Year Seven (Standard One)
Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (EIE) Report

Prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Bellingham Technical College
March 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Bellingham Technical College is a two-year technical college located in Northwest Washington State, an area perched on the Pacific Rim and bordered by Canada. The college's service district (Whatcom County) is comprised of 2,107 square miles with an estimated population of over 225,000 in 2020. BTC's service area today is within the usual and accustomed lands of the Lhaq'temish or Xwlemi (Lummi) Nation, and of the Noxws'a'ʔaq (Nooksack) Tribe of the Coast Salish peoples, as well as the original territory of the sʔéməš (Samish) Indian Tribe. The I-5 corridor, which links Seattle, WA and Vancouver, British Columbia, runs through Whatcom County. Much of the county's population is clustered along this pipeline, and in rural areas located to the north and east in the foothills of the North Cascade Mountain range. BTC has been serving its region with workforce education degrees and certificates for more than 60 years. The college provides professional technical programs and courses, adult basic education, English Language Acquisition programs, academic courses, community education, a few direct transfer degree opportunities, and two Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degrees. BTC works closely with regional employers and other partners to develop programs and train students to fill regional workforce demands and support economic development.

History
BTC began before World War II as an "industrial school" that was part of the Bellingham School District. After the war, the demand for an industrial skills center grew and, in 1957, Bellingham Vocational Technical Institute (BVTI) was established on the present site. The Community and Technical College Act of 1991 transferred the governance of BVTI to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) and to a local Board of Trustees. In September 1991, BVTI was renamed Bellingham Technical College (BTC) and joined the State two-year post-secondary educational system, obtaining initial accreditation in 1999. Throughout this process and today, the college has maintained a strong commitment to its original workforce development mission.

Location and Physical Structure

The majority of BTC students are from its service district, but students across Washington and other states commute or move to the area to enroll. The college is situated on 32 acres of land containing 17 buildings. BTC has two off-site instructional locations: the Perry Center for Fisheries & Aquaculture Sciences at Bellingham's Maritime Heritage Park, and the Technology Development Center, located on Port of Bellingham property at the Bellingham waterfront.

Professional Technical Education
BTC provides an array of degree and certificate programs in nine areas of study:

Advanced Manufacturing   Fisheries & Aquaculture Sciences
Business Programs   Industrial Technology

Culinary & Pastry Arts   Information Technology
Engineering Technology   Nursing & Allied Health
                                                Transportation & Mechanical Technology

Student Profile

During the 2020-21 academic year, the college enrolled 2,715 degree-/certificate-seeking students, and 1,803 full-time equivalent student enrollments (FTEs). The college has experienced fluctuating enrollment levels over the past several years, with a significant decline in the 2020-21 academic year, at least in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The current educational program mix at BTC is 90% professional technical, 5% non-award seeking, and 5% basic skills (Transitional Studies). Over half (55%) of all BTC students attend part-time. The average age of BTC students is 29, and 57% of students identified as female and 41% as male (2% did not report). Of enrolled students, 25% identified as students of color, with 22% not reporting: according to US Census data, this is above the service district average. Nearly half (49%) of certificate-/degree-seeking students are eligible for need-based financial aid and 60% identify as first-generation college students. 40% of certificate-/degree-seeking students leave the college with a credential within 12 quarters of starting, and approximately 72% of students who last attended BTC in 2019-20 and left with at least 45 credits or a certificate/degree were employed or continued education within nine months of leaving.

Human Resources

As of Fall 2021, BTC had a total of 262 employees. The composition of these employees includes 52 full-time tenure/tenure-track faculty members and 19 full-time temporary faculty, 69 adjunct part-time faculty, eight administrators, 41 exempt staff, and 73 classified staff. members.

Accreditation History

In 1992, the college applied for accreditation candidacy with the Northwest Association of Schools and of Colleges and Universities, Commission on Colleges and Universities, and was granted accreditation at the associate degree level effective September 1, 1999. That accreditation was most recently reaffirmed by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) in January 2015 based on BTC's Fall 2014 Year Seven *Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability* Evaluation. In January 2019, NWCCU granted BTC accreditation at the baccalaureate level effective September 1, 2017.

The college's Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC), consisting of faculty, staff, administrators, and students, was formed in Fall 2010 to organize college efforts related to the preparation of self-study reports and evaluative site visit in Fall 2014, and the Committee has been meeting on a regular basis since that time. Dr. RaeLyn Axlund McBride, Executive Director of Institutional Planning & Advancement, is the current Accreditation Liaison Officer and ongoing ASC co-chair. Melisa Nelson, Procurement & Contracts Coordinator, is currently serving in her third year as ASC co-chair.

PREFACE

Brief Update on Institutional Changes since the Institution's Last Report (Year Three Mid-Cycle Report - 2017)

Since 2017, BTC has fully implemented its participatory governance model, with its College Assembly (CA) and all eight governance committees in operation since the 2017-18 academic year. Major activities implemented and approved through the governance structure over the past few years have included BTC's Planning & Resource Allocation (PARA) Committee leading a collaborative, campus-wide development process that resulted in the college's 2018-23 Strategic Plan, and piloting a new campus-wide resource request process that explicitly connects the college's strategic planning and resource allocation processes in 2019-20. The college's Instruction Council implemented a new, data-informed tenure prioritization process in 2018-19, while the Facilities Committee created BTC's new Facilities Master Plan, and the Student Access and Success committee facilitated the launch of new, data-informed efforts such as Care Call Campaigns to support vulnerable students.

In Fall 2019, BTC was awarded a five-year Title III Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This project provides support for implementing a Guided Pathways model on the BTC campus, and is aligned with a Washington State focus on implementing a Guided Pathways model on all public two-year college campuses across the state. Guided Pathways is a research-based approach that provides clear, structured, educational experiences for students through four elements, including 1) clarifying paths to students' end goals, 2) helping students choose and enter a pathway, 3) helping students stay on path, and 4) ensuring that students are learning. In October 2019, BTC's Guided Pathways Steering Committee began planning and implementation of BTC's Guided Pathways model, which includes an intense focus on professional development for employees and development of common program cores.

Over the past few years, BTC has increased its efforts to align with State two-year degree standards. Because the college's two-year professional technical programs include a high number of theory and lab courses, the total number of credits required for these programs were often well over 100 credits. Over the past three years, many BTC professional technical programs revamped curriculum and decreased their total number of required credits to align more closely with State standards for 90-credit two-year degrees. Although the proportions of full-time and part-time student enrollments have been relatively flat since 2015-16, students are now taking fewer credits per quarter due to these changes. This impacted the college's tuition and fee revenue. For example, although BTC added new and expanded existing in-demand programs, which resulted in a slight increase in student headcount in 2018-19, overall student Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) levels decreased.

BTC's student enrollments are typically tied to regional economic shifts. Traditionally, when the economy is robust and unemployment levels are low, BTC enrollments decrease. During

economic downturns and high unemployment levels, enrollments tend to rise as regional citizens focus on retraining in high-demand fields. In 2018-19, BTC dipped to under 90% of its state enrollment target, and 83% of the state enrollment target in 2019-20.

The pandemic significantly accelerated this enrollment decline. COVID-19 disproportionally impacted enrollments at technical colleges in Washington State due to the high number of hands-on training programs that were required to shift to online and hybrid instruction and implement extensive health and safety regulations for any on-ground instructional components. In response to Washington State health and safety mandates, BTC went entirely online in Spring 2020. While BTC's professional technical programs shifted to online instruction as much as possible, most of the skills needed in these programs require on-ground practice in specialized campus labs or clinical sites. These programs shifted essential program lab or clinical courses to the Summer and Fall quarters and implemented new safety standards. Many students did not return to their BTC courses and programs during this period of upheaval.

BTC experienced a sharp decline in enrollment in Spring 2020, with 25% fewer state FTE enrolled compared to Spring 2019. Although some of these programs ran during the summer, the increased Summer FTE did not fully compensate for the substantial FTE decrease in Spring quarter. Additionally, retention of students amidst the pandemic was significantly lower than in previous years, particularly among new students. For example, only 50% of students who began in Winter 2020 returned in Spring 2020/Summer 2021 (a decrease of 22% from the previous year). These decreases are due in part to cancellation of new program cohorts (e.g. Dental), classes that could not meet the required physical distancing and/or class size restrictions, and student struggles with the change to online learning. During the pandemic, BTC received Federal and State support to continue operations in the face of substantially reduced enrollment levels. However, this aid is anticipated to end in 2023, while enrollment levels may remain depressed and negatively impact revenue potential.

Not all changes caused by the pandemic were negative. Employees came together to develop creative and, in many cases, sustainable best-practice solutions to remote learning and support challenges that helped facilitate increased student access and success. One instructor noted that "I had students for whom English is not their first language who gave me the feedback that the online flipped classroom with Panopto lecture and Zoom group work and discussion made for the most successful quarter yet for them. They were able to pause, slow down, or rewind lectures, and felt like they didn't struggle as much as past quarters. This was a silver lining in the COVID-19 curriculum changes." The college also substantially invested in new equipment and technology to help fill COVID-related resource requests on the part of professional technical programs. Supporting these requests helped BTC programs meet physical distancing requirements and change instruction modalities from traditionally in-person instruction to hybrid and remote learning environments. This work will set the foundation for more flexible, accessible structures in a number of BTC's professional technical programs.

In 2013, Washington State began migrating from an outdated, statewide student management system (HP3000) to a new system (ctcLink) for all two-year public colleges. Initial

implementation issues arose with the three pilot colleges, but after extensive system updates, the remaining 32 colleges began to transition to the new system in deployment groups beginning in October 2019. BTC is in Deployment Group 5 and was the first technical college to transition (in October 2021). Employees needed training and support over the past two years to help ensure that student data could continue to be tracked effectively and that basic student services could be maintained as a result of the changeover. Over 60 BTC employees led or participated in core training and testing efforts across all college work areas in preparation for transition to the new system. All BTC employees also completed basic training on general operational elements of the system (such as leave reporting or general purchasing processes) and elements related to their particular work areas. Hundreds of hours of employee time have been devoted to conversion preparation and initial implementation, and the college hired additional personnel to assist with critical elements of these processes. After ctcLink implementation in October, employees experienced transitional changes and issues in nearly all work areas; for example, current data systems "froze" (i.e., BTC still had access to all of its old data, but nothing new could be added), and the college is now rebuilding nearly all data systems (including dashboards) from scratch. Employee data access is still extremely limited and it will take significant effort to prioritize data needs for an extended period as these systems are rebuilt. In addition, it will be difficult to precisely match enrollment and outcomes data with the prior system so there may also be some fluctuation regarding outcomes reporting.

b. Response to topics previously requested by the Commission (i.e., Addenda).
BTC completed a compressed four-year accreditation cycle (2011-2014) in Fall 2014. The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) notified BTC in February 2016 that the college had satisfied the Commission's expectations regarding all but one of the recommendations stemming from the Fall 2014 Year Seven report and visit. The college submitted an ad hoc report in March 2016 in response to the final recommendation (external fiscal audit), and NWCCU notified BTC in July 2016 that the college had satisfied expectations. BTC began its current seven-year cycle (2015-2022) in Fall 2015, submitting its Year One Report in Fall 2015 and its Mid-Cycle Report in Fall 2017. No new recommendations resulted from these reports and visit.

STANDARD ONE – STUDENT SUCCESS AND INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND EFFECTIVENESS

The institution articulates its commitment to student success, primarily measured through student learning and achievement, for all students, with a focus on equity and closure of achievement gaps, and establishes a mission statement, acceptable thresholds, and benchmarks for effectiveness with meaningful indicators. The institution's programs are consistent with its mission and culminate in identified student outcomes leading to degrees, certificates, credentials, employment, or transfer to other higher education institutions or programs. Programs are systematically assessed using meaningful indicators to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and achieve stated student learning outcomes for all students, including underrepresented students and first-generation college students.

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

1.A.1 The institution's mission statement defines its broad educational purposes and its commitment to student learning and achievement.

> *Bellingham Technical College provides student-centered, high-quality professional technical education for today's needs and tomorrow's opportunities.*

Bellingham Technical College (BTC) began as an extension of the K-12 system in Bellingham before World War II, as the Bellingham Vocational Technical Institute (BVTI). After the war, the demand for a local skills center grew, and BVTI broke ground for its campus in 1957. All over Washington State, secondary school systems had established similar vocational campuses but, with the passage of the Washington State Community College Act in 1967, the picture of post-secondary education in Washington changed dramatically.

Most of the technical institutes formerly under the umbrella of the K-12 system separated to become community colleges under the supervision of the newly created State Board for Community Colleges in 1967. Five vocational technical institutes (VTIs) resisted this change, and among them was BVTI. Much of what lay behind the resistance of BVTI to separate from the K-12 system was its determination to remain true to its original mission of vocational education. Eventually, the VTIs' break with their former system of governance became inevitable under pressure from the state to establish common data systems and governing boards. As a result of the Community and Technical College Act of 1991 ([RCW 28B.50.020](#)) these remaining five institutes became part of the [Washington State Community and Technical College](#) system.

While changes have occurred, BTC's mission has remained consistent for over 60 years – and its campus community has remained fiercely loyal to BTC's original workforce development mission. The college's current mission statement was collaboratively updated and approved in August 2012 to incorporate a strong focus on student learning and achievement by prioritizing 'student-centered' language. This mission statement was reaffirmed by the campus community in Winter 2017. Student learning and achievement, in the context of an emerging sense of equity, is at the heart of everything that employees do at BTC.

In 2017, BTC established a new participatory governance system, including a cross-constituency Planning and Resource Allocation (PARA) governance committee as one of its eight new governance committees. The continuing charge of this group is to develop, implement, and assess multi-year and annual strategic planning and resource allocation processes, which includes enhancing alignment between the college's strategic planning and resource allocation efforts. The cross-constituency PARA Committee and a series of strategic planning taskforces worked together to guide the reaffirmation of BTC's mission statement in 2017 and development of the college's 2018-23 Strategic Plan, which was finalized and approved in March 2018.

INSTITUTIONAL THEMES, GOALS & KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
BTC's 2018-23 Strategic Plan was developed by the employees and students of BTC and guides our institutional work. The themes, goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that constitute the Plan form a central framework for all BTC operational, planning and self-study efforts. The college continuously works to create, evaluate, and improve college practices and policies to support—and bring to life—its Strategic Plan.

BTC's four themes and 13 goals were approved by the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee, College Assembly, Administration, and Board of Trustees in February and March of 2018. BTC's 12 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures. Several of the KPIs include sub-KPIs to measure more specific aspects as relevant. For example, BTC's Student Learning Outcomes KPI includes measurement at the course, program, and campus levels. BTC's KPIs were approved in Winter 2019, while measurement details (including baselines, standards, and targets) for all but one KPI were approved in three phases from Winter 2019 to Spring 2020. The college established a baseline, standard and target for the remaining KPI (KPI 12a) in Fall 2021. Subsets of BTC's KPIs are used to help the college measure achievement of each goal. BTC's themes, goals and KPI subsets are listed below:

<div align="center">Theme One: Teaching and Learning</div>
Foster teaching and learning through quality instructional methods, effective student learning environments, job skills training, and professional development.

#	Goals	Key Performance Indicators
1	Support student learning through quality instruction	Student Learning Outcomes Course-Level Program-Level Campus-Level Student Retention BTC Employee Professional Development
2	Build clear and effective pathways for students	Student Access Student Transition

		Transitional Studies to College-Level
		Developmental Education to College-Level
		Early-Program to Core-Program
		Student Retention

3	Identify and address barriers to student learning	Student Educational/Career Plans
		
		Student Transition
		    Transitional Studies to College-Level
		    Developmental Education to College-Level
		    Early-Program to Core-Program
		
		Student Retention

4	Establish systems and support for employee success and professional development	BTC Employee Professional Development Participatory Governance

Theme Two: Student Career Preparation & Achievement

Facilitate student career preparation and achievement through career advising, workplace readiness and soft skills training, job placement support, and strong employer relationships.

#	Goals	Indicators of Achievement
5	Support students in identifying and achieving their educational and career goals	Student Educational/Career Plans Student Completion Student Employment Job Placement
6	Maintain and develop partnerships designed to help students succeed	Student Access Student Employment Workplace Performance External Partnerships
7	Strengthen student workplace readiness and job placement services	Student Employment Career Services Job Placement

Theme Three: Innovation & Responsiveness

Promote innovation and responsiveness by keeping up with current workplace practices, trends, and latest technology; supporting adaptation to change; and developing external partnerships.

#	Goals	Indicators of Achievement
8	Prioritize continuous improvement through evaluation of current practices and alignment of resources	Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation

#	Goals	Indicators of Achievement
9	Keep pace with industry and workforce needs and emerging trends	Student Employment Workplace Performance External Partnerships BTC Employee Professional Development Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation

Theme Four: Campus Community & Culture

Strengthen campus community and culture through a collaborative workplace, connected infrastructure, transparent governance, respectful and open communication, and a welcoming and safe environment.

#	Goals	Indicators of Achievement
10	Cultivate an environment that contributes to employee engagement and satisfaction	BTC Employee Professional Development Campus Environment Satisfaction Inclusivity
11	Strengthen college commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusiveness	Student Access Student Transition Transitional Studies to College-Level Developmental Education to College-Level BTC Employee Professional Development Campus Environment Inclusivity Safety
12	Unify the campus community through collaboration and open communication	Participatory governance Campus Environment Satisfaction
13	Maintain a welcoming, safe and accessible environment	Student Access Campus Environment Satisfaction Inclusivity Safety

IMPROVING INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

1.B.1 The institution demonstrates a continuous process to assess institutional effectiveness, including student learning and achievement and support services. The institution uses an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement.

A cycle of continuous improvement—including data-informed planning, implementation, and assessment of results—has become part of the BTC campus culture. When the college embarks on a formal planning process, the process itself is examined and changes are made to improve the outcomes.

BTC's Strategic Plan is used to guide the college's work as it strives to accomplish its goals and fulfill its mission. In 2017, BTC began the process of updating its previous Strategic Plan to develop a new five-year plan for 2018-23. This process centered around gaining a comprehensive understanding of the needs and direction of the college by using an Appreciative Inquiry approach to implement a collaborative, iterative, campus-wide discussion process which included BTC students, employees, and board members. The results of this work were used to develop new campus themes and a revised set of strategic goals organized by theme. For the 2018-23 Strategic Plan, the college developed a common set of accreditation and strategic planning themes and goals to align these two major institutional processes.

After approval of the new Strategic Plan in March 2018, the college focused on further developing its related set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). In the first year of the 2018-23 Strategic Plan, employees and students finalized a set of KPIs and, in the second year, employees and students finalized nearly all KPI measurement details (baselines, standards and targets) through which to evaluate BTC's success in achieving its strategic plan goals and, ultimately, fulfilling its mission. The college is now focused on implementing its Plan—with ongoing data-informed planning and assessment of results.

BTC's Strategic Plan guides all major decision-making at the college. Progress on college goals and strategic initiatives is assessed on a yearly basis and is reviewed by the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee, College Assembly, Administration, and the Board of Trustees via the Annual Review (formerly State of the College reports), which also summarizes the status of each of BTC's KPIs.

BTC carefully monitors current students and their academic progression, including initial enrollment, retention, transition from pre-college to college-level coursework, and completion rates (via BTC internal dashboards), as well as workforce success indicators for our graduates, including placement rates and wages (Career Wages & Placement Reports). Annually and as part of Faculty Inservice days, professional technical program faculty—in collaboration with Data & Research (Institutional Research) staff and their deans—complete Program Effectiveness Reports (PERs) and Student Learning Outcomes Reports (SLORs) to evaluate each

individual professional technical program.

PERs are aligned with BTC's KPIs to include program-specific data on and standards for student enrollment (headcount and FTE), student retention, student completion, and completer employment. These reports also include program-level student enrollment data disaggregated by various demographic factors and compared to the local service area or the college rate, information about students who are retained at BTC but move from one program to another, and the top industries that completers enter. Faculty review their data, optionally provide their own data (e.g., a handful of faculty keep meticulous records of their graduates' employment status), respond to a set of reflection questions, and provide a reflection on the changes/improvements that they identified in the prior year's reports. Faculty and deans then review the reports together as needed to discuss the effectiveness of prior changes and identify any further changes needed or new areas for improvement.

SLORs include program- and course-specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), measures/assessments, and student achievement data. Faculty select two courses each year and assess program results, discuss future plans with their deans based on their outcomes data, and complete a follow-up about the results of the prior year's course assessment and planning.

The Facilities Master Plan has a significant tie to the college's Strategic Plan. The college reviews and updates the Facilities Master Plan on a regular basis (most recently in 2020) based on BTC's strategic themes and goals, and continues to execute capital projects in accordance with the Plan. The Facilities Master Plan provides a developmental roadmap for a full build-out of the campus while retaining flexibility in order to be able to adapt to changes in the college's overarching Strategic Plan.

Four key examples of recent, campus-wide, data-informed assessment and continuous improvement efforts at BTC include:

Improving Student Access & Success (Guided Pathways): The majority of BTC's professional technical degree and certificate programs of 45 credits and above are offered in a structured, cohort-based model. Generally, once a student starts their selected program, they are enrolled into a schedule that remains consistent throughout their educational experience, and they stay with the same one or two lead instructors. Because students are entering and progressing in a structured sequence, they rarely get off track from their educational plans. This design results in high BTC completion rates compared to national averages.

However, while the college's rigid model is successful at serving those students who can meet demanding academic and scheduling requirements, it also greatly restricts the number of students the institution can serve, and means that many members of the region's most vulnerable populations—including low-income parents, the working poor, and those with care-giving or other responsibilities—cannot enroll or persist in the college's high-demand, high-wage programs.

BTC non-traditional (part-time, low-income, first-generation, academically under-prepared) student outcomes are lower than those of other student populations. For example, 44% of BTC's part-time students retain from fall to fall, as compared to 66% of full-time students. Overall, BTC's non-traditional student population is retained at a rate of 56% one year after starting at BTC, which is 24 percentage points lower than the rate for traditional students. Only 36% of non-traditional student populations complete their degree programs, which is 18 percentage points lower than the rate for traditional students.

This reality also impacts the college's bottom line. As a small institution, the college does not have economies of scale that would allow it to easily overcome decreases in enrollment levels, which it has been experiencing over the past few years. It has become increasingly clear to the campus community that BTC must change its delivery model to provide access to and better serve non-traditional students in order to eliminate equity gaps, ensure the future economic viability of the institution, and fulfill the demands of regional employers for a skilled workforce.

As a result of BTC study and guidance from the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), which included researching evidence-based strategies for increased success outcomes for disadvantaged students, the college selected a core intervention model ([Guided Pathways](#)) to address student equity gaps. BTC's implementation of the Guided Pathways model focuses on five key areas: 1) instructional design, 2) college navigation, 3) faculty teaching and learning, 4) employee technology training, and 5) data literacy and research. This [five-year initiative](#) was launched in October 2019, and reflects an institutional focus on campus priorities established through the 2018-23 Strategic Plan development process, including 1) employee professional development; 2) building clear and effective pathways for students; 3) strengthening college commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusiveness; 4) supporting students in identifying and achieving their educational and career goals; and 5) increasing student access, transition, retention, completion, and employment outcomes. The college targeted its resource development efforts to help fund this work, and has been awarded a five-year Department of Education Title III Strengthening Institutions Program grant and State allocations to move this campus-wide initiative forward. As a result of this work, BTC has begun major improvement activities, including development of common exploratory core coursework across related programs, design of a sustainable college navigator advising and coaching model, and creation of a new faculty orientation and peer mentoring program. The Guided Pathways team will evaluate results – with a particular emphasis on decreasing equity gaps and improving student learning and achievement – in the coming years.

Designing New Professional Development Systems: During the development of BTC's 2018-23 Strategic Plan, improving BTC's employee professional development systems emerged as a top interest on the part of BTC employees. Based on this feedback, BTC developed new, collaborative approaches to the design of long-standing BTC events. For example, BTC's [Campus Kick-off](#) and [Faculty Inservice](#) events are now organized by

planning committees and are offered in a conference style, with a variety of plenary and breakout sessions hosted by BTC employees and external presenters. In 2017, only 63% of attendees were somewhat or extremely satisfied with the Campus Kick-off event overall. In the first year that the event shifted to the new format (2018), 88% of attendees were somewhat or extremely satisfied with the new structure, which allowed them to select and participate in up to three workshops. This increased level of satisfaction has persisted; for example, 90% of attendees were somewhat or extremely satisfied with the plenary accreditation session in 2021.

BTC also invested in professional development resources that could be easily accessed by a wide variety of employees, including online resources such as Innovative Educators, and by inviting nationally-recognized speakers to deliver on-campus professional development opportunities for all employees, such as a National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) representative who spoke at a Faculty Inservice event. College leadership continued to support on-campus peer training efforts, such as BTC's faculty-led Reading Apprenticeship (RA) program in which members of the BTC RA community of practice support each other in implementing the RA framework (designed to help faculty facilitate increased student reading comprehension, engagement levels, and metacognition skills) in classrooms and online environments. BTC's student support staff hold training opportunities for employees to help them integrate best-practice coaching techniques into their everyday work.

The college has targeted resource development efforts to help support employee needs. For example, one key focus of the college's new Title III grant is on professional development. In addition to hiring an Instructional Designer to help BTC faculty create areas of study (clusters of related programs with common cores), the college has identified faculty leaders to develop not only a Faculty Teaching & Learning Academy, which will assist BTC faculty adapt program content and delivery to remediate student equity gaps, but also a peer mentoring program for new faculty. As part of the Guided Pathways initiative, BTC is also developing a strong technology training program that will help employees effectively research, plan and implement system improvements for teaching, learning and student support. Another component of the initiative is to help improve employee data literacy skills and continue fostering a culture of data-informed decision-making. This work includes developing and enhancing data dashboards and other tools to enable employees to analyze student outcomes from an equity lens in order to identify and respond to barriers and service gaps for student populations.

Collaborative Adaptation and Resilience - COVID-19 Pandemic Response: Over the past several years, the college has expanded its emergency planning efforts, including forming an Emergency Response Team (ERT), training members of the ERT, establishing the college's Safety Committee as one of nine governance committees, adding a Safety Information page, and creating a dedicated BTC Emergency Preparedness and Safety Manager (now Safety Director) position, which was first filled in 2017. The college used this emergency response and safety infrastructure to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. BTC expanded its ERT and

engaged in an expedited evaluation and planning process as services went fully online in Spring 2020 in response to State and regional health and safety mandates related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The college responded and adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic through a variety of activities that required intense collaboration between work areas throughout campus, including converting to hybrid and online instructional formats, providing technology supplies and assistance to students and employees, checking out books and other instructional materials through the mail or drive-up services, continuing deep cleaning protocols, creating a Virtual Assistance portal for students, allocating emergency aid to provide financial support for students, and creating and implementing the college's phased plans for returning to campus. During the pandemic, the college also conducted two surveys (Spring 2020 and Fall 2020) to assess and respond to student technology and service needs, as well as establishing a dashboard to summarize and facilitate use of survey results.

The speed and scope of these changes was memorable, with much occurring in a matter of weeks. These changes were made in order to enable BTC students to continue developing skills and progress along their pathways. These changes also greatly increased the number of resources for employees and, in many cases, increased student access to both instruction and support resources.

In Winter and Spring 2021, BTC worked with multiple employer and local government partners, including the Whatcom County Health Department, to establish Whatcom County's COVID-19 mass vaccination clinic at BTC. In addition to serving a critical community health need, this project provided clinical experiences to nursing students whose access to clinical opportunities at the local hospital and other care centers had been greatly disrupted by the advent of the pandemic.

Improving Communications and Climate: After two strike actions on the part of BTC employees (one by faculty in Fall 2013 and the other by classified staff in Fall 2017), BTC leadership conducted an employee survey to assess interest in conducting a broad-based study of the campus climate. Based on the results of that survey, the college hired an external consultant in Winter 2018 and formed a cross-representational *Heart of BTC* Design Team (sample agenda/meeting notes) to explore employee concerns regarding campus communications, culture and climate. This research occurred in three phases, with the first including confidential small group and individual interviews in which all employees were asked to participate. The second phase involved compilation and analysis of data results and a series of all-campus meetings to review and discuss those results. In the third phase, BTC leadership discussed results of the *Heart of BTC* consultation process, engaged in study of conscious leadership, and began developing and implementing strategies to help improve communication and engagement across campus.

This work resulted in a variety of improvements, including the formation of joint Labor Management Communication committees, which include BTC administrators and leaders from each BTC employee constituency group and union. The purpose of the committees is

to facilitate communication across groups, share information and concerns, and promote constructive, respectful, meaningful, and cooperative labor management relations.

Other improvements included BTC leadership providing additional opportunities for employees to evaluate supervisor performance. Over the past few years, leadership members have also provided multiple opportunities for employees to join them at informal and formal venues in order to establish and strengthen relationships and allow feedback opportunities. For example, prior to the pandemic the President and Board of Trustees had established regularly-scheduled lunch meetings which any employee could join, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Learning (VPAASL) established a similar, weekly opportunity for all faculty. The VPAASL published a weekly newsletter for the Instruction area called 'Alphabet Soup', which included updates and announcements, and the Executive Dean has continued this tradition, with a weekly 'Instruction Office News' (ION) email publication. BTC's former President focused on publishing all-campus email communications as needed. Frequency of these communications increased as the pandemic took hold. Interim President Walter Hudsick sends out regular 'Prez Sez' communications to campus to share pertinent COVID-19 updates and other campus-wide news and updates. Student Services has continued monthly all-staff meetings, and the Student Services Leadership Team gathers in a weekly 'morning huddle' to share information and updates, which are emailed each week to all Student Services staff members. The college also established a publicly-available monthly 'Notable News' publication, which is populated with information and announcements contributed by any employee and shared out to the campus community and key external stakeholders.

The full implementation of BTC's participatory governance structure, with committee representatives sharing information with and gathering input on committee decisions from their constituent groups, has greatly assisted in increasing campus decision-making transparency and communication levels. In the Spring 2021 employee survey, 89% of employees who responded felt at least somewhat represented by the college's participatory governance structure in the 2020-21 academic year.

1.B.2 The institution sets and articulates meaningful goals, objectives, and indicators of its goals to define mission fulfillment and to improve its effectiveness in the context of and in comparison with regional and national peer institutions.

Based on extensive employee input, BTC identified four overarching themes, 13 strategic goals, and 12 KPIs (24 including all sub-KPIs) for consistent, college-wide use. The cross-constituency Planning & Resource Allocation (PARA) committee and two PARA taskforces—one focusing on broad strategic planning and the second focusing on identifying meaningful KPIs—worked together to develop the college's 2018-23 themes, goals, and KPIs.

Several KPIs have remained consistent over the last several years, while others were developed specifically for the 2018-23 Strategic Plan. This combination of KPIs are aligned with the college's mission, themes, strategic goals, and other major initiatives, and include both

quantitative and qualitative measures. One major component of the three-year KPI development process was identifying—and continuously returning to—the following guiding principles, which were informed in part by the 2010 NWCCU Standards:

- KPIs should be global, with all or most BTC employees contributing to and/or impacted by the activities related to the KPI;
- KPIs should be meaningful and actionable (2010 NWCCU Criteria 1B2, 3A3, 3B3, 4A1, 4B1, 5A2, 5B1, 5B2);
- KPIs should be assessable and verifiable (2010 NWCCU Criteria 1B2, 4A1), drawing upon data that are unbiased, reliable, and consistent;
- All KPIs should be understandable to the BTC community and to the public (2010 NWCCU Criteria 5A1, 5A2);
- KPIs should include focus on course, program, and degree SLOs (2010NWCCU Criteria 4A3, 4B2); and
- KPIs should be associated with existing or reasonably potential data and/or systems.

Other KPI development activities included reviewing relevant NWCCU standards for key metrics; exploring existing KPI examples from approximately 28 other colleges and universities, as well as state and national frameworks; drafting BTC's KPIs and measurement details (i.e., baselines, standards, and targets); and gathering campus feedback via 12 interactive events. The college's mid-cycle evaluation feedback in 2017 led to a pause and integration of evaluator feedback into the KPI development process. Draft KPIs and measurement details were revised based on this feedback, including adding an SLO-focused KPI and adding several qualitative or 'critical success activity' indicators. The college has identified a five-year standard (reflecting a minimum performance expectation) and five-year target (reflecting a stretch performance expectation) for each KPI, and sets annual targets across each year of the Plan.

BTC defines mission fulfillment as (a) making progress across its strategic goals and (b) meeting standards for 80% of its KPIs. In the 2020-21 academic year, BTC was fulfilling its mission based on meeting standards for 90% of its KPIs. The Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC) reviewed and slightly revised its KPI evaluation framework during Winter and Spring 2019. In alignment with this structure, ASC updated BTC's three categories of indicator accomplishment: 1) Meets Target, 2) Meets Standard, and 3) Doesn't Meet Standard. Strategic goal and KPI progress is documented in an Annual Review that is shared with the Board of Trustees and campus community, and helps inform planning for the subsequent academic year. KPI results are analyzed and documented via the BTC Annual Review, Program Effectiveness Reports (completed by each instructional program), and accreditation self-study reports.

BTC's Annual Review provides an overview of the performance targets and current status of each KPI, and the college has developed new public dashboards to help stakeholders assess institutional status and effectiveness: 1) Key Performance Indicator Status - reflects the progress made across each of BTC's KPIs; and 2) Student Profile - shows enrollment metrics, including demographics, as well as student achievement metrics, including retention, progression, completion, and job placement.

An important aspect of examining institutional performance is external benchmarking. BTC uses a number of dashboards provided by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) for this purpose, and has added these links and descriptions for each to its website and employee intranet. These dashboards encompass a number of metrics, including enrollment, student progress and completions, and post-college outcomes. Using these dashboards, college stakeholders can see how the college is performing relative to the other Washington State community and technical colleges.

Public-facing SBCTC dashboards most frequently used for external benchmarking and which are linked on BTC's sites include:

- *Enrollment*: Quarterly and annual student headcounts and full-time equivalents (FTEs).
- *Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) 3.0*: SAI is the points-based performance funding system for Washington State's community and technical colleges. Colleges receive points when students reach key academic momentum points such as completion of first 15 credits, college math, and a credential.
- *Perkins V*: BTC receives funding under the Carl D. Perkins Act, which requires the college to disaggregate student data by subgroup, special population, and program area for the three performance indicators. Though not all colleges can be viewed at once using this dashboard, BTC compares metrics with the other Washington State technical colleges in particular.
- *Credentials Awarded*: Student awards broken down by high school credential/GED certificate, workforce certificates, degrees, and apprenticeship credentials.
- *After College Status: Professional-Technical Programs and Apprenticeships*: A large portion of BTC's students plan to enter the workforce after earning their BTC credential. As a result, job placement and job salary data are very important to BTC. This dashboard shows the rate at which students go on to be employed or transfer to other post-secondary institutions outside of the SBCTC system, and allows BTC to compare itself to the system rate.
- *First-Time Entering Student Outcomes*: Includes progression, retention, credential completion, and post-college outcomes information for a variety of cohorts (first-time ever in college, first-time ever at institution, Running Start, College in the High School, and Alternative High School). The dashboard also allows for disaggregation and filtering, including being able to compare BTC to user-defined subset of other colleges. *(Note: This dashboard is located only on BTC's intranet site, as it requires users to access from a college IP address.)*

The Accreditation Steering Committee recently (in Summer and Fall 2021) identified regional and national peers for BTC using the following criteria: public institution, open enrollment, high career and technical focus (Carnegie classification), high nontraditional/mixed traditional/nontraditional (Carnegie classification), predominantly associate's degree granting, similar campus setting (small city or midsize suburb), similar enrollment size, similar partial/full

distance education enrollment rate, similar part-time enrollment rate, similar student racial diversity, and similar distribution of need-based aid.

The College's regional peers include Bates Technical College, Clover Park Technical College, Grays Harbor College, Lake Washington Institute of Technology, Peninsula College, Renton Technical College, Skagit Valley College, Spokane Community College, and Walla Walla Community College (all in WA). BTC's national peers include Albany Technical College (TX), Cochise County Community College District (AZ), Eastern Maine Community College (ME), Moraine Park Technical College (WI), and Texarcana College (TX). The college will continue to assess the appropriateness of this initial set of peer campuses, and will make changes as needed.

The Accreditation Steering Committee is currently identifying benchmarking metrics, and regional and national benchmarking data will begin to be published in 2022-23 on the BTC website and intranet. Data & Research staff conducted an exploratory analysis into the utility of IPEDS data for national comparisons and found that, due to a data collection issue, SBCTC was misclassifying a large portion of degree-seeking students as non-degree-seeking students. BTC addressed the issue to improve reporting, and IPEDS data appropriate for national benchmarking will be available on its online site starting in 2022-23.

1.B.3 The institution provides evidence that its planning process is inclusive and offers opportunities for comment by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

A major emphasis of BTC's cyclical strategic planning efforts is to foster the consistent involvement of college constituents in all aspects of development. This inclusive process helps ensure that the college's mission statement reflects its core community goals and values.

BTC's Planning and Resource Allocation (PARA) Committee launched a collaborative planning process for development of the college's 2018-23 Strategic Plan in March 2017, which included the following key activities:

- *BTC Moving Forward Together: Creating our Strategic Plan Kickoff Event.* This daylong event (and a condensed evening event for night shift employees) in Winter 2017 was designed to engage the campus community in conversations through which to personalize BTC's mission and vision, and collectively identify a set of meaningful themes to guide our work. This event used an Appreciative Inquiry approach, which focuses on exploring what's working well by engaging people in asking questions and telling stories. Over 140 students, employees, and board members considered the following questions as part of the event:
  - What about BTC as an organization do you most value?
  - What do you think BTC does really well?
  - What one thing would you like to see BTC focus on in the coming years?
  - What is it that BTC is currently doing that our external stakeholders (e.g.,

prospective students, employers, educational partners) value most?
- o What else might our external partners be looking for from us?
- o What one external opportunity do you think we should focus on in the coming years?

- *BTC Moving Forward Together: Creating our Strategic Plan Follow-up Event*. This 75-minute event in Spring 2017 provided an opportunity for small groups to review and provide input on the draft theme concepts that emerged from the kickoff events, and begin to identify potential goals.

- *Mid-Cycle Evaluation Visit*. In Fall 2017, two peer evaluators visited the BTC campus as part of its Mid-Cycle Evaluation process, and suggested that PARA further specify several of the draft goals, which would better allow BTC to identify one to three meaningful indicators to measure the success of each goal. Based on this feedback, PARA solicited more campus feedback and added specificity to the draft goals.

- *Strategic Plan Feedback Event.* This 2.5-hour drop-in event in Winter 2018 was designed to solicit feedback on BTC's revised Strategic Plan themes and goals through small-group discussions and individual work. Other options for feedback included an online survey, which was emailed out to campus.

- *Key Performance Indicator Forums.* The PARA Committee hosted 12 interactive campus forums across the 2018-19 academic year—four in Fall 2018 to discuss an initial draft list of KPIs, and eight in Spring 2019 to further discuss the qualitative sub-set of KPIs—to gather campus input to inform the development and refinement of BTC's KPIs.

BTC's iterative, multi-year Strategic Plan development process resulted in an intentionally simple and streamlined 2018-23 Strategic Plan that is understandable, is actionable, and both aligns with and guides the development of other campus plans (e.g., the Facilities Master Plan).

Additional examples of the inclusivity and collaborative nature of BTC's planning processes, and the impact of these processes on resource allocation and institutional effectiveness improvement, include:

Resource Request Process: Each year since its inception in 2017, the PARA Committee has built on previous work to continue designing a college-wide planning, assessment and evaluation model that is tied to annual resource allocation processes and aligned with the college's strategic goals. In the second year of BTC's 2018-23 Strategic Plan, based on employee feedback, PARA created and piloted a new, campus-wide resource request process which combines campus materials (e.g., goods, supplies, equipment) and personnel requests into one request form. This new process allows for streamlined and prioritized application of grant, private and operating resource support, and enhances transparency and record-keeping regarding all campus resource requests. Additionally, the resource request process requires each requesting program or department to describe how the specific budget request supports the achievement of

BTC strategic goals. The PARA Committee created and published a review rubric, and reviews, ranks, and prioritizes all requests. Committee recommendations are submitted to the President's Leadership Team for overall administrative review, with a feedback loop in the event that administration recommends a change in the selected priorities. Prior to launch of this new system, the PARA committee held multiple all-campus training sessions to explain and introduce the new process, and has since held annual information sessions.

Advisory Committee Work: Advisory committees at Bellingham Technical College have three major roles: to advise, assist, and provide support and advocacy for college professional technical programs. Member insights into industry training needs and competencies are of great value to professional technical program faculty members, who design their curriculum around industry standards and with substantial input from program advisory committee members. For example, over the past few academic years, BTC's Culinary Arts program faculty have made a series of changes in their program's course sequencing and content as well as reductions in overall program course load. These changes were planned in consultation with the program advisory committee and are intended to help improve retention and graduation rates in the program. In another example, BTC's Radiologic Technology program, based on input from advisory committee members, made a variety of program changes in 2018-19. Program changes included updating course content to better align with industry standards and adjusting program entry requirements to be consistent with other Allied Health programs and Guided Pathways. The program added an Introduction to Radiologic Technology course to include an observation/shadowing experience that introduces potential students to the profession. Unfortunately, the observation/shadowing experience has been temporarily placed on hold due to the changing COVID-19 pandemic requirements for healthcare workers, but the program will implement the requirement once restrictions for observations are lifted.

Communications Relations Management System: In 2009, feedback from campus employees indicated a need for a centralized communications and tracking system for both prospective and current students—and this campus need was also identified as part of the college's 2010 Title III Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) application development process. Using a combination of grant and operational funds, BTC purchased Communications Relations Management (CRM) modules for both prospective and currently enrolled students in Fall 2013. A few years later, however, multiple employees concerned about the amount of resources needed for module implementation and underutilization of this technology came forward. Based on campus concerns regarding the cost and benefits of the modules, and to support the practice of evaluating major technology product purchases, the President requested an evaluation of the college's CRM modules in Fall 2017.

The college's Executive Director of Institutional Planning & Advancement (IPA) and Director of Grants & Strategic Initiatives collaborated with stakeholders to develop an evaluation design, and conducted information-gathering sessions and interviews with

approximately 32 stakeholders from Winter to Summer 2018. Additionally, IPA reviewed relevant items such as existing college documents, student enrollment data, and the results of system-wide CRM usage surveys that were conducted in Fall 2017 and Summer 2018. Data collection concluded in October 2018.

Based on analysis of key findings from the internal study (Connect Evaluation Report), and with employee input, the college piloted a lower-cost, more adaptive CRM system in Spring 2019. BTC employees worked with the new vendor to plan the college's use of the new educational system template and ensure that the system met student and employee needs. As part of this process, the college's Early Alert system was also revised. Employees continued to assess the new system throughout the succeeding year to make needed improvements and to confirm that the move was a positive one for the college.

1.B.4 The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it considers such findings to assess its strategic position, define its future direction, and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, planning, intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement of its goals.

BTC continually monitors its internal and external environments in order to inform strategic planning efforts, and the college uses the results of this process, including via its participatory governance structure, to identify campus and service area needs as well as program and service opportunities. Systems for internal and external data collection, access, and analysis have improved substantially over the past two years. BTC's Data & Research staff have added and recently updated comprehensive data dashboards that are accessible to all employees, and BTC employees have collaborated over the last few years to improve major reporting processes, including instructional program effectiveness and student learning outcome reporting processes. BTC's advisory committees continue to provide robust support for the college's instructional programs.

Implementation of the college's new participatory governance structure included establishment of a College Assembly in 2017-18. This cross-constituency group provides input, policy direction, general advice and recommendations to the Administration and Board of Trustees. This group also sets the institutional agenda for the college, monitors the college's progress toward achieving its goals (whether internally- or externally-focused), serves as a communication network, and helps maintain consistency of major college processes. As part of its governance work, BTC also developed or revitalized eight governance committees, each with new operating guidelines and broad representation, and a variety of operational committees.

The college's participatory governance committees are intentionally structured to require cross-campus constituency membership and feedback, and to review key college data as relevant. For example, in Fall 2020, a PARA subcommittee worked to update the college's

annual 2020-21 KPI targets based both on prior performance data and anticipated impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on some measures. These annual targets were approved by the full PARA committee, College Assembly, BTC administrators, and the Board of Trustees. BTC's participatory governance structure ensures that BTC's development of key goals and indicators is highly collaborative, and that the college's performance on these goals and indicators is continuously assessed and improved as needed.

Other examples of improvements facilitated through BTC's governance structure include:

Policy, Plan and Procedure Updates: Over the past few years, as a result of internal monitoring efforts, BTC's College Assembly has approved a substantial number of new and updated policies, separated all procedures from policies, and approved new iterations of campus-wide plans, including the college's Technology Plan (developed by the Technology Committee) and Facilities Master Plan (developed by the Facilities Planning Committee).

Tenure Prioritization Process: In Fall 2018, BTC's Instruction Council (IC) formed a subcommittee to develop a new tenure prioritization process. After review and recommendations from the full Council, the governance committee piloted a new tenure prioritization process to help streamline new and replacement requests for tenured faculty positions. The cross-departmental members of IC reviewed and prioritized all requests, based in part on student outcome data and the alignment of the request to BTC's strategic goals. Their recommendations were then reviewed by the PARA Committee and BTC administrators. This new process, which was implemented in 2019-20, was also based on employee feedback and helped enhance the collaborative and transparent nature of BTC resource allocation processes. In 2020-21, this tenure prioritization process was integrated into the college's new Resource Request process to better streamline and track all campus resource requests. Work on these campus-wide budget review processes continue to more closely tie resource allocation, including salaries, goods and services, and equipment, to the achievement of BTC's vision, mission, values and goals.

Retention and Completion Research and Planning: BTC's Student Access and Success (SAS) governance committee has added operational subcommittees, creating two in 2020-21 (one focused on connection to enrollment, and a second focused on enrollment to completion) to allow employees to lead the critical work of coordinated recruitment, enrollment, and retention planning. The Data & Research team worked with SAS to conduct targeted analyses of BTC data with respect to enrollment, retention and completion outcomes for special populations in professional technical programs. Development of strategies to further identify student barriers and implement related interventions is underway. The two SAS subcommittees plan to engage in a strategic process to identify student support areas that may benefit from coordinated data analysis.

Program Changes: BTC's Instruction Council reviews and provides recommendations regarding proposals for new programs and existing program revisions. For example, in 2018,

based on input from their advisory committee, BTC's Information Technology faculty members proposed the creation of new student certificate options and pathways in both programming and cloud technologies as a response to industry changes. The Council voted to approve the Information Technology Program redesign and the new structure was implemented. In 2019, BTC's Business Programs proposed and were approved to implement a programming redesign to eliminate duplication. This effort reduced program offerings and streamlined these certificate and degree programs for BTC students.

Each of the college's KPIs is designed to formally monitor key aspects of BTC's internal and external environments, as well as overall mission fulfillment. For example, review of student learning outcome achievement; educational plan development; and transition, retention, and completion rates help shed light on both success levels of our students and the effectiveness of the programs and services that are meant to support them. Evaluation of professional development systems and the participatory governance structure assists the college in monitoring levels of employee engagement and satisfaction, while assessment of campus safety, inclusivity and satisfaction levels allows BTC to evaluate whether it maintains a welcoming, engaging, and secure campus culture and environment. Appraisal of the effectiveness of the college's strategic planning and resource allocation processes enables BTC to monitor whether it is aligning strategic planning and resource development processes and implementing collaboratively developed strategies to maintain its fiscal health. Status of BTC's external partnerships and student access and employment rates, along with workforce performance, speaks to the college's ability to effectively engage with and serve its regional community.

Examples of activities based on analysis of BTC's KPIs include:

Early Leavers: As part of work related to BTC's retention KPI, Data & Research staff conducted an analysis of early leavers (defined as degree-seeking students who dropped out after their first quarter) and found that many of these students share three common characteristics: 1) math course failures, 2) general academic underperformance, and 3) part-time enrollment. As a result of this work, BTC implemented several activities/interventions, including:

1) The Enrollment to Completion SAS subcommittee helped redesign the college's Early Alert system. The subcommittee solicited feedback from faculty members regarding what was and was not working, and worked with Computer Information Support Services (CISS) to make the alerts easier and more intuitive to use. Student Services staff also worked with the Chief Academic Officer and deans to improve regular communications with faculty reminding them to submit alerts, and analyzed data from the system to determine when the most alerts were received (weeks 4-6) to reserve sufficient time for alert responses on Student Services staff calendars. Student Services and CISS staff presented sessions at Faculty Inservices regarding early intervention resources and

practices, which helped college employees align and improve practices related to early intervention.

2) The SAS governance committee implemented an Early Leaver Call Campaign in late Winter 2018, which specifically targeted those students who were categorized as continuing students but had not yet registered for Spring quarter. Results showed that 35% of students who received outreach went on to register, compared with just 12% of those who were not successfully contacted. Based on these positive results, SAS continued these outreach efforts, renaming them Care Call Campaigns. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, a staff team reached out to over 750 students as part of the Spring 2020 Care Call Campaign to connect with, and offer assistance and resources to, those who were registered for coursework but not were connected to a special assistance program (such as Accessibility Resources or TRiO Student Support Services).

3) Further analysis of BTC data showed that part-time disadvantaged students benefitted most from meeting with a completion coach, and those who received coaching at least three times per quarter were predicted to be retained at similar rates to that of full-time students. As a result, coaches became more intrusive to help ensure a sufficient number of contacts with these students. The college also began to institutionalize coaches and coaching services into Admissions & Advising, which led to their integration into mandatory GET (Goals, Education Plan and Tech Readiness) Started sessions for all new BTC students, allowing students to meet with coaches before they started classes. In addition, coaches began to visit classrooms and become integrated into online platforms for developmental, math and College Success courses on a quarterly basis.

4) As noted in BTC's Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy, students struggling academically progress through three stages if their academic performance does not improve: 1) academic warning, 2) probation, and 3) suspension. BTC employees have traditionally focused on intervening with students in the last (suspension) stage, but analysis of BTC data showed that a high number of students placed on academic warning do not stay at the college. Employees therefore shifted their approach to proactively intervene with these students *before* they moved to probation status. Student Services staff have begun working more closely with faculty to support students before or as soon as they are placed on academic warning. The SAS governance committee worked with BTC's Data & Research staff to build a Student Academic Progress dashboard that helps identify equity gaps—a SAS subcommittee is analyzing these data in the 2021-22 academic year to identify areas where early and intensive intervention/coaching could be most effective with both faculty and students, and how best to get those students re-enrolled.

Transitional Studies Improvements: Improving the progression rates of basic skills and English Language Learners to college-level coursework and professional technical programs has been a college priority over the last several years. The college's Instruction Council has reviewed and approved a variety of strategies to increase progression rates for these students, including implementing the I-BEST model (basic skills students take professional technical program courses and receive special assistance within and beyond the classroom); restructuring Transitional Studies coursework, academic progression policies and learning environments to better prepare students for college environments; and providing Transitional Studies students with dedicated Admissions & Advising support. Recent activities to support both student access and progression have included creating specialized programs within Transitional Studies that facilitate student success and progression to college level, such as a youth reengagement program for at-risk students (IMPACT!) and high school completion programs (e.g., HS+) that co-enroll Northwest Indian College students. College transition rates for BTC's Transitional Studies students have begun to rise over the past few years.

Part-time Student Success: In studies of student persistence, SAS committee members found that, while 63% of new full-time, degree-seeking students persisted from Fall 2018 to Fall 2019, only 52% of new part-time, degree-seeking students continued. This gap widened during the COVID-19 pandemic, with 63% of full-time students persisting from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020, while 39% of part-time students did. Similar gaps continued from Fall 2020 to 2021, with 69% of full-time students persisting, but only 46% of part-time students were retained. Targeted efforts to accommodate and retain these part-time students began over the next year, including implementation of the Guided Pathways model, and are anticipated to help close equity gaps across BTC's student population.

BTC also monitors its internal and external environments via student, employee, and employer surveys, and posts the results of each on the Institutional Planning & Advancement (IPA) intranet site for employees to access. The 'College Surveys & Reports' page includes links to student survey reports, graduate and employer survey reports, employee survey results, program reports, campus-wide data, and state and national data.

BTC participated in the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) in 2014, 2015, and 2017 and, since that time, has focused on using internally-designed survey instruments. For example, in Spring 2020, a survey was administered to assess the technology needs (e.g., laptops, video cameras, hotspots) of students as the college transitioned online in response to statewide stay-at-home orders. The results of this survey were used to identify the highest-need students and connect them with BTC technology resources. In December 2020, another student survey was used to assess student academic and social/emotional experiences and needs by learning modality (fully remote, fully in-person, and hybrid). Data & Research staff designed a dashboard – including both quantitative and qualitative results, and an equity focus—and hosted data review sessions to inform improvements and define future directions. The survey results spurred multiple activities to help improve online instruction and access to online and technology resources, including securing grant funding to buy new laptops for Transitional

Studies students, adding new digital databases and eBooks to support online teaching and learning, and connecting students more effectively with virtual services such as the Tutoring Center and Library. Survey data indicated that students experienced higher levels of stress, anxiety and depression during the COVID-19 pandemic, which prompted BTC's Counselor to develop a Canvas module (the BTC Remote Learning Self-Care Package) with self-care tips, resources, and materials that could be uploaded into Canvas courses.

Within the last few years, the college has also developed and administered surveys intended to specifically assess employee experiences and satisfaction with participatory governance and professional development systems, and, more recently, working remotely in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Spring 2021 results indicate that 89% of employees feel at least somewhat represented by our participatory governance structure, which is one indicator that this structure is achieving the intended goal. Results from BTC's professional development survey questions will be used to inform BTC's professional development system, which is currently being developed by a workgroup with input from the campus community.

BTC is currently planning to implement a student/employee campus climate survey in May 2022. The results of this survey will inform the development of the college's first-ever Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) strategic plan and will help guide the work of the new DEI unit and ongoing DEI governance committee.

The college has administered an employer survey over the past few years to better understand how BTC graduates do after they leave BTC. This survey has been administered annually since Fall 2018 through BTC's professional technical program advisory committees. Specifically, this survey explores the extent to which employers believe BTC graduates have developed the soft skills (e.g., problem solving, written and oral communication, collaboration, adaptability) and technical skills (e.g., performing diagnostic work, reading blueprints or other diagrams, operating specialized equipment, using specialized software) necessary to do their work. In Fall 2020, 96% of employers reported that they were satisfied with BTC graduate workplace performance and, in Fall 2021, this rate decreased slightly to 90%. These results offer one promising indicator that BTC students are developing the knowledge and skills needed to perform well in the workforce. Industry representatives serving as advisory committee members also contribute feedback and recommendations on program facilities, materials, equipment, curricula, and student employment.

College employees use a variety of additional external scanning practices. Employees continuously monitor funding trends (e.g., state allocations, grant opportunities and focus areas), state and national data comparisons, and service area demographics to evaluate college performance compared to regional, state and national norms. The college has also created a BTC stakeholder group that meets quarterly in 'Economic Summit' meetings to discuss shared partner information regarding the local, regional, and state economy and BTC responses to current or emerging economic/workforce needs. With a primary focus on employing graduates, the college conducts labor market research on an annual basis, proactively seeks feedback from advisory committee members, and works with workforce

and economic development councils and other similar groups to identify workforce trends. The college's partnerships with school districts, peer educational institutions, labor, industry, industry association partners and community organizations allow it to build comprehensive program advisory committees, form focus groups and skills panels to address emerging issues and demands, enrich curriculum development processes, and provide informed and targeted support for students. BTC employees participate in multiple local, statewide, regional, national, and international industry groups and councils, and bring information and ideas back to the campus community.

These processes have resulted in the college developing new, expanding existing, and reintroducing multiple programs over the last few years. For example, BTC's Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences program instructors proposed a new certificate in Aquaculture Science in 2019 in response to industry requests/needs for current employees to have the option to brush up on fundamentals and maintain employment. Another example is BTC's Nursing program. In collaboration with industry and labor partners, BTC launched a part-time, LPN to RN degree option in Spring 2019, and reinstated a part-time Practical Nursing (PN) program in Spring 2020.

BTC develops plans and reports annually regarding its use of Federal Perkins funds. New Perkins V regulations also require BTC to develop a biannual Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA). This assessment process and related document requires the involvement and input of a broad range of secondary, post-secondary, economic development, parent, student, and special population representatives, and results in an extensive, evidence-based report which summarizes the college's current and desired states in response to questions under five broad categories. The CLNA also requires BTC to document action plans which enables the college to achieve its desired state for each category. The five CLNA categories include: 1) Improving Equity and Access; 2) Evaluation of Student Performance; 3) Evaluation of Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs: Alignment including Size, Scope & Quality; 4) Implementation of Programs and CTE Programs of Study (dual-enrollment programs); and 5) Recruitment, Retention and Training of CTE Educators. BTC has completed its first CLNA assessment process and report, and will repeat this biannual scanning and reporting process in the 2021-22 school year. To assist this process, the college has created a BTC stakeholder group that meets quarterly in 'Economic Summit' meetings to discuss shared information regarding the local, regional, and state economy and BTC responses to current or emerging economic/workforce needs.

1.B Assessment, Reflection and Future Planning
BTC's mission statement resonates with campus stakeholders, and levels of campus engagement in the multi-year 2018-23 Strategic Plan development process—including identification of Key Performance Indicators and metrics—was high. College administrators value feedback in decision-making, and the campus community has opportunities to contribute to institutional planning and development: BTC employees attend gatherings; actively participate in discussion, idea development and/or problem-solving regarding campus-wide initiatives and issues; bring back specific or campus-wide issues to their individual

constituencies; and provide feedback. Faculty engage in Program Effectiveness and Student Learning Outcomes reporting processes, which allow them to review student achievement and program-specific data in alignment with BTC's KPIs, reflect on past practices and outcomes, and engage in data-informed planning for the future. BTC's Planning & Resource Allocation (PARA) governance committee has been instrumental in setting up new, campus-wide budget planning and resource allocation systems that are intentionally connected to the college's strategic planning efforts. The college is making progress in implementing data and alert systems to help identify students who need extra support.

BTC has long-standing and active advisory committees, employees who participate in regional, statewide and national training and information-sharing networks, and a robust set of data dashboards, which provide support for internal monitoring. The college needs to strengthen its suite of assessment and monitoring tools through activities such as incorporating further disaggregation capability into its dashboards and consistently comparing its outcomes to regional and national peers.

In a Fall 2021 accreditation report review event, faculty praised the development of exploratory core course sequences between related programs as part of the college's Guided Pathways initiative – noting that development of these cores will "help students really understand the career and networking opportunities in the field." Faculty also praised campus-wide communication efforts through venues such as the Prez Sez, Instruction Office News, and Notable News publications, and noted that the college's response to challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic was perceived as both high-quality and supportive of faculty members.

The college will work towards implementing unit-level and cross-functional (beyond instructional programs) planning and assessment processes in alignment with the institutional strategic plan. BTC will continue to explore creating stronger links between instructional assessment and budget allocations; for example, intentionally using Program Effectiveness and Student Learning Outcome Report results and planning to inform resource requests and allocation decisions. BTC used internal comparisons as part of its 2018-23 Strategic Plan and will need to work on establishing external benchmarking resources to help assess its performance in alignment with NWCCU's 2020 Standards. Now that key elements of BTC's participatory governance structure (College Assembly and other governance committees) have been in place for several years, the college plans to strengthen its assessment processes regarding the effectiveness and structure of the college's governance system.

STUDENT LEARNING

1.C.1 The institution offers programs with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission, culminates in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes that lead to collegiate-level degrees, certificates, or credentials and includes designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

The college's mission of providing student-centered, high-quality professional technical education forms a tight focus for its educational programs. All college employees support and facilitate an educational environment where the primary purpose is to help students prepare for careers in professional and technical fields.

Curriculum is developed by faculty, and is based on state and/or national skill standards. The sequencing and structure of the coursework is influenced by several factors, including prerequisite skills and knowledge needed for courses, benchmarking with similar programs at other colleges, and advisory committee feedback and recommendations. Ongoing revision of existing programs takes place as needed for the programs to keep abreast of changes in the relevant occupational fields. The appropriate dean or director, Interim Executive Dean of Instruction, and BTC Instruction Council recommend new or revised professional technical curriculum for Chief Academic Officer approval. Faculty consult with the Interim Executive Dean of Instruction, program advisory committee members, Guided Pathways Instructional Designer, and deans to design effective and well-defined program and course Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

The college has made significant strides in refining learning assessment processes for both courses and programs; faculty have worked over many years and across many professional technical programs and academic disciplines to build and sustain a culture of assessment. Recent work has centered on ensuring that assessment processes in both courses and programs are explicitly identified in syllabi and that all major activities are strongly aligned to and help students achieve success in those outcomes. Information on SLOs is included in Program Information Sessions, and program SLOs and measures, such as relevant skills, knowledge, and abilities, are published to the college website (e.g. Business Management) and catalog (e.g. HVAC). SLOs and measures are included on syllabi, as defined by the BTC syllabi template. When students enter their programs, they are provided with course syllabi and program handouts outlining requirements and expectations for successful program completion. Many programs, such as Culinary Arts, Dental Assisting, Nursing, Radiologic Technology and Welding & Fabricating Technology, provide specialized orientations and/or courses which cover learning outcomes, and may also provide students with extensive program handbooks (in accessible formats) on specific program requirements, procedures and conditions.

All professional technical programs develop an annual SLO Report to document and evaluate achievement of clearly identified program- and course-level SLOs. In the 2020-21 academic year, 89% of students included in these reports achieved their course-level SLOs.

For each of the professional technical degrees, an advisory committee of business and industry employers meets at least twice annually. Lab and classroom activities, facilities and curriculum are developed to best reflect current technology and skills used in relevant occupations. Faculty are members of related industry or business organizations and are familiar with industry standards. Whenever possible, employees arrange student internship opportunities and/or opportunities for students to take national or state industry licensing exams used by their particular industry. Many professional technical programs focus on preparing students for industry licensing exams and/or incorporate licensure exam standards and testing into course and/or program curriculum. Each certificate/degree program at the college provides the appropriate scope, rigor and sequence of learning. Programs of more than 45 credits must include general education courses in math, English composition or communications, and psychology or human relations.

NWCCU approved BTC candidacy status to offer degrees at the baccalaureate degree level in May 2016, and awarded full approval in January 2019 (effective September 2017). Today, BTC offers two Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degrees in Operations Management and Engineering Technology.

The college also offers four Direct Transfer Agreement/Major Related Program (DTA/MRP) associate degree programs in computer science (not currently enrolling new students), nursing, and pre-nursing. These programs help students transfer seamlessly into baccalaureate programs as juniors and follow statewide transfer agreements, which require agreed-upon courses statewide and are approved by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

BTC awarded 1,247 credentials to 909 students in 2020-21. All Associate in Applied Science (AAS), Associate in Applied Science-Transfer (AAS-T), Direct Transfer Agreement/Major Related Program (DTA/MRP) and Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degrees and certificates offered at Bellingham Technical College meet requirements established by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) and the Intercollege Relations Commission (ICRC). The AAS-T, DTA/MRP and BAS degrees include transferable general education courses that are designated as common courses with standard outcomes in the SBCTC system. All professional technical programs with 90 credits or more of required course content offer AAS and/or AAS-T degrees, and all approved programs of less than 90 credits offer certificates. All students who graduate with an AAS, AAS-T, DTA/MRP, BAS or certificate from BTC must meet required course and program outcomes and requirements. All transferable general education coursework fulfills content requirements as defined by the ICRC and SBCTC.

1.C.2 The institution awards credit, degrees, certificates, or credentials for programs that are based upon student learning and learning outcomes that offer an appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis of learning.

BTC's professional technical programs are developed or modified in response to identified workforce needs and the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that are needed to prepare enrolled students for entry into the workforce. Program design and modification are centered

around these outcomes and assessed based on student achievement of SLOs. Faculty design professional technical program courses (and the course-level SLOs) to build upon each other and align with the program-level SLOs. As part of BTC Guided Pathways work, faculty are conducting intensive study of current program course sequencing, content overlaps, and SLOs to create common course cores across related programs. Development or revision of existing programs, including course sequencing and SLO development and assessment, is based on input from general education and professional technical instructional faculty, administrators, advisory committee members, and other business and industry representatives.

In order to ensure the development and continuation of coherent program design with appropriate breadth, depth and sequencing of student learning across courses, extensive work is done to verify the workforce need and employment potential for graduates, and to ensure that program content meets the targeted industry needs, professional technical skills standards, and certification requirements. For the development of new programs, the college conducts a needs assessment to identify labor market demand from a variety of sources, including focus groups, advisory committees, business and industry requests, local, state and national labor market research and reviews of existing programs. Continuing development or refinement of curriculum and program structure and sequencing (including creating 'stop in' and 'stop out' points for students) is conducted by faculty working in conjunction with advisory committee members and other industry representatives. Several of BTC's professional technical programs maintain national accreditation status, including Culinary Arts, Dental Assisting, Dental Hygiene, Nursing, Surgery Technology, and Veterinary Technician, while programs such as Information Technology and Welding & Fabrication integrate industry skill standard certification testing into their curriculum. Program faculty ensure that any curricular changes closely adhere to industry-specific standards and closely monitor student pass rates on required industry tests.

The BTC catalog (e.g. Automotive Collision Repair Technology) and website (e.g. Engineering Technology - Mechanical) list program requirements and Student Learning Outcomes for all degree and certificate programs.

1.C.3 The institution identifies and publishes expected program and degree learning outcomes for all degrees, certificates, and credentials. Information on expected student learning outcomes for all courses is provided to enrolled students.

The BTC website identifies Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for each of its degree and certificate programs (e.g. Accounting Technician), and the college catalog (e.g. Diesel Technology), available online and in hard-copy, also lists program-level SLOs. Syllabi (e.g., Communications) are provided to each student for each individual course offered at the college and contain course-level SLOs. Individual programs also may provide program handbooks (e.g., Nursing) for each student, which include SLOs for each course or unit. Both course- and program-level SLOs are assessed and evaluated by faculty as part of the annual SLO Report completed by each professional technical certificate and degree program.

1.C.4 The institution's admission and completion or graduation requirements are clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible to students and the public.

BTC's website includes an overview of typical course sequencing (e.g., Electrician) and structure for each program as applicable. Admissions & Advising staff and faculty discuss program entry requirements with prospective students during outreach events and individual communications and meetings, and college navigators meet with every student in required *GET Started* sessions prior to enrollment to review program entry and completion requirements. After completing the required *GET Started* sessions, students are cleared for course or program registration. Transitional Studies students fill out a special application online, and ELL students at basic language levels do intake and advising directly with their instructor or college navigator. College navigators also track prospective students as they continue the admissions process and send regular communications to applicants to support and encourage their progress. Admission requirements and steps are listed in the catalog and website. Supplemental program admission sheets (e.g., Dental Hygiene) are also available in the Admissions & Advising Office. Graduation requirements are available on the website and program handbooks (e.g., Radiologic Technology) also detail requirements for admission and graduation. BTC has used Degree Audit to help track student progress towards graduation, and will use Academic Advisement Reports in the ctcLink system to assist students, faculty and staff in tracking student progress towards fulfilling graduation requirements. Once in their professional technical programs, students are provided ongoing support from college navigators as well as their program faculty members: after students enter their professional technical program of choice, BTC program faculty act as primary advisors and assist students in keeping track of program graduation requirements. Entry and ongoing support is also provided by staff who serve special populations of students, including those with disabilities, veterans, displaced workers, students in poverty, foster youth and those working on basic academic skills.

BTC meets accreditation information requirements through its annual catalog, which is available on BTC's website and in hard copy. The catalog is available primarily online and is provided in hard copy upon request for those who prefer a print medium. Students are encouraged to visit the website for the most updated and accurate information. The BTC catalog is created using a collaborative process to ensure broad input and accuracy.

1.C.5 The institution engages in an effective system of assessment to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs. The institution recognizes the central role of faculty to establish curricula, assess student learning, and improve instructional programs.

BTC faculty complete annual Student Learning Outcome (SLO) reports, in which they document program- and course-specific SLO expectations, measurement/assessment details, student achievement results, and reflective responses to those results. The SLO Report template was recently updated to prompt faculty to enter raw numbers (rather than percentages or brief descriptions) of student achievement across each SLO, allowing for descriptive analysis at the course-, program-, and institutional-levels. As part of the college's ongoing focus on development of effective SLOs, faculty and administration have worked together to improve

SLO assessment processes, combining course- and program-level SLO Reports to emphasize the integration of SLOs across the curriculum; improve faculty training; streamline the reporting process; and make the resulting data more accessible for analysis and application to future practice. This improved process for SLO development and assessment helps ensure that faculty—working in conjunction and as needed with the Chief Academic Officer, deans, and Data & Research staff—will continue to identify specific, measurable SLOs, define effective assessment methods to measure student achievement across each SLO, and engage in meaningful use of assessment results to improve the teaching and learning process.

For example, a Process Technology faculty member noted in their 2019-20 SLO Report for their PTEC 211 (Troubleshooting) course that "students struggle to analyze basic ladder logic diagrams." In response, the faculty member developed an interactive lab to demonstrate ladder logic basic concepts and execution using the Envision high-fidelity simulation system. Subsequent analysis of course SLO outcomes after this change, however, showed that "the Envision system has proven inadequate to demonstrate basic ladder logic diagrams and execution. More work needs to be done to improve student comprehension of this topic." In a second example, BTC's Veterinary Technology instructor noted that, for their VET 104 (Veterinary Nutrition) course, the "General concept [was] understood well, but specifics of puppy vs. senior vs. lactation diet needs in dogs [were] clearly understood by 25% of students." The instructor planned to increase emphasis of this topic in lecture to address the issue, and reported that, after implementation of the change, "students did well on understanding lifestage nutrition with incorporation of [the] new Lifestage Nutrition tutorial (online)."

Faculty are considered the subject-matter experts in their respective fields, and have clear authority and responsibility for setting appropriate SLOs, designing and implementing curriculum guided by the SLOs, and assessing student achievement of SLOs. Faculty revise existing curriculum using relevant business and industry input, and participate in campus-wide professional development opportunities. For example, in the Fall 2021 Faculty Inservice, two 'Assessment Norming' sessions regarding consistent design and evaluation of both written and practical assignments were facilitated by and offered to BTC faculty. Faculty also regularly update their knowledge of industry standards and skills via ongoing professional development, such as participating in back-to-industry experiences or attending professional technical trade shows and other events. Proposals for curriculum revisions and structural changes are reviewed and approved by the appropriate dean, Instruction Council, and the Chief Academic Officer prior to implementation. Standard transfer courses such as those in science, psychology, mathematics, and English are developed based on state common course requirements.

Annually, all professional technical program faculty—in collaboration with Data & Research staff—also complete Program Effectiveness Reports, which are aligned with BTC's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and include program-specific data on and standards for student enrollment (headcount and FTE), student retention, student completion, and completer employment. Faculty and deans review the reports together as needed to discuss the effectiveness of prior changes and identify any further changes needed or new areas for improvement. Faculty use this reporting structure to formally evaluate and continuously

improve each professional technical program. For example, in the 2020-21 [Transitional Studies](#) report, staff and faculty noted that technology, including online reading, had continued to be a barrier for students. Improvement planning and activities to address this issue in the online learning environments required during the pandemic included checking out laptops and wifi hotspots to students, sending course packets to students' homes and making them available through the library, and providing one-on-one assistance through the phone or zoom. The department created an online orientation course to help students get onboarded for school (which included technical training and assistance with completing forms), Facebook page (including announcements for registration and other information), and a new process through which instructors visit each other's online classes to offer feedback and support.

The college uses a variety of technologies to collect and analyze program performance data, including Tableau software and other tools, to create multiple online dashboards which are developed and maintained by BTC's Data & Research team. Recently, Data & Research staff have focused on creation of a [program-specific data dashboard](#), and hope to align this dashboard with the college's program effectiveness reporting process in the coming years. Instructional programs are also evaluated and improved based on regular [course experience surveys](#), advisory committee feedback, and the college's Instruction Council, composed primarily of faculty and a cross-section of other employees, reviews and recommends policies and procedures related to student learning on an ongoing basis.

1.C.6 Consistent with its mission, the institution establishes and assesses, across all associate and bachelor level programs or within a General Education curriculum, institutional learning outcomes and/or core competencies. Examples of such learning outcomes and competencies include, but are not limited to, effective communication skills, global awareness, cultural sensitivity, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, problem solving, and/or information literacy.

BTC is committed to providing a solid academic foundation for its students in communication, computation, and human relations subjects, as well as helping students master complex professional technical skills relevant to each discipline. Each course included in the general education requirements for BTC's degree programs is designed to build knowledge and skills that will directly support student career goals. College [general education courses](#) required for professional technical programs remain focused on delivering: 1) the communication, computation, and human relations skills needed by students for success in respective professional technical programs; and 2) a general education foundation needed for further education.

One of BTC's qualitative Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is "campus-level SLO expectations and assessment processes are in place." In Spring 2019, the [Planning and Resource Allocation](#) (PARA) Committee held a series of eight [campus forums](#) to inform the development of the college's qualitative KPIs, including campus-level SLOs, and the Data & Research team conducted a short faculty survey to gather feedback on meaningful campus-level SLOs. The General Education area began drafting program-level outcomes in Fall 2019 with the idea that

these outcomes would inform the development of BTC's campus-level SLOs. Much of this work was put on hold until recently due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An Instruction Council (IC) workgroup was established in Spring 2021 to begin identifying college-level SLOs and assessment processes focused on improving BTC practices. The workgroup created and shared an early draft of the College-Level Student Learning Outcomes (CLSLOs) with IC in June 2021, and drafted a timeline for completing development and assessment of those outcomes. The workgroup continued to fine-tune the CLSLOs in Fall 2021, and gathered stakeholder feedback in January and February 2022. IC will consider the CLSLOs for approval in March 2022, and both College Assembly and the President's Leadership Team will review and consider for approval in April/May 2022.

1.C.7 The institution uses the results of its assessment efforts to inform academic and learning- support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes.

Student outcomes data form the foundation for major student learning initiative planning, and are compiled and analyzed annually at the program and course levels. These data are available to any employee, are regularly reviewed by faculty and deans, and may be reviewed by special initiative teams. BTC professional technical program faculty may also share Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Report information with their program advisory committee members to gain input on strategies that may help improve SLO achievement. In a recent accreditation report review session, faculty noted that the SLO annual reports have become easier to use and that faculty use these reports to "make changes in real time as well as share input [with] advisory committee members" and "review previous year [results] and make improvements to track action." Other BTC areas, such as Accessibility Resources, have also developed SLOs based on national student affairs standards used by the Council of Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, and evaluate area performance against their established SLOs at least annually.

Examples of using the results of BTC student learning assessment efforts to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices, with the goal of continuously improving Student Learning Outcomes, include:

> **Continuous Improvement Changes**: BTC faculty make a variety of adjustments to individual courses based on SLO data, including modifying syllabi, reviewing and improving learning assessments, reviewing and updating books and other course learning materials, and purchasing equipment and technology intended to enhance student learning. In each SLO Report, faculty discuss their actions to help improve SLO achievement. For example, a math faculty member reported that only 58% of their Spring 2019 students in Math& 142 had achieved 70% or higher on a unit test meant to measure student ability to derive the arc functions from the basic trigonometric functions using inverse function properties, sketch their graphs by hand, and evaluate the composition of arc functions analytically. Recognizing that "students need more time to fully understand the concepts when applied to a transcendental function such as trigonometry and master the delicate manipulation to evaluate the composition of arc functions analytically," this faculty member decided to use a different course textbook with enhanced online support resources. As a result, 92.31% of

students enrolled in Spring 2020 achieved 70% or higher on the unit test. In another example, an Industrial Maintenance and Mechatronics program faculty member reviewed student assignments, projects, and test results in the EMTEC 105 course related to the program's "recognize[d] safety standards/protocols for industrial safety conditions as identified throughout instruction." They realized that "we need to add some parts for safety in mechatronics, for instance physical safety including robot safety and ergonomics, also digital safety such as information systems or IT safety and security."

Resource Requests: The BTC Resource Request process also encourages employees to respond to SLO and SLO-related data. For example, in their response to prompts within the request form, BTC's Automotive Technology faculty members requested an engine performance trainer (in response to advisory committee feedback) because "Quality instruction is more important now than ever. These engine performance trainers will greatly enhance the quality of instruction in our most complex curriculum, engine performance. There is no topic more challenging to a new graduate entering the workforce than engine performance related diagnostics and these trainers directly address their readiness to enter the workplace when faced with the arduous task of diagnostics. Our current trainers are outdated and these modern trainers will assure [that] BTC keeps pace with industry and the needs of today's workforce."

In BTC's Machining program, students were training on bed mills with controls and software from different eras. Students could not transfer their programs from one machine to another, and the techniques used for programming on one machine were not applicable to another. This situation resulted in bottle-necks and frustration for both students and faculty members. Although the college had gradually been replacing outdated lathes, adding machines, and updating lab software, the pace of this change was inadequate. The program struggled to retain students, particularly in their third and fourth quarters, due in part to student frustration over waiting times to use the training equipment and the inefficiencies of that equipment. Based on these retention—and related student learning access—issues, faculty launched multiple successful resource development efforts (including through the resource request process) over the past three years to fully update, standardize, and equip the Machining program laboratory. As a result of faculty and administration efforts to improve student outcomes, students are now able to train in smaller teams on each piece of equipment, reducing frustration over lack of access to the equipment they need to practice their skills. This change helped focus program curriculum and activities on current industry processes and skills, and increased the relevancy of program training.

Financial Literacy: BTC has studied the needs of its lowest-income students to identify the most significant barriers to learning and success for this population. Results from targeted student and employee forums indicate that lack of financial literacy skills and inability to effectively access financial aid resources are the biggest challenges for these students. In a Spring 2017 survey, 82% of responding students reported that financial aid was very important in their decision to attend BTC, yet only 65% were satisfied with

financial aid resources. To respond to these concerns, BTC created a peer mentoring program intended to help low-income BTC students develop financial literacy knowledge and skills. This program was designed to improve student learning outcomes by enabling students to access more financial resources and develop financial plans to help them stay in school and better focus on their learning. While this model has shown promise, the number of students served remained low. Financial literacy content is now included in BTC's College Foundations I (CDEV) course, which is required for students placing into pre-college coursework. Previously, due to BTC policy loopholes, many students were able to avoid enrolling in this course, but college policy/processes have recently been updated to correct this gap. An element of BTC's Guided Pathways model includes the integration of student financial literacy training into required navigation and student support activities. The college will build on its prior models of financial literacy training to design an information system that will effectively serve BTC students.

1.C.8 Transfer credit and credit for prior learning is accepted according to clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible policies that provide adequate safeguards to ensure academic quality. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that such credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic rigor, and quality.

BTC's Credit Acceptance Policy (331) is clearly articulated in the college catalog and online. On its Transfer Student website, BTC maintains a linked table of courses it accepts in transfer from the other state two-year community and technical colleges. Credit transfer guidelines, including for College Board Advanced Placement (AP) credit and Career and Technical Education (CTE) Dual Credit, as well as courses from other accredited institutions, are clearly outlined in the college catalog and website. College procedures are consistently followed by BTC's Transcript Evaluator. Typically, a student must earn at least a "C" average and three credits or more in courses that are 100-level or above at an accredited college or university in order to satisfy general education equivalencies. For transfer of specific professional technical credits within a particular program, the program instructor helps evaluate the student's request and official transcripts for equivalency. CTE Dual Credit articulation agreements with area high schools are in place for programs such as Business, Culinary Arts, and Welding & Fabricating Technology. The transfer credit policy for the CTE Dual Credit program is described in the college catalog and website.

In addition to offering DTA/MRP and BAS degrees, BTC continues to expand articulation agreements with colleges that offer baccalaureate degrees in fields that match the college's offerings. Over the past few years, BTC has improved transfer opportunities for professional technical students, including finalizing an articulation agreement between BTC's Fisheries & Aquaculture Sciences program and Skagit Valley College's (SVC) Bachelor of Applied Science Degree in Environmental Conservation. Additional articulations have been developed between SVC's Manufacturing Technology program and BTC's Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Engineering Technology, and between BTC's Engineering Technology: Geomatics Specialization program and the University of Alaska's Bachelor of Science in Geomatics. The BTC website has a

[Transfer Options](#) site that lists colleges with which BTC has developed articulation agreements, or that have blanket acceptance of AAS or AAS-T degrees. The site includes an overview and list for the state's common course numbering system.

BTC has revised and added to its prior learning policies, creating policy 332.0, [Academic Credit for Prior Learning](#) (ACPL), and 332.1, [Awarding Credit for Military Training](#). Together, these policies address credit for prior experiential learning, challenge procedures, and options for advanced program placement. [ACPL](#) information is outlined on BTC's website and includes both the process for awarding credit for prior learning and which professional technical programs at BTC are approved to award prior learning credit.

When a program develops procedures to award credit for prior experiential learning, the process is reviewed and approved by BTC's Instruction Council. Programs make these procedures available to enrolled program students. The institution makes no assurances to the student regarding the number of credits to be awarded prior to the completion of the institution's review process. At BTC, prior learning credit for experiential learning is identified on transcripts with the unique grade "CR". Over the past year, to better assist students who enter BTC with previous experience and skills, the Instruction area created an [ACPL brochure](#) for current and prospective students and a [one-page document](#) to inform internal stakeholders about the benefits of ACPL. The [BTC Foundation](#) also established an endowment and annual scholarship fund to offset fees for students who want to earn ACPL.

1.C.9 The institution's graduate programs are consistent with its mission, are in keeping with the expectations of its respective disciplines and professions, and are described through nomenclature that is appropriate to the levels of graduate and professional degrees offered. The graduate programs differ from undergraduate programs by requiring, among other things, greater: depth of study; demands on student intellectual or creative capacities; knowledge of the literature of the field; and ongoing student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression, and/or relevant professional practice.

N/A

1.C Assessment, Reflection and Future Planning
BTC's practice of building its professional technical programs around industry knowledge and standards is excellent, and its students have high placement rates in their chosen fields compared to other Washington community and technical colleges. The college has a mix of many long-standing and some newer professional technical programs: long-term and new faculty members are working together to experiment with promising instructional models that can be used to enhance program practices.

The culture of embracing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in order to improve courses is becoming established, and the quality of individual course SLOs is improving. Professional technical program faculty demonstrate thoughtful engagement with SLO assessment and improvement efforts. One faculty member recently noted that "SLOs which have very high

performance scores allow instructors to evaluate the appropriate difficulty aspect and may encourage the instructor to delve deeper and challenge the students in the future," while another observed that "transitioning to mainly online learning, due to COVID, has provided unique opportunities to assess SLOs in a different way." However, while the SLO and Program Effectiveness reports contain a wide range of data, the quality of report assessment and follow-up on the part of faculty and their supervisors is not consistent across all programs, and not all programs involve all relevant faculty members in development and assessment of SLOs across all courses. Results and outcomes from these reporting processes need to be consistently used to inform improvements and resource allocation decisions. Professional technical faculty do not yet report SLO achievement at the individual student level (the current reporting structure instead prompts faculty to report the proportion of students who met each SLO), which prevents employees from conducting more effective analyses of equity gaps in student learning. The quality of SLOs and SLO assessments are not yet consistent. For example, adjunct faculty do not complete SLO Reports and may be the sole instructor for a course; this results in some courses not being assessed via the SLO reporting process.

The college is in the process of establishing institution-level SLOs and assessment practices based on those outcomes, but BTC does not yet have a consistent and effective system in place for establishing and/or communicating non-instructional program outcomes.

BTC employs technology systems to track student progress, and program admission and completion requirements are published in its catalog. The college could, however, better communicate and strengthen processes to help students track their progress and graduation requirements.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

1.D.1 Consistent with its mission, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational programs. It orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advice about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.

The college maintains an open admissions policy, and most of BTC's degree and certificate programs require evidence of appropriate reading, mathematics, and sentence skills for entry. Applicant skill levels are identified through evaluation of previous testing or educational experience, or through assessment testing using the Accuplacer Next Generation[©] exam. Some programs, such as Nursing and Allied Health programs, require additional application materials, including the completion of prerequisite courses, criminal background checks or drug testing (to meet clinical partner requirements), to ensure that program admissions requirements meet professional standards and/or program accreditation requirements. Programs with specific admissions steps provide additional information (e.g., Dental Hygiene) on the BTC website and in the Admissions & Advising Office. Hard-copy and web information includes admissions

information and steps along with required forms. For most short-term certificate programs, students sign up for classes on a first-come, first-served basis. Transitional Studies students may be referred to the Transitional Studies area as a result of Accuplacer assessment scores, or go directly to the department to complete an intake process and register for courses or programs.

In a collaborative effort between Instruction and Student Services, program waitlists, long a tradition at BTC, were eliminated beginning in 2018-19. Students who meet the admissions requirements for these programs now enroll on a first-come, first-served basis during scheduled registration periods. This change was implemented to reduce enrollment barriers for students and decrease employee workloads.

BTC's nine areas of study are listed on the college's main webpage, with links to the individual program pages that are included under each area. Each individual program page contains program information such as entry requirements, costs, required courses, outcomes, and employment outlook. Similar information is provided via BTC's program brochures and Viewbook, which have traditionally been distributed in hard copy but are now also available on BTC's website.

BTC Admissions Specialists employ a prospective student caseload structure, which assists with communications and resource information-sharing. Activities include invitations to campus tours and events, and provision of both in-person and remote individualized assistance for each new student prior to registration for their first quarter. The college provides a variety of outreach events designed to inform students about educational pathways, including campus-wide career and program exploration events such as 'Try-a-Trade' and in-person or online Info Sessions, which cover information on featured programs, and opportunities to tour different programs (virtually or in-person) and talk to instructors. Admissions specialists are available to answer questions about how to get started at BTC. BTC also hosts regular information sessions at high schools where staff discuss BTC program offerings and admissions processes. At these sessions, high school students and family members can access navigation support as well as take advantage of placement testing opportunities.

Based on a collaborative assessment of Student Services operations and programs that needed further refinement in Spring 2018, an employee-led Onboarding Redesign workgroup was established. This group researched, planned and implemented improvements to BTC's onboarding process for new students, and the new student onboarding process was implemented in Fall 2018. The process emphasizes consistent communication and outreach to prospective students and connecting new students to individualized assistance prior to registration for their first quarter. The group developed the model of holding required individual *GET Started* meetings with every new degree-seeking student prior to registration.

As part of BTC's Guided Pathways work, the college's goal was to align college navigators with each area of study. While BTC previously had advisors and coaches in separate roles, the college successfully created its first college navigator role (involving an integration of advising and coaching functions in one position) in Fall 2019. In Summer 2021, the college converted its

academic and career advisors and completion coaches into college navigators, creating a cadre of college navigators who were assigned to specific areas of study. At *GET Started* sessions, these college navigators work with each student to help them understand their program of choice, entry and registration requirements, and help them create an academic plan. College navigators also provide students with information about BTC funding opportunities, support resources, and next steps. This mandatory on-boarding structure aligns with Guided Pathways equity goals, and is particularly beneficial for new students, including first-generation students, who may not know about or be adept at seeking out resources. College navigators keep students on their caseloads from entry to graduation so that, although faculty take over advising duties once students are in their program, college navigators retain connections with and remain resources for students.

Career exploration tools and services are available to all prospective and current students. Online tools include the Emsi Career Coach software tool (purchased in Spring 2021), which provides students with labor-market information, career exploration and assessment services linked to BTC's professional technical programs, and resume-building services. The system also has a portal for employers to post internship or job opportunities suitable for students. BTC has employees who specialize in assisting special population students, including those with disabilities, veterans, displaced workers, students of color, foster youth, and those with basic academic skills. These specialized programs often provide mandatory and intensive career exploration, academic planning and transfer support for target populations. For example, BTC's TRiO Student Support Services and Workforce Funding programs help specific populations of students with additional educational and career planning. For example, the college's Basic Food, Employment & Training (BFET) program onboarding process includes development of an employment plan, identifying barriers to success, career path, and assessment of student's interest in their program of study. As part of its Guided Pathways implementation, BTC is working with professional technical program faculty to create common exploratory course cores shared across relevant programs. These cores will not only increase ease of student transfers between programs, but will also typically include career exploration elements.

BTC departments, such as Student Life, Library, and eLearning, host Tech Camps and an Open House before the beginning of each quarter. All new and continuing students are invited to attend the camps and visit the Student Center for a student ID card and to meet and network with Associated Students BTC (ASBTC) Executive Team members, peer coaches from BTC's TRiO SSS program, and BTC's cadre of Student Ambassadors, who lead campus tours and participate in new student activities. Many programs (such as Culinary Arts and Nursing) also have individual orientations that occur before the quarter starts. The myBTC portal allows students to access a wide variety of online services, including online registration, Financial Aid, Degree Audit, unofficial transcripts, and current course schedules.

1.D.2 Consistent with its mission and in the context of and in comparison with regional and national peer institutions, the institution establishes and shares widely a set of indicators for student achievement including, but not limited to, persistence, completion, retention, and postgraduation success. Such indicators of student achievement should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, first generation college student, and any other institutionally meaningful categories that may help promote student achievement and close barriers to academic excellence and success (equity gaps).

BTC has selected a collection of data that are used to inform strategic planning, evaluate progress across each goal, and help shed light on how well BTC is fulfilling its mission. Development of BTC's Key Performance Indicators was informed by an extensive, campus-wide collaborative process, research of peer regional and national college KPIs, and review of several external sources (e.g., the American Association of Community Colleges' core indicators of effectiveness, IPEDS). A Planning & Resource Allocation (PARA) Committee taskforce developed a set of draft KPIs for BTC based on student and employee feedback, identified how to assess progress for each KPI, and worked with PARA, College Assembly, President's Leadership Team, and the Board of Trustees to finalize the indicators.

Out of the college's 12 KPIs, five focus on student achievement:

1. Student Learning Outcomes, with sub-KPIs capturing course-, program-, and campus-level SLOs;
2. Student Transition, with sub-KPIs capturing Transitional Studies to college-level, Developmental Education to college-level, and early-program to core-program transition;
3. Retention;
4. Completion; and
5. Employment, with sub-KPIs capturing job placement and workplace performance.

The College's peer institutions include nine community and technical colleges in Washington State, and five additional colleges across the nation. Regional and national benchmarking data will begin to be published in 2022-23 on the BTC website and intranet. Indicators from these institutions will be reviewed and updated annually.

In order to expand access to BTC KPI information and data, Data & Research staff rebuilt the college's internal dashboards, which are accessible to all employees, to align with the KPIs, and recently developed public-facing Strategic Themes, Goals & KPIs and KPI Indicator Status dashboards, which are available on its website and help viewers understand the college's progress across each of its KPIs. For these internal data dashboards, users can disaggregate data by student demographics such as age, gender, first-generation status, disability status, students of color/ethnicity, veteran status, and low-income status. Users can also disaggregate by student status, such as part-time status or academically disadvantaged. BTC's Transition, Retention, and Completion student achievement dashboards allow for comparisons between student groups (e.g. comparing students of color to first-generation students). These dashboards also allow for comparisons to be made across certain student support programs

that primarily serve underrepresented students, such as [workforce funding](#), [TRiO SSS](#), [Accessibility Resources](#), [Running Start](#), and the [IMPACT!](#) youth reengagement program.

BTC's Data & Research area has focused on broad engagement with stakeholders regarding student achievement data. The area posts the dashboards on the college's intranet site for easy access on the part of employees, shares information about those dashboards in campus publications such as [Notable News](#) and the President's regular newsletters, conducts training sessions at campus-wide events such as Campus Kick-Off, Faculty Inservices and in governance committee meetings, and processes [ad-hoc data requests](#). In BTC's [Spring 2021 employee survey](#), 65% of respondents reported that they were aware how to access the dashboards, and 52% reported occasionally or frequently using college data to inform their work.

1.D.3 The institution's disaggregated indicators of student achievement should be widely published and available on the institution's website. Such disaggregated indicators should be aligned with meaningful, institutionally identified indicators benchmarked against indicators for peer institutions at the regional and national levels and be used for continuous improvement to inform planning, decision making, and allocation of resources.

BTC carefully monitors current students and their academic achievement, including retention, progression, and completion rates, as well as workforce success indicators (job placement and employer feedback) for our graduates. College [data dashboards](#) offer users the ability to disaggregate BTC student achievement data. Employees use these data to help identify BTC's most at-risk student populations and focus resource development efforts to help identify strategies and adopt models (such as [Guided Pathways](#)) intended to close achievement gaps. Annually, all faculty—in collaboration with Data & Research staff—complete [Program Effectiveness Reports](#). Each program's faculty review their disaggregated program-specific effectiveness data, use those data results to demonstrate the program's effectiveness compared to institutional standards, and develop strategies for increased retention and completion. For example, a faculty member for the [Instrumentation & Control Technology](#) program identified job placement as an area of opportunity for their program after review of their Program Effectiveness Report data, and collaborated with other faculty to gather ideas. As a result, the faculty member implemented a variety of improvement activities, including increasing the frequency of dialogue with students regarding employment opportunities, application processes, common industry hiring practices, interview questions and pre-employment exams. In addition to more in-program discussions, on multiple occasions faculty had industry professionals come in to answer student questions and provide industry insight.

A public-facing student achievement dashboard has been created and added to the website, including easy-to-understand metrics such as student demographics, retention and progression, and completion and employment. This [dashboard](#) is simple to use, and was designed for use by individuals with no dashboard training. Definitions and other data information have been added to the dashboard to enhance understanding and transparency.

College employees have access to the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) dashboards, such as the [Credentials Awarded](#) and [First-Time Entering Student Outcomes](#) dashboards, that track student achievement outcomes and include both disaggregation options based on student demographic factors and comparison options across specific colleges. Regional and national benchmarking data will begin to be published in 2022-23 on the BTC website and intranet (see response to Criterion 1.B.2 for further information).

1.D.4 The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing indicators of student achievement are transparent and are used to inform and implement strategies and allocate resources to mitigate perceived gaps in achievement and equity.

The annual schedule for Program Effectiveness and Student Learning Outcomes reporting ensures that assessment is consistently applied to all degree programs and offerings and that a continuous cycle of improvement is in place.

Faculty regularly and systematically assess and respond to findings, and develop and implement strategies to improve their teaching and student learning. In order to ensure dissemination of best practices, these results are compiled and posted to the Instruction section of the college's intranet site (accessible to all campus personnel). [This site](#) contains detailed information related to course syllabi, Student Learning Outcomes, assessment tools and techniques, assessment results, improvements in teaching and learning, learning outcomes tracking, current assessment, and projects. Academic and learning support planning enhances core teaching and learning in the classroom as well as at the institutional level, and occurs at every cornerstone of the college, including Instruction, Student Services, Administrative Services, Institutional Planning & Advancement.

Examples of how data are used at BTC to inform and implement strategies and allocate resources to mitigate perceived gaps in achievement and equity include:

Applicant Milestones and Placement Dashboards: In an effort to identify equity gaps between student populations based on entry milestones that occur before they even step foot in a BTC classroom, BTC's Data & Research staff worked with the [Student Access and Success](#) (SAS) governance committee to create an [Applicant Milestones dashboard](#), which was finalized in Summer 2020. While the dashboard was still in development, the committee was able to use the data to identify potential equity gaps among students of color and first-generation student groups: the gap between the number of students who applied for financial aid and the number who ultimately enrolled at BTC was much greater for these groups as compared to the rest of the student population. Based on these findings, Student Services staff reexamined recruitment practices geared toward students of color, consulting guidance materials from organizations such as the SBCTC. Employees revised communications strategies with undocumented students and students who complete the [Washington Application for State Financial Aid](#) (WASFA), working with them proactively and on an individualized

basis. Student Services staff have also begun planning work with BTC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) area to align efforts with the college's strategic plan and DEI efforts.

One of the SAS operations committees (Connection to Enrollment) is also using the Applicant Milestones dashboard to examine how students advance through BTC's admissions steps. The data suggests that over the last few years, BTC has experienced an increase in the number of admissions applications it has received, but a decrease in the number of students enrolling. For example, in the 2020/2021 academic year, 1,438 students achieved placement the quarter they planned to start, but only 730 of them enrolled, which was 15% of the total number of applicants. BTC has also developed a Placement Testing dashboard that helps employees assess what methods students are using to place into English and math courses, along with student success rates in initial English and math courses based on placement method. Results indicate that nearly half of those students who take the college's current assessment tests fail to enroll. The Connection to Enrollment committee will examine what happens after students test and achieve placement that may keep them from enrolling, and provide recommendations to the college based on this research and analysis.

Exploratory Core Sequences: Most of BTC's professional technical degree programs have historically operated within a rigid, siloed structure. Many programs offer courses on common topics such as safety or basic mechanical principals, but each has a unique curriculum and students can transfer no credits among them. Thirty-four percent (34%) of BTC completers change programs prior to receiving their degree, but graduating students who change their program at least once take a median of seven additional quarters to complete their degrees. In addition, students who are interested in enrolling in professional technical programs but who place into pre-college course levels have no chance to take program-level courses in their area of interest until they finish their remedial coursework in English and/or mathematics. This causes delays of a quarter or more for these students, and results in low retention and completion rates. Almost half of BTC's non-traditional students enroll in a pre-college course in their first year, and only 44% of these students are still at BTC one year later. Only 28% of non-trad students who are required to take pre-college coursework complete a credential within three years of starting, compared to 43% of non-traditional students who did not have to enroll in pre-college courses.

A key element of BTC's Guided Pathways project involves the development of exploratory core sequences between areas of study, and in some cases, exploration of de-sequencing second-year coursework to better allow students to stop-in and stop-out of professional technical programs. We expect this work to strengthen student achievement outcomes by allowing students to transfer credits between similar programs, enhancing completion rates, and ensuring pre-college level students will be able to begin taking program-level courses as soon as they enter their area of study. These areas of study are being designed to promote non-traditional student learning by offering coursework at times and in modalities that can help students meet work and

family care obligations. BTC anticipates that this structure will increase non-traditional student access to professional technical programs and their related opportunities for engagement, allow them time to fully explore career options within their field of interest, and improve their learning outcomes. Some faculty are also working to de-sequence courses in their second year with the support of BTC's Instructional Designer, which will open up access for students who may stop out of the program and need to come back in and finish a specific quarter.

Students Helping Build an Inclusive Future in the Trades (SHIFT): Faculty members in BTC professional technical programs observe that, while their female-identifying students have the same level of ability as male-identifying students, they often suffer from lack of confidence in their skills and abilities, and sometimes struggle to fit in with an overwhelmingly male student population. Female students frequently need to balance school and other obligations (e.g., child/family care), experiencing a high degree of pressure to earn money and spend time outside of school fulfilling other responsibilities. In consequence, and as reflected in state data, the college has seen steady decreases in the levels of non-traditional student enrollment and retention over the past several years.

In order to help address these issues, female-identifying faculty members at the college proposed formation of a cross-trades women's mentoring program. With assistance from State and private funding resources beginning in 2017-18, the SHIFT committee, with over 15 representatives—including faculty members; Student Services, Institutional Planning & Advancement, and Marketing & Communication staff representatives; and members of BTC's administrative team—have worked to identify project goals, progress, and issues; create student networking groups; host events designed to raise awareness; and engage in planning. For example, in 2019-20, in addition to developing a SHIFT video, organizing fund-raising events, and delivering the plenary address at a Faculty Inservice event, committee members met in special sessions to assist with special event and outreach planning, organizing and promoting a campus-wide event that highlighted the experiences of non-traditional students and workers. The SHIFT committee partnered with the Apprenticeship and Non-Traditional Employment for Women (ANEW) and the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) to host the first annual Northwest Washington Council of Tradeswomen Equity Summit at BTC in Winter 2020. In Spring 2021, BTC's SHIFT faculty leader was a featured presenter at the statewide Workforce Education Council (WEC) winter meeting hosted by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges. The meeting included approximately 80 statewide workforce deans, directors, and other personnel.

Multiple Services Study: In a study requested by SAS in 2018-19, BTC's Data & Research staff examined whether student participation in multiple specialized support programs was more effective in retaining students than participation in only one program. Preliminary study results showed no evidence of increased retention on the part of students who received services from multiple support programs as compared to students who received

services from a single program. This research helped strengthen the college's focus on creating touch-points and services that serve a broad range of students rather than concentrating multiple services on limited student populations. For example, the college integrated student support staff into all developmental classrooms to provide navigation information and services, and the college's new onboarding process for new students requires that nearly every new degree-seeking student receive navigation support.

Completion Coaching Program: Using the [retention dashboard](#), the college identified academically underprepared students (those students who placed into basic or developmental general education coursework), low-income students, students with disabilities, and first-generation students as high-risk groups. After researching evidence-based post-secondary strategies for increasing high-risk student retention, BTC selected replication of the [*InsideTrack*](#) student coaching model as a strategy to help redress student equity issues. The college targeted its resource development work and successfully obtained a TRiO Student Support Services grant and multiple Title III awards to support this effort. This funding allowed BTC to pilot a completion coaching program in Spring 2016 and has enabled BTC to continue the program ever since. BTC research showed that 63% of new full-time, degree-seeking students persisted from Fall 2018 to Fall 2019, but that only 52% of new part-time, degree-seeking students continued. Further analysis revealed that part-time students who receive coaching three times per quarter from one of BTC's coaching programs (TRiO Student Support Services and Title III completion) are retained at higher rates than are non-coached students and, furthermore, at rates similar to those of full-time students. These results suggest that BTC's coaching programs are effective in helping retain this at-risk student population at higher rates. As a result of this improvement, BTC has transformed and expanded the college's existing advising and coaching systems in order to integrate coaching practices at scale. As part of the Guided Pathways model at BTC, advisors and coaches have worked together to combine coaching and advising practices and become college navigators, delivering intrusive, mandatory navigation services to at-risk students enrolled in each of the college's areas of study. College navigators and faculty continue to work together to make sure the navigators are aware of program processes and curriculum to better help students figure out what their end goal is.

Team Math: BTC faculty formed an inquiry group ('Team Math') in 2015-16 to begin addressing pervasive student success issues in BTC's math courses. BTC data showed that nearly 40% of all BTC students were not succeeding in one or more BTC math course and, in some critical gateway courses such as Beginning or Intermediate Algebra, the overall failure rates rose to nearly 50%. When students fail math courses, they become increasingly unlikely to ever achieve their educational goals: only approximately 21% of students who enrolled in one of BTC's precollege math courses went on to earn a BTC certificate or degree within the next three years.

Team Math began research and activities with the goal of improving BTC student success, retention, and completion in mathematics. As a result of this work, faculty members identified the [National Repository of Online Courses (NROC) Project](#) as a

critical resource for improvement. The NROC Project represents a network of educators who work together to develop and share robust digital resources designed to better prepare and accelerate students through math coursework modules. Faculty determined that adaptation and use of these open educational resources would help the college create a competency-based, flipped-classroom mathematics learning model designed to redress specific weaknesses in student knowledge, along with substantially reducing course costs for students.

BTC administrators approved resource development efforts to support the goals of Team Math, and garnered multiple State and private funding resources to assist this work. With this additional funding, Team Math worked closely with the NROC Project to fully implement a flipped-classroom instructional model in BTC's math courses, as well as develop a suite of shared academic and metacognitive resources, create master Canvas course shells for math courses, develop Open Educational Resources (OER), and incorporate additional teaching assistance into pre-college math classrooms. These achievements represented the culmination of over three years of faculty-led effort to redesign BTC's math programming. The focus of this redesign was on basic and developmental math courses, which serve a high percentage of BTC's non-traditional students. Preliminary data results are indicating success; for example, the percentage of BTC students in Math 50, 90, 98, and 99 who enroll in the next course with a C or better within four quarters increased by approximately 12% from 2015-16 to 2019-20. Student surveys across all years of the project showed that students felt that NROC worked: they attested that the new examples, practice problems, and videos helped increase their understanding of math. In 2018-19, Team Math was recognized by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) for saving over $400,000 in student costs since switching to OER textbooks for developmental math courses in 2015-16.

1.D Assessment, Reflection and Future Planning

Multiple elements of BTC's Guided Pathways model, including development of a college navigation model, greater focus on career preparation services, and core exploratory sequences between related programs, will help students explore career options early in their educational pathway. BTC's advising systems have greatly improved, shifting from providing optional advising services to mandatory, individualized assistance for each new degree-seeking student prior to first-quarter registration. BTC has developed a strong suite of data dashboards, which are available to all employees. Use of these data to inform and implement strategies is increasing; for example, data informs BTC resource development efforts, and governance committees such as SAS look at data to help inform decision-making. BTC's KPI indicator status dashboards are available both internally and externally on the college's website, and the college has identified a meaningful set of regional and national peer institutions across which to benchmark. SLO assessment methodologies have been developed from campus input and are effective.

Traditionally, the college has employed a rigid program enrollment system in which students declare and enter their professional technical program of choice either immediately or after

their developmental coursework. Program content, however, is siloed, thereby limiting transferability between even related programs. This results in BTC students who enter their program of choice, realize that they are not suited for and/or do not want to enter the occupation, and lose time by having to start over in another program (or leave the college). To address this issue, BTC will continue to work on implementation of the Guided Pathways model, which includes development of core exploratory course sequences across related programs and improvement of the college's career advising services, particularly for prospective or new students. The college needs to provide dedicated training and support to help employees using the college's data systems to fully understand student outcome gaps and pressure points. BTC also needs to establish a consistent practice for identifying and acting on equity gaps. The college recently expanded its engagement in regional/national benchmarking, and needs to identify meaningful, ongoing processes through which to both analyze and make improvements based upon these comparisons.

CONCLUSION

Heavy involvement from employees in institutional planning, assessment and accreditation efforts has helped stakeholders feel that their interests are strongly reflected in BTC's themes, goals and Key Performance Indicators. This dynamic has led to increased awareness and interest on the part of participants and other campus community members in looking at internal and external data to identify student achievement and college performance gaps. The development and expansion of the Institutional Planning & Advancement division over the last several years and the corresponding increase in campus-wide access to accurate, meaningful data analyses and tools has helped foster this culture.

Since the college submitted its Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report in Fall 2017, the college has developed major new initiatives around student success, transition and completion; created, reinstated or expanded high-demand professional technical programs; finished developing a new Strategic Plan; added new policies and procedures through highly collaborative processes; and reorganized multiple college departments. Engaging in authentic assessment of college outcomes through institutional planning and accreditation processes has also helped BTC prioritize and target strategies and activities needed to maintain its financial stability. The college has worked to balance educational programming, diversify its revenue streams, and develop strategies and systems to help address declining enrollment patterns. All of this work has taken place amid state budget reductions, a near-total turnover in administrative leadership, and a strong focus on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pace of change and the current economic, political, and health environment, however, has also created challenges for the institution. BTC has responded to these challenges by emphasizing broad engagement in campus-wide initiatives and planning efforts, including strategic planning, budget planning, and accreditation. Over the past few years, college leadership has improved campus culture through a strong commitment to increasing levels of collaboration and creating formal and informal feedback loops.

BTC's success is supported by a cadre of quality employees who have a high level of commitment to the college's mission. An example of this commitment is the college's pandemic response. Beginning in late Winter 2020, employees came together at BTC as never before to address the unprecedented teaching, learning, and service changes necessitated by the college's pandemic response.

Based on analysis of key performance indicators, it is apparent that the college is substantially fulfilling its mission and is positioned well for continued success. Key areas of strength, challenge, and opportunity are discussed in relation to each of the Standard One elements and can be found at the conclusion of each section. BTC is committed to continuous quality improvement, as evidenced by the fact that several major improvements and interventions are already well underway in response to gaps and weaknesses identified through the self-evaluation process. Despite challenges, the college has continued to adapt and improve its

student-centered, high-quality workforce training programs and related student support systems. Important on- and off-campus discussions and collaborations are continuing and enhancing the college's ability to serve as a major resource to its community.