EDMONDS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Ad Hoc Report
Regarding Recommendation #1
from the Spring 2017 Year Seven Visit

Prepared for
the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Submitted September 14, 2018

Certification of the Ad Hoc Report

To: Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, President, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
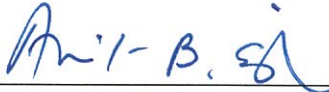
From: Edmonds Community College

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and Edmonds Community College, we are pleased to submit this Ad Hoc Report for the purpose of assisting in the determination of the institution's accreditation status.

We certify that there was broad participation by the campus community, and we believe that this Ad Hoc Report accurately reflects the nature and substance of the institution.

Signed:

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Dr. Tia Benson Tolle, Chair, Board of Trustees

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Dr. Amit Singh, President

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James Mulik, Accreditation Liaison Officer

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Introduction and Recommendation to be Addressed

After submitting the Year Seven Report in February 2017 and hosting a comprehensive evaluation visit April 24-26, 2017, Edmonds Community College received an [Action Letter from the NWCCU, dated July 10, 2017](), stating that, "[i]n reaffirming accreditation, the Commission determined that its expectations with regard to Recommendations 2 and 3 of the Spring 2014 Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report have been fulfilled. More, the Commission rescinded Recommendation 2 of the Spring 2017 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report. The Commission requests that the College submit an Ad Hoc Report without a visit in spring 2018 to address Recommendation 1 of the Spring 2017 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report. The Spring 2018 Ad Hoc Report is to be a separate report from the College's Spring 2018 Mission and Core Themes Report."

In a [January 5, 2018 Action Letter from the NWCCU](), the date of the two reports was moved to October 1, 2018.

The one new recommendation is listed below with the college's response.

2017 Recommendation 1. *"While the evaluation committee recognizes that the College has a strong commitment to continuous improvement, and is creating a strong culture of evidence, the committee recommends that core theme planning be defined by the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate the accomplishment of core theme objectives and the achievement of the intended outcomes (Standard 3.B.3)."*

The July 10, 2017 NWCCU Action Letter states that, "the Commission finds that Recommendation 1 of the Spring 2017 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report is an area where Edmonds Community College is substantially in compliance with Commission criteria for accreditation, but in need of improvement."

In order to address Recommendation 1, the college has taken the following steps:
1. Reviewed and revised (as necessary) the college's mission and core themes;
2. Reviewed and revised (as necessary) the college's core theme objectives, indicators of achievement, and definition of mission fulfillment; and
3. Reviewed and revised (as necessary) the framework for core theme planning.

Step 1: Mission and Core Theme Review

During the college's spring 2017 accreditation Year Seven Self-Evaluation process, for the sake of closure and to complete the entire assessment cycle, the decision was made to keep the same 16 indicators of achievement, even though the self-evaluation process revealed that the college's plans were not always been guided by those indicators. When the college received a formal recommendation highlighting this disconnect, the college was not surprised by this finding. In fact, while the college's spring 2017 accreditation Year Seven Self-Evaluation process was coming to a close during the 2016-17 academic year, the college conducted an in-depth review of its mission and core themes. This work is outlined in [Board]()

[Procedure BOT 6.01pr](#) and was to be carried out during the seventh year of the accreditation process so that the college would be well-positioned and prepared for its next Year One Mission and Core Theme Report.

The mission and core theme review process was led by a "[Listening Team](#)," which was comprised of two faculty members; one student; two classified employees; and two exempt employees. The team proactively sought input from individuals and groups throughout the college; distilled the feedback and input received; worked with the college's administration (i.e., President's Cabinet) and with the college's Planning Group (which at the time was comprised of the president, members of the President's Cabinet, and three other administrators at the college) to craft the revised language; and then obtained additional input and feedback on the revised language from individuals and groups. Those processes resulted in more streamlined, revised language for the mission and set of core themes for the college:

> Edmonds CC's Mission
> > Teaching | Learning | Community

> Edmonds CC's Mission Core Themes
> > Guided by innovation, equity, inclusion, and a global perspective we are committed to…
> > - Academic Excellence
> > - Student Success
> > - Community Engagement

The college's Board of Trustees approved the revised mission and core theme language on [June 8, 2017](#), and the NWCCU approved the revised language on [August 21, 2017](#).

Step 2: Core Theme Objectives, Indicators of Achievement, and Mission Fulfillment Definition Review

With the revised mission and core themes in place, the college continued to review its core theme objectives and its indicators of achievement in order to determine which ones, if any, should change and to review its definition of mission fulfillment. Input was sought via a college-wide survey, at core theme-related open forums, and during meetings with particular stakeholder groups at the college.

The emphasis of the survey and the forums was regarding what the college meant by its core themes (i.e., the objectives) and what actions and initiatives the college will take or implement (i.e. plans) for each of the core themes. During the process, the approach that the college maintained was that the core theme objectives and their related mission fulfillment indicators of achievement are minimal threshold levels of acceptable performance for the college. [This is an important distinction from lofty goals or strategic performance levels that the college aspires to achieve. That said, the college has also set aspirational threshold levels for each of its indicators in order to help the college connect its mission fulfillment work and its strategic planning efforts.]

The college's Planning Group distilled all information that was collected to craft core theme objectives and to identify meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of the core themes.

Throughout the 2017-18 academic year, the Planning Group regularly provided updates to and solicited feedback from the college campus and the college's Board of Trustees regarding the core theme objective language and suggested revised indicators of achievement.

The Board of Trustees approved revisions to the college's mission fulfillment definition (through BOT Resolution No. 18-6-7 (approved in June 2018). These definitions are contained in Board Policy BOT 7.0 - Board Monitoring and Planning and Board Procedure BOT 7.01pr - Board Monitoring and Planning: Procedure.

The college's President Cabinet formally approved the revised core theme objectives and indicators of achievement language at its July 30, 2018 meeting.

Specifics of the approved, revised core theme objectives and indicators of achievement are shown in the appendix to this document.

Step 3: Core Theme Planning

While the core theme objectives, indicators of achievement, and revised definition of mission fulfillment work (discussed above in Step 2) was underway, the college's Planning Group worked with various stakeholder groups at the college to better articulate specific plans for each core theme. During this work, the concepts of leading and lagging indicators (particularly as described in the book, *Creating a Data-Informed Culture in Community Colleges: A New Model for Educators*) were utilized, with:

- Lagging indicators being big goals that the college focuses on because those measures are typically accountability measures; and
- Leading indicators being directly actionable measures that can be monitored for a student or group of students and that directly (or sometimes indirectly) influence lagging indicators in order to provide information about progress on the college's big goals.

Within the leading and lagging indicator framework, leading indicators represent planned, measured actions that are designed to influence a lagging indicator. At Edmonds Community College, regarding the definition of mission fulfillment, the college's core theme objectives are the lagging big goals, which are measured by the college's mission fulfillment indicators of achievement.

The leading actions (and their related data that are analyzed and used to evaluate accomplishment of those actions) are core theme-related plans and strategies that are designed to influence the lagging core theme objectives and mission fulfillment indicators of achievement. These leading plans are measured and assessed by appropriately defined data that are relevant to the specific plans and actions.

As a result, the leading-lagging framework allows the college flexibility in creating core theme plans, undertaking core theme-related strategies, and implementing core theme-related initiatives that can directly (or indirectly) influence the college's indicators of achievement, which collectively define mission fulfillment for the college and which collectively form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the college's core theme objectives.

Some examples of potential leading core theme plans that are related to the college's lagging core theme objectives are shown in the table below:

Lagging Core Theme Objective (measured and assessed by the indicators of achievement)	Potential Leading Core Theme Plans[*] (measured and assessed by appropriately defined data)
Objective 1.1 Edmonds Community College provides high-quality academic programs.	● Complete program reviews every three years ● Establish engaging professional technical advisory committees ● Implement guided pathways curriculum maps
Objective 1.2 Edmonds Community College provides high-quality instruction.	● Provide professional development, including instructional technology and library support, for all faculty members in order to increase the engagement of students in class sections ● Offer tutoring and learning support services for students ● Offer community-based projects and/or service-learning activities in order to better engage students in their learning
Objective 2.1 Edmonds Community College supports student persistence and success.	● Create and implement clear program pathways with support structures ● Refine the college's advising model and process ● Increase outreach efforts to all students
Objective 2.2 Edmonds Community College supports students' graduation and transfer goals.	● Provide academic advising/planning and career counseling services for students ● Provide opportunities for students from different economic, social, and racial/ethnic backgrounds to interact and learn from one another ● Provide students with support they need to succeed, which may include support for students to thrive socially; financial support to students in order to help them afford their education; and/or services to help students cope with their non-academic responsibilities

Objective 3.1 Edmonds Community College extends the learning environment to our community through a wide variety of training opportunities, services, and courses.	● Gather constituents' input and feedback regarding non-credit and short-term career preparatory trainings ● Develop new business and industry partnerships ● Monitor changes in the surrounding communities that the college serves

*While potential leading core theme plans have been provided in the table, throughout the college's current seven-year accreditation cycle these plans are likely to change based upon work accomplished each year and based upon the dynamic nature of planning needed to address the college's lagging core theme objectives.

Since the core theme objectives are now in place, each area of the college has an opportunity to determine which leading core theme-related plans and actions it will take to influence the core theme objectives and, thus, help the college fulfill its mission. This work was jump-started and strengthened by the purposeful (now ongoing) dialogue that occurred at the college during the college's mission and core theme review process, which has led to an increased focus and awareness of how the college's planning activities align with its mission.

Lastly, with the arrival of the college's new president (who started at the college on June 25, 2018), the college is poised to use the core theme objectives to inform the college's next strategic plan, which the new president has prioritized to be created during the 2019-20 academic year.

Concluding Statement

In summary, the college has addressed all three steps needed to address recommendation number 1. To wit:
1. The college's mission and core theme language has been updated.
2. The college's core theme objectives, indicators of achievement, and definition of mission fulfillment have been updated.
3. The college has established a leading-lagging framework for the development of core theme plans.

With all three of these steps completed, the college has demonstrated that any and all leading core theme-related plans will be related to the college's lagging core theme objectives. Each of the leading core theme-related plans that the college implements will be measured and analyzed by data that are used to evaluate accomplishment of not only the plans, but also the related core theme objectives. As such, planning for programs and services at the college is informed by the analysis of appropriately defined data in order to evaluate achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of those programs and services.

Appendix: Details of the College's Core Theme Objectives and Indicators of Achievement

This information is shown below on the following pages.

Core Theme 1: Academic Excellence

Core Theme 1	Objectives	Indicators of Achievement
Academic Excellence	Objective 1.1: Edmonds Community College provides high-quality academic programs.	Indicator of Achievement 1.1: Program Quality
	Objective 1.2: Edmonds Community College provides high-quality instruction.	Indicator of Achievement 1.2: Successful Class Completion

Objective 1.1: Edmonds Community College provides high-quality academic programs.

Indicator of Achievement 1.1: Program Quality

Measurement: Each year the college will review the content, structure, and learning outcomes of at least 33% of all of its programs of study (i.e., degrees, certificates, and diplomas).

Rationale: Regular review of programs of study ensures that the college's curriculum, wherever offered and however delivered, demonstrates a coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning and helps ensures that the college's curriculum remains innovative and includes global and cultural perspectives and topics.

Benchmark Type: Local comparison

Threshold Levels: Mission Fulfillment Threshold: 33%; Aspirational Threshold: 75%

Objective 1.2: Edmonds Community College provides high-quality instruction.

Indicator of Achievement 1.2: Successful Class Completion*

Measurement: The ratio of passing grades (at a 2.0 or above, including S grades) to all grades given (including U, V, W, and I grades) for each academic year will be at least 50%.

Rationale: While the retention of students from the beginning to the end of a quarter is a fundamental measure of student success, class retention by itself is not adequate as students often must earn a grade of 2.0 or higher in order to proceed into subsequent courses. Faculty-student interactions and support services offered by the college (both in and out of the

classroom) should positively impact students' ability to pass each of their classes. Disaggregating the data will allow the college to identify and develop strategies to address any equity gaps and to determine if any high-enrolled, low-completion (HELC) courses exist.

Benchmark Type: Local comparison

Threshold Levels: Mission Fulfillment Threshold: 50%; Aspirational Threshold: 75%

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* This indicator is directly related to one of the college's previous 16 indicators. Therefore, the college can longitudinally track and compare its previous mission fulfillment work (from 2009-2017) to work that will occur during the current seven-year cycle.

Core Theme 2: Student Success

Core Theme 2	Objectives	Indicators of Achievement
Student Success	Objective 2.1: Edmonds Community College supports student persistence and success.	Indicator of Achievement 2.1: Academic Progress
	Objective 2.2: Edmonds CC supports students' graduation and transfer goals.	Indicator of Achievement 2.2: Combined Student Graduation and Transfer Rates

Objective 2.1: Edmonds Community College supports student persistence and success.

Indicator of Achievement 2.1: Academic Progress*

Measurement: As measured by the cohort-based Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) measures, the college's points per student (measured annually) will be at least 0.50.

Rationale: The college offers programs and services that assist students to make credit gains each year. The college's aspirational (i.e., strategic/stretch) threshold has been based upon the average of the entire state system of institutions (which is usually around 1.75 points per student). Disaggregating the data by student demographics and by the Student Achievement Initiative milestones (e.g., 15 credits, 30 credits, 45 credits, etc.) will allow the college to identify and develop strategies to address any equity gaps.

Benchmark Type: State/Regional comparison

Threshold Levels: Mission Fulfillment Threshold: 0.50 points per student; Aspirational Threshold: 2.00 points per student

Objective 2.2: Edmonds CC supports students' graduation and transfer goals.

Indicator of Achievement 2.2: Combined Student Graduation and Transfer-out Rates*

Measurement: The college's reported Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Graduation and Transfer-out Rates (combined) will not be lower than 30%, which aligns with the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions' (C-RAC) minimal acceptable level of a 15% graduation rate for a college to not be considered as a "low-performing institution" (p. 17).

Rationale: The IPEDS Graduation Rate is for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students who complete within 150% of the program length time. The IPEDS Transfer-out Rate is the total number of students from the first-time, full-time, degree-seeking cohort who are known to have transferred out of the college. Comparison with national standards allows the college to monitor its outcomes and ensure compliance with external expectations. The college's aspirational (i.e., strategic/stretch) threshold has been based upon doubling the minimal national level. Disaggregating the data by student demographics will allow the college to identify and develop strategies to address any equity gaps.

Benchmark Type: National comparison

Threshold Levels: Mission Fulfillment Threshold: 30%; Aspirational Threshold: 60%

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* This indicator is directly related to one of the college's previous 16 indicators. Therefore, the college can longitudinally track and compare its previous mission fulfillment work (from 2009-2017) to work that will occur during the current seven-year cycle.

Core Theme 3: Community Engagement

Core Theme 3	Objective	Indicator of Achievement
Community Engagement	Objective 3.1: Edmonds Community College extends the learning environment to our community through a wide variety of training opportunities, services, and courses.	Indicator of Achievement 3.1: Students Served through Industry and Community Education Partnerships

Objective 3.1: Edmonds Community College extends the learning environment to our community through a wide variety of training opportunities, services, and courses.

Indicator of Achievement 3.1: Students Served through Industry and Community Education Partnerships*

Measurement: The college will serve no fewer than 3,000 students (unduplicated headcount) per academic year in its community education (extended and continuing education), WATR Center, corrections education, and family life education classes.

Rationale: The college offers a mix of learning offerings for children, students, and community members. This is consistent with the Revised Code of Washington (RCW 28B.50.020) for community colleges, ensuring that the college offers, "thoroughly comprehensive educational, training, and service programs to meet the needs of both the communities and students served by combining high standards of excellence in … community services of an educational, cultural, and recreational nature." The number of individuals taking these offerings epitomizes the value of personal enrichment and innovation that the college strives to instill in its community and its students.

Benchmark Type: Local comparison

Threshold Levels: Mission Fulfillment Threshold: 3,000 students; Aspirational Threshold: 6,000 students

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* This indicator is directly related to one of the college's previous 16 indicators. Therefore, the college can longitudinally track and compare its previous mission fulfillment work (from 2009-2017) to work that will occur during the current seven-year cycle.