

ASSURANCE SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

**West Virginia State Community and Technical College
Institute, West Virginia 25112 - 1000**

April 19 – 21, 2004

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

Dr. Gerald W. Baird, Executive Vice President for Administrative Services
Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kansas 66210

Dr. Marsha S. Bordner, President
Terra State Community College, Fremont, Ohio 43420

Dr. Bryan Tippet, Dean of Instruction
Maricopa County Community College – Estrella Mountain College
Avondale, AZ 85323

Dr. Charles P. Guengerich, President (Chairperson)
City Colleges of Chicago – Wilbur Wright College
Chicago, IL 60634

Table of Contents

CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT	PAGE
A. Purpose of Visit:	2
B. Institutional Context:	2
C. Unique Aspects of Visit	2
D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited:	2
E. Distance Education Reviewed:	2
F. Interactions with Institutional Constituencies:	3
G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed:	3
II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW	
A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process:	4
B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report:	4
C. Capacity to Address Previously Identified Challenges	4
D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment:	4
III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS	4
IV. AFFIRMATION OF THE GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS	5
V. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA	
Criterion One	8
Criterion Two	9
Criterion Three	10
Criterion Four	13
Criterion Five	14
VI. Affiliation Status	15
VII. Additional Comments	17

ASSURANCE SECTION

I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

This is the team report of a comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation as an independently accredited institution at the associate degree level. The visit was conducted on April 19 – 21, 2004.

B. Institutional Context:

West Virginia State Community and Technical College has been operated as part of West Virginia State College since 1953. At that time, the College established community college programs to serve the citizens of the mining communities in south West Virginia. Associate degrees were first granted in 1957 and through the years the institution added more associate degree programs to serve the needs of business and industry. These associate degree programs were accredited through the relationship of West Virginia State College with the Higher Learning Commission.

In 1995, the West Virginia State Senate introduced Senate Bill 547 to separate the community and technical colleges from the university structure. In 2000, Senate Bill 653 required that five community and technical colleges separate from the universities and satisfy all of the requirements of independent regional accreditation by July 1, 2005. For over 50 years, West Virginia State Community and Technical College has operated as part of West Virginia State College. (Now named West Virginia State University as renamed by Senate Bill 448 of April 2004.) At this time, WVSCTC wants to operate as a separate and independently accredited institution.

In addition to on campus offerings, WVSCTC academic courses are offered to students at Clay High School in Clay, West Virginia and at workforce sites throughout the service area of Kanawha, Putnam, and Clay Counties.

The visit is occurring at a time when the state legislature continues to address the development of an independent community and technical system within the state. Recently passed Senate Bill 488 was designed to address Higher Learning Commission issues on the autonomy of the executive officer of the administratively linked institutions. This legislation makes the chief executive officer of WVSCTC a college president reporting directly to the Board of Directors of the linked institution.

C. Unique Aspects of Visit

This was a comprehensive visit for initial accreditation of West Virginia State Community and Technical College that addressed the institution's request to be an independently accredited but administratively linked institution.

D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited: None

E. Distance Education Reviewed: None

F. Interactions with Institutional Constituencies:

- President of WSCTC(formerly Provost of WVSCCTC)
- President of West Virginia State University (formerly West Virginia State College)
- Chancellor, Community and Technical College System State of West Virginia
- Workforce Development/Business and Industry Staff
- Administrative staff including Vice Presidents, linked services directors for registration and counseling
- Program Review and Assessment Committee/Academic Policy Committee
- Program Directors, Chairs, and Deans
- Metro Area Agency on Aging
- Budget Advisory Committee
- Classified Staff Council
- Institutional Effectiveness Committee
- WVSCCTC Institutional Board of Advisors
- WVSC Board of Governors
- Chair, WV Council for Community and Technical Colleges
- WVSCCTC Faculty Senate and faculty
- WVSCCTC Program Advisory Board Representatives
- Members of Phi Theta Kappa National Honor Society and Student Government

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed:

- Self Study Report West Virginia State Community and Technical College (February 2004) Parts I and II
- Financial Information – WVSCCTC February 2004
- WVSC Financial Audits – 2002 and 2003
- Higher Learning Commission “Memorandum of Understanding” (Steve Crow letter)
- WVSC Classified Staff Handbook
- WVSC Student Handbook – “The Buzz”
- WVSCCTC Faculty Handbook (August 2003)
- WVSCCTC College Catalog (2003 – 2004)
- WVSC College Catalog
- Course Syllabi for Technical and Occupational Courses
- Course schedules for Fall 2003, Spring 2004, and Fall 2004
- Selected student transcripts
- Program Review Reports
- Program Portfolios containing Program Advisory Member rosters and meeting minutes
- WVSCCTC Web site and extensive links for data
- WVSC publications – Student Newspaper, Le Journal, View Book, President’s Newsletter
- Selected faculty personnel files
- West Virginia State Legislative Acts related to the establishment of Community and Technical Colleges
- Program Advisory Committee Rosters and Meeting minutes
- Assessment plans for capstone courses
- Board of Governors Meeting Minutes
- Board of Governors By Laws

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process:

The Self Study Report was organized around the fulfillment of the GIRS and the criteria for accreditation. The report was well organized and included broad representation from within the college community. Although at points highly repetitive, the institution did identify its strengths, and challenges for the future and had begun to address some of the challenges at the time of the visit.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report:

Although lengthy, the self study report was clearly written and understandable. Conclusions were reached and strengths and challenges were identified that at times were not linked to data. The report could have made use of tables and graphs to indicate trends in enrollment, finance and areas of institutional effectiveness indicators. The report was linked to documents on the web, in the resource room, and in the appendix to allow for easy cross referencing.

C. Capacity to Address Previously Identified Challenges

Although West Virginia State Community and Technical College was not independently accredited and fell under the auspices of West Virginia State College when last accredited in the 1994 – 1995 academic year, the institution placed the institutional concerns from the last team into their operating context in partnership with that of the administratively linked institution. Work has progressed in all areas cited with mechanisms in place to move the community and technical college forward.

D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment:

Requirements were fulfilled.

Comments: According to a communication from the Higher Learning Commission dated April 5, 2004, the Commission did not receive any third party concerns regarding the College prior to the comprehensive evaluation.

VI. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The Team reviewed the required Title IV compliance areas and the student complaint information. Program length, awarding of credits, and tuition were also reviewed. The institution has several occupational programs which are accredited by various external agencies, but holds no dual institutional accreditations.

VII. AFFIRMATION OF THE GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Based on the self study review and other documentation, the team confirms that the institution meets the twenty-four General Institutional Requirements as detailed in the following:

- 1) It has a mission statement, formally adopted by the governing board and declaring it is an institution of higher education.

The WVSCTC mission statement was approved by the Governing Board on September 6, 2001. The mission statement is published in various institutional documents including the catalog, faculty, staff and student handbooks, college policy manuals and brochures.

- 2) It is a degree granting institution.

The institution has been awarding certificates and Associate degrees as part of West Virginia State College for 35 years.

- 3) It has the legal authority to grant its degrees, and meets all legal requirements to operate as an institution of higher education wherever it conducts its activities.

West Virginia State Community and technical College has legal authorization to grant degrees through West Virginia Senate Bills 653, 703, and 448.

- 4) It has legal documents to confirm its status as not for profit, for profit, or public.

WVSCTC has legal authorization confirming its status as a public institution through West Virginia Senate Bills 653, 703, and 448.

- 5) It has a governing board that possesses and exercises the governance function of the institution.

The West Virginia State College Board of Governors is legally established to exercise the governance function of the institution. It also has a Board of Advisors to work directly with the President (formerly Provost) to examine and share any governance issues to assure the Board of Governors can exercise appropriate oversight for the institution.

- 6) Its governing board includes public members and is sufficiently autonomous from the administration and ownership to assure integrity of the institution.

The Board of Governors is comprised of 11 voting members; 8 members are appointed by the Governor from the public and the three remaining members are institutional members. Under recently passed legislation, the Chair of the WVSCTC Institutional Advisors will become an ex-officio voting member of the WVSU Governing Board.

- 7) It has an executive officers designated by the governing board to provide administrative leadership for the institution.

The initial executive officer of Provost was appointed by the Board at the recommendation of the President of West Virginia State College. In April of 2004, Senate Bill 448, changed the administrative relationship and made the college Provost the President of West Virginia State Community and Technical College.

- 8) Its Governing Board authorizes the institution's affiliation with the Commission.
The Board of Governors under the authority of Senate Bill 653 approved the institution's affiliation with the Commission.
- 9) Its employees a faculty that has earned from accredited institutions the degrees appropriate to the level of instruction offered by the institution.
WVSCTC employs fully credentialed faculty who hold degrees from accredited institutions as verified via personnel files.
- 10) A sufficient number of faculty are full time employees of the institution.
WVSCTC employees a sufficient number of full time faculty with a goal to have at least one full time faculty member for each program when existing vacancies are filled.
- 11) Its faculty has a significant role in the development and evaluation of all of the institution's educational programs.
WVSCTC faculty play an important role in the development and evaluation of curriculum and programs. College faculty members serve on the Assessment, Curriculum, Program Review and Institutional Effectiveness Committees.
- 12) It confers degrees.
WVSCTC conferred its first degrees in 1957 as part of WVSC. It confers on average 200+ degrees per year.
- 13) It has degree programs in operation with students enrolled in them.
WVSCTC enrolls students in all degree programs offered. There are a small number of programs with low enrollment, but these programs are reviewed as part of the Program Review process mandated by the State.
- 14) Its degree and certificate programs are compatible with the institution's mission and are based on recognized fields of study at the higher education level.
WVSCTC offers an array of occupational/technical (AAS) programs as well as the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science transfer degree and various workforce development offerings, all of which are consistent with the mission of the institution.
WVSCTC has an open admissions policy consistent with its mission and with the provisions of the West Virginia legislative provisions for accessibility to higher education.
- 15) Its degree programs are appropriately named, following practices common to institutions of higher education in terms of both length and content of the programs.
WVSCTC offers the Associate of Arts, Associate in Science, and Associate of Applied Science degrees. Degrees are of comparable length and content with those offered by community and technical colleges nation-wide.
- 16) Its undergraduate degree programs include a coherent general education requirement consistent with the institution's mission and designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and to promote intellectual inquiry.
WVSCTC degree programs have coherent general education requirements that are appropriate to the degree offered and also related to the general education requirements of the co-located West Virginia State University to allow for easy transition (transfer) of students between the tow institutions.

- 17) It has admissions policies and practices that are consistent with the institution's mission and appropriate to its educational programs.

WVSCTC admissions policies are clearly documented in the College Catalog (pages 29 – 36) and are consistent with the mission of the institution as an open door institution.

- 18) It provides its students access to those learning resources and support services for its degree programs.

WVSCTC provides an appropriate range of support services and learning resources to enable students to be successful in their degree programs. Some services are provided directly to students and others are contracted through administratively contracted services from the host institution West Virginia State College.

- 19) It has an external audit by a certified public accountant or a public audit agency at least every two years.

The Higher Learning Commission has stipulated in its agreement with the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission that initially a separate audit will not be required. However, the institution will provide records of its financial activity as Supplemental Information within the external audit of the administratively linked institution. Such an audit document exists for WVSTC.

- 20) Its financial documents demonstrate the appropriate allocation and use of resources to support its educational programs.

The financial documents reviewed demonstrate that there is adequate financial support for the WVSCTC mission and that there are funds for growth. The President of WVSCTC has full budgetary authority.

- 21) Its financial practices, records, and reports demonstrate fiscal viability.

There have been no operating deficits since the institution was separated from WVSC and financial documents show adequate cash flow and reserves for future operation.

- 22) Its catalog or other official documents includes its mission statement along with accurate descriptions of practices, policies, its academic calendars; its learning resources; its admissions policies and practices; its academic and non-academic policies directly affecting students; its charges and refund policies; and the academic credentials of its faculty and administrators.

The WVSCTC catalog describes the programs, policies, resources, faculty and other consumer information necessary to provide complete and dependable information to students. These documents are made available to the public and are clear, accurate and useful to the reader.

- 23) It accurately discloses its standing with accrediting bodies with which it is affiliated.

WVSCTC lists its standing and memberships on pages 27 and 28 of the College Catalog. The list indicates its relationship as a member of the North Central Association.

- 24) It makes available upon request information that accurately describes its financial condition.

The annual audit statements of WVSCTC are available at the College Library and in the Office of Fiscal Affairs for public viewing and information.

VIII. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

A. CRITERION ONE

The institution demonstrates that it has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion

1. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:

- WVSCTC has a mission statement approved September 6, 2001 that reflects it is an open access, broad-based technical college.
- The college exhibits a major commitment to developmental education.
- The request for proposal and audit engagement letter contains a provision for supplemental information to be included in the financial audit of the administratively linked institutions – WVSCTC and West Virginia State University.
- Under Senate Bill 448, the West Virginia State University Board of Governors hires, evaluates and dismisses the President of the institution.
- Service Agreements that outline the relationships between the administratively linked Community and Technical College and the university have been developed.

2. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention

- Inter-institutional agreements for some administratively linked student services are not currently fully documented in writing. This includes issues related to financial aid, admissions and records, and library acquisitions and use.

3. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion requires institutional attention and Commission follow-up

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team

Pattern of evidence documented. No Commission follow-up recommended.

B.**CRITERION TWO**

The institution demonstrates that it has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion**1. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:**

- The Board of Governors and Institutional Board of Advisors understand the mission of WVSTC and the role they play in the separation of WVSTC from West Virginia State University.
- Faculty credentials document appropriate preparation for the academic assignments.
- Administrative personnel are qualified and appropriately assigned to manage the college.
- Institutional personnel are enthusiastic about the institutional changes.
- A budget for WVSTC has been developed.
- Institutional committees provide opportunities for participation in college governance to all employee groups.
- Partnerships with West Virginia State University provide opportunities for joint grant fund raising activities, such as a recent grant to internationalize the business curriculum at both institutions.

2. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention

- Allocations of direct costs attributed to operations of WVSTC have been defined and are being implemented. The allocations will need to be reviewed and refined over time.
- Written agreements for the allocations of cost have not been formalized in service areas of the College. These written agreements need to be formalized by December of 2005 in accordance with new state legislative mandates.
- Enrollment and completion data reflect that there are under-enrolled career programs.
- Diversity of the faculty, while reflecting the demographics of the region, does not provide for an enriching learning environment for student growth and understanding.
- Faculty and staff feel that they have limited participation in budget development and that their contributions are not valued.
- In the President's absence reporting lines are not well defined.

3. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion requires institutional attention and Commission follow-up

None noted

Recommendation of the Team

Pattern of evidence was sufficiently demonstrated. No Commission follow-up recommended.

C.**CRITERION THREE**

The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion**1. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:**

- Syllabi and course outlines exist for all courses offered by WVSCTC.
- Community and technical college students have all rights, privileges, and responsibilities of the co-located university students, including participation in student government, athletics, and use of all recreational and educational facilities.
- Student policies and rights are clearly articulated in the college catalog and student handbook.
- Most occupational and technical programs have active program advisory boards composed in local practicing business and industry professionals.
- The faculty and staff of the college and university are committed to providing seamless services for students of both organizations.
- Faculty and staff of the two-year college are willing, even in light of budget cuts and long work hours, to preserve their flexibility in serving students and in providing access to learners in this region.
- Despite frequent legislative changes and turmoil in funding, the collective college community is focused on providing a positive learning experience that goes beyond the classroom. Technicians, tutors, and fellow students contribute to the overall learning experience of students.
- The college has developed an enrollment plan to build enrollments.
- Funding from Title III, the land grant, and other sources has helped to keep technology for the two-year programs current.

- The college, based on interviews, is a vital community partner, sharing in the support of groups like the Metro Area Agency on Aging.
- The two-year college is responsive to the workforce needs of the region, as documented by the annual work force report and interviews with employers.
- The campus has implemented a telephone registration system and will implement on-line registration by the fall of 2004.
- Cole classrooms are well equipped with Internet access, data projectors, etc.
- The college and university recently renovated the Student Union, which is now a center for student activity. Students have open access to the Internet, to common study area, and to a campus dining room. Students freely collaborate and socialize in this new facility.

2. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention

- The program review model adopted by the two-year college is based on that of West Virginia State University and according to mandates of the West Virginia legislature. The two-year college has yet to establish common program review benchmarks for all two-year programs and certificates, and to provide consistent data to the faculty for review.
- Institutional effectiveness, program review, and assessment of student learning are not clearly differentiated in the minds of the staff and faculty. In particular, there is confusion between the analysis of the needs of programs and the learning that results from the teaching in these programs.
- Faculty ownership of the assessment model has not developed systematically across campus.
- The initial assessment of student skills in English is not standardized and universally implemented.
- Faculty development on assessment has been limited primarily to on campus workshops during the two years prior to the site visit. Faculty demonstrate some confusion about terminology such as “course-embedded” assessment and include grades as an assessment tool.

- The community college faculty and staff are overburdened with joint attendance at meetings scheduled by both the university and the college.
- Program learning outcomes are not publicly stated in the college catalog.

3. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion requires institutional attention and Commission follow-up

- In the two years prior to the site visit, the college staff worked diligently to develop an assessment plan. The faculty and staff are in the early stages of both using and understanding the language of assessment. Because the plan is in the early phase of implementation, very little data on the extent to which students are achieving learning goals are available.
- The college is still focused on the “how’s” of assessment. There is no clear feedback loop that ensures that the analysis of evidence results in improvements in learning.
- The results of student learning have not been widely used in budgeting, planning, and curriculum revision.
- The college and its faculty collect little direct evidence of student learning. In particular, there is little external validation of student learning by reviewers outside the individual programs.
- The college has depended heavily on surveys to provide feedback about the college’s programs. Most of these indirect measures provide feedback that is more relevant to program review than to actual student learning.
- Students are generally unaware of the assessment initiative.
- Assessment of student learning occurs primarily at the exit point of graduation rather than throughout the continuum of a student’s learning.
- A general education portfolio has been piloted. No systematic review of the work has yet to begin.

Recommendation of the Team

Progress report: Assessment of Student Academic Achievement and General Education and implications for budget and operational planning by May 31, 2006.

D. CRITERION FOUR

The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion**1. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met**

- The college possesses significant data resources on program enrollment, student satisfaction, and related issues.
- The institution has engaged in a participatory planning process through a newly formed faculty senate, program review and assessment and academic policy committees.
- The institution has a written agreement for charge backs for instruction and residence use, and the beginnings of formal agreements in other areas of administrative linkage.
- The Board of Governors and Board of Advisors have a commitment to and vision for the independence of WVSCTC.

2. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention

- Institutional Master Plan's for facilities and campus development will need to be reviewed and revised to consider the needs of a growing community and technical college operation.
- Institutional marketing plans will need to be developed to highlight the unique opportunities provided by co-located institutions of higher education.

3. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion requires institutional attention and Commission follow-up

- None noted

Recommendation of the Team

Patterns of evidence sufficiently demonstrated; No Commission follow-up Recommended.

D. CRITERION FIVE

The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion**1. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:**

- Student transcripts accurately reflect student completion of degree requirements as documented in the catalog.
- The institution keeps a student complaint log.
- The college provides a safe and secure student learning environment in which intellectual inquiry and academic integrity is fostered.
- The environment supports access, equity, and diversity.
- Policies and practices for the resolution of internal disputes within the institution are published and followed through due process.
- Relationships between WVSCCTC and WVSU are based on mutual respect and collaboration.
- Relationships with business and industry, governmental agencies, and other partners are conducted ethically and responsibly.

2. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention

- Publications such as the college catalog, institutional brochures, and marketing documents need to be updated to accurately reflect the institution's affiliation with the Higher Learning Commission. HLC policies and requirements should be reviewed in the updating process.
- Mechanisms need to be developed to update student records to identify course work taken through the community and technical college on the currently unified institutional transcript.
- The College catalog and the student handbook should contain information on tuition and fees.

3. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion requires institutional attention and Commission follow-up

- None noted.

Recommendation of the Team

Patterns of Evidence Sufficiently Demonstrated; No Commission Follow-up Recommended

VI. AFFILIATION STATUS

A. SUMMARY OF COMMISSION REVIEW

Year for next comprehensive evaluation 2008 - 2009

Rationale:

Following a legislative mandate to seek separate accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission, West Virginia State Community Technical College has demonstrated through its Self-Study process that it meets both the General Institutional Requirements and the Five Criteria for accreditation. The evidence supports that the institution demonstrates leadership in its governance, resource allocation and planning and has the local support of its Board of Governors to enable it to fulfill its mission and purposes.

NATURE OF ORGANIZATION

- 1. Legal Status: Public**
- 2. Degrees Awarded: Associate's**

B. CONDITIONS OF AFFILIATION

- 3. Stipulation on Affiliation Status: None**
- 4. Approval of Degree Sites: Requires Commission Approval**
- 5. Approval of Distance Education Degree**
- 6. Reports Required**

Progress Report

Topic: Assessment of Student Academic Achievement and General Education and implications for budget and operational planning.

Due date: May 31, 2006

Rationale and Expectations

West Virginia State Community and Technical College has been accredited under the umbrella of West Virginia State College with much of the assessment activities being coordinated through the parent organization. As such, WVSTC has limited experience in the assessment of general education outcomes. The faculty and administration have developed assessment strategies that have yet to be fully implemented and are at present untested. Therefore, the Team is recommending a Progress Report to document the following:

- a) That the portfolio assessment plan for general education outcomes has been implemented in all programs.
- b) That the plan includes evaluative input from external as well as internal sources.
- c) That the results of the plan have been used to:
 - o Inform discussions between faculty at WVSCTC and the General Education faculty of West Virginia State University
 - o Review the effectiveness of imbedded General Education Outcomes in occupational program course work.
- d) That general education outcomes strengths and weaknesses be identified.
- e) That the outcomes of assessment are used in curriculum and budget planning at WVSCTC.

Monitoring Report: None recommended

Contingency Report: None Recommended

7. Other Visits Scheduled: Focused Visit: None recommended

8. OTHER

D. COMMISSION SANCTION OR ADVERSE ACTION

- 1. On Notice: Does Not Apply
- 2. On Probation: Does Not Apply
- 3. Denial/Withdrawal of Status
Rationale

IX. Additional Comments or Explanations (Optional)

Higher Education in the State of West Virginia is undergoing significant changes that are being driven by legislative views of the needs to improve access, accountability, affordability, and economic opportunity for its citizens. To accomplish these goals, several legislative initiatives have begun to change the face of community and technical colleges across the state. West Virginia State Community and Technical College is one of the institutions founded through these legislative actions. Formerly an active component of West Virginia State College (University as of April 2004), an institution with a long history of offering higher education within the state and a long history of accreditation by the North Central Association, has offered Associate degrees and occupational certificate programs since the mid-1950's.

In creating these administratively-linked institutions, the legislature has required that each institution become independently accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. During the course of this visit for the initial accreditation for WVSCTC, it has become increasingly apparent to the Team that not only are the institutions administratively-linked, but that they are also significantly academically linked. Both institutions have the same shared educational values and commitment to student success. As independently accredited institutions, they will continue to have to rely on each other for various educational and institutional needs. Being co-located on the campus of the University, agreements for shared services and resource charge backs are well under way to being developed and finalized. Still, the more complex academic issues relating to assessment of student academic achievements will need to be negotiated, tested, refined, revised, and used to improve the learning environment for all students. For faculty and staff of both institutions resolving these issues will have to be done collaboratively in an atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding, and with an open dialog designed with one focus in mind – improving the quality of life for the students they serve.

It is the hope of this Team that the institutions will work together to seize this exciting opportunity to collaborate as willing partners in this new learning adventure.

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

**West Virginia State Community and Technical College
Institute, West Virginia 25112 - 1000**

April 19 – 21, 2004

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

Dr. Gerald W. Baird, Executive Vice President for Administrative Services
Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kansas 66210

Dr. Marsha S. Bordner, President
Terra State Community College, Fremont, Ohio 43420

Dr. Bryan Tippet, Dean of Instruction
Maricopa County Community College – Estrella Mountain College
Avondale, AZ 85323

Dr. Charles P. Guengerich, President (Chairperson)
City Colleges of Chicago – Wilbur Wright College
Chicago, IL 60634

Table of Contents

	page
I. Overall Observations about the Institution	2
II. Consultations of the Team	
A. College Catalog	2
B. Scholarships	3
C. Human Resources	3
D. Low Enrollment Programs	3
E. Assessment	4
F. Institutional Identity	5
G. Governance	5
H. Facilities Planning	6
III. Recognition of Significant Accomplishments, Progress, and/or Practices	7

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

West Virginia State Community and Technical College benefits from strong relationships with its co-located institution West Virginia State University. The strength of these relationships has allowed WVSCTC to begin to establish its own identity in the community. However, many of the agreements between the two institutions are based on “hand shake” agreements between the Presidents of the two institutions. There is a need to document all agreements between the two institutions so that future institutional leaders have a sense of the history and rationale for these relationships.

The focus of the existing institutional agreements are the cost sharing of administrative services such as financial aid, admissions, records, and faculty costs. In the near future agreements for academic links and the role each institution plays in the assessment of student outcomes for shared academic services will need to be addressed. The links must focus on shared values for student learning outcomes and a shared commitment to student learning.

The team believes that WVSCTC has both the ability and the talent to finalize the administrative and academic linkages to the benefit of students.

II. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

A. College Catalog:

WVSCTC should review its college catalog for appropriate listing of its associations with various accrediting bodies including the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association where the required contact information is not published. Additionally, as it exists, the catalog of WVSCTC contains much of the boiler plate information of its co-located, administratively linked institution. The catalog content should be reviewed to eliminate information that does not apply to WVSCTC students. For example: The catalog has several pages of available scholarships to students. This list is exactly the same as that in the West Virginia State University College Catalog. No effort is made to identify scholarships that are only available to WVSCTC students or to lower level students exclusively. Additionally, having exactly the same boiler-plate information does not help WVSCTC establish its own identity within the community.

B. Scholarships:

WVSCTC should seek to negotiate specific transfer scholarships for its students with its co-located institution, West Virginia State University, as well as other universities throughout the State of West Virginia. Scholarships for members of Phi Theta Kappa honor society students have been developed as part of a nation-wide effort to recognize the achievement of this group of students. WVSCTC should also pursue scholarships for this group of students with West Virginia State University.

C. Human Resources:

Faculty: The reorganization of the two year college sector in the State of West Virginia has resulted in a change in status for faculty employees. Faculty, who were previously classified as state college employees are now employees of the community and technical college. This employee group has seen its teaching and committee work load increase while salaries and other benefits have been frozen. As an independent entity, WVSCTC must be sensitive to the changes in work requirements that are placed on their faculty and make sure that adequate released time for program directors, department chairs, assessment coordinators is provided so that these duties can be effectively carried out.

Support Staff: The growing work demands of an independently accredited institution must be considered as part of institutional planning. Support and administrative staff must be available to support institutional efforts of the community and technical college. Although, some support staff comes through the administrative linkage agreements, the institution will need to review staffing to support its own institutional research and assessment efforts.

D. Low Enrollment Programs

A review of the current data related to various WVSCTC career programs reveals that some have low enrollments and completion rates. The number of students enrolled in a program needs to be sufficient to allow for student interaction and development. A greater concern is whether the low enrollment reflects a low community job demand for this career program. If low enrollment is the result of job demand, then these programs should be considered for elimination through the institution's program review process. If not, the college needs to partner with the community through program advisory boards to increase awareness of the program and job availability to graduates as part of its recruiting efforts.

E. Assessment

1) Portfolio Process:

WVSCTC has proposed a portfolio model of assessment through capstone courses for all graduates. The model is still in its pilot phase with full implementation expected in the Fall of 2004. One perceived weakness of the portfolio system is the lack of multiple reviewers. The College is encouraged to expand the number of portfolio reviewers. This can be done in several ways: such as including members of the program advisory committees in the portfolio review process for occupational program graduates, using holistic grading methodology and rubrics that involve faculty from other disciplines as "blind" reviewers, and using academic personnel from the administratively linked institution.

The general education portfolio is an ambitious project. The key to this project will be how to "manage" it. The college must consider how it will handle portfolio submissions of part-time students, students who have credits transferred in from another college, etc. It will also need to consider whether the portfolios will be a graduation requirement and who would most appropriately evaluate general education. As in the portfolios for career programs external reviewers or a system using internal blind reviewers is needed to validate the process. If the faculty members of the co-located university are willing to review the student portfolios for the community college, this would be ideal. It would also assist them in their own assessment process and would provide an opportunity for academic discussion between the two institutions.

Finally, the data collected has yet to be used in a feedback loop. Since university employees teach many of the general education courses, how perceived curricular changes are fed into the university curriculum might prove to be the most difficult part of using assessment data to improve learning. The ability of the faculties of both institutions to work together will be a critical factor in making assessment work at both institutions.

2) Organization of Assessment Activities:

Since assessment should be a faculty driven activity, WVSCTC might consider creating a separate assessment committee composed primarily of faculty members. If the faculty members are also program directors, the college might consider giving these individuals release time to review and analyze the data and propose curricular changes. The data collected and analyzed can continue to feed into the program review process, but the two groups must remain distinctly clear so that the primary focus of assessment of improving teaching and learning is maintained.

F. Institutional Identity

West Virginia State Community and Technical College is beginning to build its own institutional identity. Continuing Education and work force development programs are recognized in the community for being able to provide quality educational offerings in the area of workforce training and non credit offerings for the community at large. This division of the institution publishes and distributes its own schedule of course offerings within the service area.

However, the same does not apply to the credit offerings for the institution. For the first time for Fall 2004, the Community and Technical College is recognized on the published course schedule of the university. However, course offerings are co-listed, and, therefore, beyond the cover of the schedule the community and technical college does not have a separate identity from its co-located institution. How this will ultimately play a role in student perspectives on which of the co-located institutions they are actually enrolled is a potential problem.

More significantly, how students are charged different tuition levels for shared general education courses may also prove to be a future issue. Admissions officers will be torn between enrolling students as community college students at lower tuition costs or university students at a higher tuition cost, while both are sitting in the same class room. The impact on the perception of institutional integrity in the eyes of the community and perspective students must be constantly monitored so that each student feels that he or she has been provided with the necessary factual information to make a decision on which institution to enroll in for the first two years of their academic experience.

Finally, the enrollment management and student recruitment plan should include marketing the College as an HBCU to the African-American community.

G. Governance

Student Governance:

Although Community and Technical College students are allowed to participate in student governance through a linked Student Government Association, CTC students felt that their views would be better represented through their own

association. This issue might be handled in several ways other than separation. The existing student government constitution could be amended to create a vice president for the university and community and technical college and allocate student senate seats to community and technical college students.

Additionally, the Board of Governors, if within their legal purview, could create two student advisory members in their governance structure. This would allow the Board to get views that represent both student groups.

Faculty and Administrative Governance:

Faculty governance as an independent institution is a new phenomena for the CTC faculty. Early efforts to organize a fully functional faculty senate and shared governance model have been successful. However, the faculty feels that they have little or no say in some of the operations of the college. They also report that reporting lines beyond the President are not clear, especially when he is off-campus.

It is suggested that clear reporting lines be designated, and that the reporting structure be made visible to the college community. Resolving this issue is of particular importance now that the state legislature has changed the reporting line for the Chief Executive Officer of the Community and Technical College directly to the Board of Governors. This will allow for clear institutional direction and problem solving in case an emergency situation arises in the absence of the College President.

The President of West Virginia State University publishes a newsletter to inform employees of relevant college wide issues. This model could also be adopted by the President of West Virginia State Community and Technical College so that internal communication can be improved.

H. Facilities Planning

As the co-located institutions look to the future, facilities planning must begin to address the specific needs of the community and technical college. Although general education classroom space can reasonably be shared, the educational needs of occupational programs must be considered in campus master planning.

Currently, the building used by the Community and Technical College for its occupational programs provides cramped spaces for these programs. There is little or no room for program growth or to house new programs within this facility. Based on community needs, the Community and Technical College is considering developing new programs such as an Associate Degree in

Nursing. To adequately house such programs, additional space and perhaps a new on campus facility will be necessary.

To address the facilities needs of the Community and Technical College, it must be an equal partner with West Virginia State University in the campus Master Planning Process.

III. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND/OR PRACTICES

- West Virginia State Community and Technical College, as an Historically Black College, has a long tradition dedicated to educating citizens of West Virginia, and particularly those who are of African decent. Through tremendous dedication, the college has regained its land grant status, thus allowing it to carry out its mission in unique ways that will benefit its entire service area.
- The WVSCTC has a wealth of support through its alumni. It is clear that the alumni are very interested in the continued success of both institutions, and are particularly interested in the future success of the CTC. The administration of the CTC is strongly encouraged to further cultivate the relationship it has with the alumni.
- The Business Service and Continuing Education Division of the Community and Technical College is viewed as an institutional strength by internal and external constituencies. Business partners find the division responsive to their needs, willing to work with them to find training solutions, and as delivering a quality training product.

