



DALTON
STATE

**DALTON STATE COLLEGE
COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATION REPORT**

**RESPONSE REPORT TO THE ON-SITE
REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE**

Name of Institution:

Dalton State College

Address of the Institution:

650 College Drive, Dalton, GA 30720

Dates of Committee Visit:

September 18-20, 2012

Report Submitted:

Response Report to the Visiting Committee

Name, title, contact numbers of person(s) preparing the report:

Henry M. Codjoe

Director of Institutional Research & Planning and SACS Liaison

706-272-4406

Part I: Signatures Attesting to Integrity
(Applicable to all institutions)

By signing below, we attest to the following:

That *Dalton State College* has conducted an honest assessment of compliance and has provided complete and accurate disclosure of timely information regarding compliance with the identified Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, and Federal Requirements of the Commission on Colleges.

Date of Submission: *February 15, 2013*

Chief Executive Officer

Name of Chief Executive Officer

Dr. John O. Schwenn

Signature

Accreditation Liaison

Name of Accreditation Liaison

Dr. Henry M. Codjoe

Signature

List of Recommendations
Cited in the Report of the Reaffirmation Committee

Recommendation 1: The Committee recommends that the institution continue its recent efforts to improve assessment of student learning in educational programs and demonstrate the use of data to make improvements.

Recommendation 2: The Committee recommends that the college continue its efforts to improve assessment of the effectiveness of its administrative units and the use of data to make improvements.

Recommendation 3: The Committee recommends that the college continue its efforts to improve assessment of the effectiveness of its Academic and Student Support Services and demonstrate the use of data to make improvements.

Recommendation 4: The Committee recommends that the college collect data to document the effectiveness of its community/public service activities and demonstrate the use of data for improvement.

Recommendation 5: The Committee recommends that the institution fully implement the assessment of general education competencies and report the extent to which students have attained them.

Recommendation 6: The Committee recommends that the institution demonstrate that it regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with the institution's new published criteria.

Response to Recommendations

* **3.3.1** The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas (**Institutional Effectiveness**):

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

Committee Comments and Recommendation

The strategic plan serves as the starting point of unit level assessment which is documented in annual reports. The annual report template includes accomplishments, achievements, progress towards the strategic plan goals, assessment and results, and the identification of issues which will be the focus of activity in the upcoming year. The institution has specialized accreditation for programs in its school of business, education, nursing, social work, technology and has made improvements based on their accreditation experiences. However, these improvements were not tied to student learning outcome results and no program level student learning outcomes were evidenced in these reports.

A review of sample reports demonstrated many inconsistencies as evidenced by the following sections:

Bachelor's Degree Programs

Documentation titled "Program Outcomes Assessment" provided a sample of program level student learning outcomes. However, the BBA degree has the same outcomes regardless of major. The Social Work and the Early Childhood Education reports included program operational outcomes but no program student learning outcomes. The Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, and Criminal Justice reports did have outcomes but they were measured by GPA and survey data. There was no use of results for improvement. Measures of effectiveness listed in the narrative are not connected to any data from learning outcomes.

Associate's Degree Programs for Transfer

The Associate of Arts degrees have two outcomes that are assessed and the rest of the outcomes list course grade as the measurement. The Associate of Science used successful course completion as the only assessment measure for all its outcomes. Both programs did not list any use of outcomes assessment data to improve student learning.

Associate's Degree Program in Nursing

The Nursing school provided a 20 page report filled with operational program outcomes but no program level student learning outcomes. For example, they did not identify learning outcomes that are assessed by the NCLEX. They do appear to be using their operational outcomes results to make improvements.

Career Associates Degree Programs and Certificates

All the samples provided for both career associates degrees and career certificates included student learning outcomes. However, all were assessed by the same vague measures (e.g. "student course assessments" and "faculty course outcome assessments") with no explanation as to what these are. A review of the evidence provided shows survey data, "qualitative program assessment" (which is not explained) and certification exams. An example of acceptable assessment would be to focus on outcomes one and two and measure these through the subscores of the certification exams (e.g. the MRI exam has subscores for patient care, imaging procedures, data acquisition and processing, and physical principles of image formation). By identifying a unique direct measure of each outcome, the unit can identify where students do well and areas that need improvement in student learning. Although some improvements are listed in the reports they are not connected to a particular outcome.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee found that while Dalton State has collected and used data from a variety of sources the College recently noted several deficiencies in the assessment of student learning and a lack of evidence that data has been used systematically to improve educational programs. This led to an ambitious campus-wide Assessment Improvement Plan affecting all departments. In its Focused Report, the College commits to improving institutional processes, producing consistent and regular assessment reports, and documenting use of assessment results to improve educational programs.

Dalton State's Academic Leadership Team has developed a set of steps to: (1) revamp the assessment of educational programs and student learning outcomes by creating more assessable and clearly defined learning outcomes for each educational program, (2) identify multiple and varied measures for each outcome, (3) develop a consistent assessment report format, and (4) cultivate a common assessment language across the college. This ambitious plan will use WEAVEonline Assessment Management System. The system promises to allow personnel to manage assessment, plan for improvement, and document the use of data for decision-making. The first assessment reports through the WEAVE system are slated for the 2012-2013 reporting cycle.

In conjunction with the College's Assessment Improvement Plan and adoption of the WEAVEonline Assessment Management System, workshops with an assessment consultant have been held to train educational program directors and faculty to: (1) write student learning outcomes for programs; (2) write valid measures and set performance standards, (3) reduce reliance on class grades and identify other assessment measures to document student learning, and (4) write effective assessment reports to document improvements linked to specific outcomes.

The Focused Report also addresses other assessment and data-related issues by: (1) citing a variety of documented program improvements resulting from special accreditations in the School of Business, School of Education, School of Nursing, School of Social Work, and School of Technology, (2) clarifying the existence of program-level student learning outcomes in these same programs, (3) addressing specific program outcomes in Bachelor's degrees with multiple majors, (4) addressing the need for learning outcomes assessment in the Associate of Arts Transfer program, and (5) acknowledging the need to revise assessment methods in Associate degree and Certificates programs during the coming year.

Learning outcomes assessment appears to have taken place in some departments, especially by individual teachers. However, these systematic assessments have not been consistent across all degree and certificate programs. Committee interviews with academic administrators, program directors, and faculty confirmed that personnel are enthusiastic about collecting new student learning data to guide decision-making and to improve instructional programs. These interviews also

confirmed that the college is committed to expending resources, time, and energy to improve assessment methods.

The Committee acknowledges the College's recent efforts. The institution-wide improvement plan has been clearly laid out. However, the new process is in its initial stages and not yet sufficiently established to guide future decision-making. While the College has clearly made progress, the Committee cannot determine whether these recent efforts will, in fact, result in the improvement of educational programs.

Recommendation: The Committee recommends that the institution continue its recent efforts to improve assessment of student learning in educational programs and demonstrate the use of data to make improvements.

Dalton State Response

In its Focused Report, Dalton State acknowledged the deficiencies in the assessment of the effectiveness of its educational programs and of student learning and resolved to address them in a new campus-wide Assessment Improvement Plan – using the WEAVEonline Assessment Management System and encompassing all academic departments, programs, and courses [1]. The campus community and leadership agree that assessment is a major institutional concern which must be addressed (see the president's email message to the campus [2]). Moving forward, the College has developed a set of steps to (a) revamp the assessment of educational programs and student learning outcomes by creating more assessable and clearly defined learning outcomes for each educational program and course, (b) identify multiple and varied measures for each outcome, (c) develop a consistent assessment report format, and (d) cultivate a common assessment language across the College. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee members were made aware of the College's commitment to improving institutional assessment processes, and after interviews with academic administrators, program directors, and faculty, the committee reported that Dalton State “personnel are enthusiastic about collecting new student learning data to guide decision-making and to improve instructional programs. These interviews also confirmed that the College is committed to expending resources, time, and energy to improve assessment methods. The Committee acknowledges the College's recent efforts. The institution-wide improvement plan has been clearly laid out [in an] ambitious campus-wide [effort] affecting all departments. This ambitious plan will use [the] WEAVEonline Assessment Management System. The system promises to allow personnel to manage assessment, plan for improvement, and document the use of data for decision-making.”

The clearly laid out plan started in the summer of 2012 via workshops with a Weave assessment consultant [3] who helped to train educational program directors and faculty to (a) write effective program and student learning outcomes that specify the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes students are expected to attain in courses or in a program; (b) write valid direct and indirect measures and set meaningful achievement targets; (c) use multiple (direct and indirect) assessment measures that target specific student learning outcomes instead of relying on grades alone to provide evidence of improvement of educational programs or student learning outcomes; and (d) write effective assessment plans/reports that will provide evidence linking improvements to specific outcomes or show how results are used for improvement, including how outcomes are related to or aligned with the department/institution mission [4]. The goals as noted in the College's Focused Report and acknowledged in the On-Site Committee Report are “improving institutional processes, producing consistent and regular assessment reports, and documenting use of assessment results to improve educational programs.”

To respond further to the recommendation and provide assurance that this new educational program and student learning assessment plan will be fully implemented, the College affirms that following the off-site visit in fall 2012, the director for Institutional Research, who has responsibility for the College's assessment activities, initiated meetings, consultations, and training sessions [5] and has continually worked closely with deans (See, for example, email correspondence from a dean to her faculty about new assessment processes [6]) and faculty of all the academic schools and departments to develop a robust method of assessment built into Weave that will assess all of the College's educational programs and courses (See, for example, the email correspondence between the director of institutional research and various deans, chairs, and faculty [7], [8], [9], [10], [11], [12]). These training sessions have led to the production of new and revised program and course-specific student learning outcomes assessment plans using Weave that address deficiencies noted by the reaffirmation committees and the recommendation. In fact, deans, chairs, program directors, and [faculty](#) have already loaded their program and course-level assessment plans into Weave as these examples of programs [13], [14], [15], [16], [17], [18], [19], [20], [21] [22] and courses [23], [24], [25], [26], [27], [28], [29] demonstrate. Deans, chairs, and faculty will report assessment results of program and course-specific student learning outcomes in Weave beginning in Spring 2013.

These assessment plans address the concerns raised by the reaffirmation committees and the recommendation. These include specifically identifying program and program-level student learning outcomes for the BBA in Business, BSW in Social Work, BS in Education, BS in Mathematics, BS in Chemistry, BS in Biology, BS in Criminal Justice, and AAS in Nursing; achieving consistency in assessment reporting across the campus; eliminating the use of survey data and GPA as the sole measures of program and student learning outcomes; using outcomes assessment data to improve student learning outcomes in associate's degree transfer programs; setting appropriate assessment measures and targets for career associate's degree programs that avoid the use of vague measures to assess program and learning outcomes (e.g., "student course assessments" and "faculty course outcome assessments"); determining a unique direct measure of each outcome that can identify where students do well and where improvements in student learning are needed; and tying measures of effectiveness and improvements to data related to specific student learning outcomes.

Furthermore, to show its commitment to full implementation and address the on-site committee's concern as to "whether these recent efforts will, in fact, result in the improvement of educational programs," the College again affirms that the plan is fully endorsed by the institution's president and key leadership. The president has given the responsibility for ensuring the success of the new process to the director of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning. To assist the director and in further support of the plan, in July 2012, the president approved a new full-time position, [data and assessment coordinator](#), for the institutional research office. The coordinator now works closely with academic deans, department chairs, and faculty to oversee a centralized, comprehensive, and systematic assessment program that includes all academic programs and administrative/academic support units. Using the WEAVEOnline electronic documentation software, the coordinator assists with the development of multi-year archives of institutional assessment data to ensure the successful operation and maintenance of the College's assessment system – thereby enhancing its effectiveness on an on-going basis. And to ensure ongoing monitoring and success, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning will provide consulting and advising to campus deans, chairs, and faculty on issues concerning the development of outcomes related to program goals, design and implementation of assessment plans and results reports, unit/program reviews, data analysis, and use of assessment results for continuous improvement. These are assurances that the new assessment efforts will be successful by ascertaining that a full, annual, and continuous cycle of assessment activities within the academic departments will be achieved. Here, the institutional benefit of using WEAVEonline is having a central repository of related quality controlled documents in one location, enhancing the use of multiple documents in decision-making environments.

The use of WEAVEonline will also allow for departments to learn from one another – helping to create a strong culture of assessment and continuous improvement activities across campus.

And although the on-site report noted that “the new process is in its initial stages and not yet sufficiently established to guide future decision-making,” the College affirms once more that these efforts have led to the production of new and improved academic programs and course-specific assessment plans using Weave and address the concerns and issues raised by the visiting committees and the recommendation. Indeed, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee acknowledged in its report that “the College has clearly made progress” in this regard.

Documentation

- [1] [Dalton State WEAVEOnline Assessment Management System](#)
- [2] [President's Correspondence to campus re WEAVE Assessment Training](#)
- [3] [Weave Academic Affairs Training Agenda, 9-7-12](#)
- [4] [Dalton State College Assessment Plan Training \(Faculty\), 9-4-12](#)
- [5] [Office of Institutional Research & Planning, WEAVE Training Schedule](#)
- [6] [Dean's correspondence to Faculty about new assessment processes](#)
- [7] [Email Correspondence re Weave Training \(Humanities Faculty\)](#)
- [8] [Email Correspondence re Weave Training \(Math & Science Faculty\)](#)
- [9] [Email Correspondence re Weave Training \(Math, Science, and Tech. Faculty\)](#)
- [10] [Email Correspondence re Weave Training \(Social Sciences Dept.\)](#)
- [11] [Email Correspondence re Weave Training \(Social Sciences Faculty\)](#)
- [12] [Email Correspondence re Weave Training \(Social Work Faculty\)](#)
- [13] [Revised and Improved Program-Level Assessment Plan - BBA & BAS Business](#)
- [14] [Revised and Improved Program-Level Assessment Plan - BS Education](#)
- [15] [Revised and Improved Program-Level Assessment Plan - BS Biology](#)
- [16] [Revised and Improved Program-Level Assessment Plan - BS Chemistry](#)
- [17] [Revised and Improved Program-Level Assessment Plan - BS Mathematics](#)
- [18] [Revised and Improved Program-Level Assessment Plan - BS Criminal Justice](#)
- [19] [Revised and Improved Program-Level Assessment Plan - BSW Social Work](#)
- [20] [Revised and Improved Associate of Arts Transfer Program](#)
- [21] [Revised and Improved Program-Level Assessment Plan - ASN Nursing](#)
- [22] [Revised and Improved Program-Level Assessment Plan - AAS & CERT Digital Design](#)
- [23] [Revised and Improved Course-Level Assessment Plan - GEOL 1121H \(Hybrid\)](#)
- [24] [Revised and Improved Course-Level Assessment Plan - BUSA 3050](#)
- [25] [Revised and Improved Course-Level Assessment Plan - EDUC 4901](#)
- [26] [Revised and Improved Course-Level Assessment Plan - ENGL 4905](#)
- [27] [Revised and Improved Course-Level Assessment Plan - English 1101](#)
- [28] [Revised and Improved Course-Level Assessment Plan - POLS 1101](#)
- [29] [Revised and Improved Course-Level Assessment Plan - RADT 1101](#)

3.3.1.2 administrative support services

Committee Comments and Recommendation

The strategic plan serves as the starting point of unit level assessment which is documented in annual reports. The annual report template includes accomplishments, achievements, progress towards the strategic plan goals, assessment and results, and the identification of issues which will be the focus of activity in the upcoming year. The institution included six different kinds of reports and notes that the Productivity Report and Major Unit Accomplishment Reports are measures of assessment but it does not identify which outcomes are being assessed in these reports. Rather, they consist of lists of accomplishments and data which do not appear to be related to any particular outcome.

A review of reports provided indicates that administrative units are listing administrative tasks and activities as outcomes (e.g. "fill job openings," "relocate the college website," and "Implement new online payment system"). While these activities can be strategies to achieve an outcome or goal, they are not outcomes themselves. These units should consider identifying what these activities are intended to achieve and use that purpose as an outcome or goal. For example filling a job opening in the finance office could help achieve an outcome of clean audits. The assessment then takes place when the audit is received and if the outcome is not achieved by hiring staff, then the use of results could be to provide additional training for the staff or to create new policies.

The institution lists annual reports and periodic unit outcomes assessment reports as "assessment measures." While these reports might contain information about assessment, they are not in themselves assessment measures. This combined with some of the assessments listed in the various reports indicates that there is some confusion at the institution as to what constitutes an assessment measure. For example the sample Report on Institutional Effectiveness Practices from Institutional Research lists items such as appointing the IR Director as SACS Liaison as "assessments."

The fact that all outcomes seem to be met indicates that the IE system in administrative offices is not functioning in a way designed to use outcomes assessment data to make improvements. This is further evidenced by the samples included as documentation. Overall the samples show "evidence of improvement" which appears to be lists of unit accomplishments or improvements not related to outcome data.

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found the institution failed to demonstrate that it identifies outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes and uses the results of assessment to identify improvements in administrative units.

The on-site review concurs with the previous findings. However further investigation reveals the institution's administrative offices will be included in the college's new assessment efforts. A consultant has been retained to assist administrative unit heads with developing appropriate expected outcomes, assessing these outcomes, and using results to make plans for improvement. The first workshop was held in July 2012. An assessment handbook will be developed to outline responsibilities, provide instructions, and establish deadlines. Administrative personnel cited multiple examples of how data have been used to make improvements across campus. Interviews confirmed that administrators are committed to using new assessment methods and collecting data to guide decision-making.

The College has provided clear evidence that it is moving forward to strengthen assessment among administrative support units. However, it is too early in the process to determine if these new efforts will be successful.

Recommendation: The Committee recommends that the college continue its efforts to improve assessment of the effectiveness of its administrative units and the use of data to make improvements.

Dalton State Response

In response to the Off-Site Committee's recommendations of the College's Compliance Certification, Dalton State's Focused Report noted that the College has begun a campus-wide Assessment Improvement Plan to address the deficiencies noted in the assessment of administrative support services at the institution. The plan includes a complete review and revision of all administrative support services unit outcomes, with the goal that administrative directors and unit heads are able to (a) write or formulate effective administrative objectives as expected outcomes and not as lists of accomplishments or tasks, (b) identify appropriate and realistic measures/means of assessment that include both direct and indirect measures, and (c) know what components should be included in a completed administrative outcomes unit assessment plan so that the College's reports are consistent and meet SACS criteria.

To facilitate this process, the College adopted the WEAVEonline Assessment Management System [1] as a tool in July 2012, and staff in the Office of Institutional Research and Planning trained directors and staff of administrative support services units on how to set outcomes, establish appropriate measures, assess outcomes, and evaluate improvements resulting from action plans (See the Weave Training Schedule [2]). In addition, these examples of correspondence between staff of the Office of Institutional Research and staff of various administrative support services units demonstrate the fulfillment and extent of the training sessions [3] [4] [5] [6] [7]. In fact, during the September 2012 visit to the campus, the On-Site Committee reported after interviews that "further investigation reveals the institution's administrative offices will be included in the college's new [Weave] assessment efforts. [The Institutional Research Office will] assist administrative unit heads with developing appropriate expected outcomes, assessing these outcomes, and using results to make plans for improvement. Administrative personnel cited multiple examples of how data have been used to make improvements across campus. Interviews confirmed that administrators are committed to using new assessment methods and collecting data to guide decision-making. The College has provided clear evidence that it is moving forward to strengthen assessment among administrative support units."

The training sessions which occurred in the summer [8] [9] [10] and fall of 2012 [2] resulted in the production of new and improved assessment plans using Weave by all administrative support services departments [11] [12] [13] [14] [15] [16]. Because of the built-in assessment processes in Weave, these plans satisfy SACS criteria and address issues raised in the recommendation such as the identification of specific outcomes being assessed, avoidance of listing accomplishments as outcomes, use of valid assessment measures, collection of data related to these measures, and analysis of outcomes assessment data to make improvements. Administrative unit heads will begin implementing this new assessment plan using Weave in their annual reports submitted to the president and the director of institutional research in 2013.

In response to the On-Site Committee's concern as to whether this new campus-wide assessment effort will be successful, the College affirms that the plan is fully endorsed by the institution's president and key leadership. The president has given the responsibility for ensuring the success of the new process to the director of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, who is also responsible for the institution's

assessment activities. And in further support of the plan, in July 2012, the president approved a new full-time position, [data and assessment coordinator](#), for the institutional research office. The coordinator now works closely with academic deans, department chairs, and directors of administrative departments to oversee a centralized, comprehensive, and systematic assessment program that includes all academic programs and administrative/academic support units. Using the WEAVEOnline electronic documentation software, the coordinator assists with the development of multi-year archives of institutional assessment data to ensure the successful operation and maintenance of the College's assessment system – thereby enhancing its effectiveness on an on-going basis. And to ensure ongoing monitoring and success, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning will provide consulting and advising to campus deans, chairs, faculty, and administrative directors on issues concerning the design and implementation of assessment plans and results reports, unit/program reviews, data analyses, and developing outcomes related to program improvements and goals. The office has also begun revising its assessment handbook to outline responsibilities, provide instructions, and establish deadlines. These are assurances that the new assessment efforts will be successful.

Documentation

- [1] [Dalton State WEAVEOnline Assessment Management System](#)
- [2] [Office of Institutional Research & Planning, WEAVE Training Schedule](#)
- [3] [Email Correspondence re Weave Training \(Fiscal Affairs\)](#)
- [4] [Email Correspondence re Weave Training \(Human Resources\)](#)
- [5] [Email Correspondence re Weave Training \(Institutional Advancement\)](#)
- [6] [Email Correspondence re Weave Training \(Plant Operations\)](#)
- [7] [Email Correspondence re Weave Training \(Purchasing\)](#)
- [8] [Administrator Attendees to Weave Workshop, July 19, 2012, 9am – 3 pm](#)
- [9] [Administrative Staff Weave Training Agenda, 7-19-12](#)
- [10] [Dalton State College Assessment Plan Training \(Staff\), 7-19-12, Final](#)
- [11] [New Outcomes Assessment Plan - Institutional Research and Planning](#)
- [12] [New Outcomes Assessment Plan - Institutional Advancement](#)
- [13] [New Outcomes Assessment Plan - Marketing & Communications](#)
- [14] [New Outcomes Assessment Plan - Business Services](#)
- [15] [New Outcomes Assessment Plan - Human Resources](#)
- [16] [New Outcomes Assessment Plan - Public Safety](#)

3.3.1.3 academic and student support services

Committee Comments and Recommendation

The strategic plan serves as the starting point of unit level assessment which is documented in annual reports. The annual report template includes accomplishments, achievements, progress towards the strategic plan goals, assessment and results, and the identification of issues which will be the focus of activity in the upcoming year. The institution included six different kinds of reports and notes that the Productivity Report and Major Unit Accomplishment Reports are measures of assessment but it does not identify which outcomes are being assessed in these reports. Rather, they consist of lists of accomplishments and data which do not appear to be related to any particular outcome.

The sample reports provide evidence that the institution is identifying outcomes in the area of academic and student support services and that they are assessing the extent to which these outcomes are achieved. The fact that most outcomes seem to be met indicates that the IE system in administrative offices is not functioning in a way designed to use outcomes assessment data to make improvements. This is further evidenced by the samples included as documentation. Overall the samples show "evidence of improvement" which appears to be lists of unit accomplishments or improvements not related to outcome data. For example, the testing center identified one outcome as not met, yet no improvements were suggested to address it. Overall assessment and use of the results was inconsistent. Some documentation showed that outcomes were written but not the results of those desired outcomes nor how they would impact future services/events. However, the library did respond to deficiencies in resources and services as indicated in surveys by purchasing needed materials in both book and electronic formats; new audio visual materials compatible with instructional equipment; and providing additional study spaces.

The Focused Report acknowledges that overall assessment and use of results has been inconsistent in academic and student support services units. The on-site review found these units will participate in the campus-wide Assessment Improvement Plan. Interviews with academic and student support services personnel confirmed that department heads are committed to participating in the college's new assessment efforts. Several support personnel have already been trained in the use of the WEAVE online system. They will collect and manage data to guide decision-making about how to improve support services for students. However, it is too early in the process to determine if these new efforts will be successful.

Recommendation: The Committee recommends that the college continue its efforts to improve assessment of the effectiveness of its Academic and Student Support Services and demonstrate the use of data to make improvements.

Dalton State Response

As noted in Dalton State's Focused Report in response to the Off-Site Committee's recommendations of the College's Compliance Certification Report, the College has begun a campus-wide Assessment Improvement Plan to address the deficiencies noted in the assessment of academic and student support services. The plan includes a complete review and revision of all academic and student support services unit outcomes, with the goal that administrative directors and unit heads are able to (a) write or formulate effective administrative objectives as expected outcomes and not as lists of accomplishments or tasks, (b) identify appropriate and realistic measures/means of assessment that include both direct and indirect

measures, and (c) know what components should be included in a completed administrative outcomes unit assessment plan so that the College's reports are consistent and meet SACS criteria.

To facilitate this process, the College adopted the WEAVEonline Assessment Management System [1] as a tool in July 2012, and staff in the Office of Institutional Research and Planning trained directors and staff of academic and student services units on how to set outcomes, establish appropriate measures, assess outcomes, and evaluate improvements resulting from action plans (See the Weave Training Schedule [2]). In addition, these examples of correspondence between staff of the Office of Institutional Research and staff of various academic and student services units demonstrate the fulfillment and extent of the training sessions [3], [4], [5]. Indeed, during the September 2012 visit to the campus, the On-Site Committee reported after interviews that "academic and student support services personnel confirmed that department heads are committed to participating in the College's new assessment efforts [and] several support personnel have already been trained in the use of the WEAVE online system. They will collect and manage data to guide decision-making about how to improve support services for students. The on-site review found these units will participate in the campus-wide Assessment Improvement Plan."

As a result of these training sessions which occurred in the summer [6], [7], [8] and fall of 2012 [2], all academic and student support services units have produced new and improved assessment plans using Weave. These plans satisfy SACS criteria and address issues raised in the recommendation such as the development of outcomes that specifically relate to the goals of each unit, the development of measures to assess each outcome, the collection of data related to these outcomes (thereby eliminating the listing of accomplishments as outcomes), the use of outcomes data to make improvements, and the consistency in overall assessment reporting. Some examples of the revised assessment plans are provided here as illustration [9], [10], [11], [12] [13], [14], [15], [16], [17]. At the end of the spring semester 2013, unit directors will report on meeting targets and develop improvement plans.

In response to the On-Site Committee's concern as to whether this new campus-wide assessment effort will be successful, the College affirms that the plan is fully endorsed by the institution's president and key leadership. The president has given the responsibility for ensuring the success of the new process to the director of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, who is also responsible for the institution's assessment activities. And in further support of the plan, in July 2012, the president approved a new position, [data and assessment coordinator](#), for the institutional research office. The coordinator now works closely with academic deans, department chairs, and directors of administrative departments to oversee a centralized, comprehensive, and systematic assessment program that includes all academic programs and administrative/academic support units. Using the WEAVEOnline electronic documentation software, the coordinator assists with the development of multi-year archives of institutional assessment data to ensure the successful operation and maintenance of the College's assessment system – thereby enhancing its effectiveness on an on-going basis. And to ensure ongoing monitoring and success, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning will provide consulting and advising to campus deans, chairs, faculty, and administrative directors on issues concerning the design and implementation of assessment plans and results reports, unit/program reviews, data analyses, and developing outcomes related to program improvements. These are assurances that the new assessment efforts will be successful.

Documentation

[1] [Dalton State WEAVEOnline Assessment Management System](#)

[2] [Office of Institutional Research, WEAVE Training Schedule](#)

[3] [Email Correspondence re Weave Training \(Enrollment Services\)](#)

[4] [Email Correspondence re Weave Training \(Academic Resources\)](#)

- [\[5\] Email Correspondence re Weave Training \(Residential Life\)](#)
- [\[6\] Administrator Attendees to Weave Workshop, July 19, 2012, 9am – 3 pm](#)
- [\[7\] Administrative Staff Weave Training Agenda, 7-19-12](#)
- [\[8\] Dalton State College Assessment Plan Training \(Staff\), 7-19-12, Final](#)
- [\[9\] New Outcomes Assessment Plan - Admissions](#)
- [\[10\] New Outcomes Assessment Plan - First Year Experience Program](#)
- [\[11\] New Outcomes Assessment Plan - Library](#)
- [\[12\] New Outcomes Assessment Plan - Public Safety](#)
- [\[13\] New Outcomes Assessment Plan - Counseling and Career Services](#)
- [\[14\] New Outcomes Assessment Plan - Disability Support Services](#)
- [\[15\] New Outcomes Assessment Plan - Student Activity Council](#)
- [\[16\] New Outcomes Assessment Plan - Student Conduct](#)
- [\[17\] New Outcomes Assessment Plan - Tutoring](#)

3.3.1.5 community/public service within its mission, if appropriate

Committee Comments and Recommendation

The institution offers many public and community service programs. The sample reports provide evidence that the institution is identifying outcomes in the area of community and public services and that they are assessing the extent to which these outcomes are achieved. The fact that most outcomes seem to be met indicates that the IE system in community and public services is not functioning in a way designed to use outcomes assessment data to make improvements. For example, only one outcome was identified as not met, yet no improvements were suggested to address it. Most reports are missing a "evidence of improvement" section. The few improvements listed do not in any way related to outcome data. Rather these appear to be lists of unit accomplishments.

The on-site review revealed the college plans to restructure the way it assesses community/public service programs by treating four broad areas as goals and clearly defining and assessing outcomes. As part of the Assessment Improvement Plan, the assessment of community/public service programs and activities will be assigned to the Office of Institutional Research and Planning. These new assessment processes will be managed through the new WEAVEonline Assessment Management System. The Focused Report does not make clear exactly who will review these data or report how they will be used to improve community/public service activities. While interviews with college personnel confirm that the college is fully aware of deficiencies in its assessment of community/public service activities, and is committed to implementing clear steps to correct these deficiencies, these steps have not yet been sufficiently implemented to confirm that community/public service outcomes have been established and assessed.

Recommendation: The Committee recommends that the college collect data to document the effectiveness of its community/public service activities and demonstrate the use of data for improvement.

Dalton State Response

In order to manage the myriad of community/public service programs and report meaningfully on their assessment in compliance with SACS standards and in response to the recommendation, the College decided that the Office of Institutional Research and Planning would coordinate and report on community/public service programs for the institution using the WEAVEonline Assessment Management System [1]. As a starting point, a new structure has been put in place that will assess community/public service programs in four broad goal areas with clearly defined assessment outcomes which are not necessarily unit accomplishments. This new assessment plan [2] will be managed by the director of Institutional Research and Planning through Weave.

To implement the new public/community service assessment activities, the director of institutional research, who also is responsible for the College's assessment efforts, met with all faculty/staff assigned with public and community service program responsibilities. The purpose of these meetings was to share and discuss the College's new assessment plan for public and community service programs and to develop ways to gather the required information on a regular basis for assessment reporting. It was decided that responsible units, such as Office of Student Life and each of the academic schools, will send all data to the Office of Institutional Research where their individual assessments and data will be reviewed by the director of institutional research and planning and appropriately reported using the WEAVEonline Assessment Management System. Using the data supplied to his office, the director of

institutional research will then address and report on college-wide targets and provide evidence of improvement or action plans when targets have not been met. As previously noted, having a college-wide plan is important because of the decentralized nature of campus community/public service activities and the need to coordinate, track, and report all community and public service programs and activities on a regular basis.

Reported data will include noted improvements to community/public service programs. The WEAVE assessment system facilitates this approach and addresses the focus of the recommendation – ensuring that besides evidence of improvement, all noted improvements will be related to outcome data and to specific outcomes. Use of Weave with its focus on outcomes-based improvements will eliminate the listing of unit accomplishments as outcomes which was noted as a deficiency in Dalton State’s Compliance Report. Furthermore, the implemented assessment report will present clearly defined outcomes and measures that demonstrate how community/public service outcomes relate to the College’s mission; an established achievement target for each measure to assess the extent to which the outcome has been achieved; and when targets are not met, an action plan to improve the results in the next cycle.

To give some time to fully address the deficiencies identified by the review committees as well as to gather all necessary data for assessment reporting, the new structure to assess community/public service activities will be implemented beginning with the 2013-2014 annual report cycle. Data and information collected prior to this cycle (e.g., Spring 2013) will be included in the data analysis and findings for 2013-2014. For example, deans and chairs set school goals and targets related to community/public activities and report on findings in their annual reports submitted to the College president and the director of institutional research and planning [3]. As well, using the WEAVE assessment system, specialized units with unique public service activities, such as the Bandy Heritage Center, will report on their own public service assessment in fulfillment of the College’s mission [4].

Documentation

[1] [Dalton State WEAVE Online Assessment Management System](#)

[2] [Dalton State new community/public service assessment plan using the Weave](#)

[3] [School of Liberal Arts Annual Report, re Example Report on Faculty Public Outreach](#)

[4] [Bandy Heritage Center Community Service Assessment Plan using the WEAVE Online Assessment Management System](#)

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them. (General education competencies)

Committee Comments and Recommendation

College-level general education competencies have been identified and approved as shown in the institution's Academic Council Minutes and as directed by the system-wide *Academic Affairs Handbook*. The Council on General Education approved the current outcomes on April 15, 2011. The major areas include: Communications, Problem Solving and Analysis, and Critical Thinking and Integrated Learning. A variety of more specific student learning outcomes are associated with specific courses which help fulfill the institution's Core Curriculum requirement, which also involves the new system-wide critical thinking, global perspectives, and U.S. perspectives learning outcomes. The institution has established a system by which to assess the extent to which students have attained these general education competencies by gathering three basic kinds of information: (1) requiring the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) as a mandatory exit exam for all graduates; (2) using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and a locally-developed exit survey to gather affective responses; and (3) developing a variety of different course assessments conducted in general education courses by faculty teaching these courses. The nationally recognized CAAP and NSSE do allow for some broad comparisons with national norms so that the institution can set benchmarks of the national average as the criteria for successfully meeting their stated standards. However, every standard cannot adequately be assessed by these two instruments alone. For instance, a review of the General Education Competencies chart indicates that several of the communication competencies, the computer literacy competencies, the understanding of major forces and events, influences and ideas that have shaped history and society, as well as the articulation of perspectives and values of diverse cultural groups - among others - are not directly assessed by these instruments. Instead, the source of information is often cited as Individual Course Student Learning Outcomes Results. A few examples are included in the institution's documentation. However, many of these reports (such as the ones for CHEM 1211, GEOL 1122, or different reports for COMM 1110 and ENGL 1101, etc.) indicate that the assessments conducted are the actual assignments in the class graded by the same instructor who taught the assignment, so, to some extent, the instructor is rating himself/herself. Often, one of the benchmarks is simply the percentage of students passing the class. What is the actual benchmark for student learning, and how does passing or not passing help target it? Also, the only assessment result given in some cases is simply number - the number of students who met the goal. There is no further breakdown of scores, nothing more detailed than just a simple percentage. This is not usually enough analysis to help determine where strengths or weaknesses reside or to justify substantive change. Likewise, it does not appear that all assessments have yet been initiated for all learning outcomes. It is difficult to determine how the existing measures really benchmark a particular learning outcome or whether these measures actually demonstrate competence. Without clearer and more developed justifications of what constitutes actual competence, as well as more robust assessments of the targeted courses, it cannot be determined whether the institution does, or does not, adequately assess the extent to which students have actually attained all of the stated competencies.

Based on the Committee's review and personal interviews, the College has adequately demonstrated the identification of college-level general education competencies. Further, Dalton State College utilizes CAAP and NSSE to allow for some "broad comparisons with national norms so that the institution can set benchmarks of the national average as the criteria for successfully meeting their

standards." Additionally, Dalton State has recently implemented a strong plan to incorporate general education competencies and their associated assessments into WEAVEonline Assessment Management System. However, this has yet to be fully implemented.

Recommendation: The Committee recommends that the institution fully implement the assessment of general education competencies and report the extent to which students have attained them.

Dalton State Response

Dalton State College has approved college-level general education competencies [1], the most current approved by the Council on General Education of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia on April 15, 2011 [2], and the On-Site Review committee noted that "the College has adequately demonstrated the identification of college-level general education competencies."

As noted in the previous responses on assessment, the College has initiated a campus-wide Assessment Improvement Plan to address the deficiencies noted by the review committees in the assessment of educational, administrative support services, academic/student support services, and community/public services at Dalton State using the recently adopted WEAVEonline Assessment Management System [3]. This plan includes a review of and revised procedures for assessing general education competencies [4]. After reviewing the plan, the On-Site Review committee noted that "Dalton State has recently implemented a strong plan to incorporate general education competencies and their associated assessments into WEAVEonline Assessment Management System."

To respond further to the recommendation and provide assurance that this new general education assessment plan will be fully implemented, the College affirms that since the off-site visit, the director of institutional research has worked closely with the deans/chairs of the departments of Social Sciences, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Technology and Mathematics to develop a robust method of assessment built into Weave that will assess all of the College's general education competencies, especially those that cannot be measured by either CAAP or NSSE. (See, for example, the email correspondence between the director of institutional research and the dean of the School of Sciences, Technology, and Mathematics [5]). To address a concern of the committee as well as the recommendation, this new method of assessment avoids the use of students' passing the class and end-of-course grades as the sole methods and measures of general education outcomes. During additional training sessions with faculty [6], the Office of Institutional Research and Planning emphasized that final course grades could not be used as assessment measures for individual student learning outcomes. Particularly, the training [7], [8], [9] and further instructions to faculty [10] clearly emphasized to faculty the need to set clear and specific targets for student learning outcomes, to breakdown scores on individual tests and activities to aid analysis of specific competencies, to incorporate greater use of rubrics or detailed grading criteria, and to link the use of assessment results back to specific course student learning outcomes. These new levels of specificity will address the Off-Site Committee's observation that faculty used test scores to assess competencies without explaining how the test specifically addressed a specific student learning outcome. Detailed, precise, and specific assessment measures are important since general education courses play a major role in assessing general education outcomes. The College will continue using NSSE and CAAP, though only for those general education competencies that specifically relate to the NSSE and CAAP test scores. The nationally recognized CAAP and NSSE will allow the College to make some broad comparisons and to set benchmarks for student learning directly related to national averages.

To further show that this new process will be implemented, faculty will report assessment results of general education competencies in Weave beginning in Spring 2013. In fact, faculty have already loaded

their course-level assessment plans in Weave as these two general education courses demonstrate [11], [12]. Department chairs and deans will review individual course-level assessments for specificity, adequacy of analysis, and use of assessment results. The dean of Liberal Arts and the dean of Sciences, Technology, and Mathematics will then report on general education assessment in their 2013 annual reports, which are submitted to the president and to the director of institutional research. All reporting will be done using Weave and will follow the new assessment plan put in place. Reports will include analysis of strengths and weaknesses and appropriate improvement plans. To ensure further implementation, the data and assessment coordinator in the institutional research office will regularly monitor in Weave all assessment reports completed and notify unit heads to complete assessment reports that are due. This plan and the associated changes and revisions to the assessment of general education outcomes will adequately assess the extent to which students have attained all of the stated competencies and will comply with SACS standards.

Documentation

[1] [General Education Outcomes \(Revised July 30, 2010\)](#)

[2] [Board of Regents Approval of General Education Outcomes \(April 15, 2011\)](#)

[3] [Dalton State WEAVEonline Assessment Management System](#)

[4] [Revised and Improved General Education Assessment Plan using Weave](#)

[5] [IR Office Correspondence with Dean of Math, Science & Technology re General Education Outcomes Assessment Outcome in Weave](#)

[6] [Office of Institutional Research & Planning, WEAVE Training Schedule](#)

[7] [Faculty Attendees to Workshop, September 7, 2012, 9am – 4 pm](#)

[8] [Weave Academic Affairs Training Agenda - 9-7-12](#)

[9] [Dalton State College Assessment Plan Training \(Faculty\), 9-4-12, Final](#)

[10] [Dean's correspondence to Liberal Arts Faculty about Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Reports](#)

[11] [Revised and Improved Course-Level Assessment Plan - English 1101](#)

[12] [Revised and Improved Course-Level Assessment Plan - POLS 1101](#)

3.7.2 The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status. (Faculty evaluation)

Committee Comments and Recommendation

The compliance report, the college's *Faculty Evaluation Process Manual of Procedure*, and an example of a departmental handbook for faculty evaluation, demonstrate that the college has policies in place to evaluate the effectiveness of each full-time faculty member in accord with published criteria. However, no examples of completed evaluations are provided and are necessary to show implementation of the described policies. Additionally, what is not clear and needs to be made so is whether part-time instructors are evaluated. Section 2.3.2 of the *Manual of Procedure* states that they are; however, no statement or evidence are offered in the compliance report. The standard notes evaluation of all faculty members must take place regardless of contractual status.

Further review on-site found the College evaluates full-time faculty members each spring as stipulated in the *Faculty Evaluation Process Manual of Procedure*. Examples of completed faculty evaluations of full-time faculty members from the Department of Social Sciences and the Department of Humanities were reviewed and interviews were conducted with the chairs of these departments. However, part-time faculty members, prior to the fall of 2012, have been evaluated primarily with the use of student evaluations (the same student evaluation instruments and procedures that are used with the full-time faculty). At the end of each semester, deans and/or department chairs reviewed the results of the student evaluations of faculty--including the students' comments on faculty effectiveness--shared the results with the faculty, and discussed problems if issues were discovered. The College also utilized grade distributions, course syllabi, assessment materials, and standard professional responsibilities (e.g., being punctual, checking class rolls, keeping records of student attendance, and submitting midterm grades). However, Dalton State College, as noted in their Focused Report, acknowledged that a more formal process of evaluating part-time faculty members was warranted.

As a result, the Academic Leadership Team (June 2012 meeting minutes), implemented a more formalized evaluation process for part-time faculty. Effective for the fall 2012 term, deans, chairs, or their designees must complete a minimum of four or more of the following activities and provide feedback to faculty members at least once a year:

- Review of student evaluations of instructor/course
- Direct in-class observation of instruction
- Review of course syllabus
- Review of grade distributions and DWF rates
- Review of instructional materials
- Assessment of professional responsibilities

The College has acknowledged in their Focused Report that a more robust method of evaluation (multiple assessment measures) of part-time faculty will be fully implemented in the fall semester of 2012. (The institution piloted the new procedure in the summer of 2012 and evaluated five part-time faculty members using the more formal process.) However, the institution has not had time to fully implement the new process which is described in the *Dalton State Policy and Procedures Manual*.

The process and plan to evaluate part-time faculty appears to be appropriate; however, it has not yet been fully implemented.

Recommendation: The Committee recommends that the institution demonstrate that it regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with the institution's new published criteria.

Dalton State Response

As per its [Faculty Evaluation Process Manual of Procedure](#) and Section 2.4 of the institution's [Policy and Procedures Manual](#), Dalton State has a policy to evaluate the effectiveness of each faculty member on a regular basis. Indeed, in its Focus Report, the College provided examples of completed evaluations of full-time faculty in accordance with published criteria. The examples are provided here again to demonstrate implementation of the evaluation of full-time faculty [1] [2] [3] [4] [5].

Concerning the evaluation of part-time faculty, which was the focus of this recommendation, the College's Academic Leadership Team developed and implemented a more formalized evaluation process for part-time faculty (minutes of the meetings of June 4, 2012 and October 29, 2012 [6] [7]). Effective with the fall 2012 term, deans, chairs, or their designees must complete a minimum of four or more of the following activities and provide feedback to part-time faculty members at least once a year:

- Review of student evaluations of instructor/course
- Direct in-class observation of instruction
- Review of course syllabus
- Review of grade distributions and DWF rates
- Review of instructional materials
- Assessment of professional responsibilities

To account for a more robust method of evaluation (multiple assessment measures) of part-time faculty, a section on "Evaluation of Part-time Faculty" was prepared [8] and added to the College's [Policy and Procedures Manual](#), Section 2.4.2. With this policy and associated documents [9] [10], the College ceased the use of student evaluations as the primary method of evaluating part-time faculty. Deans and department chairs announced the new policy and implementation to part-time faculty as this "Memo to Part-Time Faculty about Annual Evaluation" shows [11]. And as these examples from each of the College's five schools demonstrate, the College fully implemented the more formalized part-time evaluation policy during fall semester 2012 [12], [13], [14], [15], [16], [17], [18], [19], [20], [21], [22], [23], [24], [25]. Henceforth, each part-time faculty member will be evaluated regularly in accord with published criteria.

Documentation

[1] [Example of Completed Full-Time Faculty Evaluation – School of Natural Sciences & Mathematics](#)

[2] [Example of Completed Full-Time Faculty Evaluation – School of Business](#)

[3] [Example of Completed Full-Time Faculty Evaluation – Department of Social Sciences](#)

[4] [Example of Completed Full-Time Faculty Evaluation – Department of Nursing](#)

[5] [Example of Completed Full-Time Faculty Evaluation – Department of Humanities](#)

[6] [Academic Leadership Team Meeting Minutes for June 4th, 2012](#)

[7] [Academic Leadership Team Meeting Minutes for October 29, 2012](#)

[8] [Evaluation of Part-time Faculty \(added to 2.4 of the Policy and Procedures Manual\)](#)

- [\[9\] Part-time Faculty Classroom Observation Report Form](#)
- [\[10\] Standard Faculty Responsibilities - Part-time Faculty Evaluation, 2012](#)
- [\[11\] Memo to Part-time Faculty about Annual Evaluation, Department of Humanities, Sept. 26, 2012](#)
- [\[12\] Example of Completed Part-Time Faculty Evaluation 1 \(School of Business\) - Fall 2012](#)
- [\[13\] Example of Completed Part-Time Faculty Evaluation 2 \(School of Business\) - Fall 2012](#)
- [\[14\] Example of Completed Part-Time Faculty Evaluation 3 \(School of Business\) - Fall 2012](#)
- [\[15\] Example of Completed Part-Time Faculty Evaluation 1 \(School of Education\) - Fall 2012](#)
- [\[16\] Example of Completed Part-Time Faculty Evaluation 2 \(School of Education\) - Fall 2012](#)
- [\[17\] Example of Completed Part-Time Faculty Evaluation \(School of Health Professions\) - Fall 2012](#)
- [\[18\] Example of Completed Part-Time Faculty Evaluation 1 \(Department of Humanities\) - Fall 2012](#)
- [\[19\] Example of Completed Part-Time Faculty Evaluation 2 \(Department of Humanities\) - Fall 2012](#)
- [\[20\] Example of Completed Part-Time Faculty Evaluation 3 \(Department of Humanities\) - Fall 2012](#)
- [\[21\] Example of Completed Part-Time Faculty Evaluation 1 \(Department of Social Work\) - Fall 2012](#)
- [\[22\] Example of Completed Part-Time Faculty Evaluation 2 \(Department of Social Work\) - Fall 2012](#)
- [\[23\] Example of Completed Part-Time Faculty Evaluation 1 \(Department of Technology & Mathematics\) - Fall 2012](#)
- [\[24\] Example of Completed Part-Time Faculty Evaluation 2 \(Department of Technology & Mathematics\) - Fall 2012](#)
- [\[25\] Example of Completed Part-Time Faculty Evaluation \(Department of Allied Health\) - Fall 2012](#)