

# James A. Rhodes State College - OH

HLC ID 1841

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OPEN PATHWAY: Mid-Cycle Review

Review Date: 3/13/2023

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## Context and Nature of Review

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### Review Date

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3/13/2023

### Review Type:

Mid-Cycle Review

### Scope of Review

- Mid-Cycle Review

*There are no forms assigned.*

## Institutional Context

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Rhodes State College is a comprehensive two-year college located in Allen County in west-central Ohio. The college serves ten counties in the region and 90% of its graduates reside or are employed in the service area. The organization is true to its mission by changing lives, building futures and improving communities through lifelong learning. Its vision is to be the college of choice where students have an equitable opportunity to achieve their career and educational goals. The college's people will be the source of innovation and reason for the enriched value added to our students, communities and partners. The college has adopted the following core values: equity, quality, integrity, innovation, passion and compassion.

Rhodes State College offers credentials appropriate to higher education, including Ohio transfer modules, 67 certificates and 55 associate degree programs, which appear on the college website and in their catalog. New to the college is the RN to BSN completion program, which offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. College facilities have expanded to support this new program and existing health programs. The RSC Borra Center for Health Sciences, a 50,000 square foot facility that opened in the fall 2021.

The college is committed to quality, which is evident in several new initiatives which include: framework for general education outcomes, faculty evaluation system, program review process, revisions of its institutional learning outcomes and the adoption of new assessment software to build its curricular and co-curricular assessment infrastructure and streamlined its budget process.

## Interactions with Constituencies

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NA

## Additional Documents

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1. Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO)/General Education Learning Outcome (GLO)

**2. Recommended Changes to Core Skills and Abilities**  
**Compiled by the Core Skills and Abilities Task Force**

# 1 - Mission

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

## 1.A - Core Component 1.A

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The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

## Rating

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Met

## Rationale

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Rhodes State College, a state-assisted community college in Lima, Ohio, has continued to meet expectations regarding the institution's publicly articulated mission and operationalization of that mission. The college previously documented how the mission statement review procedure occurs and was expanded in 2018 before their last HLC visit. Since then, evidence was provided of revising the college vision statement and revising mission criteria from eleven to five to better align with updated higher education performance indicators.

In addition to updating mission criteria, the college refined key performance indicators to focus on eighteen vs. thirty-one. Evidence shows in 2022 the Board approved a new extended statement of institutional purpose that aligns with the revised mission criteria and KPIs. New criteria include an emphasis on access, student progress, learning, satisfaction & talent and fiscal responsiveness. In addition, their strategic plan aligns with regional needs for a multi-county area with over 90% of graduates residing or employed in the area.

The college's mission is to be an institution that changes lives, builds futures and improves communities through lifelong learning. They document and measure that success through various key performance indicators and demographic and assessment reports. Baseline performance measures were presented as evidence, along with the methodology to be used for future assessment. Goals were presented that aim to be proportional to Ohio Tech Sector institutions were provided regarding age, minority status, gender and socioeconomic status.

The college provided evidence of academic offerings supporting its mission, one example being the recently approved RN to BSN program following stakeholder input and institutional planning. Completing numerous associate degrees, certificate programs and non-credit certificates were provided as evidence. Organizational changes were documented with the outcome for improved student services, enrollment growth and workforce development for the Ohio region served. Evidence included charts showing the merging of academic divisions in 2020 and the creation of a Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

The mission and related materials are provided on the college website, in print materials (including annual reports) and oral reports to the Board, as well as internal and external stakeholder meetings.

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

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Rhodes State College continues demonstrating its mission is committed to the public good. Examples provided include evidence of this component being met. Evidence provided had constituent meetings to determine the need for a proposed expansion of degree offerings in nursing from an RN to a BSN level and the donor, community, local and state support of their new Borra Center in 2021. The college provides low- or no-cost programs assisted by state and private grant funding to better students' lives.

As a state-assisted community college, there are no investors or parent organizations. Their academic programming is measured through persistence to graduation, successful employment, or transfer to a four-year institution for those with those goals. Non-credit offerings are created through documented survey results. One of their measured KPIs relates to the impact of investments from students, taxpayers and society to support the economic and social well-being of the communities served.

RSC's 'Survey of Emerging Workforce Needs' was administered to assist with gaining employer feedback and later the creation of non-credit or credit offerings. Public meetings of the Board of Trustees and reports demonstrated hundreds of community partners and outreach efforts, including dental clinics, workforce development courses to meet area needs and expansion of nursing education at the request of multiple healthcare employers. Articulation agreements with four-year institutions, MOUs with other public entities, surveys and partnerships were demonstrated through print, web links and multiple grants. The college has grown collaborative efforts with area high schools to advance college entrance rates at any higher education institution and preparatory career experiences like the Uniquely Able Academy.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

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The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Rhodes State College continues to demonstrate they meet the component for providing opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse and global society.

In addition to a mission criteria focusing on multiculturalism, their new strategic plan includes core values of Equity, Quality, Integrity, Innovation, Passion and Compassion. Recent organizational changes have occurred to create a Special Assistant for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in addition to the promotion of the Student Engagement Coordinator to a Senior Director of Student Success overseeing expanded cultural activities, student clubs and organizations.

The college demonstrated efforts targeting more diverse populations of students, including veterans, adult learners and underserved populations. KPIs have established baselines and will monitor enrollment, retention, persistence and completion advancement regarding age, gender, minority and socioeconomic segments. General education learning outcomes were shared, including modifications to the diversity competency to address cultural and diversity awareness. Student clubs and organizations are listed and available, as well as an example of student programming supporting diversity, including LGBTQ+, as recent evidence.

Student, employee and employer satisfaction surveys are completed and documented. In addition, the college provided evidence of training in diversity, Title IX compliance and support for special populations like veterans. Employment application and hiring processes remain documented and supportive of qualified individuals with disabilities.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary**

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

### **Rationale**

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Rhodes State College continues to demonstrate Criterion 1 is met by making their institution's mission clear, articulated publicly and used in guiding their operations. Their mission of being an institution that "changes lives, builds futures and improves communities through life-long learning" was demonstrated through evidence of virtual and print media, reports and surveys. RSC provided evidence of surveying stakeholders and using that information to create credit and non-credit academic programming to meet local needs.

An updated vision statement, mission-centered strategic plan and streamlined KPIs with baseline measures have been designed to demonstrate ongoing advances targeting demographic characteristics such as age, gender, minority and socioeconomic status along with veterans and individuals with disabilities. Most recently, the college will expand its life-long learning goals through agreements with organizations like Ed-to-Go and approval of a new RN-BSN academic program. The Borra Center for Health Sciences and Emerging Workforce Centers further prove their connection to community workforce needs and working with the community to address workforce challenges.



## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

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

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The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Rhodes State College continues to demonstrate they meet core component 2A through established policies and procedures to ensure fair and ethical behavior. Their regionally and governor-appointed Board of Trustees meets regularly and approves college policies and personnel actions as the college President recommends. In addition, the college is updating policies and procedures to ensure consistency in language format and current practice. A review schedule of policies and procedures and the new policy templates were provided as evidence, along with minutes of board meetings.

The institution's organizational structure provides for shared governance and delegation of duties to appropriate departments for federal, state and local compliance issues. Fiscal audits are completed and filed, and information systems training and security support compliance of student and employee personal information are conducted. Documentation of required Ohio Ethics Training employees and examples of online Title IX compliance training for all employees and students was provided.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

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The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Rhodes State College continues to provide evidence it meets Component 2B by presenting itself clearly and completely to its students and the public. Rhodes offers various academic and non-credit offerings to meet area needs while promoting those opportunities in multiple media sources, including print and virtual. Course-specific costs are shared for both educational and workforce development offerings. Student-friendly tools like Net Price Calculator and Student Handbooks assist in communicating expectations to students. A student complaint process exists for issues that may arise. Accreditation for specialty programs and institutionally, like HLC, are provided on their website.

RSC has recently updated its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure program and student learning outcomes, employee and employer satisfaction and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. A baseline data is provided with methodology in place to document changes. In addition, a new shared-governance model was established with college-wide professional development training implemented.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Rhodes State College continues to demonstrate they meet the component of having an autonomous Board of Trustees working in the best interest of its stakeholders. Regular and required training of the Board has occurred as documented in Board minutes and retreat schedules, including the topics of Title IX compliance and Ohio Ethics Policy. In addition, the college has completed a new Board orientation guide and a shared governance manual that clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Board, President, cabinet, faculty, staff, students, and various committees and councils.

The regionally and governor-appointed Board has continued to operate even without one governor-appointed representative while updating the strategic plans and policies. The Board members all have professional and personal experiences that qualify them to represent the RSC's stakeholders.

Board members sign an annual conflict of interest statements and abide by the Ohio Ethics Policies and college policies and procedures, including a conflict of interest policy. Meeting minutes document transparency of open meetings and approval of faculty, administrative and significant facility and technological purchases.

The Shared Governance Manual clearly outlines the delegation of management to the President and is evident through meeting minutes of recommendations, including organizational structure changes and purchases being recommended by the President for Board consideration. In addition, the budget approval processes demonstrates a comprehensive process of creating and implementing fiscal investments, and annual fiscal audits confirm compliance and accountability.

Faculty are rightfully involved in academic processes as evident through later sections showing involvement in activities like the assessment of student learning, academic freedom and program review and accreditation.

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

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **2.D - Core Component 2.D**

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

### **Rating**

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Met

### **Rationale**

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Rhodes State College continues to demonstrate meeting core component 2.D showing commitment to academic freedom by providing evidence of updates in the faculty handbooks, use of college facilities and free speech policies for compliance with Ohio Revised Codes and practice. Training and information is provided in person and available via web resources. The following policies are included in the student handbook and found on the college website: Freedom of Inquiry & Expression, Use of College Outdoor Space, Use of College Facilities, Nondiscrimination and Student Code of Conduct.

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

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Rhodes State College continues to demonstrate they meet component requirements of having policies and procedures for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty and students. As a primarily associate degree granting public institution, policies and procedures seem appropriate.

Responsibilities for ethical completion of work and appropriate use of information resources are documented through recent updates to adjunct faculty handbooks to align with handbooks for full-time faculty. Syllabi and student handbooks were reviewed and they continue to show emphasis of student code of conduct training and enforcement. Recent updates to Institutional Research Board (IRB) charters are provided as further evidence of compliance with this component.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

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

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

### **Rationale**

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Rhodes State College demonstrates they have met Criterion 2 of acting with integrity with its conduct being ethical and responsible at all levels of the organization: Board, faculty, staff, administration and students. Through standard templates, policies and procedures have been updated, including more clearly defining roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders through their 2022-2023 Shared Governance Manual, and New Board Orientation Guide. Audits, trainings, handbooks and updated syllabi have been provided as evidence of communications, compliance, enforcement and expectations regarding ethics and integrity of the institution.

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

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

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

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The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

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

### **Rating**

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Met

### **Rationale**

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Rhodes State College offers credentials appropriate to higher education including Ohio transfer modules, 67 certificates and 55 associate degree programs, which appear on the college website and in their catalog. Many academic programs are externally accredited by accrediting bodies, which are also linked on the college website. The faculty, with input from program advisory board members, assess curriculum annually. RSC maintains the rigor of its academic offerings through a process that includes the creation of clearly stated learning outcomes for all programs, which appear in the college catalog, the student evaluation of courses and ongoing curriculum review.

All new programs and courses must be presented to the faculty-led RSC Curriculum Committee that oversees both curriculum development and the assessment process at the institution. The college has processes for adding new courses and programs which require a detailed curriculum schedule, articulation and coordination agreements, program outcomes and objectives and course proposals. Detailed explanations of faculty credentials, completed course syllabi, and program outcomes demonstrate the required rigor of the program as appropriate to the level of the degree conferred. After programs and courses are approved, ongoing rigor and quality are maintained through both the institution's learning outcomes assessment and program review processes.

RSC ensures the quality and learning goals of its courses across the various modes of delivery available to its students. Instructors use a standard syllabus template and uniform textbooks, which are reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. The college recently adopted CourseLeaf Syllabi (SYL)



software that will integrate their Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) and Student Information System to improve efficiency. As a result, all courses will use four common LMS elements: Welcome Page, Syllabus, Grades and Grading Scheme. The college also has a new assessment plan for evaluating student learning outcomes in courses and programs that has been implemented fully by a few programs. The college is encouraged to fully implement that process and utilize its results to contribute to evidence of consistent quality for all delivery methods, including online and dual credit offerings.

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

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

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The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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The exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to Rhodes State College's educational programs. RSC's general education program is appropriate to its mission and in alignment with the Ohio state requirements that state a minimum of 6 credit hours of communication and math, a minimum of 18 credit hours of arts and humanities, social and behavioral science, and natural sciences, and an additional 12-15 credit hours aligned with the Ohio Transfer Module's (OTM) five general education categories. A review of the catalog and website verified that RSC aligns with the state required 36-40 semester credit hours in a distributed model of traditional liberal arts and sciences curriculum.

RSC has adopted a new framework for its general education outcomes since its comprehensive visit, which articulates and defines six institutional learning outcomes that it believes every college-educated person should demonstrate, which include 1) Civic, Professional, and Ethical Responsibility (CPER); 2) Cultural and Diversity Awareness (CDA); 3) Critical Thinking (CT); 4) Effective Communication (EC); 5) Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning (QSR); and 6) Technological Proficiency (TP). Each of these outcomes is mapped for introduction in General Education Courses and mastery in the capstone course of whichever program the student is completing. RSC clearly demonstrates that its degree and certificate programs engage students in both industry-specific and broad learning and skills development. A majority of associates of applied science and certificate programs employ field experience and standardized industry certifications, clinical experiences,

portfolios or practicums for degree-specific capstone or summative projects.

RSC's occupational and transfer programs engage students in a wide range of intellectual work throughout general education and other components of the programs that will prepare them for specific jobs and for navigating the broader socioeconomic environment. Growth opportunities are provided that incorporate multicultural and cultural diversity, that, along with RSC's newly defined institutional learning outcomes, demonstrate that RSC is actively engaged in preparing its students for a diverse world.

Creative work by RSC students, faculty and staff demonstrates active involvement in their fields of study and professional practice. Student work and publications by faculty combined with professional association conferences attended highlight the professional involvement and contributions of students and employees to the college's mission. For occupational faculty and students, maintaining currency with the latest industry certifications and technologies is particularly important to RSC's effectiveness in its large and highly respected workforce and contract training efforts.

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

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Rhodes State College actively recruits expert full-time and adjunct faculty who bring real-world experience and employer connections to the college, which are vital to the fulfillment of the mission. The narrative was silent on any goals or demographic information about the diversity of faculty and staff. Reviewers encourage the college to consider how gathering and using that information may contribute to the overall effectiveness of faculty and staff in service to student populations.

RSC maintains a student to faculty ratio of 16:1 (up from 12:1), which is used as evidence that it has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services. In 2021, RSC employed 56 full-time faculty (down from 61) and 103 part-time faculty (down from 315) to support its 1456 FTE students (down from 1812). This results in a total full-time equivalent instructional staff of 92 (down from 154.67). The college did not provide additional narrative addressing the decline in faculty numbers and reviewers noted that in the program review evidence that faculty shortages were named as a concern. The college has an opportunity to monitor these fluctuations and their impact on sufficiency of faculty based on student enrollment.

RSC has a Faculty Qualifications Policy (3.03) that provides standards for ensuring qualified faculty are teaching credit-bearing courses including dual credit, consortia and online. Dual credit faculty

qualification compliance will be reviewed at the next comprehensive review date given the extension the college received through 2025. The Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, Workforce Development (SVP) is responsible for faculty qualifications and works with Academic Deans, Chairs and Coordinators to meet institutional requirements.

RSC evaluates instructors regularly. The narrative from the comprehensive review indicates that full-time faculty participate in an annual professional growth planning process with their supervisor that includes classroom observations and student evaluation data. Adjunct faculty are evaluated regularly through direct classroom observations and student course evaluations. Chairs and Deans access this data to manage and improve faculty performance. The update indicated that the previous system was inconsistent, cumbersome and offered little value and was being replaced by a new process implemented in the Spring of 2022. No data was provided that indicated consistent evaluation of faculty under either the old or new system. The college has an opportunity to provide evidence from the new process in its next report.

RSC provides internal and external professional development opportunities to faculty that are coordinated by a newly hired, part-time Faculty Development Coordinator. Faculty-led Professional Development sessions explore innovative teaching methodologies and share best practices among peer instructors. Additionally, the college develops department-delivered training covering a range of topics from leadership and personnel management to the effective use of technology and meeting state and federal compliance requirements. RSC has a well-developed process for applying for external professional development which is paid for by funds budgeted in Human Resources. The annual Perkins allocation also allows employees to participate in professional associations and activities specific to their fields of study or work assignments.

According to the handbook full-time faculty are required to be accessible to the student a minimum of 10 hours per week in a manner appropriate to meeting with needs of students. Office hours are posted on syllabi and outside office doors (if applicable).

The college also provides non-faculty, student support personnel with training and ongoing professional development opportunities both internally and through professional associations and organizations. Sample job descriptions and staff credentials listed on the college website confirm that the college recruits and employs qualified student support service personnel.

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

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

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The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Rhodes State College provides a variety support services to meet student needs including Admissions, Academic Advising, Accommodative Services, Career Development, Financial Aid, Mental Health and Wellness Services (formerly Counseling Services) and Veterans and Military Member Services. Since the comprehensive report, Success Navigators were added as part of an Enrollment Management model and provide a single point of contact for college services for first semester students.

The college's Academic Success Center (ASC) provides comprehensive learning support including tutoring and is responsible for the college's Early Alert Process (CEAP), which identifies students at risk during the academic year who are then directed to the appropriate support services personnel. The Testing Center also provides learning support including a new virtual proctoring service and plays a key role in initial course placement for students. An orientation program is available for all students and student success navigators assist students in appropriate course placement.

As part of a newly adopted advising model, RSC provides student advising through multiple roles. Student Success Navigators advise students until the third week of the first semester, when both staff and faculty advisors assume advising responsibilities depending upon student role. The college provided a flowchart detailing this advising process, which ensures that academic advising is provided to students by program major and certificate. Students can schedule appointments with an advisor, including virtual appointments, via the college website. Advising satisfaction is measured through an advising survey.

RSC provides evidence of sufficient infrastructure to support effective teaching and learning. Technology and equipment, specialty academic laboratories and the Center for Distance and Innovative Learning provide a strong foundation and resources for faculty. The college reported many infrastructure improvements to support the needed technological environment for learning

during the pandemic including increased bandwidth and hyflex technology. A new center for Health Sciences supports teaching and learning for students and faculty in Health Science programs.

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

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

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

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

### **Rationale**

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Rhodes State College provides evidence of quality education in its degree/certificate, dual enrollment, work-based training and continuing education offerings, no matter how and where they are delivered. Its programs are appropriate for the type and location of the institution as well as the needs of the communities and students it serves. The curriculum and student supports are overseen and supported by appropriately qualified faculty and staff and emphasize engaging students in enriching activities at the college and in the workplace. As a result of its success in these endeavors, Rhodes State College is recognized as a major factor in the success of its graduates.



## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

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

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The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Rhodes State College has evaluation processes in place that aim to ensure the quality of its educational offerings. The college adopted a new program review process in 2020 that changed the program review cycle from a 3-year schedule to one where programs are now evaluated every-other-year. This process requires the evaluation of program quality and health in multiple categories including alignment with mission, total credits, enrollment, retention, persistence and completion and student satisfaction. The process provides an executive summary that includes a SWOT analysis. Each program's report is evaluated by the Curriculum Committee using a rubric that feeds into program action plans for improvement. The college provided four completed program review examples that demonstrate this robust process is being implemented and are encouraged to provide a schedule that demonstrates that all programs are participating in every-other-year cycle by the next comprehensive review date.

The college's policies and processes on transfer credits are aligned with the State of Ohio Articulation and Transfer Policies, and language about those policies remains in the college catalog and on the college website. The comprehensive report noted a new process and rubric for evaluating prior learning credits to be implemented in Fall of 2019 that was not mentioned. Reviewers encourage the college to include updates on its use and impact at the time of the next report.

The college did not note any updates to the college's three-phase process (operational, shared governance and external) for curricular changes at both the course and program levels. In 2019, the review team noted that the process had been implemented and was slow in moving from the operational to the shared governance phase, which was inhibiting RSC's agility in responding to community education needs, complying with ODHE mandates, and/or adapting courses/programs based on updated industry standards. The 2019 team encouraged RSC to develop and adhere to a schedule of regular committee meetings to ensure timely consideration of curricular changes. No such schedule was included as part of the college's update, and minutes of meetings provided as evidence were for the months November 2021, December 2021 and January 2022 (Curriculum) and December 2021 January 2022 (Shared Governance), which are over one year old. The college provided a list of faculty credentials as evidence of the quality of faculty along with a statement that these credentials are updated as part of the program review process. Reviewers did not find evidence of that update procedure in the program review documentation. The college has an opportunity to consider clarifying that process and also the format of the faculty credential list for the next evaluation, making more clear which columns in the list qualify the faculty member in accordance with college policy. There are faculty on the list that have NA in each qualifying box that may be Dual Enrollment faculty, currently exempted from policy, but that was not clear.

The college maintains external accreditation for a total of 16 programs, seven of which have undergone site visits resulting in ongoing good standing since the last HLC Comprehensive Visit.

RSC evaluates the success of its graduates using data collected from various sources which it compares to revised key performance indicators (KPI). It identifies KPI #6 (Placement); KPI #7 (Transfer Rate); KPI #8, (Graduation Rate); and KPI #14 (Employer Satisfaction) for these evaluations. The college reports that when a desired target has not been achieved or where baseline data has yet-to-be established, action plans will support identified improvements for the next strategic planning cycle. The college may want to consider including those action plans as part of evidence in its next report.

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

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Rhodes State College demonstrates a commitment to educational outcomes for students and has processes in place for the ongoing assessment of student learning. The college has articulated institutional, program and course level learning outcomes and has a college-wide framework for their assessment being established in a new software product, Watermark. At the strategic level, new Mission Criteria, in particular Criterion 3: Learning Competencies, establish KPI's for each of these levels of student learning outcomes.

RSC's previous General Education Outcomes have been replaced since the last HLC Comprehensive Visit with six Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO's). A Core Skills and Abilities task force made up of faculty, student services leaders and administration worked with both the student services and academic assessment committees to arrive at the recommendations. These teams performed extensive research of peer institutions, developed an initial list of core skills and abilities for review by Shared Governance committees and revised the list based upon feedback, drafted definitions, key words and outcomes based on Bloom's Taxonomy, and supported rubric development. The process reflects good practice and the substantial participation of faculty and staff in establishing the assessment framework.

These new institutional outcomes include 1) Civic, Professional, and Ethical Responsibility (CPER); 2) Cultural and Diversity Awareness (CDA); 3) Critical Thinking (CT); 4) Effective Communication (EC); 5) Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning (QSR); and 6) Technological Proficiency (TP). Each of these outcomes is mapped for introduction in General Education Courses and mastery in the capstone course of whichever program the student is completing. The college plans to assess two of the outcomes each year in academic affairs over a three-year cycle, and four of the learning outcomes (CPER, CDA, CT and EC) in the co-curricular over that same time span. The college is encouraged to ensure that the co-curricular dimension of the assessment process is fully described and supported in the next comprehensive argument and evidence file.

Institutional results and improvement actions for the first cycle of ILO assessment in 2021-22 (#1-

CPER and #6-TP in Academics and #1-CPER in the Co-Curricular) were not provided as part of the 4B argument, nor were any results or improvement actions provided for General Education, Program, or Course outcomes for the 2019-2021 period prior to the new framework adoption. Reviewers noted that the institutional effectiveness report provided as part of the 4C argument contained results and findings for mission criteria #3 KPI's, reporting ILO results (student in between 4 and 25), capstone course success outcomes and course learning outcome success in each school. Faculty engagement reports provided at the comprehensive visit were not updated to show levels of participation in the assessment process since then. The college did provide assessment plans and results for a watermark pilot group, which contained identified improvement actions for unmet learning outcomes. In addition, the college provided evidence of two programs (Physical Therapist and Nursing), which have completed curriculum maps, gathered assessment results and identified action items on those assessment results in the new Watermark software environment during the 2021-22 year for course, program and institutional level outcomes.

In the period since the comprehensive visit, reviewers commend the college for undertaking both the revision of its institutional learning outcomes and the adoption of a new assessment software to build its assessment infrastructure. In this light, the college has made substantial process improvements that demonstrate a commitment to ongoing and improved assessment of student learning. The college is encouraged to ensure a timeline for full participation in this new process in both academic affairs and the co-curricular that will allow for a robust reporting of the use of assessment results to make improvements warranted by the data at the course, program and institutional level in its next report.

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

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Rhodes State College has goals and strategies in place for student retention, persistence and completion of programs. The college adopted new mission criteria in 2021 that set key performance indicators for student progress including proportional retention (KPI 2); persistence (KPI 3); Degree and Certificate Completions (KPI 4); Course Completion (KPI 5); Placement (KPI 6), Transfer Rate (KPI 7); and Graduation Rate (KPI 8). Definitions, targets and measures show a clear methodology that reflects good practice supporting these KPI's.

The college's Institutional Research (IR) Department collected and analyzed data on retention, persistence and completion for the period 2018-22, which was reported in an institutional effectiveness report. The report included findings by KPI and an analysis of where the college fell in relation to the segmented targets set for each measure set at the strategic level. This analysis reflected good methodology and practices. Overall retention and persistence rates for RPC were above the Ohio tech sector in all years reported, however graduation rates within 100% of expected timeframes were above the sector in 2018 (39%) and fell below (to 8%) for the 2020 group. The college indicated that this report will be used to create action plans for areas where targets were not met in its next strategic planning cycle. The college has an opportunity to provide this evidence in its comprehensive report.

At the operational level, the program review process evidence provided in 4A supports the gathering, analysis and action on program retention, persistence and completion data. The college also provided evidence of strategies being implemented in student support that align with retention and completion goals including student-centered scheduling software and a new advising model. The college is

encouraged to report the results of those strategies, an analysis of whether those results met established targets and how that analysis feeds educational improvements.

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

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary**

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

### **Rationale**

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Rhodes State College demonstrates its responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services through multiple continuous quality improvement processes including program review, which regularly evaluates program quality and health in multiple categories and an updated student learning outcomes assessment process, which is being scaled in both curricular and co-curricular activities. In addition, the college has institutional level goals set for student retention, persistence and completion. A planned process is in place for evaluating their achievement along with the success of their graduates that will inform improvement action plans in the next planning cycle.

## 5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

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

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Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Rhodes State College provides several evidence points, such as the Board of Trustees orientation guide and Board policy and procedures, clearly document the Board of Trustees operating responsibilities related to the operation of the college. In addition, the Presidents Report has been formalized in recent years to include reports from all cabinet areas.

Since the last visit, RSC has adopted a revised Shared Governance Model defining the membership engagement process which focuses on the committee structure. As part of adopting the new model, the college conducted Shared Governance training. The actions related to Shared Governance directly responded to feedback received during the last visit.

The institution's administration participates in regular meetings with the Faculty Association. Minutes suggest that the meetings serve as a channel for exchanging current topics and events on campus. The college provided evidence of several channels used to provide proper communication between all aspects of the campus community.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Rhodes State College has established resource channels that have fluctuated slightly since the last visit. The revenue channels include state appropriations, student tuition/ fees and federal student grants. The college adjusted tuition rates using an established review system that included cabinet recommendations, comparative analysis with other Ohio colleges and final approval by the Board of Trustees.

The student-to-faculty ratio has shifted slightly but is still better than state and national averages. Enrollment shifts occurred following the COVID-19 pandemic but appear to be moving toward pre-pandemic levels.

Facilities have expanded, most notably the RSC Borra Center for Health Sciences, a 50,000 square-foot facility that opened in fall 2021. In addition, Federal HEERF funds made significant updates to the college's technology infrastructure.

The 2021-2022 cabinet budget retreat streamlined the RSC budgeting process. Evidence suggests this new approach provides a multi-level analysis to determine needs and alignment with strategic goals and mission.

Both the Ohio Department of Higher Education Ration Analysis and the HLC Composite Financial Index levels are consistent with established levels. In addition, evidence shows that the college's latest audit for FY21 had no negative findings.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

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The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Rhodes State College engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement. The college engaged the campus community and the institutional stakeholders in preparation of the 20-21 strategic planning cycle. As a result, the 2021-2023 strategic plan titled "Inventing Our Future Together" outlined the college's priorities and established budget priorities that align with the college's mission and strategic goals.

Within the 2021-2023 strategic plan, specific connections are made that unify the broad institutional goals and key performance indicators (KPIs), including the Institutional Learning Outcomes, Program Learning Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes. In addition, the college included a cross-section of other critical operational elements to round out the KPIs.

The strategic plan is a foundational element of the budgeting process that shifted to a consolidated process where proposals are developed more fully with department-level teams before being presented to the Cabinet. During the annual retreat, the Cabinet then reviews the recommendations, operational needs, enrollment trends and State-Share of Instruction (SSI).

The most recent budgeting process (March 2022) clearly expressed the institution's recognition of enrollment trends and demonstrated a recognition of the fluctuations in the institution's resources. As a result, the institution has committed to establishing a budget that is not only addressing the current needs but is also securing a stable future for the college.

As part of the budgeting process, the Cabinet and the Board incorporate various resources that include information such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, state-level institutional

comparisons, the current economic status of the state and region and appropriated state support.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

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

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

### **Rationale**

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Rhodes State College has maintained a commitment to providing the campus community with the resources and investments needed to meet its strategic planning, institutional mission and goals. As a result, the college has adopted a new streamlined budgeting process that engages a diverse cross-section of the campus community and aligns with the latest version of its strategic plan. These efforts have led to campus financial stability and positioned the institution for future growth.

## Review Dashboard

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

## Review Summary

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### Conclusion

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In serving its constituents, Rhodes State College is committed to its mission, vision and core values. The college is commended for being aggressive in launching several **new** initiatives over the past couple of years: framework for general education outcomes, faculty evaluation system, program review process, revisions of its institutional learning outcomes and the adoption of new assessment software to build its curricular and co-curricular assessment infrastructure and streamlined its budget process. It will be important for the team to continue their work in all of these areas and be able to show evidence that supports success and institutionalization for the Higher Learning Commission Comprehensive Visit in 2029.

### Overall Recommendations

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#### Criteria For Accreditation

Met

#### Sanctions Recommendation

No Sanction

#### Pathways Recommendation

Not Applicable to This Review

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*