



# HLC Staff Review Narrative

Non-Financial Indicator 4

Minimal Full-Time Faculty

*Submitted to:*

**The Higher Learning Commission**

230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500  
Chicago, IL 60604

*Date Submitted:*

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*Submitted by:*

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**Institutional Category:** Small; Not Graduate Only

**Data from Institutional Update**

FT Faculty: 26

Degree Programs Offered: 34

Faculty/Degree Programs: 0.76

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# Description and Listing of Degree Programs

Although West Shore Community College (WSCC) reported 34 degree programs in its annual Institutional Update, this is a misleading total for several reasons. First, many of the distinct “programs” are actually different concentrations within a single program. To illustrate this point, Table 1 provides a full listing of the 34 degree programs offered at WSCC at the time of the Institutional Update<sup>1</sup>. These have been grouped and shaded by relevance to show the large number of programs that appear separately, but which operate as part of a single discipline at the college.

Table 1 – Listing of Degree Programs with Faculty

#	Code	Program Name	Faculty
1	AA	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Sean Henne Jennifer Lundberg Anders Jodi Radloff
2	AGS	General Studies	Matt Sanderson Erwin Selimos Ted Malt
3	DLIT	Digital Literacy	Jessica Houser Mike Nagle John Wolff
4	ASC	Science	Sonja Siewert Joe Grochowski Paul Drelles
5	AS	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Wade James Eric McLearn Paul Bilinski
6	ACC	Accounting	Connie Schwass
7	ADN	Nursing – RN	Duane Kelley Steve Deller Peg Gramas Kristi Richards
8	ALH	Multi-Skilled Health Care	
9	ALHNA	Multi-Skilled Health Care - Nurse Assistant	
10	CIT	Network Services	
11	CSS	Computer Support Services	Kellon Petzak
12	COR	Corrections	
13	LAW	Law Enforcement	John O'Hagen
14	CRJA	Criminal Justice	
15	ECE	Early Childhood Education	Lisa Morley
16	MKMG	Marketing/Management	
17	MKT	Marketing/Management - Hospitality Emphasis	Katie Stewart
18	OIS	Office Information Systems	
19	OISM	Medical Office Information Systems	

<sup>1</sup> A new Agribusiness degree program was approved by the Board of Trustees in June, which will be yet another concentration of the Agricultural Science programs (27-28) already listed. However, this will bring the total number of degree programs up to 35.

20	PAR	Paramedic	
21	MTR	Mechatronics	
22	ELC	Electrical/Electronic Systems	
23	MEC	Mechanical Systems	
24	PMT	Precision Machine Technology	
25	PRO	Paraprofessional	
26	WLD	Welding Technology	Dave Cutler
27	AGRO	Agricultural Science - Agricultural Operations	
28	AGRF	Agricultural Science - Fruit & Vegetable Crop Mgmt	
29	MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)	
30	NDXT	Neurodiagnostic (EEG) Technology	
31	MEDA	Medical Assistant	
32	MEDAB	Medical Assistant-Business Focus	
33	MEDAS	Medical Assistant-Science Focus	
34	GDA	Game Design and Animation	Eden Foley

Programs 1-3 are essentially different versions of the Liberal Arts and Sciences degree (AA) and are comprised almost entirely of general education coursework, electives, or existing courses from within other disciplines. The faculty members listed are those who teach within communications, humanities, fine arts, and social sciences. Programs 4-5 are WSCC's Associate of Science (AS) degree offerings. The faculty listed teach within science and math. Programs 8-9 are the college's multi-skilled healthcare degrees, one of which is a separate concentration that incorporates the CNA credential. While this degree area does not have a full-time faculty member, the programs are comprised primarily of existing courses from within allied health, business, office information systems, and general education.

Programs 10-11 have a single full-time faculty member, but contain many of the same courses. Again, these act like separate concentrations, with one program including distinct coursework in networking and the other focusing more on business software. Both programs are easily supported with minimal adjuncts by a single faculty member teaching 16 credits per semester.

Programs 12-14 are the college's corrections and criminal justice programs. The law enforcement and criminal justice degrees are essentially the same program, but with one being designed to facilitate transfer and the other intended for immediate employment. The college runs a corrections academy in the fall semester and a police academy in the winter semester. The faculty member listed will be resigning in mid-August, and the college has decided to transition this position back to an administrative director. The position was historically a director, but WSCC attempted to make the position faculty two years ago. Unfortunately, this designation caused more problems than it solved. Moving the position back to an administrator with teaching duties will lower WSCC's official full-time faculty count to 25, but will actually increase the level of support provided to these programs.

Programs 16-17 are concentrations of the same management program, while programs 18-19 are concentrations of the same office information systems program. As a result of the office information systems program review process completed in April, WSCC is currently exploring the closure of these two programs entirely. Through that process, it was determined that students have a broader set of employment opportunities by obtaining the marketing/management degree. In effect, the office

information systems degrees are limiting students' employment potential to specific positions within an organization.

The paramedic program has not been offered recently by the college, but is restarting in the Fall 2022 semester. The college recently hired a full-time director with at least six contacts of teaching load each semester to support this program.

Programs 21-25 are a variety of open-entry/open-exit programs that students complete outside of a traditional classroom. Students pursuing these degrees complete online learning modules, then come to the college campus to demonstrate competency with an adjunct instructor. No full-time faculty member is employed because no traditional courses are taught within these programs. The college is also currently considering whether to eliminate this model in favor of a single mechatronics and robotics program offered in a more traditional format. If this change is made, a full-time director or faculty member will be hired.

Programs 27-28 are offered by Michigan State University on WSCC's campus, but the degrees are also approved at the community college level so that students earn a credential from both institutions. However, WSCC does not teach any of the program-specific courses, but rather supplies general education courses to the degree. Likewise, programs 29-30 are offered through the consortium of Educational Programs in Collaboration (EPiC), which is facilitated by the Michigan Community College Association and Michigan Colleges Online. Students take general education courses through WSCC, but all program-specific courses are taught online by a community college in Michigan who specializes in that degree field. Therefore, no full-time faculty are employed for these programs at WSCC.

Programs 31-33 are currently undergoing a transition that will move them to the aforementioned consortium model through EPiC. Historically, WSCC employed a full-time coordinator for the medical assistant degrees, which again operated as a single discipline with multiple concentrations. Due to low enrollment and the resignation of the full-time director, however, the college recognized that transitioning the medical assistant program to the statewide consortium was the best way to ensure that the college could continue to offer this program locally.

## Ensuring Faculty Expertise

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Based upon the groupings of similar programs from Table 1, WSCC actually only offers 17 academic disciplines. Considering the 26 faculty employed by the college at the time of the Institutional Update, this would adjust the college's faculty/degree programs ratio to 1.53. The college has structured its programs this way so that the specific title appears on student degrees and transcripts. However, based on the way this data structure impacts this ratio for the HLC, WSCC recognizes that it should consider making better use of the *concentrations* feature within its student information system. This would significantly pare down the list of degree programs, while also allowing for degree specialization when appropriate.

Regardless of how our student information system's structure impacts this ratio, WSCC takes considerable precautions to ensure there is enough faculty expertise to offer the degree programs listed. WSCC has historically used a faculty prioritization process to gather feedback from the faculty regarding which new positions they feel are important for the college to add. This process was not completed last

year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the prior year resulted in the transition of the criminal justice director position to faculty, as well as the decision to hire an instructional designer and an early alert and retention specialist. The college also closely monitors faculty teaching loads and the percentage of contact hours taught by full-time faculty. For example, in 2019, full-time faculty accounted for 66% of all contact hours taught at WSCC. This number has risen steadily since 2016 when full-time faculty accounted for just 40% of contact hours taught. As can be seen in Table 1, the college does a good job of supporting each academic discipline with full-time faculty whenever it makes sense to do so. In cases where there is a significant administrative workload, such as with law enforcement and paramedic, a full-time director with limited teaching responsibilities has been used in place of traditional faculty. This type of position still represents a dedicated instructor, coordinator, and student support professional, however.

In terms of faculty qualifications to ensure sufficient expertise, when the HLC reaffirmed its guidelines several years ago, the college undertook a significant effort to thoroughly document its faculty qualifications for each course. A Faculty Qualifications Guidelines document was created at that time and has been updated regularly ever since. Generally speaking, courses that are part of a transfer program (e.g. general education courses) require a minimum of a master's degree, while courses that are primarily intended for immediate entry into the workforce require a minimum of a bachelor's degree. Alternative credentialing based on tested experience is used when appropriate and is often documented within the faculty qualifications table. As new courses are approved by the Curriculum Team, faculty qualifications to teach the course are established and added to the Faculty Qualifications Guidelines document. Likewise, whenever a new faculty member is hired, whether full-time or part-time, the courses they are qualified to teach are identified and documented on a Faculty Credentials Form as part of their hiring paperwork.

## **Compliance with Core Component 3.C**

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WSCC completed a mid-cycle Assurance Argument in June 2020, which included a response dedicated to compliance with 3.C. The college's submission met HLC requirements and no interim monitoring report was requested for this Core Component. Not much has changed during the past year in terms of the processes used to ensure that the college has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services. College staffing levels and academic offerings have also remained consistent. Therefore, some of the information contained below is similar to that which was presented in the Assurance Argument.

### ***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.***

WSCC is located in an area without abundant racial and ethnic diversity, but the organization takes its role as a cultural leader in the community seriously. Promoting the value of social and cultural diversity in society represents a major institutional commitment. WSCC is an equal opportunity employer. The top of each job application states, "West Shore Community College is committed to the principles of equal opportunity and strictly prohibits discrimination against any person on the basis of age, ancestry, citizenship status, color, creed, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, genetic information, marital status, mental or physical disability, height, weight, national origin, race, religious affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status in its activities, admissions, educational programs, and employment".

Backing up this statement are two board policies. Board Policy 2008: Hiring states the college's commitment to using non-discriminatory hiring practices, while Board Policy 2015: Discrimination/Harassment affirms the college's commitment "to maintain a work environment free of harassment and unlawful discrimination". WSCC's president also signed a CEO commitment to diversity and inclusion as part of a Talent 2025 initiative, which aims to increase workplace diversity through leadership, benchmarking, resource sharing, and events. WSCC's overall employment includes a mix of individuals from non-white racial and ethnic groups, as well as numerous individuals who fall within the protected characteristics listed above. While the majority of its employees are white, this is consistent with the broader region.

***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.***

Faculty members play a crucial role at WSCC in not only delivering classroom instruction but also carrying out a wide range of additional duties. Article IX of the Instructional Agreement identifies faculty responsibilities relating to curriculum development, professional development, committee work, filing reports, assessment, budgeting, providing office hours, attending meetings and events, and more. Several faculty members serve as the chair of the committee on which they serve, and every committee has faculty representatives on it, including the President's Leadership Team. Faculty members have a standard teaching load of 15 credits per semester and are paid an overload rate of \$1,000 per contact hour for every hour they teach beyond that. Faculty may voluntarily choose to take on a load of up to 20 hours without administrative approval, assuming disciplinary proceedings are not in place, and faculty and administration can mutually agree to exceed this limit when a higher teaching load is beneficial to both parties.

Faculty longevity is also important since the continuity of faculty adds experience to the organization and provides a source of organizational history and knowledge. Of the 26 full-time faculty, 16 of them have been with WSCC for more than five years, 12 of them have been with WSCC for more than ten years, and seven of them have been with the college for more than 20 years. The average number of years that the full-time faculty have been employed at WSCC currently stands at 11.91 years, while the longest-tenured faculty member has been in place for 29 years!

Certain faculty members are given additional responsibilities relating to the operations of their division. These division chairs provide coordinating services like communication, course schedule recommendations, faculty assignment recommendations, hiring and evaluation of adjunct faculty, and handling student complaints within the division. Division chairs are given three credits of release time each semester to ensure they have sufficient time to carry out these duties. There are currently six division chair positions at WSCC, plus other divisions have full-time directors to help them carry out administrative tasks (e.g. nursing). Faculty occasionally are also given release time for special projects, such as recent contracts that were given for coordinating the introduction of First-Year Seminar courses within area high schools and for leading the college's implementation of its new assessment model.

***3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.***

This item was addressed in the prior section about ensuring faculty expertise. It should also be noted that qualifications to teach within dual-credit, contractual, and consortial programs are identical to those for traditional courses. No distinction is made between a section taught on the college's campus and one that is taught, for instance, within a high school. All instructors of the course must have the minimum qualifications as described above.

***4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.***

Faculty participate in an annual evaluation process at WSCC and begin the academic year by developing an individual annual plan with their dean that is aimed at carrying out the contractual responsibilities of a faculty member (e.g. professional development, increasing disciplinary proficiency, researching and implementing new practices in teaching and learning). During the academic year, deans complete classroom observations, and students are asked to complete course evaluations in which results and anonymous feedback are shared with the faculty member. Toward the end of the academic year, faculty then submit a year-end review to measure and reflect on what was accomplished. Supervisors then meet with individual faculty to discuss all pieces of the evaluation and document whether or not performance was satisfactory or if improvement is needed, and also what was achieved during the year and what they plan to do next year.

Another option that is made available to faculty who have received continuing appointment status (i.e. WSCC's version of tenure) is to participate in a teaching-learning circle. These circles, involving two or more faculty approved by the administrative supervisor, include discussions and at least one peer observation in any modality, rotating modalities at least every two years, if applicable. Teaching-learning circles will generally stand in place of class observations by the supervisor, although the supervisor may observe classes. For faculty choosing this option, their year-end review consists of an analysis of the perceived impact of the teaching-learning circle and reflections on being observed by and observing peers.

***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.***

Professional development is an important part of WSCC's culture, and faculty are active participants in any classes, events, or programs that are offered. Frequently, employees of the college provide ad hoc training courses directed primarily at faculty. WSCC also maintains a subscription to LinkedIn Learning, so faculty can take any courses from that training repository without any additional cost. Regular professional development opportunities are also offered, such as those that are part of the two in-service sessions per year. The Instructional Agreement allows the college to offer up to seven professional development days per year. Four of these days are typically offered before the fall semester as in-service and three before the winter semester. These days are full of updates from college employees, workshops to accomplish tasks like developing assessment maps or program pathways, and training sessions from external participants. For example, during the 2020 winter in-service, an expert on designing accessible

online content was brought in from Northwestern Michigan College to provide a one-hour training session to WSCC faculty and answer their questions.

WSCC also has a strong history of granting faculty sabbatical requests. These sabbaticals always result in professional development for the faculty member in some form. Some faculty have chosen to take courses towards advanced degrees, while others have worked on projects that might benefit their teaching, such as writing a book. The most recent sabbatical at WSCC was taken by the full-time speech faculty member to research the importance of speech and communication across the curriculum.

Faculty also have a contractual responsibility to remain current in their field and to utilize regular professional development to accomplish this objective. The college frequently authorizes the use of departmental funds to allow faculty to attend professional development events or purchase learning materials of their choosing. Other sources of funds, such as that obtained from Carl D. Perkins, are also allocated towards faculty professional development. Faculty frequently choose to attend conferences and workshops like InstructureCon by the makers of Canvas, the Student Success Summit put on by the Michigan Center for Student Success, and many others that are discipline-specific.

#### ***6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.***

At a fundamental level, students are guaranteed access to instructors by the Instructional Agreement which requires faculty to provide “reasonable accessibility to students via multiple modalities (e.g., in-person, phone, or email).” The Agreement further requires faculty to hold office hours (on-campus or online) and to “sustain a campus presence separate from teaching hours” to ensure that students have broad and convenient access to their instructors. By long-established college policy, faculty are required to hold a minimum of one office hour per week for each of their courses. In practice, however, faculty typically make themselves available to students whenever they are not otherwise teaching or in committee meetings—upwards of approximately 20 hours per week. In addition, almost all faculty respond to students in the evenings and on weekends. Faculty have also responded well to the pandemic-related migration of the college’s courses to online delivery by increasing their knowledge and use of digital tools like document cameras, Zoom, and other video chat platforms to help their students succeed.

#### ***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.***

WSCC’s hiring process begins by having the vacant position’s supervisor, the director of human resources, and usually a vice president level position draft a position profile that outlines the job duties of that position. The nature of those duties then informs the required qualifications for that position, thus ensuring that any eventual hire possesses at least the minimum qualifications required for that specific position. WSCC recognizes that regular professional development is required to maintain the necessary skills of the job, however, as well as to keep skills current with changes to technology and processes. Therefore, WSCC invests heavily in its employees’ professional development in myriad ways. First and foremost, the professional development of employees is part of the college’s strategic plan and is articulated as having 100% of employees participate in professional development annually. This is tracked by the Professional Development Team, which is a cross-functional group of administrators and faculty who assist with providing professional development events on campus and implementing best

practices learned from prior training. Each student support services department also has distinctive methods for obtaining professional development for their employees related to their area of work.

For example, the financial aid department relies heavily on email listserves and webinars. The department's staff attends as many workshops, conferences, and webinars each year as possible that are financial aid and military- and veteran-related. They also frequently utilize the Federal Student Aid Handbook and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) AskRegs for guidance. Employees within the advising department are members of the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (MACRAO). This statewide group regularly broadcasts informational updates, options for webinars, and conference notices related to registration and advising topics. Advisors meet regularly to discuss advising program changes, improvements to advising, or information obtained from one of the aforementioned sources.

Within the departments of tutoring and testing, the full-time support staff is required to complete at least eight hours of training per year, but typically at least 20 hours are completed. Many vendors also require mandatory initial and annual recertifications, such as Pearson VUE, Accuplacer, and Certipoint. Similar to other student support departments, employees within the tutoring and testing centers are encouraged to join national associations, such as the National Collegiate Testing Association and the College Readiness and Learning Association. Peer tutors are also required to show proof of earning at least a B grade in any course in which they are providing tutoring, and they are paired with a senior counterpart for at least a week until the supervisor and mentor agree they are competent in the subject area.

Finally, the peer coaches in the Writing Center are WSCC students from a range of disciplines who are hired based on a combination of factors, including faculty recommendations, strong academic standing, writing samples, and personal interviews. They receive extensive training from the faculty member who directs the Writing Center before they begin tutoring, and their training and professional development continue throughout their employment. They complete academic readings and activities connected to writing center theory and scholarship, co-tutor, and are mentored regularly by the director.