

## Context and Nature of Review

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### Visit Date

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10/22/2018

#### Mid-Cycle Reviews include:

- The Year 4 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Biennial Review for Applying institutions

#### Reaffirmation Reviews include:

- The Year 10 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Review for Initial Candidacy for Applying institutions
- The Review for Initial Accreditation for Applying institutions
- The Year 4 Review for Standard Pathway institutions that are in their first accreditation cycle after attaining initial accreditation

### Scope of Review

- Reaffirmation Review
- Federal Compliance
- On-site Visit
- Multi-Campus Visit (if applicable)
  
- Federal Compliance 2018

## Institutional Context

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Casper College is one of seven state-supported two-year institutions of higher education in Wyoming. Casper is an open access, comprehensive community college located in Casper, Wyoming, a metro area of approximately 55,000 residents. The college serves approximately 4000 students annually and offers over 120 associate and certificate programs; some programs are offered on-line and many courses are offered as hybrids. There is a well established dual enrollment/concurrent program with the county school district. 140 full-time faculty and 120 adjuncts are employed to support these programs. Students are supported with an array of services such as tutoring and advising. The college also is a cultural center for the region, providing a range of activities and learning opportunities to the community.

The college has two primary sources of funding - state appropriations and student tuition and fees. More than 65% of the annual budget is allocated to education, in the form of faculty salaries, equipment, and technology. The campus is well maintained with facilities that provide an impressive learning environment. Wyoming has a long tradition of supporting higher education, but the most recent economic downturn in 2015 changed that landscape. Casper was the only two-year institution that did not have to layoff in order to meet its budget shortfalls. When combined with declining enrollments, college leadership has recognized and is meeting the challenges of planning for the college's future.

It should be noted that the college has a relatively new president (2015) and a new VP of Academics. Approximately

half the board members are newly elected as well. At the same time there is a deep reservoir of experience at the college among the board, faculty and staff. The commitment to the institution was impressively obvious during the visit.

## **Interactions with Constituencies**

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The team met with the following groups or individuals.

Open Forum on Criteria 1 & 2 - 19 attendees

Open Forum on Criteria 5 - 18 attendees

Area of Focus on Retention & Persistence - Members of Strategic Enrollment Planning Team (Public Relations, Interim VP of Academics, VP Student Services, Director Recruitment & Retention, IT Director)

Board of Trustees - 5 of 7 attended

Open Forum on Criteria 3 & 4 - 35 attendees

Federal Compliance - Financial Aid Director, Registrar, Dir. Financial Services/Controller

Faculty - 24 attendees

Area of Focus: Assessment of Student Learning - VP and AVP Academics, Director of Assessment, Assessment Specialist, members of Assessment Committee (9 faculty)

Students in Eng 1010 - 18 attendees

Faculty/staff drop in - 12 attendees

Area of Focus: Planning and Budgeting - Public Relations, Dir. Financial Services, Interim VP Academics, President, VP administrative Services, Exec Dean Continuing Ed, VP Student Services, Dir HR

Co-curricular - AVP Student Services, Director of Assessment, Student Activities Coordinator, AVP Academics

Student Complaints - AVP Academics, AVP Student Services

Faculty credentials - VP Academics

Policy Committee Chair

VP and AVP Student Services

## **Additional Documents**

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electronic login provided to Curriculog, Moodle, and MyCCInfo

Co-curricular definition and assessment tool

Approval letter from Department of Education and update

Program Participation Agreement Expiration date 9/30/2022

syllabi for concurrent enrollment classes

syllabi prepared for Federal Compliance Filing

Appendix W for Federal Compliance Filing - accreditation documentation

faculty evaluation documents

minutes from BOT, Curriculum Committee, Faculty Senate

audits and budgets - last 5 years

college website, catalog, student handbook

faculty personnel files

# 1 - Mission

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

## 1.A - Core Component 1.A

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The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

## Rating

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Met

## Evidence

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The college developed a mission statement appropriate for the institution as part of its newest strategic plan. Board members report directing new president in 2015 to update the college's mission as part of the new college strategic plan. An ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee composed of 33 volunteer faculty, staff, and administrators constructed the strategic plan using feedback from the larger college community. In meetings with the review team, representatives of the different institutional constituents confirmed participation and the process used to construct the strategic plan.

The draft strategic plan was presented college-wide in August 2016. Meeting minutes show that the draft plan was presented to the College Council, Faculty Alliance, and Staff Alliance for feedback. After incorporating feedback, the draft strategic plan was presented to the Board in February of 2017. Board members provided individual feedback and sent the draft back to the President's Executive Council. Conversations with Board members confirmed that this was the process used. The document was revised to incorporate the feedback from the Board. The final version of the draft strategic plan was presented to the Board in early summer of 2018. As evidenced by the June 19th minutes of the regular meeting of the Board, the new strategic plan containing, in part, the new mission, vision, values, and goals of the college was officially adopted.

The college's programs are consistent with its stated mission. The mission of the college reads "Casper College is a public, comprehensive two-year institution with a primary focus on student success that provides learning opportunities to enrich the lives of our students and community." A random perusal of the web pages for 20, of the 120, associate degree programs offered at the college confirms that each program explains its role in and support of the college mission. The college clearly explains the purpose, structure, and opportunities found in each program. In conversations with the

review team, the 18 students at a students-only forum expressed satisfaction with the programs available. In addition to the 120 associate degrees available, the college catalog lists 43 certificate programs providing training for students.

The services provided by the college are designed to promote the success of its students. According to the college catalog, 14 associate degree programs, four certificates, and 140 individual courses are offered completely online. The college Digital Learning Center has a variety of online tools to both help faculty build quality online classes and students to be successful in them. Some of the tools, provided by Moodle, include quality course guidelines checklists and samples of quality course components. The Digital Learning Center employs a staff of four, and faculty report mostly satisfaction with the help and tools provided them to help build their online courses. The college also subscribes to NetTutor. This national tutoring program provides online help for students in all subject matters offered by the college 24 hours a day.

The college provides effective services to promote the success of its students who attend traditional in-person classes. The Student Success Center offers advising, tutoring, career services, testing, disability support services, transfer information, and a single parent program. A tour of the Student Success Center demonstrates that it is a large well-equipped facility staffed by a team of seven. The Adult Learning Center serves out of school adults 16 years and older. Services include adult basic education, high school equivalency preparation, and English as a second language program. Community members interested in lifelong learning can participate in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (Olli). Olli is utilized mostly by adults 50+ who are interested in attending classes without the goal of earning credits, a degree, or a certificate. A perusal of the Olli class catalog shows that students can take classes in a wide variety of fields including culinary, arts and crafts, and science and technology.

The connection between the college's planning and budgeting priorities and its mission is addressed in Criterion Five. It is clear that the college focuses its resources on the success of its students. The student to faculty ratio at the college is 14:1. The college employs about 140 fulltime and 120 adjunct faculty to serve around 1,600 full time and 2,600 part-time students. An extensive tour of the campus showed modern and up to date facilities optimized to serve students. The simulation labs used in the medical fields, the music facilities, and paleontology resources available for students are all examples of the high-quality resources available to help students achieve their educational goals.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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The Casper College mission is clearly articulated publicly on the college web page, the catalog, the student handbook, the strategic plan, and digital and nondigital signs across campus. The mission identifies the college's purpose and its role in promoting student success, transfer programs, career training, continuing education, basic skills, and opportunities to improve the quality of life for the people of Casper, Natrona County, the state of Wyoming and the world.

In meetings on campus, faculty, staff, administrators, and Board members were well aware of the mission, knew where it could be found and, most importantly, understood their role in that mission. Everyone spoke positively about the opportunities the college offered, the importance of student success, and the myriad of opportunities the college offered. Repeatedly, they spoke of the college enriching the lives of the people and the community of Casper. When discussing their role in that process, they had pride in what they did whether it be the fiduciary responsibility of the Board of Trustees, the work of the facilities staff in keeping the physical plant clean and safe, or the work of faculty and staff in promoting student success.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

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The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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The institution has made progress in addressing its role in a multicultural society. In the spring of 2016, President Divine formed an ad hoc Diversity Committee. President Divine charged the committee with identifying the strengths, needs, and shortcomings in the area of diversity within the college community. The committee finished its work during the spring 2017 semester. The Diversity committee's final report is located in the committee section of the college website and made a series of recommendations. One, the recommendation to "require safe zone training for residence hall supervisors and make training available to administration, faculty, and staff" was partially met at the start of the fall 2017 semester when residence hall assistants were required to attend a safe zone training regarding sensitivity to LGBTQ students in the residence halls. The other ten recommendations made by the committee do not appear to have been addressed. When asked about this topic in open forums, constituents consistently explained that the leadership of the committee has been reassigned to other areas and that the committee's work had temporarily been discontinued. In the forums, it was stated that the committee is going to be revived with new leadership. Given the recommendations by the 2009 review team that diversity was an area that needed to be addressed, it would be beneficial to the college for the recommendations of Diversity Committee to be revisited.

The college does provide activities for students that reflect attention to human diversity. Student veterans report satisfaction with the college's Peer Advisors for Veteran Education (PAVE) program. In this program older veterans provide mentoring and support for newer veterans just returning from their theatre of operations. The college sponsors 35 student clubs and organizations. The various clubs are listed in the clubs and organizations portion of the college website and include clubs such as the culture clubs, geology club, and the oil city ag club. The college Humanities Festival and Demorest Lecture Series is a three-day event that offers presentations dealing relating to human diversity. The 2017 series focused on European history and culture as well as a presentation by trans-activist Kate Bornstein. The 2018 series focuses on a culinary demonstration focusing on fairy tales and food. The college hosts cultural dinners where students and their families can attend a culturally themed dinner and listen to presentations on the particular area. Recent dinners include fare from Ireland, Netherlands, and India.

The college includes diversity in its curriculum. The college has eight institutional learning outcomes embedded in its curriculum. Outcome #4 is "Demonstrate knowledge of Diverse Cultures and Historical Perspective." The outcome is assessed in all programs every two years. As demonstrated by

an examination of a wide variety of syllabi, the outcome is addressed throughout the curricula.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## 1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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Since 1945 Casper College has served the public by providing accessible and affordable education leading to certificates, associates degrees, and transfer programs. Casper offers a variety of career and technical programs to promote economic development. The college also offers ongoing lifelong learning and cultural activities to the public.

Casper College is one of seven colleges operating under the authority of the Wyoming Community College Commission as a public, not-for-profit institution. As confirmed by discussions with trustees, faculty and staff, Casper College's educational responsibilities are the core of its mission. Its primary revenues derive from the state of Wyoming and student tuition/fees. The college has no stockholders, investors, or parent organization. The college is accountable to taxpayers, students, and the communities it serves.

Casper College is deeply connected to the local and regional community. The college actively engages with its external constituencies and service communities in a variety of ways including: BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services, a partnership with the Natrona County School District for dual and concurrent credit opportunities), articulation agreements with the University of Wyoming, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), the Knowledge Enrichment for Youth (KEY) program, active program advisory boards, among others. Because of the town's central location in the state, many faculty and staff indicated they were able to play an active role in state and regional professional organizations. Since the 2015 economic downturn, Casper has become more conscious of its role in creating a more diversified economy; it has partnered with community entities to provide job fairs, for example. Casper offers the public vibrant arts and cultural programming, links with other cultural entities, a world-class museum, and state of the art music facilities far surpassing those usually available in a town of Casper's population.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

### Evidence

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Casper College has developed a mission statement and supporting documents that are appropriate to its nature and culture. The mission, focused on student success, guides operations. The college has provided evidence that its academic programs and student support services are aligned with the mission and strategic goals.

The mission statement is available publicly in a variety of formats and well understood across the institution and the communities served by Casper. This was evident from team interviews with students, faculty, staff, and trustees. Students in particular emphasized the willingness of faculty and staff to do everything they could to help them succeed.

The college's mission demonstrates a commitment to the public good in a variety of ways: providing accessible, affordable education; K-12 partnerships; business and industry partnerships; and a variety of cultural activities. The institution's composition of faculty, staff, and students largely reflects the demographics of the community, which presents some issues to developing diversity at the institution. Interviews with faculty and staff and a review of syllabi, other documents, and college programming indicate the college is making a sincere effort to be inclusive and promote diversity; however, the college has an opportunity to enhance its efforts in this arena.

## **2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct**

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

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

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The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

#### **Rating**

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Met

#### **Evidence**

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In its Assurance Argument and in discussions with the team, Casper College provided evidence that it acts with integrity. Board action is guided by policy, while students can find direction in the Student Handbook. Day to day operations at Casper are driven by several policies and processes which guide actions and decisions of faculty and staff in a spirit of honesty and truthfulness.

Policies are built using an inclusive, campus-wide process which generally allows ample time and opportunity for review and comment by members of the entire campus community. It is an expectation of the members of the Tri-Alliance (representing the three types of college employees) to communicate policy development and status and to solicit feedback from other members within their respective alliances.

An example of an exception to this lock step process was offered by an employee in an open session which revealed that, in the spirit of urgency around building equity, the college president tasked the faculty to revise a workload policy. Given the urgency and detail around this work, the president recommended an alternate path to advance this important work which resulted in standardized workload unit.

#### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

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The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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Students and the public are provided information about the college on its website, the catalog, and the student handbook. Information is also provided to students through a comprehensive orientation prior to the start of the term. Although optional, students are strongly encouraged to attend. When visiting an English course and speaking with students, Peer Reviewers learned that many of the students in that particular class had attended orientation and found it to be extremely helpful. Since a large amount of information is covered during orientation, student services staff, coaches, and advisors continue to reinforce messages helpful to onboarding new students, especially during the first three weeks of the term.

There are numerous examples of the college's efforts to maintain transparency and communicate with students and the public. To bolster retention efforts, residence hall staff recently began receiving the DFW list and are working one-on-one with students to map out a plan to improve grades and/or mitigate the impacts of a failing grade or withdrawal.

The Public Relations team works closely with all units across the institution to accurately represent the college to the many stakeholders it serves via multiple channels so as to maximize accurate messaging and information.

Casper College might consider building a more formal student feedback loop with the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) to ensure the student voice is heard when considering tuition increases.

Prior to the visit, the Peer Review team encountered broken links on the website for several of the specialized accreditations. Once the college was made aware of the issue, the links were promptly restored and functional. The college might consider building in reminders to check and ensure accreditation link functionality on a regular basis.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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Agendas and minutes from the Board of Trustees' meetings and conversations with board members and college staff provide evidence of the board's autonomy and integrity. The seven member board is elected from the local Community College District. Several of the board members have long tenure, bringing a depth of experience to the board's deliberations. The board operates under a set of bylaws, as well as guidelines from the Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees. Board members spoke knowledgeably about those guidelines, the laws of Wyoming, and the requirements of the Wyoming Community College Commission. Appropriate policies are in place and followed to ensure ethical behavior, including required disclosure of potential or actual conflicts of interest.

In conversation with the Board it was clear they understood their role as a fiduciary one, rather than managerial, and they expressed their confidence in the president, leadership team, faculty and staff of the college to provide quality education. Several board members are graduates of the college. Conversations with college staff indicated confidence in the board; no one could recall any board actions that were inappropriate to the board's role in governance.

The board follows a monthly meeting schedule, with a fixed agenda that is publicly disseminated. Meetings are open to the public. Board minutes are available promptly on the college website following approval. Board activity is documented back to 2015 on the website.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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Casper College is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning in a number of ways. The college's academic freedom policy assures that "Academic freedom is balanced by academic responsibility." The Casper College student code of conduct outlines guidelines for freedom of expression on campus balanced with responsible and civil behavior.

Faculty are not only allowed but encouraged to pursue creative learning opportunities. In meetings with faculty and staff, the example of the college supporting two museums and promoting faculty in their field trips taking students on digs elicited the remark from one faculty member, "This is the best place I've worked!" Secondly, freedom of expression is witnessed in the rich and varied lecture series, festivals, forums and conferences which include an impressive lecture series called "Science in the Public Eye" and an equally impressive Humanities Series featuring topics on gender identity. Third, the faculty development offered through the college provides learning opportunities for faculty to pursue their academic teaching and research. In discussions with faculty, they spoke of their ability "to experience their own truths through the arts, research, and projects." They noted the wide range of texts faculty were able to assign in their classes. They spoke of the women and gender studies program which provided opportunities for students to learn of multiple viewpoints. And staff noted the freedom to launch programming for students on a wide array of topics. Finally, student clubs and organizations provided a myriad of opportunities for students to experience freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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Casper College's policies and procedures promote responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students, and staff. The integrity of research is ensured through their institutional review board which assures the rights and welfare of human subjects in research projects in well-written and clear statements.

Students are guided in the the ethical use of information resources through the student code of conduct, the college's copyright policy, and the lectures and training offered through the Goodstein Foundation Library which offers 150 class lectures per year. Faculty and students are trained through the digital learning center on the use of anti-plagiarism software such as turnitin.com and Respondus. The college writing center also works with students on the correct citing of materials. Faculty noted the benefits of such tools, while the interim VP of Academic Affairs spoke of the college's academic dishonesty reporting form to be used more as a developmental, educational tool and less as a punitive measure.

The academic code of conduct is found in the student handbook as well as in every course syllabus. A spot check of syllabi and review of the student handbook verified this.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



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

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

### **Evidence**

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Through the actions of its policy committee, Casper College has developed a framework of policies to ensure integrity and ethical conduct in all college operations. Employees have a voice through a robust committee and governance structure. The faculty oversee academic matters through the faculty alliance as well as curriculum and other academic committees. Likewise, the board acts responsibly. Board members are active learners who have sought professional education from state and national board organizations; the board clearly understands its role and separates itself from day-to-day operations.

The college presents itself clearly and openly to all its constituents. Minutes reflecting committee action are available publicly. Review of college documents and discussion with faculty and staff underscored the college's commitment to freedom of expression and the ethical use of research and resources.

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

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

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

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The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

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

### **Rating**

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Met

### **Evidence**

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The college's courses and programs are current and require appropriate levels of student performance. The college offers 16 programs that required specialized accreditation. These programs include Addictionology, Art, Business and Accounting, Dance, Early Childhood Education, Health Science Simulation Center, Medical Lab Technology, Music, Nursing, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Paralegal Studies, Paramedic Technology, Pharmacy Technology, Radiology, Respiratory Therapy, and Theatre. The review team reviewed the status of each program's specialized accreditation and found that all programs are currently accredited and in good standing.

The college's students are successful when they graduate and move on from the institution. The college's students who transfer to the University of Wyoming are more successful than those from other institutions. According to the University of Wyoming student information system, in 2016 the Casper students who transferred to the University of Wyoming had an average GPA of 2.98 while the average GPA of other transfer students was 2.84. In 2016 the Occupational Therapy Assistant program had a 95% pass rate on the National Board of Certification of Occupation Therapy Exam. In 2015 the Radiography program had a 100% pass rate on the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists exam. Examination of the pass rates for other programs requiring licensure exams showed similar rates of success.

The college's programs and certificates required the appropriate level of student performance. The college offers 120 associate degree programs and 43 certificate programs. A perusal of the college catalog demonstrates that each program requires a minimum of 60 credit hours with 32 credits of general education. Although not specifically addressed in the assurance argument, conversations with

faculty and administrators showed that many programs and certificate programs employ advisory groups to maintain curriculum currency.

The learning goals for associate and certificate programs are clearly articulated to students. The individual web page for each program and certificate lists a recommended degree progression plan. The college could consider adding curriculum maps to link the classes required in a program to program level outcomes. This would clarify to students why they are taking the classes that they are. The college has eight institutional learning outcomes. These outcomes are listed in the catalog and on the individual web pages.

The learning goals for courses are clearly articulated to students. An archive of current and past syllabi are found in the Academic Affairs webpage. The team examined a wide selection of syllabi and found that the course level learning outcomes are clearly explained in the syllabi. Additionally, in courses that address institutional learning outcomes, the specific outcomes are listed in the syllabus. It is clearly articulated to students when they are both learning and being assessed in regards to the institutional learning outcomes. When asked in the student forum, students were aware of the existence and importance of their institutional level outcomes.

The college's learning goals are consistent whenever and however learning takes place. Classes are taught in person, in the blended format, and completely online. A perusal of archived syllabi demonstrates that the learning goals for a particular class are identical across the various modalities. The college doesn't have a policy for determining student identification during online testing; however, faculty in open forums report using proctored exams and ProctorU to maintain the integrity of their online testing process.

The college maintains program quality by providing similar resources to students taking classes in all modalities. Students taking classes in person and the blended format can utilize the Student Success Center. This center, described in Criterion One, provides help to students in all academic areas. The college subscribes to NetTutor. This 24 hour online services provide academic help to students in all areas regardless of location. All students use Moodle as their learning management system (LMS). Online resources and communication with faculty are facilitated by the LMS for students utilizing all modalities. Students in their open forum expressed satisfaction with the academic help that they received from faculty and other resources available to them. The Digital Learning Center provides resources to ensure that online classes maintain compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. As an example, the Digital Learning Center ensures that narrated videos used in online classes are closed caption for the hearing impaired.

The college offers both dual and enrollment to high school students in the Casper area. The students are funded by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). BOCES began in 1991 as a joint venture between the college and the Natrona County School District. Dual and concurrent credit courses are articulated with the school district on an annual basis. An examination of syllabi shows that these classes have the same learning outcomes as those offered in the traditional college classes. Instructors are credentialled using the same process as that used for college faculty.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

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The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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The general education program of the college is appropriate to the institution and is grounded in a framework developed by the institution. As detailed in the June 2014 HLC Progress Report, a six-member ad hoc subcommittee of faculty led by the Vice President for Academic Affairs reduced the college's 38 discipline-specific outcomes into eight general institutional outcomes. The eight general institutional outcomes are the foundation of the college's general education program. The meeting minutes of November 12, 2013, Faculty Senate show that the general education was approved.

The content of the college's general education outcomes is appropriate for the mission and educational offerings of the institution. The college offers 120 degree programs with each program composed, at a minimum, of 60 total credits with between 17 and 32 of those based in general education. The general education outcomes found throughout the college web pages address topics such as communication, the scientific method, critical thinking, diversity and historical perspectives, creativity, technology, responsibility, and quantitative analytical skills. The general education and major requirements of each program complement each other and impart to students the skills that every college educated person should have.

The college makes clear to students in its 2018-2019 Casper College Catalog the purpose of its general education program. A section of the catalog titled General Education Philosophy Statement, Outcomes, and Requirements, reads "While education within a major field of study prepares each student to achieve success within a chosen vocation, general education provides the cornerstone of

understanding in areas that prepare students for life. The goal of general education is to provide the skills necessary for one to be an educated member of society. Therefore, as a fundamental part of their education at Casper College, graduates are expected to possess the following core abilities, commonly termed institutional learning outcomes.”

The college informs students about the intended learning outcomes of the general education program. A perusal of syllabi shows that general education outcomes, and the assessments linked to them, are clearly outlined. Students in open forums voiced that they are aware of the purpose of the college’s general education program. The web pages for individual degree programs contain degree progression plans that guide students through the class selection process to meet their general education requirements.

The college’s general education program ensures that all degree programs engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information. The specific general education outcomes demonstrate effective oral and written communication, use the scientific method, solve problems using critical thinking and creativity, and use quantitative analytical skills to evaluate and process numerical data provide instruction in, and assessment of, these topics. As described further in Core Component 4.B, the college assesses two of its eight general education outcomes every semester. This frequent rolling assessment of the general education outcomes ensures the currency of the program for students.

The college’s educational opportunities recognize and value diversity. The April 2018 Board minutes show that the college reaffirmed its Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination policy stating "Casper College is an equal opportunity institution and as such does not discriminate based on race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, political affiliation, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state, or local law in admission or access to or treatment or employment in its educational programs or activities." The policy is followed in practice. Students in their open forum describe feeling safe and valued. The recently revived Diversity Committee could work to address further the college’s vision of human and cultural diversity. As addressed in Core Component 1.C, the college offers valuable clubs, organizations, and events that promote a culture of diversity.

The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge as appropriate for a two-year college awarding associate degrees and certificates. The focus of the college is on teaching and learning; however, some faculty do participate in research. An August 2017 article in the Casper Star Tribune describes how faculty participated in research conducted during the total solar eclipse. The college website describes how students, faculty, and community members participate in summer paleontology digs. The review team toured the Tate Geological Museum which functions as both a museum and a working laboratory providing hands-on paleontology experiences for students.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

### Rating

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Met With Concerns

### Evidence

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Casper College has sufficient numbers of faculty to carry out both classroom and non-classroom roles. For the 1,622 full-time and 2,631 part-time students, the college employs 140 full-time faculty and 120 adjunct and dual credit instructors in the local high schools. Full-time faculty receive two days of orientation when hired. Non-tenured faculty who have taught at the college for fewer than 4 years are evaluated every year. Tenured faculty are evaluated every three years.

Faculty are active participants in the college's curriculum committee and represent a cross-section from the academic disciplines providing academic oversight of the curriculum. Faculty assure the quality of programs through their positive and enthusiastic engagement in the college's assessment team. The work of the college's assessment team is well-established, on-going and impressive given the rigorous schedule established to assess general education outcomes every 4 semesters by the team.

A review of the college's assessment site as well as several meetings with faculty provide evidence of this strong faculty engagement.

Instructors are accessible for student inquiry as evidenced by the office hours kept on their syllabi; their office hour requirements outlined in the office hours for faculty policy requiring faculty teaching lecture courses to maintain at least six office hours per week and those teaching lecture and lab to maintain five office hours per week; and through highly positive comments by students in our meeting with them. Additionally, a 2017 CCSSE report indicated that Casper College students exceeded their cohort's responses regarding time spent with faculty: 19.8% of Casper students reported they worked

with instructors often or very often compared to 11.9% of students in the national cohort.

Faculty development funding is available for Casper faculty through tuition waivers, tuition reimbursement and through \$25,000 - \$35,000 allocated per year for faculty development. Additionally the Faculty Senate may add \$500 stipends every other year to faculty to defray faculty development expenses.

Non-instructional staff are appropriately trained, qualified and supported in their roles: Staff in financial aid, student success and tutors have training or documented experience to perform their roles at the college. The financial aid director and staff attend four conferences or trainings per year: FSA training NASFAA national conference, a regional and a state conference as well as a week long intensive training seminar, the Summer Institute from Rocky Mountain Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. Meetings with students also indicate a high level of satisfaction of support from financial aid staff at the college.

The College has established a Faculty Credential Procedure. A dual enrollment and dual credit process is in place: faculty are to meet college teaching qualifications, syllabi are reviewed, learning outcomes are to meet college departmental learning outcomes, they must participate in departmental assessments, and they are evaluated annually by the chair of the department.

Among other processes, the Casper Faculty Credential Procedure indicates that college personnel employ the following processes:

"Department Chairs and Program Directors, in association with their respective Academic Dean, define the faculty credential requirements required to teach specific college courses and disciplines. These requirements may include a combination of education, training, and tested experience. These requirements are reviewed on an annual basis and in turn approved by the Vice President of Academic Affairs."

"Current faculty members not holding minimum credentials to teach the college credit classes they are assigned will be offered the opportunity to develop an academic development plan to ensure they can meet the established credential standards for courses they teach. Specific assistance rendered to faculty members who chose to agree to an academic development plan will be determined on an individual basis. These plans will be developed by the faculty Member, the associated Academic Dean, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs. These plans will include a mutually agreed upon timeline for meeting the established faculty credential requirements for the academic courses they teach. Plans will be reviewed for progress on an annual basis."

A review of selected faculty credentials during the visit indicated the following concerns:

- Only xerox copies of transcripts were on file for at least two of the faculty personnel files.
- Three faculty who were working to meet college qualifications had forms in their personnel files indicating their work was to be completed by 2023. These examples did not meet the Higher Learning Commission's Assumed Practice B.2 to be in compliance by September 1, 2017, nor was there an extension filed from the College to allow faculty to have more time to meet HLC's assumed practice. Further there was not a process in place to assure that these plans were reviewed on an annual basis by human resources, the dean, or the Vice President of Academic Affairs.
- Although the college faculty credential procedure indicates that teaching requirements may include tested experience, there was not a policy in place at the college related to tested experience that was

reviewed and approved through the faculty governance process.

This review of faculty credentials as well as meetings with faculty, academic administrators, and human resources indicate that there is a need for clearer policies and procedures regarding faculty credentialing. The frequent turnover of the Vice President of Academic Affairs at the college over the past eight years may provide some insight into the lack of well-established policies and procedures in this area. Nevertheless, it is important for the college to address these concerns.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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By October 1, 2019 the college must submit an interim report indicating evidence that faculty who were placed on Academic Development Plans have made the requisite progress necessary to meet the HLC Assumed Practice B.2 regarding qualified faculty.

By October 1, 2019 the college must submit evidence that a well-defined policy, procedure and documentation have been put in place, demonstrating when tested experience is sufficient to determine that a faculty member has the expertise necessary to teach students in a given discipline.

This police should be reviewed and approved through the faculty governance process, as directed in HLC Assumed Practice B.2.



## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

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The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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Through the Assurance Argument and in conversations with faculty and staff, ample evidence has been provided that Casper College provides support for learning and teaching.

Recognizing the need for continued growth in the diversity and inclusion space, Casper College has invested in professional development training for the Board of Trustees and staff. Staff are engaging in professional development in the form of guest speakers and webinars to learn more about how to attract and serve the Generation Z market, for example. With the increase in part-time students, the college seeks to better serve special populations such as Single Parents and Veterans in ways that expressly meet unique needs. In particular, a physical Veterans Center has been designated on campus which serves as a hub and gathering spot for students to coalesce around their shared military experience. Organic and informal support networks are a natural outgrowth and work to strengthen student success, retention, and persistence. Single parents are supported with extended hours in labs to ensure access in non-traditional day parts. Single parents find assistance in the form of bus passes, diapers, baby food, clothing, and emergency funding. A strong feedback loop also exists between Wellness and Health Services and student services programming. Notably, there is a publication in the restrooms which hangs on the back of the individual stalls called the Stall Street Times. This publication promotes learning opportunities and student and community services. In October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Stall Street Times focused on resources for individuals impacted by any form of domestic abuse along with instructions on how to report.

Financial Aid staff maximize funding opportunities for students by investing in professional development which connects them to changes in policy and best practices. Staff consistently attend regional and national training, in addition to investing in their profession by sharing best practices with colleagues by presenting at conferences. One conference presentation facilitated by Casper's

Financial Aid staff focused on how to solve the challenge associated with the literacy requirements associated with Work Study allocations. Staff have partnered with elementary schools and humane societies in a program which features students reading to the sheltered pets. Students benefit from additional reading practice (in a non-judgmental environment), not to mention the altruistic benefit of instilling a spirit of volunteerism at an early age. We are not sure what the pets think, but we can only imagine they are delighted by the added human interaction.

Casper offers several opportunities to prepare students for college academic rigor and to support learning. Several labs including the World Languages Lab, Math Learning Center, and the Writing Center offer face-to-face assistance while the online tool, NetTutor, is embedded within the learning management system, Moodle, and available around the clock. Interviews with staff and students revealed mixed beliefs about the online tutoring tool. With the increase in online instruction, would encourage staff to survey students on use of online tutoring product to ensure proper support is available wherever and whenever needed. In an effort to place students in the highest class possible, Placement Coordinators employ multiple measure techniques such as incoming test scores in addition to high school grade point average.

Transparency and self-service is supported through the myCCinfo portal where students can see their program plans and maps, register for classes, review financial aid, view their grades, and pay their bills. So that students are supported holistically, shared professional development is encouraged between coaches (student services staff) and academic advisors (largely faculty) so as to standardize messaging and gain a shared understanding of roles. Quality control measures will ensure that a student's cognitive and non-cognitive needs are being addressed. Academic advisors provide a solid picture relative to curriculum and coaches relative to more intrusive development. Students may benefit from the two support structures having a firm understanding of which each function encompasses.

Casper College has made significant upgrades to the information technology infrastructure to include updating outdated equipment, consolidating multiple phone systems, and expanding network coverage. Through collaboration between the Digital Learning Center's Audio Visual team and the Information Technology department, classrooms are on a regular rotation for upgrades; examples of solid communication and planning between academic and information technology were shared. IT soundly and creatively built capacity in help desk services by partnering with the library to provide expanded service and work opportunities for student help desk technicians. With more students taking online courses and accessing learning more remotely, this will better serve distance learners. Wireless access points recently increased 421 percent from 2011 (121 access points) to 2018 (631 access points). This investment allows for expanded coverage across the campus and greater density within the classrooms. Additionally, students specifically reported satisfaction with the technology and technology-related services at Casper College.

The college is supported by an ongoing state appropriation for deferred maintenance. Reviewers found the campus to be exceedingly well-maintained. Investment in physical learning structures such as those observed in the health labs, the Tate Museum, and the performing arts center suggest a deep commitment to providing state of the art learning environment for stakeholders.

As the college evolves its online offerings, so too has the Goodstein Foundation Library appropriately morphed its resources to reflect relevant print and electronic source materials. The library also provides one-on-one support answering 1,073 research questions annually. The Casper College Institutional Student Learning Outcomes speak to the ways students are challenged to develop research skills and ensure that graduates use a variety of methods to find, analyze, and use information.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.E - Core Component 3.E

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The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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The college's co-curricular programs are suited to its mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students. In 2016 a committee of faculty and administrators led by the Student Activities Coordinator defined co-curricular for the college. The college defines co-curricular activities as "programs, activities and learning opportunities that are an extension of formal learning experiences and are connected to, or mirror academic curriculum. Co-curricular activities cover a broad range of out-of-classroom, but sponsored campus programs and services. These are designed to promote leadership, life skills, and personal development for students while enhancing campus life, with a focus on student engagement."

The Center for Learning Through Service's webpage describes many of the co-curricular activities available for students. Service learning provides opportunities for students to combine community service and classroom instruction while student volunteer services give students the opportunity to engage in services outside of the classroom. The Honor's program supports around 50 students with scholarships every semester and offers classes such as museum studies, poetry, and current issues in politics to students accepted into the program. The Student Activities Program provides an array of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to promote engagement and leadership. The Student Activities/Events webpage lists a busy schedule of various intramural sports, club and organization meetings and other events offered to students and the community.

The college has made strides toward assessing the quality and outcomes of its co-curricular programs. This topic is addressed in Core Component 4.B.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

### **3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary**

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

#### **Evidence**

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Casper College offers 120 associate degree programs and 43 certificate programs across five academic schools. The college maintains 16 specialized accreditations. Learning goals are clearly presented to and understood by students. Review of syllabi and discussion with faculty confirmed that quality and learning goals are consistent across modes of delivery. The college utilizes its well-regarded Digital Learning Center to provide development and resources for faculty.

The general education program and its associated learning outcomes have been developed by the faculty. A robust process of assessment ensures continuous review and improvement. The college both recognizes and strives to fulfill its obligations regarding diversity and knowledge contributions. Students have access to a wide range of activities and programming, both through formal class structures and through campus events.

A broad array of student support services are available that align with program offerings. The technological infrastructure is up-to-date. A campus tour indicated impressive, well maintained spaces highly suited to the college's mission. Co-curricular programs are in place and being assessed.

The college has 140 full-time faculty to meet its instructional needs. Processes are in place to evaluate faculty and continue with professional development. The overwhelming majority of faculty have appropriate credentials, a requirement that is strictly maintained for dual credit/concurrent faculty. However, review of faculty credentials revealed some gaps. The college had undertaken a review of credentials to meet the September 2017 HLC deadline and had in fact created improvement plans for faculty not meeting the requirements. Perhaps due to turnover in the VP Academics position, the college has not followed up with these plans to ensure compliance, nor has the college put in place a policy regarding tested experience as required in the Assumed Practices. For these reasons the team concludes that Criterion Three is Met with Concerns.

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

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

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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The college maintains a practice of regular program reviews. Its program review process has been recently changed through a collaborative process and approved to include items updated annually, items updated as needed, and items updated on a five-year process. The revised process will be implemented during the 2018-19 academic year.

The college evaluates all credit -- including credit for prior learning -- it transcripts. As confirmed by the review team, the guidelines for accepting credit are provided in the college catalog, which is publicly available on the website. Casper College utilizes the listing in the American Council on Education's Accredited Institutions of Post-Secondary Education to determine whether credits will be

accepted from a particular institution. When questions arise about the equivalency of transfer courses, students may be required to submit additional documentation; the Registrar's Office utilizes subject-matter expertise from the academic departments to make final determinations.

Casper College maintains authority over all of its academic programs. The process for concurrent offering is admirable. The college and the public schools work together under the auspices of BOCES, the Natrona County Board of Cooperative Educational Services. Concurrent enrollment classes are evaluated twice a year by the vice president of academic affairs, deans, and Natrona County School District principals. Review of documentation provided by the college and conversation with administrators and deans confirmed that the process is followed and fully operational to ensure high school students receive a high quality learning experience.

Specialized accreditation is verified by relevant external agencies according to accreditor schedules. The programs that maintain specialized accreditation are listed in the college catalog. Links are provided to the accrediting agency on the departmental webpages which provides full transparency for students seeking information.

The success of graduates of the college is evaluated through employment rates, admission rates to senior institutions, and internships. Admirably, the college participates in an annual fall summit with the University of Wyoming to assure alignment of course and program learning outcomes (UW is the only public, 4-year university in the state and is students' preferred transfer institution).

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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As discussed in Core Component 3.B, the college has clearly stated goals for student learning. The importance of the general education program is articulated to students. The classes that address the general education outcomes are identified to students. Class syllabi list the learning outcomes and assessments used in the course.

The college effectively assesses the achievement of student learning outcomes. The process used to create the eight general education outcomes is described in Core Component 3.B. Examination of a cross-section of syllabi shows that the general education outcomes are identified in the syllabi of classes that address them. It is clear to students when course content is addressing general education outcomes. It is clear when their knowledge of the content is being assessed. Students in their open forum expressed familiarity with the general education outcomes.

Every semester two general education outcomes are assessed. The assessment webpage contains the schedule and results of assessment dating back to Spring 2013. The rubrics used to assess the general education outcomes are located in the assessment webpage. The college uses the rubrics supplied by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (VALUE rubrics). Faculty teaching classes that address the general education outcomes assessed in a particular semester submit assignments that align with the learning outcomes. 20 faculty members then score the assignments using the VALUE rubrics.

Faculty creates a quantitative feedback report for each outcome. The reports are archived in the assessment webpage. The Assessment Committee analyses the reports and recommends changes based on the assessment results. Analysis of the reports shows that recommendations are made at the student, faculty, department, and institutional level. Faculty in open forums report changes made to due to assessment results. For example, based on assessment feedback, the college became concerned about plagiarism. This led to the adoption of Turnitin. However, there is no record of systemic implementation and assessment of curricular changes made due to assessment results. It would close



the circle of assessment if the recommendations were tracked for implementation and effectiveness. The college evaluates all credit courses on an annual basis using student questionnaires. The aggregated data for all courses taught from fall 2014 to spring 2016 is archived in the assessment webpage.

The college has made progress in its assessment of co-curricular activities. In 2016 a committee of faculty and administrators led by the Student Activities Coordinator defined co-curricular for the college. The college defines co-curricular activities as “programs, activities and learning opportunities that are an extension of formal learning experiences and are connected to, or mirror academic curriculum. Co-curricular activities cover a broad range of out-of-classroom, but sponsored campus programs and services. These are designed to promote leadership, life skills, and personal development for students while enhancing campus life, with a focus on student engagement.” At the same time, the Student Activities Coordinator started the process of asking the representatives of the various co-curricular activities to determine their outcomes. The Student Activities Coordinator changed positions at the college and, according to conversations with faculty and staff, co-curricular assessment at the college ceased.

The new Student Activities Coordinator, aided by the Director of Assessment, has revived building a process for assessing co-curricular activities. Leaders of some co-curricular activities submit surveys to participants to quantitate satisfaction and the learning that occurs during the activity. The survey, and its supporting documentation, was provided to the review team upon request. The process of having leaders of co-curricular activities determine their outcomes has been revived. Faculty and staff in open forums report participation in this revived activity. Faculty and staff report using Association of College and University Housing Officers (ACUHO) and National Intramural-Recreation Sports Association (NIRSA) standards to build their outcomes. The review team feels that, despite the lull in activity, the college is actively engaging in a process to assess co-curricular activities.

The college’s processes and methodologies for assessment are faculty driven. As described in Core Component 3.B, the eight general education outcomes were designed by an ad hoc committee of faculty led by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and approved by the Faculty Senate. Each outcome is assessed every two years by faculty using the VALUE rubrics as described above. The assessment reports include recommendations for students, faculty, department, and institutional level. It would complete the assessment circle if implementation and assessment of the recommendations were to take place

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

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

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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In various forms, since 2014, Casper College staff have been focusing on the importance of retention and persistence. Early work in this area saw the formation of a Persistence and Completion Academy Team which expanded data collection by conducting an intent survey and focus groups. This work set the stage for participation in the Higher Learning Commission's Persistence and Completion Academy and ultimate successful completion and graduation in May 2018.

Executive team members shared that the current president has expressly identified retention, persistence, and completion as a priority and has promised to allocate resources to move this work forward. Evidence of this support can be seen in the addition of one full-time Data Scientist in Institutional Research and the intentional collaboration between academic and student services. Deans and directors from both teams meet twice per month. Faculty have also been invited to join the CARE team. Wider adoption and use of Maxient software has also contributed to a college-wide effort toward addressing completion. Smaller class sizes where faculty have the ability to build authentic relationships with students is impacting retention efforts as well.

Based on IPEDS and other data sources such as those available through WCCC, Casper College has identified the following three KPIs which are intended to positively influence retention, persistence, and completion:

- Enrollment (semester and unduplicated annualized, overall headcount and FTE, BOCES, transfers, non-degree seeking, online)
- Student Progress (new students first to second-year retention [IPEDS], and graduation rates)

[IPEDS], persistence rates, transfer rates, completers [IPEDS])

- Diversity Enrollment (numbers enrolling and percentage of students from diverse backgrounds or under-represented groups demonstrating success)

Combining an executive leadership directive, graduation from the HLC's Persistence and Completion Academy, and the addition of a data scientist has moved initiatives around retention, persistence, and completion forward at Casper College. The college benchmarks itself against the sister institutions in the WCCC group. 2015-2016 data reveals that retention, persistence, and completion rates at Casper College were higher than that of the sister institutions. Staff attribute this performance to the intentional efforts around retention, persistence, and completion and that these efforts are simply more top of mind and mutually shared across the institution than ever before.

The college's overall rates are strong. Based on 2015-16 data, the retention rate is 62% for full-time students and 31% for part-time; the persistence rate is 68% for full-time and 35 for part-time; and the completion rate is 32%. Within specific majors, these rates are higher, as reported through specialized accreditation reports. Outside of these specific majors, the college has not set specific targets, although its Strategic Enrollment Plan has the goal of increasing these rates. Since a governor's initiative in 2013, Casper has been part of a Wyoming version of Complete College America which set an ambitious goal of increasing completion by 5% annually. Conversations with deans and other college administrators confirmed that the college was knowledgeable about its KPIs and aligning activities with the intention of improving those numbers.

Many tools and communication channels are being employed to impact student retention, persistence, and completion. For example, staff are implementing Hobsons' Radius to facilitate the online chat function to connect students and prospective students to information more instantaneously than ever before. Intentionally stronger alliances are emerging between academics, student services, and public relations so as to ensure better, more targeted and relevant data is being provided to the student consumer at the exact time it is relevant and necessary in the student life cycle. The data uncovered by the Strategic Enrollment Plan identified opportunities to build upon the retention, persistence, and completion efforts and as such, has established the following goals:

- Increase overall enrollment through Review of Academic Programs
- Increase retention, persistence, graduation, and completion of current and future students
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness through systems and process
- Implement a comprehensive Marketing Plan that supports enrollment, campus climate, campus partners, and Casper College friends
- Implement a comprehensive Recruiting Plan that supports enrollment, campus climate, campus partners, and Casper College friends

The college has gone beyond the typical data found in IPEDS by analyzing additional cohorts, by investing in the addition of a data scientist in the Institutional Research office, and through channels available within the WCCC such as the Complete College Wyoming initiative. Casper has a standing Data Governance Steering Committee which reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. This group meets regularly to resolve issues involving data use. Most recently, the committee resolved which elements of student data the college declares as directory information under The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). Financial Aid staff reported a commitment to analyzing and reflecting upon information shared by students in the student satisfaction survey and regularly uses that data in continuous process improvement.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

### Evidence

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Casper College has policies and procedures in place to ensure the quality of its educational programs. The institution has revised its program review process. As appropriate, it has achieved external accreditation for its programs. Its faculty provide oversight of the college's coursework through their work on the curriculum committee, assessment committee, and in the classroom. The college supports a Digital Learning Center to ensure faculty are appropriately trained and have access to resources. The college works in close partnership with the county school district to ensure the quality of its dual/concurrent offerings.

Casper College has an ambitious assessment program that routinely assesses all eight of its general learning objectives. The college follows good practice; for example, the VALUE rubrics from AAC&U are utilized to evaluate student work. The process could be further strengthened by tracking changes made on the basis of data returned from the assessment process. A process is in place to assess co-curricular activities; the process has recently been revised and is in process of being more completely implemented.

The college demonstrates a solid grasp on graduation, retention and persistence. Its work with the HLC Academy provided a starting point for the college, and the college has committed additional resources in the form of additional IR staff. The college has moved beyond considering only its IPEDS cohort, and works with transfer institutions such as the University of Wyoming and the other institutions in the WCCC to understand patterns of student behavior. The work of the Strategic Enrollment Planning Committee has also provided insights for the college.

## 5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

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

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

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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As indicated in its Assurance Argument and confirmed by review of audits and budgets available publicly on the website, Casper's FY17 budget of \$51.7 million is sufficient to support current operations. The college's primary sources of revenue are state appropriations and student tuition and fees, both of which have declined in the last several years. More than two thirds of the budget goes to support educational activities, in the form of faculty salaries, equipment, and other instructional support. Although it has fluctuated, the college's CFI remains healthy (6.05 in 2017, 2.68 in 2016, and 3.40 in 2015). The college operates with a workforce of nearly 700 employees; the number of full-time faculty (140) to part-time (120) to teach programs is commendable and more than meets the needs of the student population. Conversations with staff indicated appropriate qualifications and a strong level of competency. Opportunities for faculty and staff development are present. The financial aid staff, for example, devote considerable time to attend important regional and local training to stay current. The college maintains its own Digital Learning Center for faculty training.

The campus has undergone construction that improved its physical infrastructure, including world-class music facilities and an accredited medical simulation facility. The college has an appropriation of \$5.8 million for the upcoming biennium for deferred maintenance, although the facilities are in good repair. The college has dedicated resources to keeping its IT capacity above what is currently

required for operations.

The college's goals, particularly those expressed in the Strategic Enrollment Plan, are realistic in light of the available resources. The college's leadership is cognizant that addressing declining enrollment through attention to both enrollment and retention initiatives is key, as is the strategic allocation of existing resources.

Twenty-five years of unqualified audits indicate the college's fiscal processes are appropriate and well-managed. The college has created presentations to help personnel better understand the budget process in the new environment of scarce resources. There has been a focus on understanding the costs of offering classes and programs and matching those to expected revenue generation. The business office is implementing new software that will better connect planning with budgets and provide the capacity to conduct "what-if" scenarios. As a public, not-for-profit institution, no revenues are dispersed to superordinate entities.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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The team's meeting with the Board of Trustees confirmed that the Board is knowledgeable about the institution, understands its role in providing oversight of Casper's policies and practices, and is cognizant of its duty to meet legal and fiduciary responsibilities. The board meets monthly during the academic year; prior to each meeting, members receive briefing material, including budget information, which enables their oversight of the college's finances and operations. A working session is held just before the actual meeting where decision are made; both sessions are open to the public, and minutes and agendas provided on the college website. The board also hears presentations which update them on programs and activities. Board members take a proactive stance in educating themselves about their role as board members through membership in state and national board organizations. Although the board members are elected from the district, several have served multiple terms; additionally, several members have strong ties to the college as alumni. Members shared that they had good working relationships with other entities, such as the WCCC and the state legislature, in part because Wyoming's population is small enough that individuals' personal and professional roles overlap.

Faculty and staff engage in institutional governance and oversight through an established governance structure. The committee structure is available (with minutes) on the college website. The president meets regularly with the leadership team. In order to facilitate communications and interactions between academic and student affairs, the deans and directors meet regularly. Each group of employees has its own governance body, and representatives from these organizations meet jointly. Academic policies originate in the curriculum committee. Review of minutes and conversations with faculty and staff indicate the structure works to solicit input from multiple constituencies.

The state's fiscal downturn in 2015 has had an impact on the college's decision making. As the college has transitioned from a long period of abundant resources to a period of relative scarcity, leadership has worked to make the budget planning and resource allocation processes transparent to



stakeholders. To begin a process of controlling costs, the president asked the faculty to develop a policy for course loads based on principles of equity; with that work completed, the next phase will involve developing a more equitable and sustainable compensation structure.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

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The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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Evidence supports that Casper College's planning processes serve the college well. Casper allocates its resources in alignment with its mission which states, "Casper College is a public, comprehensive two-year institution with a primary focus on student success that provides learning opportunities to enrich the lives of our students and community."

As stated in the Strategic Plan and as approved by the Casper College Board of Trustees on June 19, 2018, the college will promote education for a lifetime by focusing on Community, Quality, Growth, Financial, and People. Perception surveys give Casper College high marks which could in part be due to the strong focus on serving the Casper community, county, and beyond in a variety of ways including through vibrant arts and culture offerings, employer-informed curricula, and partnerships with the K12s and economic development groups. Trade Adjustment Assistance for Community Colleges and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants expanded health occupations with equipment like the SIM lab and provided opportunities for the Business and Industry programs.

In open sessions, staff referenced the connections between the newly developed Academic Program Review process, for example, the assessment of student learning and further impacts on physical plant, the Master Plan, and budgeting. Evidence of these connections can also be found in the 2018 Strategic Planning document. In particular, the Strategic Plan outlines five goals which suggest the institution recognizes the organic nature and connectivity the assessment of student learning has on the greater institution relative to curriculum, program offerings, transferability, student success, safety, enrollment, data, diversity, and investing in people.

Sessions with employee groups and the Board of Trustees provided evidence that all strata of the organization are invited to participate directly in the ongoing planning process or by virtue of the alliance representative. The Board referenced both their fiduciary responsibility to the local, regional,

and state-wide constituent base in addition to fulfilling the mission of providing learning opportunities to enrich the lives of both students and community members. Additionally, program areas are informed by representative Advisory Boards who serve to represent the needs of the community and employment base.

Echoed by both the Executive Council and the Board of Trustees, there is keen awareness around the delicate balance between capacity and ever-present funding constraints. Several plans serve to inform process and decision-making including the Budget, the Strategic Plan, the Strategic Enrollment Plan, and the Master Plan. The finance division is introducing a new software tool which will dramatically inform planning.

Enrollment; retention, persistence, and completion; serving an increased number of online and part time students; generational shifts in both enrollment and staff; diversity and equity; data quality, access, and security; legislative and state funding matters; external partnerships; external initiatives (i.e. attainment, Complete College Wyoming); Board of Trustees and staff professional development; and community engagement were themes that emerged in during the visit and serve as evidence that the Board and staff have a pulse on emerging opportunities, conditions, and challenges.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.D - Core Component 5.D

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The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

### Rating

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Met

### Evidence

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Evidence was provided that Casper College works to improve college operations. Staff cited an example of building awareness around sustainability by doing a deep dive into the costs associated across the entire college with the Copy Center. To increase knowledge base around the institutional budget, the finance team has developed a Budget 101-like presentation and has been delivering the presentation to various departments on campus. The presentations spark interest, awareness, clarity, transparency, and creativity relative to budget opportunities and potential cost savings.

Several areas of evidence support that Casper College learns from its operational experiences and applies learning in an institutional effectiveness manner. The Strategic Enrollment Planning process strengthened relationships beyond the student services team. The president has identified the importance of equity and sustainability and will be engaging in a comprehensive faculty compensation project to ensure a fair and sustainable compensation structure. Enrollment services, including Registration, Admissions, and Financial Aid, have imparted a heightened awareness around student as consumer and approaches its work in a very consumer and customer centric manner.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

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

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

### **Evidence**

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The college has the personnel, facilities, and technology required to deliver its programs. Through the evidence presented in the Assurance Argument and discussion during the campus visit, Casper has demonstrated that it has adequately planned for current and future operations. Since 2015, the college has faced declines in both student enrollment and state appropriations. While Wyoming is accustomed to cyclical funding and strong legislative support for education continues, the college is more fully integrating its budgeting processes with planning and assessment. Both the trustees and college leadership have taken appropriate steps to address a new budget reality. Through increased awareness throughout the college and changes in staffing and technology to provide additional data, the college is able to consider the impact of current information, as well as the impact of future trends in revenues and enrollment.

The college has the governance and administrative structures in place to successfully address the issues it is facing. The trustees, leadership, faculty and staff are well-qualified, competent, and committed to achieving the mission of the college.

## Review Dashboard

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Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.D	Core Component 1.D	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met With Concerns
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.E	Core Component 3.E	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	
5	Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.D	Core Component 5.D	Met
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	

## Review Summary

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### Interim Report(s) Required

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#### Due Date

10/1/2019

#### Report Focus

The monitoring report should address faculty qualifications.

For those faculty who were placed in Academic Development Plans, the interim report should provide evidence that these faculty have made the progress necessary for Casper College to be in compliance with HLC Assumed Practice B.2.

The interim report must also submit evidence that a well-defined policy, procedure, and documentation have been put in place, demonstrating when tested experience is sufficient to determine that a faculty member has the expertise necessary to teach students in a given discipline. The policy should be reviewed and approved through the faculty governance procedure, as directed in HLC Assumed Practice B.2.

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### Conclusion

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Casper College has Met all the Criteria and Core Components for HLC accreditation, with the exception of 3.C which is Met with Concerns. Casper College provided sufficient evidence that it meets Criterion One with a clearly stated mission universally understood and practiced throughout the college. As the college continues to deal with declining revenues, the mission is clearly guiding planning and budgeting processes.

Casper produced evidence that it operates with integrity by adherence to its published policies and procedures in accordance with Criterion Two. The policies, and the associated committee structure, are available on the website, as are meeting agendas and minutes. The Board of Trustees understands its role and is knowledgeable and committed to the success of the institution.

Casper fulfills Criterion Three by offering appropriate programs of study for higher education institutions. Learning outcomes are clearly articulated for programs and courses and communicated to students and the public. Many program areas maintain external accreditation. Students have a variety of support services available to them such as advising, tutoring, disability resources, and library, as well as cultural and recreational programming and activities. There is consistency of quality and processes across modes of delivery. With a few minor exceptions, faculty possess the credentials for the programs and courses taught.

Casper provided ample evidence that it takes responsibility for the quality of its educational programs and learning environments as required by Criterion Four. The college has a robust system for evaluating its 8 general learning outcomes and has implemented a process for evaluating its co-curricular learning. Faculty drive the process for curricular change. The college's participation in HLC's Retention and Persistence Academy yielded valuable insights that are informing planning and actions on campus.

The team received sufficient evidence that Casper plans for its future in accordance with Criterion Five. The college has the stellar facilities with up-to-date technology to support faculty and student learning. The number and quality

of its employees support its operations. As the state of Wyoming faced a severe budget shortfall in 2015, the college has learned to budget in conditions of scarcity. It has implemented processes to improve the campus' understanding of the budgeting process and to better align budget with plans. A long history of unqualified audits speaks well to the competency of the college to manage its fiscal affairs.

The team observed and examined sufficient evidence to recommend that Casper College is eligible to chose its pathway.

## **Overall Recommendations**

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### **Criteria For Accreditation**

Met With Concerns

### **Sanctions Recommendation**

No Sanction

### **Pathways Recommendation**

Eligible to choose