



July 25, 2022

Kathleen O'Leary
Interim President
Dawson Community College
300 College Drive
Glendive, MT 59330

Dear President O'Leary:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) at its meeting on June 21-24, 2022, concerning the Spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness of Dawson Community College. This action was taken after consideration of evidence, including the institution's Self-Evaluation Report, the Peer-Evaluation Report, the optional Institutional Response to the Peer-Evaluation Report, and information received as part of the institutional representative meeting with Commissioners.

Accreditation

Reaffirm Accreditation

Status of Previous Recommendations Addressed in this Evaluation

- Finding 1: Spring 2021 Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review - Fulfilled
- Finding 2: Spring 2021 Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review - Fulfilled

Commendations

The Commission commends Dawson Community College for:

1. Transparent and collaborative communication across all levels of the college and strong participation in the shared governance committee structure, including the budget development process.
2. Strong student support efforts, especially during the pandemic, including an effective early alert process, waiving the college application fee during the pandemic, the Dawson Promise, and the Adopt-a-Buc program.
3. Establishment of a strong Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee that is composed of faculty and staff from across campus that are passionate about this work and infusing it into the values of DCC.

Recommendations Substantially in Compliance but in Need of Improvement

The Commission recommends that Dawson Community College:

- Recommendation 1: Spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Establish an appropriate definition of mission fulfillment that is expressed and articulated by goals, objectives, and indicators in the context of and in comparison with regional and national peer institutions. (2020 Standard(s) 1.B.2)
- Recommendation 2: Spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Implement an effective assessment process that incorporates course, program and institutional learning outcomes, is consistently applied by faculty to measure student learning in all programs, and leads to the continuous improvement of instructional programs and achievement of student outcomes. (2020 Standard(s) 1.C.1;1.C.5;1.C.7)
- Recommendation 4: Spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Update board and college policies and the academic catalog regarding transfer credit to ensure that the information is clearly defined, widely published, easily accessible, aligned between sources, and consistent with college practice. (2020 Standard(s) 1.C.8)
- Recommendation 5: Spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Fully disaggregate student achievement indicators that include persistence, retention, completion, and others by race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, first generation college student, and other categories that are meaningful

to Dawson Community College. This disaggregated data should be 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. (2020 Standard(s) 1.D.2;1.D.3)

Recommendations Out of Compliance

The Commission finds that the following Recommendations are areas where Dawson Community College is out of compliance with the NWCCU Standards for Accreditation. According to U.S. Department of Education Regulation 34 CFR 602.20 and Commission Policy, the Commission requires that Dawson Community College take appropriate action to ensure these Recommendations are addressed and resolved within a two-year period from the date of this letter.

The Commission recommends that Dawson Community College:

- Recommendation 3: Spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Establish a meaningful set of institutional learning outcomes that apply to all certificate and degree programs, and implement an assessment process to consistently measure student achievement of institutional learning outcomes that leads to continuous improvement in student learning across the college. (2020 Standard(s) ER 5;1.C.6)

Future Evaluations

- Ad Hoc Report with Visit Spring 2024
 - Recommendation 3: Spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness
- Mid-Cycle Review Spring 2025
 - Recommendation 1: Spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness
 - Recommendation 2: Spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness
 - Recommendation 4: Spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness
 - Recommendation 5: Spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness
- Year 6 - Standard 2 - Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review Spring 2028
- Year 7 - Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness Spring 2029

Per [USDE guidance](#), all virtual accreditation site visits shall be followed by in-person campus visits within a reasonable time when public health conditions improve and are authorized by applicable law. Campus visits may be limited to focus on items identified in the Peer-Evaluation Report and may include fewer than all evaluation team members.

NWCCU is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued support of this process. If you have questions about any of the information in this letter, please contact your staff liaison, Dr. Ron Larsen, at rlarsen@nwccu.org.

Sincerely,



Sonny Ramaswamy
President

cc: Ms. Suela Cela, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs
Mr. Chad Knudson, Chairman of the Board
Mr. Clayton T. Christian, Commissioner of Higher Education, Montana University System
Dr. Ross Tomlin, President, Tillamook Bay Community College