



Year One Fall 2015 Self-Evaluation Report



# Year-One

## Fall 2015 Self-Evaluation Report

Salt Lake Community College

Salt Lake City, Utah

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*Prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities*



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# Institutional Overview

Salt Lake Community College (“SLCC” or “College”) is a student-focused, comprehensive, urban college meeting the diverse needs of the Salt Lake County community. SLCC is one of eight institutions in the Utah System of Higher Education and is the largest supplier of transfer students to Utah’s four-year institutions. SLCC is home to more than 60,000 (credit and noncredit) students each year with an annualized FTE enrollment of over 17,000.

In recent years, Community College Week has consistently ranked SLCC in the top 10 nationally for total associate degrees awarded. The College offers over 120 programs of study and confers associate of arts (AA), associate of science (AS), associate of applied science (AAS), and associate of pre-engineering (APE) degrees as well as certificates of completion and proficiency.

The College is Utah’s leading provider of workforce development programs and is the sole public provider of applied technology courses in the Salt Lake County area. With *access* as a cornerstone of the College’s mission, SLCC has ten locations, an eCampus, and multiple continuing education sites located throughout Salt Lake County.

SLCC is the most diverse public institution of higher education in Utah. A snapshot of credit students shows the following demographics: 49% male, 51% female; 20% minorities; 74% enrolled part-time; median age of 24; approximately 1/3 career and technical education (“CTE”) majors and 2/3 transfer students.

High quality instruction and support services for students are paramount at the College, which maintains an average class size of twenty. At SLCC, over 340 full-time faculty members develop programs and curriculum, and provide 40% of the direct instruction for students. SLCC has an appropriated operating budget of close to \$130 million dollars and employs over 800 full-time staff and administrators.

Through reciprocal partnerships with community groups, business and industry, K-16 education providers, and government agencies, SLCC is an integral part of the community it serves. As the only open-access, comprehensive community college in Utah, SLCC is committed to sustaining its mission and role in the state. For six decades SLCC has been the place for students to take their first steps into higher education and for Utah adults to take next steps to advance their careers and improve their lives. *Step Ahead* is not merely a tagline; it is precisely what the College enables students to achieve.

# Preface

## Institutional Changes Since the Fall 2014 Year Seven Self Evaluation Report

Salt Lake Community College has actively improved its operations since the Fall 2014 Year Seven Report. This section will provide a brief overview of the following areas: (1) new President and Executive Cabinet, (2) new strategic planning cycle, (3) enrollment, (4) site and facility changes, and (5) new major grants.

### New President and Executive Cabinet

Dr. Deneece G. Huftalin was named the eight president of Salt Lake Community College in September 2014. Dr. Huftalin was serving as interim president at the time of her appointment and previously was the vice president of student services. Her appointment created a vacancy which has since been filled. In addition to new student affairs leadership, a new provost of academic affairs was appointed filling a vacancy created through retirement. President Huftalin has also added two new positions to her Executive Cabinet: vice president of institutional effectiveness, and special assistant to the president. The new division of institutional effectiveness is responsible for strategic planning, educational initiatives, professional development, institutional research and reporting, assessment, and accreditation.<sup>1</sup> The special assistant to the president is championing the College's inclusivity efforts and oversees the president's leadership institute.

Considering these changes the Executive Cabinet currently includes the following: Dr. Deneece Huftalin, President; Dr. Clifton Sanders, Provost of Academic Affairs; Dr. Chuck Lepper, Vice President of Student Affairs; Dennis Klaus, Vice President of Business Services; Alison McFarlane, Vice President of Institutional Advancement; Tim Sheehan, Vice President of Government and Community Relations; Barbara Grover, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness; and Dr. Roderic Land, Special Assistant to the President.<sup>2</sup>

### New Strategic Planning Cycle

In Spring 2015, President Huftalin announced the beginning of a year-long strategic planning cycle. Led by the president and organized by the Institutional Effectiveness Council, the College is developing a new strategic plan. The prior plan expired in 2015; the new plan will lead the College through 2020.<sup>3</sup> The planning process and its impact on the institutional mission statement, core themes, and mission fulfillment framework is described at length in the body of this year one report.

### Enrollment

After several years of enrollment decline, the Fall 2015 enrollments have stabilized. As of the submission of this report, the College had an FTE of 15,909 and was projecting a final FTE number 0.2% above the previous year. While Utah's economy is one of the best performing in the nation, economic success can have a somewhat adverse effect on enrollments. This stabilization inspires morale, and gives confidence and direction for the future.

### Site and Facility Changes

The College recently opened a center in the most diverse and populated region of Salt Lake County. The West Valley Center opened its doors this semester (Fall 2015) for the first time. The center was developed and launched to improve college access in an underserved population. Initial reports indicate the strategy is working as the center has nearly double the percentage of new students as the institutional average.

### Major Grants

The College has received many new grants in the past year, this report will highlight only two. The first is a grant to improve affordability and the second to develop innovative educational delivery methods.

The College received a \$200,000 grant from the Gates Foundation in partnership with OpenStax to develop and pilot open courseware (i.e., courseware that is openly licensed and free to students).<sup>4</sup> The College has made open educational resources a key component of its affordability strategy with the goal of having 15%-20% of its general education courses delivered using open educational resources by 2017. In an era where college costs keep climbing, the educational resources is a one area where SLCC can lower student costs.

The Federal Department of Education granted SLCC an experimental site waiver for financial aid. This allows SLCC to award financial aid without the bounds of the current clock-hour regulations which force students to sit for the entire length of a program. This, in conjunction with \$2.3 million TAA grant from the Department of Labor will provide resources to the SLC School of Applied Technology to develop a competency based education (“CBE”) model. This grant is funding the development of twenty competency-based programs with accompanying articulations to credit programs. This project has positioned SLCC as a leader in innovative educational models. SLCC has been and is currently participating in numerous national panels advising community college’s thinking of moving to a CBE model. SLCC is also one of 30 participants in the Competency Based Education Network, C-BEN, funded by the Lumina Foundation, a national consortium of colleges and universities developing competency-based models.

The College is thriving: new leadership has provided new energy and moral is high; enrollments have stabilized; and new facilities and grants have focused efforts in innovative and meaningful ways. The outlook is bright.

## Response to Topics Requested by the Commission

SLCC received two recommendations from the Commission following its 2014 Year Seven Comprehensive Self Evaluation. The College has been asked to only respond to recommendation 1 in this report with the other to be addressed in the Fall 2017 mid-cycle evaluation report.

### Recommendation 1

The evaluation committee recommends that Salt Lake Community College complete its work to establish assessable and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of each of the objectives of its core themes. (Standard 1.B.2).

NWCCU noted in a January 28, 2015 letter to SLCC that regarding recommendation 1, this is an area in which the institution is substantially in compliance with Standard 1.B. but in need of improvement. In this letter, the Commission asked that SLCC expand its Fall 2015 Year One Report to address this recommendation. This section provides an overview of the work done to date in addressing this recommendation.

The SLCC Fall 2014 Year Seven Comprehensive Self-Evaluation described an intricate system of core theme indicators of achievement. The institution had identified thirty potential indicators (twenty-five core theme indicators and five overall institutional indicators) across a three-part mission fulfillment framework. As the College worked to address the Northwest recommendation, leadership determined that the core theme and mission fulfillment evaluation process was too complex to be effective. The proposed framework had too many indicators and would take too long to meaningfully develop. The College needed a more succinct and focused way to express its mission and to measure core theme achievement and mission fulfillment.

The Commission's recommendation came at a fortuitous time. With a new president, four new members of the Executive Cabinet, and a new strategic planning cycle, the timing with a year one report and the work on recommendation 1 aligned to ongoing institutional work. The College's planning council, known as the Institutional Effectiveness Council ("IEC"), created a framework for integrated planning<sup>5</sup> which included a college-wide participatory process to revise the mission statement, the mission fulfillment framework, and the core theme objectives and indicators. The College has been earnestly evaluating its mission and core themes, revising them where appropriate to better guide institutional efforts.

Because the strategic planning cycle continues through the Fall 2015 semester, the contents of this year one report, including the revised core theme objectives and indicators, are preliminary and thus still in draft form. The College is thoughtfully revising its mission statement, vision statement, and values; and the work to address recommendation 1 is part of this holistic process. Addressing recommendation 1 as part of a larger planning process ensures that the new core theme objectives and indicators optimally align with the College's new strategic direction. While this work is nearly completed and is substantively presented in this report, it cannot be presented as final until the process concludes later this year.

At the conclusion of the strategic planning process the College will have revised its mission statement, created institutional values, re-established its core themes, and prioritized core theme objectives and indicators. While still preliminary, it is anticipated that the new mission statement will clearly align with the paired down core themes and objectives, and indicators.

To demonstrate progress in addressing recommendation 1, this report describes the draft revisions to the mission, mission fulfillment, core themes, and core theme indicators of achievement. The completed indicators of achievement are described in the body of this year one report. Appendix B provides a chart outlining the core themes, objectives, indicators, mission fulfillment baselines, and institutional goals for each area. Further updates regarding planning outcomes will be provided in subsequent reports.

Recommendation 1 is being addressed in two ways: (1) combining core theme objectives to prioritize and focus the institution on the most important areas and (2) critically examining the community engagement core theme. Through these two lines of work the College is establishing assessable and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of each of the objectives of its core themes.

#### (1) Combining Core Theme Objectives

The core theme objectives and indicators in the year seven report had considerable conceptual and practical overlap. Many objectives were describing a similar aspect of the mission. For example, clear articulation and integrated general education (two separate objectives) are just parts of a larger transfer objective of providing a “foundation for success in continued studies” (see transfer education section of the chart below). The IEC focused on identifying the primary objectives for institutional outcomes. The remaining objectives were subsumed under these primary objectives. A set performance indicators were identified that meaningfully captured the essential outcomes of each primary objective. The data and reporting developed for the subsumed objectives is still part of a larger reporting framework to guide institutional work on the primary objectives (see Appendix B). The resulting set of core themes objectives and indicators is simpler and more focused. Descriptions of indicators and their rationale are provided in the core themes (1.B) section of this year one report.

#### (2) Critically Examining the Community Engagement Core Theme

The community engagement core theme is being transitioned from a core theme to an institutional value. After many years of institutional effort, the College determined that developing “meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement” under its community engagement core theme was unrealistic given constraints on institutional resources. This conclusion led to a larger institutional conversation regarding how community engagement is perhaps better expressed as an as an institutional value rather than a core theme. In Spring 2015, President Huftalin hosted a college-wide conversation regarding community engagement to discuss how it may be recast.<sup>6</sup> Subsequent work by college councils and executive leadership have led to the collective decision to reaffirm the three other core themes but to frame community engagement as a “way we do our work” rather than an “outcome” of the College’s work. This appropriately recognizes the value and ethic of community while focusing the measurable outcomes on students.

From these two related but different lines of work, the College has pared down and nearly completed its work to establish core themes, core theme objectives, and core theme indicators. The chart below compares the previous version with the paired-down core themes and objectives (for a list of pared down indicators see Appendix B). Core themes and objectives which were pared down are in a light-gray font. A rationale for each change is also provided in the last column.

**Chart #1: Revisions in SLCC Core Themes and Core Theme Objectives (Draft Fall 2015)**

Pared down core themes and core theme objectives are in gray font

| Core Theme   | Core Theme Objectives  | Rationale  |
|--|--|--|
|  <p>Access and Success</p>  | <p>Provide accessible instructional programs and student services</p> <p>Provide access to students underrepresented in higher education</p> <p>Provide access to students under-prepared for higher education</p> <p>Support students to become successful and engaged learners</p> | <p>The goal is access and completion. While developmental education is a critical offering of SLCC, it is only a step towards the larger desired outcome. The objective to provide access to underprepared students was duplicative of larger efforts around access and completion. To improve access and completion rates the College must support underprepared students through to completion. Developmental education and access for underprepared students remain a critical component of our work, but is just placed within the larger goals of access and completion and not a stand-alone objective.</p> <p>The College continues to measure and track performance of underprepared students as a way to improve core theme performance</p> |
|  <p>Transfer Education</p>  | <p>Prepare students with a foundation for success in continued studies</p> <p>Provide the first two years of articulated major courses</p> <p>Provide student a comprehensive and integrated general education experience</p>  | <p>The second and third objectives were simply restating the point that was entirely contained within the first objective. Both the effectiveness of articulation and the quality of general education will affect the students “foundation for success in continued studies.”</p> <p>The other measures used previously will continue to be monitored, but as ways to look for opportunities to improve the ultimate goal of converting SLCC associate degrees into bachelor degrees.</p>   |
|  <p>Workforce Education</p>   | <p>Prepare students with knowledge and skills meeting current industry needs</p> <p>Provide specialized training for business and industry</p> <p>Provide integrated pathways for academic and career mobility/ advancement</p>  | <p>The College has successfully focused its workforce core theme around the most important elements of employment and responsiveness. While the College continues to “provide integrated pathways for academic and career mobility/advancement” (indeed it was commended for its efforts in this area), it is not a true “outcome” of workforce education.</p> <p>The measures used previously will continue to be monitored, but as ways to look for opportunities to improve the ultimate goal – employment and responsiveness.</p>  |
|  <p>Community Engagement (transitioning to institutional value)</p> | <p>Contribute to economic and community development</p> <p>Champion diversity and cultural enrichment in the community and the College</p> <p>Provide community service opportunities</p>  | <p>Community engagement is a central ethic and value of SLCC. It continues to guide our collective work to improve the community. These objectives, however, were best left as process considerations and not outcomes the college single-handedly affects.</p>  |

# Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

## Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements #2 and #3

### Eligibility Requirement 2 – Authority

Salt Lake Community College (“SLCC”) is one of eight institutions of higher education in Utah operating under the authority of the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) and the State Board of Regents.<sup>7</sup> Regents’ policy R312 classifies SLCC as a public, urban-serving, multi-campus comprehensive community college.<sup>8</sup> Salt Lake County is SLCC’s defined service area in Utah.<sup>9</sup>

### Eligibility Requirement 3 – Mission and Core Themes

The Salt Lake Community College mission statement was approved by the SLCC Board of Trustees on December 14, 2005, and the Utah State Board of Regents on March 10, 2006. The mission statement was reviewed and ratified by community partners and college personnel during strategic planning day in 2011. Following the comprehensive self-evaluation conducted in 2014, the College has embarked on a process to revise its mission statement. More information on this process is detailed below. Final approval of a revised mission statement by the State Board of Regents is anticipated in 2016.

Core themes were originally crafted by a college-wide task force during summer 2009, vetted by college personnel, and approved by the Executive Cabinet in November 2009. Subsequent work of developing outcomes and performance indicators for the core theme objectives led to revisions of the original draft. These changes, recommended by strategic priority councils, were incorporated into the final version of core themes that were approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2011. Following the comprehensive self-evaluation conducted in 2014, the current revising of the mission statement, and the Commission’s recommendation to complete core theme indicators of achievement, the College is considering a revision of its core themes. More information on this process is detailed below.

# Mission (1.A)

## Salt Lake Community College's Mission Statement

Salt Lake Community College is a public, open-access, comprehensive community college committed to serving the broader community. Its mission is to provide quality higher education and lifelong learning to people of diverse cultures, abilities, and ages, and to serve the needs of community and government agencies, business, industry and other employers.

The College fulfills its mission by:

- Offering Associate Degrees, certificate programs, career and technical education, developmental education, transfer education, and workforce training to prepare individuals for career opportunities and an enriched lifetime of learning and growing;
- Offering programs and student support services that provide students opportunities to acquire knowledge and critical thinking skills, develop self-confidence, experience personal growth, and value cultural enrichment;
- Maintaining an environment committed to teaching and learning, collegiality, and the respectful and vigorous dialogue that nourishes active participation and service in a healthy working environment.

The current mission statement has been in place since 2005. It has guided the College through many formative years. But it is also a time of new beginnings at SLCC with a new college president, executive leadership, and a new NWCCU accreditation cycle. And the College has witnessed significant changes through retirements and new hires in important faculty and staff positions. Mission statements need to be revised occasionally in an effort to match the latest strategic thinking of an institution, reflect the current values, and (through the process of revision) refocus the institution's attention on its core activities. SLCC is transitioning to a new era; new eras require new language.

Executive Cabinet charged the Institutional Effectiveness Council (IEC) with recommending draft mission statements. The IEC consulted the literature on mission statements and evaluated examples from other institutions.<sup>10</sup> The College is staying loyal to the mission; it still is and plans to remain a comprehensive, open-access community college that provides transfer and workforce pathways. But the council was trying to produce a better statement of the College's work.

The College needs a more concise, focused mission statement: a statement to point faculty, staff, administration, community members, and students to the central functions of the College; a statement that focuses efforts on the two or three activities that are core to the College's work. The council also felt the institution needs a mission statement that set it apart from other Utah institutions. What makes SLCC unique in the state?

The preliminary mission statement recommendations from the IEC are included in Appendix A. The drafts were presented to the larger college at a college-wide meeting on August 25, 2015.<sup>11</sup> The entire college community has been invited and encouraged to provide feedback on these statements. An [online feedback webpage](#) was launched and has received over 400 responses.<sup>12</sup> The IEC is currently reviewing this feedback to present a final recommendation to Executive Cabinet. College leadership will consider this feedback as they select a final mission statement to present to the College on September 29, 2015 and for board approval by the end of Fall 2015. Subsequent reports to the Commission will provide the final mission statement.

## Mission Fulfillment

As the new mission statement is refined and adopted, the College will adopt a new, simpler mission fulfillment framework. College leadership has begun work on this framework and a draft is presented in the graphic and table below. The framework is built around the student pathway either to transfer or to enter the workforce. Each core theme represents a part of the student pathway. The access and success core theme represents the beginning to the completing of a program of study. The indicators measure student enrollment and completion at SLCC. But access and completion are insufficient; the College also looks to the student outcomes post completion. Transfer and workforce outcomes are being established to ensure students are achieving their ultimate goals. The student pathway with associated objectives and indicators make up the mission fulfillment framework.

The College articulates institutional outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold of mission fulfillment. College leadership sets minimum thresholds (called baselines) through quantitative and qualitative analysis to consider the context, purpose, characteristics and expectations of institution's community, staff, faculty, and perhaps most importantly students.<sup>13</sup> The baselines are periodically reexamined to ensure currency and rigor. The draft set of baselines is provided below. The objectives, indicators, and baselines are more fully explained in the core theme section (1.B).

Mission fulfillment is defined as meeting all baselines on core theme indicators.

While baselines represent the threshold for mission fulfillment, the institution is also setting performance goals. The goals represent the desired level of performance. These goals will guide the institutional work for the next five to seven years. The precise goals will be set through strategic planning process and released in Spring 2016.

Chart #2 SLCC Mission Fulfillment Framework (DRAFT Fall 2015)



| Core Theme   | Objective   | Indicators*                         | Baseline              |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <br>Access & Success     | Provide accessible instructional programs and student services            | General SLCC Participation Rate     | 9.5%                  |
|  | Provide access to students underrepresented in higher education           | Minority Participation Ratio        | 5% Annual Growth      |
|  | Support students to become successful and engaged learners                | Student Completion Rate             | >=20%                 |
| <br>Transfer Education  | Prepare students with a foundation for success in continued studies       | Transfer Degree Conversion Rate     | 50%                   |
| <br>Workforce Education | Prepare students with knowledge and skills meeting current industry needs | CTE Graduate Employment             | 45% Above Wage Target |
|  | Provide specialized training for business and industry                    | Specialized Training Responsiveness | 1.25%                 |

\* More details about the indicators and how they will be measured is provided in the core theme section (1.B) below

## Core Themes (1.B)

In April 2009, SLCC embarked on the process of defining the mission core themes. A college-wide task force defined core themes focused on what the College provides, as an open-access, comprehensive community college. Core themes were crafted as invitations for shared ownership of the key mission components. The original draft of core themes with defining objectives was distributed to the entire college community for review and consideration during Fall 2009. The taskforce made revisions based on input from college personnel, and the Executive Cabinet ratified the SLCC Core Themes in November 2009.

The College is currently revisiting its mission statement and anticipates a slight change in its core themes (see the response to topics requested by the commission above). Feedback from peer reviewers during the Fall 2014 year seven visit suggested that a simplification and reduction in core themes may be appropriate. The core themes provide the framework for articulating outcomes and performance indicators.

The draft core themes are presented below. While the mission statement is under revision, the substantive mission will remain unchanged as a public open-access comprehensive community college. The core themes described below individually manifest the essential elements of and collectively encompass SLCC's mission.

### Salt Lake Community College Core Themes (Draft Fall 2015)



#### *Access and Success*

- Provide accessible instructional programs and student services
- Provide access to students underrepresented in higher education
- Support students to become successful and engaged learners



#### *Transfer Education*

- Prepare students with a foundation for success in continued studies



#### *Workforce Education*

- Prepare students with knowledge and skills meeting current industry needs
- Provide specialized training for business and industry

## Core Theme Objectives and Performance Indicators

The College has refined its core theme objectives and performance indicators. The indicators described below meaningfully inform the College regarding core theme objective achievement. The College has done significant work to create clear data definitions, testing the validity and reliability of measures, and benchmarking metrics against external and internal standards. Many of the core theme indicators were informed by national benchmarks (IPEDS, NCCBP, VFA, and CCSSE). Additionally, data gathered from internal student surveys provide a source of indirect measures of student satisfaction and learning that are aligned with core theme objectives. The rationale for each core theme performance indicator is provided below. Core theme indicator data can be found at [http://performance.slcc.edu/Core\\_Themes/](http://performance.slcc.edu/Core_Themes/)

### NOTE:

The self-study and subsequent strategic planning has given rise to an internal conversation regarding the role of business and administrative services (e.g., budgeting, accounting, facilities, . . .) in accomplishing specific core theme objectives. Clearly these functions are critical to institutional success but their contribution is not directly captured through the core theme objectives. This has led to conversations about developing institutional administrative objectives and indicators regarding institutional capacity, efficacy, and sustainability which would parallel the core theme objectives and provide a more clear articulation of the essential work of business and administrative services. This may be included in subsequent reports and in core theme performance reporting frameworks.



## Core Theme: Access and Success

SLCC is an open-access community college. The access and success core theme describes the time from when the student enters SLCC to the completion of their program of study. This is the most critical and influential time the College has towards improving subsequent transfer and workforce outcomes. This core theme has been organized around three objectives to: (A) provide accessible instructional programs and student services, (B) provide access to students underrepresented in higher education, and (C) support students to become successful and engaged learners. Each of these objectives has associated performance indicators described below.

### Objective A: Provide Accessible Instructional Programs and Student Services

#### *Core Theme Indicator #1: SLCC General Participation Rate*

To improve access involves both the removal of barriers and the active encouragement to enroll. The College removes barriers by keeping costs low, providing flexible class schedules, assisting students to navigate the enrollment process, and developing more accessible course delivery models. But in addition to barrier removal, the college actively seeks to increase participation in higher education. Through both marketing and student outreach efforts, the College attempts to increase college participation. Efforts to improve general accessibility must not only open the doors but also optimize the flow through them.

An imperfect but good approach to measuring access is the participation rate. This general access indicator expresses total enrollment as a percentage of the Salt Lake County college-aged population. To maintain access the college should grow at the same rate as the county college-aged population. The measure allows college leadership to set a mission fulfillment baseline to guide institutional efforts to maintain and improve access. The College considers long-term business cycle data when evaluating baselines for this indicator. This allows a longer-term perspective which can smooth out the labor market volatility to determine if population growth is being captured in higher enrollments. Ultimately this measure provides clear patterns of student access to SLCC and functions as a barometer for access initiatives.

### Objective B: Provide Access to Students Underrepresented in Higher Education

#### *Core Theme Indicator #2: Minority Participation Ratio*

The College not only needs to maintain general access, but to ensure that access is equitable. Inequitable enrollment occurs when the demographics of the student body and of the graduating class do not reflect the community's racial and ethnic demographics. SLCC actively seeks to equitably represent all populations in enrollment and graduation. Minority underrepresentation indicates an opportunity to better understand why underrepresented populations do not proportionally enroll and/or complete awards.

SLCC measures enrollment equity through a minority participation ratio. If the College has an equal proportion of minority populations as the surrounding community, the ratio equals 1:1. If the College student body is more diverse the ratio rises above 1 and if the student body is less diverse the ratio falls below 1. This allows the College to accurately measure how accessible it is to underrepresented populations. The College considers peer comparisons and

conversations with local community leaders when establishing a mission fulfillment baseline for this measure. The College has seen considerable improvement in this indicator in the past three years and is actively working towards achieving a 1:1 ratio.

## Objective C: Support Students to Become Successful and Engaged Learners

### *Core Theme Indicator #3: Student Completion Rates*

Students at the best community colleges complete. Nearly three-quarters of SLCC students have openly expressed award completion as their goal.<sup>14</sup> Prior indicators under this objective focused on important elements like fall-to-fall persistence and student engagement. While these indicators are essential to a reporting and a performance improvement environment, they were insufficient in determining if students were ultimately successful. For this reason, the College has replaced the previous indicators with the student completion rate. If students are becoming successful and engaged learners, they will complete at high rates.

SLCC is an original member of the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) and has adopted the six-year completion metrics pioneered by this group. The primary difference between the IPEDS and VFA completion numbers is the size of the cohort and the length of time.<sup>15</sup> The VFA measure (and thus the SLCC measure) holds the College accountable for all of its students, not just a small percentage. IPEDS only considers first-time, full-time students which make up less than a quarter of SLCC new students. The VFA also recognizes that community college students are part-time and have irregular enrollment patterns. With a median credit load between two and three courses and occasional stop-outs to work to earn more money to pay for college, SLCC students need more time to complete.

The College considers peer comparisons from the VFA and vast amounts of student data (including the previous indicators) in establishing a mission fulfillment baseline for this measure. The College knows that economic and financial trends impact this number heavily as students stop out when they get a job. As the College works to support more students to complete, it considers this number in context of the intent, characteristics, and expectations of its students.



## Core Theme: Transfer Education

Approximately two-thirds of SLCC students enroll with the intent to transfer to a four-year college or university.<sup>16</sup> The transfer education mission has been organized around a single overarching objective to prepare students with a foundation for success in continued studies.

### Objective D: Prepare Students with a Foundation for Success in Continued Studies

#### *Core Theme Indicator #4: Transfer Degree Conversion Rate*

Graduates need to be academically prepared and have credits which transfer. While SLCC directly impacts the lower-division coursework, the goal of SLCC transfer students is bachelor degree completion. The perception of a standalone SLCC transfer program does not fit the student perspective. Few transfer students consider their goal only to complete lower-division coursework and nothing further. The institution has adopted this same perspective in its objectives and indicators. Ultimately, SLCC aims to improve bachelor degree completion for SLCC transfer students. This is both a measure of preparation and articulation.

Students well prepared for upper-division coursework with credits which articulate to bachelor degrees are more likely complete. Successful articulation reduces the need to repeat or redo similar coursework that could be completed in at SLCC. Properly aligned articulation improves student bachelor degree completion rates by reducing student confusion and repeated course taking. Academically prepared students will be successful in upper-division courses.

The transfer degree conversation rate is the percentage of SLCC transfer degree (AA/AS/APE) graduates who earn a bachelor degree within three years of SLCC graduation. Transfer-based associate degrees must be meaningful and capable of being converted into bachelor degrees at high rates. The College closely monitors this rate and is in the process of setting an institutional goal to galvanize collective effort to improve student outcomes.



## Core Theme: Workforce Education

Workforce education continues to be an important component of the SLCC mission. Workforce education programs include those which lead to AAS degrees or certificates of proficiency (both credit and clock hour) as well as specialized non-credit trainings. The workforce education core theme has been organized around two overarching objectives to (E) prepare students with the knowledge and skills meeting current industry needs, and (F) provide specialized training for business and industry. Each of these objectives have associated performance indicators described below.

### Objective E: Prepare Students with Knowledge and Skills Meeting Current Industry Needs

#### *Core Theme Indicator #5: CTE Graduate Employment*

Workforce education prepares students for gainful employment. SLCC takes seriously the need to align workforce education programs with the industry needs. This is best for the student, the College, and the economy. If SLCC is successful in aligning its workforce programs, the CTE graduates will be highly recruited and relatively well compensated. The goal is to make SLCC workforce graduates highly competitive in the labor market and the preferred source of labor for Utah's employers.

The primary outcome of workforce education is what SLCC has defined as gainful employment. While there is significant disagreement on how to measure "gainful employment" at the federal level, SLCC has pushed forward with its own definition. At SLCC gainful employment is achieved if the graduate is employed with a wage above the median inexperienced wage for occupations in Salt Lake County which require an associate's degree, a certificate, or some post-secondary education.<sup>17</sup> To avoid confusion with the federal debate around gainful employment, SLCC simply refers to its definition as "employed above the wage target."

This indicator provides the college with valuable information to guide programmatic workforce decisions. The indicator is evaluated at six quarters after graduation to allow time to secure employment. Using the unemployment insurance database from the Utah Department of Workforce Services, the College tracks student employment and wage outcomes from the time of graduation through five years after graduation. A low percentage employed above the wage threshold after six quarters indicates a potential problem in curriculum alignment, employer demand, or student preparedness. This information facilitates further discussions with employers and students to improve workforce outcomes.

### Objective F: Provide Specialized Training for Business and Industry

#### *Core Theme Indicator #6: Specialized Training Responsiveness*

SLCC works directly with business and working professionals in non-credit specialized training. The programs are shorter than traditional college-level programs (some only a single class) and are designed to train students in a specific skill. The College measures the success of these programs through non-credit enrollment as represented through a market penetration rate.

The market penetration rate is the number of non-credit specialized training enrollments as a percentage of the county population. Using a market penetration rate also provides a control for general population growth. Increase in market penetration reflects actual growth as opposed to growth from natural population increases.

The demand-driven characteristics of these programs makes enrollment (as expressed in the market penetration rate) a meaningful indicator. Because the programs are self-supported they must be responsive to the expectations of employers and students. If the customer (whether that's the student or the company) is not pleased with the training, enrollments will drop. This is perhaps less true in the traditional college environment where students are seeking formal college awards and not paying the full-cost of the education.

The meaningfulness of this measure has been verified by looking at historic information for these types of training. While the College has seen significant growth, increasing from 10,158 enrollments in 2010 to 14,943 in 2014, it has only done so by responding to employer demand.<sup>18</sup> The College has brought on numerous new programs and courses while eliminating prior programs. New programs focused in high demand industries such as energy management, small business management (including the Goldman Sachs 10K Small Businesses program<sup>19</sup>), and composites have increased enrollments in specialized training at a time of overall institutional enrollment decline. If the college was not responsive and not meeting employer needs these numbers would not represent such growth because employers would seek other ways to meet their training needs.

## Conclusion

SLCC is entering a new era. With new leadership, new facilities, and a new strategic plan, SLCC is quickly advancing towards becoming a premiere community college. As SLCC revises its mission statement, core themes, core theme objectives and indicators, and mission fulfillment framework it is positioning the College as a national leader. The result of these efforts will be a shorter simpler mission statement, clear core themes and objectives, meaningful and assessable indicators of achievement, and a mission fulfillment framework to guide overall success. Through these efforts the College will become a model for inclusive and transformative education, strengthening the communities it serves through the success of its students.

# Appendix A

## Draft mission Statements

The drafts contain one common sentence, the statement that “SLCC is your community’s college.” The IEC felt that the emphasis on community identified something that sets SLCC apart from other colleges and universities in Utah. We hold ourselves accountable to the community in ways other higher education institutions do not. The rest of the mission statement drafts represent different attempts to capture the core work of SLCC. What are the central activities that define this institution, that answer the question “Why SLCC?”

### Mission Statement Draft 1

SLCC is your community’s college. We engage our learners in programs and pathways leading to successful transfer and meaningful employment.

### Mission Statement Draft 2

SLCC is your community’s college. We support our learners to achieve their educational and career goals in an environment that promotes engagement, inclusivity, and opportunity.

### Mission Statement Draft 3

SLCC is your community’s college. In a learning-centered environment, we support our students to achieve their educational goals through clear transfer pathways and responsive direct-to-work programs.

These drafts better represent the current efforts to connect with the community and to really hold the institution accountable in measurable ways.

## Appendix B

SLCC Matrix of Core Themes, Objectives, Mission Fulfillment Baselines, Goals, and Reporting Framework (Draft)

| Core Theme  | Core Theme Objective  | Core Theme Indicator            | Mission Fulfillment Baseline | Institutional Goal | Reporting Framework (Data Cubes and Dashboards)  |
|---|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|--|
|   | Provide Accessible instructional programs and student services      | General Participation Rate      | 9.5%                         | N/A                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market Share</li> <li>• General Education Enrollments</li> <li>• Concurrent Enrollment Enrollments</li> <li>• New Student Enrollments</li> <li>• College readiness*</li> </ul>  |
| <br>Access and Success   | Provide access to students underrepresented in higher education     | Minority Participation Ratio    | Annual 5% Growth             | 1:1                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrollment by race/ethnicity compared to county demographics</li> <li>• Enrollment by salt lake county region</li> <li>• Enrollment of race/ethnicity by campus</li> </ul>  |
|   | Support students to become successful and engaged learners          | Student Completion Rate         | => 20%                       | TBD                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistence rates (fall to spring and fall to fall)*</li> <li>• Developmental transition*</li> <li>• Awards per 100 FTE*</li> <li>• Annual student turnover rates</li> <li>• Credits at</li> <li>• QS/QL Math Completion rates</li> </ul> |
| <br>Transfer Education | Prepare students with a foundation for success in continued studies | Transfer Degree Conversion Rate | 50%                          | TBD                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance first year after transfer*</li> <li>• Degree conversion and transfer rate by program</li> <li>• General education proficiency*</li> <li>• General education integration*</li> </ul>   |

|  |  |  |                              |            |   |
|--|--|--|------------------------------|------------|---|
|  <p>Workforce Education</p> | <p>Prepare students with the knowledge and skills meeting current industry needs</p> | <p>CTE Graduate Employment</p>             | <p>45% Above Wage Target</p> | <p>TBD</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most common general education pathways</li> <li>• Licensure Passage Rate*</li> <li>• Employment and Wage by Program</li> <li>• CTE Awards per 100FTE*</li> <li>• Economic Cluster Growth and Development</li> <li>• Alignment with GOED Incentives</li> <li>• PAC Participation</li> <li>• Stackable credential growth</li> <li>• Non-credit to credit transition (internal articulation)</li> <li>• Competency-based graduates</li> </ul> |
|  | <p>Provide specialized training for business and industry</p>                        | <p>Specialized Training Responsiveness</p> | <p>1.25%</p>                 | <p>N/A</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top 5 enrolling programs</li> <li>• Industry feedback survey</li> <li>• Transition of non-credit programs to credit</li> </ul>   |

\* Indicates previous core theme indicator

## End Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> The institutional effectiveness division was previously a department within academic affairs. More information regarding this new division can be found at <http://www.slcc.edu/institutional-effectiveness>
- <sup>2</sup> More information on the Executive Cabinet can be found at: <https://www.slcc.edu/president/executivecabinet>
- <sup>3</sup> The previous strategic plan is available online at: [www.slcc.edu/strategic-planning/](http://www.slcc.edu/strategic-planning/)
- <sup>4</sup> OpenStax is a nonprofit organization that develops free peer-reviewed textbooks. More information on OpenStax is available at its website <https://openstaxcollege.org/>
- <sup>5</sup> See the [strategic planning process handout](#) created by Institutional Effectiveness for more details.
- <sup>6</sup> Insert presentation and notes from the community engagement forum
- <sup>7</sup> See Utah Code [53B-1-102](#), [103](#) for legislation creating the State Board of Regents, the Utah System of Higher Education and Salt Lake Community College's membership in that system.
- <sup>8</sup> Utah State Board of Regents Policy [R312-4.4](#)
- <sup>9</sup> Utah State Board of Regents Policy [R315-7](#).
- <sup>10</sup> This included the development of a [mission statement rubric](#) used to assess both our own drafts and drafts from other colleges. A copy of the rubric is linked [here](#); and is available in the evidence folder.
- <sup>11</sup> SLCC Convocation is an annual event held the day before start of classes (see [www.slcc.edu/convocation](http://www.slcc.edu/convocation)). The Institutional Effectiveness Council presented its recommendations in this [powerpoint presentation](#). The presentation also contains suggested revisions to the vision statement, but that is outside the scope of this report.
- <sup>12</sup> The feedback webpage can be accessed at <http://www.slccimc.com/Convocation/form.php>. Results of the feedback is provided in real time at <http://www.slccimc.com/Convocation/results.php>. Comments were also collected and reviewed at <http://www.slccimc.com/Convocation/comments.php>.
- <sup>13</sup> See NWCCU standard 1.A.2 which reads "the institution defines mission fulfillment *in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations*" (emphasis added). This element of the Standard One explicitly recognizes that mission fulfillment definitions need to be determined in the larger institutional context. Defining thresholds for mission fulfillment is a robust and meaningful conversation at SLCC. There has been considerable debate regarding the definition of thresholds and their relative permanence. How often, if at all, should such thresholds change? Because institutions are to determine thresholds within a larger institutional contexts, if those context change the thresholds themselves must change. Institutional contexts are dynamic. Economic fluctuates and programmatic and state- and system-level changes affect institutional performance. It is thus incumbent on the institution to periodically monitor that context and adjust its mission fulfillment thresholds to ensure currency. A static threshold is a lazy and inattentive threshold. SLCC expects to periodically reevaluate its threshold baselines but would not expect significant revisions unless significant changes occur to the institutional context.
- <sup>14</sup> According to SLCC Institutional Research New Student Survey 71% of new students report their primary objective is to earn a credential or formal educational award. See [http://performance.slcc.edu/surveys/new\\_students\\_graphs.html](http://performance.slcc.edu/surveys/new_students_graphs.html)
- <sup>15</sup> Although this distinction will be become less meaningful as the Department of Education has begun to change IPEDS reporting requirements to in a way that better aligns with VFA methodology. The IPEDS outcomes reporting process is moving to a six year and even an eight year time frame to "reflect the diverse student populations at 2-year institutions." (see <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/VisChangesForNextYear>).
- <sup>16</sup> According to SLCC Institutional Research New Student Survey 60% of students report an intention to transfer. See [http://performance.slcc.edu/surveys/new\\_students\\_graphs.html](http://performance.slcc.edu/surveys/new_students_graphs.html)
- <sup>17</sup> This definition was developed through the work of the Quality Higher Education Council at SLCC. The council also looked at using the [Voluntary Framework of Accountability](#) measure of 200% of poverty level for a family of four, but felt that measure was attempting to compare an individual's income to a family income. The council felt the comparison to occupational median wage was more appropriate.

<sup>18</sup> For a historical numbers in non-credit specialized training see Table 41 in the SLCC Fact Book available at [http://performance.slcc.edu/factbook/H\\_non-credit/table41.html](http://performance.slcc.edu/factbook/H_non-credit/table41.html).

<sup>19</sup> The SLCC and Goldman Sachs 10K small businesses partnerships is a vibrant and exciting new development for community colleges. The college offers small business owners access to practical business and management education. Business owners receive a scholarship for the program through the Goldman Sachs Foundation. The offering culminate with a tailored plan for business growth prior to graduation. For more information see <http://www.slcc10ksb.com/about>.