. Thus, they have allowed enrollment by non-high school students for the certificate classes. The direct departmental oversight for the certificate program is provided the by the faculty liaison from the Scott campus where the Culinary Arts Associate's degree is located.

In conversations with students and faculty there was one issue at each location that was identified as needing attention. At the Button Factory, the students indicated problems with the fall semester internships, and at Maquoketa the faculty indicated that communication was often delayed. See the Summary Recommendations section (page 10) for further discussion.

Institutional Staffing and Faculty Support

What evidence demonstrates that the institution has appropriately qualified and sufficient staff and faculty in place for the location, and that the institution supports and evaluates personnel at off-campus locations? Consider the processes in place for selecting, training, and orienting faculty at the location.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate ☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

The Academic Deans are responsible for the scheduling assignments at the off-campus locations which includes EICC employed faculty and concurrent faculty employed by their school districts. In the case of the concurrent faculty, a process document that is updated annually results in a Memorandum of Agreement between EICC and each high school. EICC reported that its Administrative Procedures Manual includes the Review of Faculty Qualifications Process and its Faculty Process Review Documentation. These documents align with Iowa's Department of Education, the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) and HLC standards regarding faculty qualifications.

The conversation with the academic leadership at the Maquoketa location noted that prospective faculty for concurrent courses are required to complete an application. For part-time faculty, the institution co-ordinates with the high school principal. The academic credentials are reviewed and approved by the Academic Dean before the individual is hired.

Non-faculty staffing needs vary by location, but an EICC commitment is to have an Academic Advisor or a College and Career Transition Counselor assigned to each area high school. The Deans of Students at each campus monitor the caseloads of these individuals in their work at the high schools. The College Presidents and the Deans work together to ensure that each location has appropriate office coverage, facility cares, and sufficient staff to ensure that the needs of students and faculty are met.

New full-time faculty participate in a yearlong program to help them transition to EICC and their role as faculty. Full-time faculty have probationary contracts for their first three consecutive years of teaching as outlined in the Quality Faculty Plan (QFP). By the end of this probationary period, new faculty must meet several requirements, including the completion of new faculty orientation, professional learning activities, and successful observations and evaluations. One of the Academic Dean's responsibilities is to monitor faculty compliance with the QFP.

Adjunct faculty complete their orientation program prior to their first teaching year and participate in on-going professional development. Both adjunct and concurrent faculty have continuing professional education requirements – six hours every three years for adjunct faculty and a 1-hour discipline-specific training sponsored by EICC.

All employees are required to complete mandatory training annually on the following topics: Title IX, Sexual Harassment/Assault, FERPA, Cyber Security, Bloodborne Pathogens, and Freedom of Speech training.

In the meeting with the Academic leadership for the Button Factory location, it was reported that EICC has faculty who are nationally certified in Food Safety and teach its Sanitation and Safety course. It was further noted that this is a credential employers value and students in the Culinary Arts certificate program are required to have it completed to earn their certificate.

Student Support

What evidence demonstrates that the institution delivers, supports, and manages necessary student services at the additional locations? Consider, in particular, the level of student access (in person, by computer, by phone, etc.) to academic advising/placement, remedial/tutorial services, and library materials/services. Also, consider the level of access to admissions, registration/student records, financial aid, and job placement services, as well as attention to student concerns.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate ☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

EICC uses national surveys to obtain information from current students, alumni, and other stakeholders. The surveys discussed during the visit were the Community College survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and SENSE (Student Engagement of New Students). The SENSE survey is administered during the 4th and 5th week of the fall semester. Its focus is to have students reflect on their early experience with the institution academically and services-related. This data is used to measure the early

student experience and evaluate if there are issues that need to be addressed by the institution as a whole. The CCSSE is administered in the spring semester and asks for feedback on institutional practices and students behaviors that are correlated with student learning and retention. This survey complements the SENSE survey and provides a “check-up” on behaviors for the student group as a whole.

The institution also administers the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partners surveys of students, high school concurrent alumni, high school counselors, and high school administrators to gather information and assess stakeholder satisfaction and engagement with concurrent offerings and support services. These survey results are evaluated in partnership with the high schools in the service region to identify successful practices and improvement opportunities.

At the start of their first term, EICC provides student handbook information to all students during orientation. The handbook provides the formal mechanisms for student concerns and complaints. It was clear during the conversation with students that these processes were infrequently utilized as students noted that faculty and advisors were willing to listen, discuss their concerns, and assist them in addressing/ resolving their concerns. Conversation with the faculty had a similar tenor and indicated that additional “behind the scenes” communication is also accomplished to provide relevant information to student support personnel for their use when the student contacted them or they reached out to the student.

In meetings with student support staff at Muscatine and Maquoketa, the following information was provided:

- ⇨ Financial Aid personnel assist students with completing their FAFSA. Ideally this is accomplished in the summer before their first college semester (this can be done on campus or at the student’s high school.)
- ⇨ Advisors inform the Financial aid staff about students they need to contact regarding financial aid appeals.
- ⇨ A “recent” student support position is a CCTC (Career College Transition Counselor) – this is a shared position with high schools (not sure if specific one or in the area) that is funded by the state. It was noted that since the position became “active” the FAFSA completion rate was doubled by their students. In the meeting with the academic leadership at Maquoketa, it was pointed out that the CCTC concept was developed and implemented at Clinton Community College.
- ⇨ The institution uses Drop-out Detective to receive information from faculty and other college personnel. This assists in monitoring student behaviors/performance to evaluate whether there are warning signs that should be addressed in a proactive meeting or other communication with the student.
- ⇨ ADA support personnel provide faculty training to alert them of the legal requirements and support available to students.
- ⇨ Students have on-line support available through the EICC portal. The Help Desk assists students who have connection or other issues which are impacting their ability to use the portal. Although the students who met with evaluator reported that the WiFi was normally good, but it depends upon the “traffic.”
- ⇨ Tutoring Services are available through the EICC web site and this information is included in course syllabi. Recently on-line scheduling capability was added so that students can schedule a meeting for a Zoom session or an in-person meeting.
- ⇨ Student Services has an emergency fund to meet student needs when they do not have other resources for things such as textbooks or other needs for their success.
- ⇨ In Muscatine, it was noted that student services can refer students to an outside entity who need childcare services to avoid missing classes or free up time to complete assignments.

An academic advising team approach is used for concurrent students which pairs an Admissions representative and an advisor to assist high school students in their current college work and their postsecondary transitional planning. EICC's Admissions and high-school advising staff host events virtually and on-site to provide a venue for students to learn about the college, the site they are visiting, and program opportunities.

The students at the Button Factory noted that Canvas is quite different than Google (which was used in their high schools). They would appreciate it if it was simpler – or if there was a more effective orientation to Canvas for the transition from Google.

Evaluation and Assessment

What evidence demonstrates that the institution measures, documents, and analyzes student academic performance sufficiently to maintain academic quality at the additional locations? How are measures and techniques employed at a location equivalent to those for assessment and evaluation on the main campus? Consider, in particular, the setting of measurable learning objectives, the actual measurement of performance, and the analysis and use of assessment data to maintain/improve quality.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate ☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

EICC reports that regardless of location and modality, all courses and programs are held to achieving the same student learning outcomes as each campus/location has comparable equipment that allows students to receive the same rigorous education. Course syllabi are submitted for all courses to ensure that courses are taught in a comparable manner. Noncompliance with these expectations results in a formal review with the instructor, EICC faculty, and administration.

Each semester, EICC faculty collect, review, and reflect on student learning outcome data for their courses. During the academic year, faculty meet four times with peers in their content area to discuss program and student learning outcomes. Collaboratively they arrive at plans to revise/adjust their area's the curriculum in an effort to improve student learning experiences in the classroom and students ability to meet the learning outcome. Canvas is used to collect the data which is then analyzed by the curriculum team. Furthermore, the curriculum department is willing to meet with faculty to assist them in improving assessment practices.

Each year the institution has an assessment day in which faculty for the program meet to discuss the data collected in the assessment process. A collaborative discussion occurs in which possible program improvements are discussed with the goal of improving outcomes on student-learning and program-learning outcomes.

In the conversations related to assessment, it was noted that PLOs are standard across the state for those students in the degrees which meet the state transfer requirements. Also the institution surveys employers of graduates to obtain their perspective on how prepared their new employees were for their positions. It was reported that the data collected has consistently indicated that concurrent students consistently report satisfaction with their educational program(s).

Continuous Improvement

What evidence demonstrates that the institution encourages and ensures continuous quality improvement at its additional locations? Consider in particular the institution's planning and evaluation processes that ensure regular review and improvement of additional locations and ensure alignment of additional locations with the mission and goals of the institution as a whole.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate ☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

EICC utilizes a variety of strategic measures including enrollment, retention, course completion, and graduation rates. When targets are not met, plans are formulated to address those factors which appear to impact the changes in enrollment or satisfaction/completion patterns.

All CTE programs have program advisory boards which participate in ongoing program reviews. Comprehensive program reviews are conducted every four years. The process evaluates curriculum, facilities, recruitment, resources, student achievement and outcomes. The program review process includes location-based offerings and facilities/labs. Advisory boards assist in determining needs of the program including curriculum modifications, equipment upgrades, and facility improvements. The role of stakeholders on advisory boards is to assist the college in maintaining programs that meet the demand of area employers.

The college utilizes the State of Iowa Occupational Outcomes report to review employment and wage increases for their graduates. The data encourages the college to consider improvements to the program to ensure occupational viability for its students.

In the discussions for the Button Factory location, it was noted that several changes in the past few years which reduced student frustration were to make available appropriate supplies through the college's bookstore. This allows each Culinary Arts student to purchase an appropriate knife set for the program and the purchase of an appropriate chef's uniform. Both of these changes allowed a student's federal financial aid funds to cover these purchases.

Marketing and Recruiting Information

What evidence confirms that the information presented to students in advertising, brochures, and other communications is accurate?

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate ☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

EICC reported that information for prospective students is distributed via brochures, flyers, or on the website. The process for ensuring accuracy for off-site instruction involves the Curriculum Office, deans,

program advisors, lead faculty and/or program facilitators. The curriculum content on the website, other electronic communications, and print materials is approved by the Curriculum Office.

The Marketing Department participates in the meetings of key committees, including the Academic Leadership council and Student Development Council, to ensure that any communications delivered to students are both accurate and timely. The Marketing team is involved with program review to assist in collecting input from stakeholders. Student testimonials, data, and survey information are used to present student profiles and outcomes. Occupational data is also collected from various sources to provide data to prospective and current students regarding career outlooks in fields of interest.

The Culinary Arts students noted that they had not seen any marketing materials for the program – they all had someone who brought the program to their attention. One of the students noted that their high school did not promote the program – the student simply saw a sign on a door at school and it matched what their interests were.

Summary Recommendation

Select one of the following statements. Include, as appropriate, a summary of findings.

☐ Overall, the pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations appears to be adequate, and no further review or monitoring by the Higher Learning Commission is necessary.

☒ Overall, the pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations needs some attention as defined in this report. The institution can be expected to follow up on these matters without monitoring by the Higher Learning Commission. The next scheduled comprehensive review can serve to document that the matters identified have been addressed. **[Identify specific areas needing organizational attention.]**

☐ The overall pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations is inadequate and requires attention from the Higher Learning Commission. **[Identify the specific concerns and provide a recommendation for HLC follow-up monitoring.]**

Summary of Findings:

The conversations with various personnel indicated that the Button Factory and Maquoketa High School are well-managed locations. The passion of the administrators, faculty, and support staff was very clear. The students reported that their interaction with faculty and staff is supportive and helpful in navigating their college experiences.

The strengths identified were:

- ⇨ The Culinary Arts program broadened their perspective about the role a Chef plays in a facility. The creativity needed to successfully introduce new dishes was surprising.
- ⇨ The Associate's degree programs will mean they can receive two degrees at the time of their high school graduation.
- ⇨ The welding program provides a "leg-up" on their career and opens up significant job opportunities for the students after high school.
- ⇨ The benefit of having the EICC instruction center next to the high school is quite beneficial in that the walk to the center reminds them that they need to use their "college mindset" for the next

class or two. The faculty also noted this benefit as adding separation from the high school perspective.

- ⇨ The Maquoketa students appreciated the ability to work with their high school counselor to schedule EICC courses at the same time they were working on their high school schedules.
- ⇨ The Maquoketa faculty appreciated the ability to participate in departmental assessment processes as they felt part of the team preparing the students for their future.

Areas that were brought to the attention of the evaluator that should be considered by the institution:

- ⇨ Students in the Culinary Arts program reported some issues with their fall internship. Primarily they believed they were not learning what they should be in the experience. They noted they often were assigned to prep work – i.e., cutting vegetables, etc. – and were not part of the cooking team. The students did note that after the situation became known to their program faculty member, the spring semester internship was a better learning situation.
- ⇨ Faculty at Maquoketa reported that their primary means of communication with EICC (e.g., reminders for mid-term grades, information from student life regarding a particular student) was through their EICC email instead of their high school email. This often meant that they received the "time-sensitive" information "late" as they were generally logged into their high school account during the school day.

These areas of concern may have some easy "fixes" or make take time. On balance the students believe that these programs will make a positive difference in their lives.

Notification Program for Additional Locations Approval Form

Complete this form **only** if an institution has been granted access to the Notification Program for Additional Locations. The Institutional Status and Requirements Report for the institution will indicate whether the institution has access to the Program under "Location Stipulation."

The institution has been accredited by HLC for at least 10 consecutive years with no record of any action during that period for sanction or show-cause.	☒ Yes ☐ No
HLC has not required monitoring of issues related to the quality of instruction or to the oversight of existing additional locations or campuses in the past 10 years.	☒ Yes ☐ No
The institution has demonstrated success in overseeing at least three locations.	☒ Yes ☐ No
The institution has no other HLC or other legal restrictions on additional locations and/or programs offered off campus.	☒ Yes ☐ No
The institution has appropriate systems to ensure quality control of locations that include clearly identified academic controls; regular evaluation by the institution of its locations; a pattern of adequate faculty, facilities, resources	☒ Yes ☐ No

and academic/support systems; financial stability; and long-range planning for future expansion.	