

Response from Bristol Community College to the NECHE Visiting Team Report

This report serves as Bristol Community College's formal response to the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) following the submission of our self-study, comprehensive evaluation and site visit that was conducted in March 2024. We appreciate the insights and recommendations provided by the NECHE evaluation team, which have been instrumental in guiding our continuous improvement efforts. We are grateful that the visiting team found core institutional strengths in their review, and we take their notations as formal commendations for the work that is being done and the progress that is being made. The on-site visit and subsequent team report also highlighted several key areas that require further attention and development. In this response, we address each of the six concerns raised in the NECHE Team Report, outlining the actions we have taken to date, our plans, appropriate timelines, and measures of success we will use to ensure ongoing improvement as we tune our efforts.

Our goal at Bristol is to create an inclusive and supportive educational environment that empowers all students to succeed. By responding to the Team Report in a detailed manner, we aim to demonstrate our dedication to academic excellence, institutional effectiveness, and student success as highlighted in our Mission, Vision, and Values. We recognize the importance of these efforts not only for maintaining our accreditation status but also for fulfilling our mission of providing accessible, innovative, and inclusive education to our community. We look forward to continuing our partnership with NECHE and the use of the evaluation team's feedback to enhance our institutional practices and achieve our strategic objectives.

Concern 1: Continuous Improvement of Teaching and Learning through Assessment

We acknowledge NECHE's concern regarding the need to fully leverage assessment findings for continuous improvement in teaching and learning. We agree that while significant progress has been made, there is more work to be done to fully realize the benefits of our assessment processes.

Actions Taken:

To date, we have made considerable progress in developing programs, GenEd competencies, rubrics, and curriculum maps. The new 5+1 CAS Program review process which is modeled after the Council of Advancement of Standards in Higher Education and is built around a five year cycle has now been implemented, allowing for a comprehensive and systematic approach to curriculum assessment and is inclusive of 95% of the college's function areas. Academic Programs that have been fully engaged in the work are beginning year 3 of the framework in the 24-25 academic year. Faculty and staff have expressed enthusiasm about this process, recognizing its potential to significantly improve our academic offerings. The Director of Institutional Assessment has been instrumental in facilitating workshops and town hall meetings to engage the college community in discussions about the value of continuous improvement and the importance of using assessment data to drive decision-making.

Additionally, we have established a robust support system for faculty and staff involved in the assessment process. This includes providing resources and training to help them develop and refine their assessment methods. To ensure understanding and consistency, the Director has completed the 5+1 CAS program review guide to aid in implementation, the remaining deliverables include assessments of program outcomes, market alignment, and course assessment, culminating in a final comprehensive report in year 5.

The institutional culture around assessment has been strengthened through these initiatives, promoting a shared commitment to using data to enhance teaching and learning. The creation of the Data Informed Decision (DID) portal has also provided a centralized platform for accessing longitudinal data sets, presentations, and feedback reports, further supporting our assessment efforts as we build a culture of assessment and continuous improvement.

Future Plans:

Moving forward, we plan to build on the foundation we have established by enhancing our data infrastructure and increasing data literacy among faculty and staff. This will involve the enhancement of an internal data warehouse to facilitate more effective data analysis and reporting. We also intend to expand our assessment efforts to include a broader range of metrics and to ensure that our assessment practices are fully integrated into our strategic planning processes. Bristol will continue to work to fully leverage findings for continuous improvement in teaching and learning and will maintain our commitment to fostering a culture of assessment in the years ahead. This includes:

1. Addressing the gap in part-time student persistence by implementing initiatives focused on college readiness, self-efficacy, and curriculum value.
2. Engaging in an in-depth review and revision of the current competency framework, including the integration of assessments into Canvas, our Learning Management System.
3. Supporting Chairs and Coordinators, who will lead efforts to measure program outcomes, align course assignments, and develop improvement plans based on assessment findings.

Timeline and Measures of Success:

Our timeline for implementing these future plans is designed to ensure steady progress against measurable outcomes. In the immediate term, we will focus on setting up the internal data warehouse. This will lay the groundwork for more comprehensive data analysis and reporting. Breaking our work into time-based intervals will assure continual progress in pursuit of our goals.

- Immediate (0-6 months): Launch the internal data warehouse project to enhance data benchmarking. Measure success by infrastructure setup completion.
- Short-term (6-12 months): Conduct data literacy workshops for faculty and staff. Measure success by workshop attendance and feedback.
- Long-term (1-3 years): Fully integrate new metrics into data dashboards and evaluate their impact on student success. Measure success by improving student outcomes and stakeholder feedback.

Concern 2: Analysis of High Impact Best Practices (HIPs)

We acknowledge NECHE's finding that an analysis of High Impact Best Practices (HIPs) across all courses would guide the process of continuous improvement in teaching and learning. We understand that a thorough and systematic approach is necessary to fully realize the potential of HIPs in enhancing student learning outcomes. As we rolled out HIPs, we determined to measure impact as an aggregate of outcomes that were based on the most current literature and designated as HIPs by external agencies. This approach limited our understanding of the specific impact of programming efforts and structural

supports. We recognize that a modification of this approach will help us to better understand the impact of HIPs on student performance.

Actions Taken:

We paid particular attention as we identified and implemented HIPs across our curriculum, making sure to tag HIPs courses in Banner for clear identification. Coordinators who completed Year 2 Program Review have self-identified over 427 HIPs across 171 distinct courses, with 60 courses meeting the minimum benchmarks to be called HIPs. These courses have been given attributes in our Student Information System to ensure consistent tracking and analysis. Additionally, we have introduced Reflective Practice Groups (RPGs) to promote faculty-led development of HIPs best practices, particularly among those who teach high enrollment gateway courses. The administration has supported these efforts by providing stipends for adjunct faculty and college service recognition for full-time faculty participating in RPGs.

We have also developed a comprehensive framework for assessing the impact of HIPs on student learning and engagement. This includes the creation of a summary report that will be presented annually to the President's Leadership Team (PLT). The report will provide a detailed analysis of successful course completion rates, pre/post comparisons, and other relevant metrics that demonstrate the impact of various approaches. Our initial findings have shown promising results, indicating that courses incorporating HIPs have higher student engagement and success rates; yet there is work to do to highlight outcomes related to HIPs.

Future Plans:

Moving forward, we will continue to map HIPs across all programs and provide ongoing professional development and resources to faculty. Our goal is to create a culture of continuous improvement where HIPs are regularly evaluated and refined based on data-driven insights. We will also expand our assessment framework to include additional variables such as persistence and retention rates, sense of belonging, and faculty feedback. To accomplish this, we will:

1. Map HIPs across all programs and provide annual summary reports to the President's Leadership Team (PLT).
2. Offer annual professional development and resources to faculty for the integration of HIPs.
3. Conduct annual analyses of HIPs impact on desired student outcomes, such as course completion rates, persistence, retention, sense of belonging, etc., and publish the findings for the benefit of the institution.

Timeline and Measures of Success:

Our timeline for implementing these plans is designed to ensure a systematic and thorough approach to evaluating and enhancing HIPs. The initial phase of identifying and mapping HIPs across the institution is to start immediately and is expected to take approximately three years to complete all courses and all practices. While this work is going on, the creation of the first summary report for the 2023-2024 academic year will be submitted to the PLT in the fall semester of the 2024-2025 academic year.

- Year 1 (2024-2025): Identify HIPs across the institution and complete the first summary report for 2023-2024.
- Year 2-3 (2025-2027): Continue mapping and professional development efforts, with annual analysis reports.

Concern 3: Progress Towards Diversity and Equity

We acknowledge NECHE's concern regarding the need for continued progress towards diversity and equity. While we have made significant strides in this area, we recognize that further efforts are necessary to fully achieve our goals. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment that supports the success of all students, faculty, and staff.

Actions Taken:

Equity and inclusion are key pillars in our strategic plan. Additionally, we have made substantial efforts to review and revise our existing policies, programs, and systems using an equity lens. Over the past few years, we have focused on providing professional development on equity-minded practices, microaggressions, and racial trauma. And we have adjusted hiring practices to take a more targeted approach to attract more diverse staff and faculty that appropriately reflect our student body. These initiatives have been bolstered by our participation in the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) Grant, which has enabled us to offer workshops, keynote addresses, and professional development series to broaden the knowledge and skills of our faculty and staff. Through this grant we have developed a model that measures the impact of professional development on our equity practices, including teaching and learning. We anticipate that the consistent results of these measures will help us tune towards future opportunities.

In addition to these efforts, we have expanded our data collection and analysis capabilities to better understand and address the needs of our Black, Indigenous, People of Color and other underrepresented student groups. By closely examining enrollment rates, success rates, and other key metrics, we have been able to identify areas with significant gaps and develop targeted action plans. These dashboards have played an important role in exposing inequities. Academic departments have created Equity Plans based around the information in the dashboards and are working to identify solutions that can help support gaps in performance outcomes. In this way the dashboards have provided both exposure to inequalities, but also accountability to tune practices.

Beyond dashboards, the data itself has informed interventions that address learning gaps. For example, we have implemented a co-requisite model for developmental math, which received an "Innovation of the Year Award" and resulted in an 82% increase in success rates among Black and African American students. We are now planning to build on this approach to support students in developmental English courses.

Further, our Open Educational Resources (OER) program has been expanded to approximately 30% of our overall course offerings, with an estimated savings to students of approximately \$545,000. This work supports financial gaps that may exist and impact equity outcomes. We have created several centers, including a Women, Gender, and Sexuality Center, Veterans, Basic Needs, and Multicultural Centers, to support our commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion,

and Belonging. And the financial aid office has facilitated targeted events for various ethnic groups, TRIO students, and others to increase FAFSA completion and support the requirements of pending free community college programs.

Future Plans:

Our future plans include rolling out the equity competency training to all college employees, with pre- and post-assessments to measure its impact. We will also continue to refine our data collection and analysis efforts, focusing on program and course-level success rates to identify and address achievement gaps. Each department will develop an Equity Plan to help provide department specific solutions to performance outcomes. Additionally, we plan to expand our Open Educational Resources (OER) program and enhance our student support services through the SUCCESS initiative, which aims to increase persistence and retention among underrepresented students. To expand impact and support progress towards diversity, equity and inclusion, we will:

1. Roll out equity competency training to all college employees with pre- and post-assessments.
2. Review success rates and develop action plans to address achievement gaps in various programs.
3. Expand our Open Educational Resources (OER) program to improve access to course materials.

Timeline and Measures of Success:

The timeline for these initiatives is structured to ensure continuous progress and measurable outcomes. In the immediate term, we will begin rolling out the equity competency training and conduct initial data collection. In the short term, we will analyze success rates and implement targeted action plans in specific programs and build departmental Equity Plans. In the long term, we will expand the OER program and assess its impact on student success.

- Immediate (0-6 months): Begin equity competency training and initial data collection.
- Short-term (6-12 months): Analyze success rates and implement action plans in targeted programs.
- Long-term (1-3 years): Expand OER program and assess its impact on student success.

Concern 4: Impact of Academic Advising

We agree with the visiting team's finding that continued progress is needed to fully assess the impact of academic advising at Bristol. Academic advising plays a crucial role in student success, and we are committed to ensuring that our advising practices are effective and impactful.

Actions Taken:

Over the past two academic years, we have made significant improvements in our data collection efforts related to academic advising. This data collection has aided us in better understanding the current impact of advising practices. Academic Coordinators have been collecting quantitative data since Fall 2022, which includes detailed information about student interactions, services provided, and engagement outcomes. This data has provided valuable

insights into the effectiveness of our advising practices and has helped identify areas for improvement. Additionally, we have established a strong leadership team in Advising & Success, as evidenced by the hiring of a permanent Director and two Associate Directors. This team has been instrumental in standardizing data collection processes and aligning them with outcomes assessment.

Furthermore, we are ready to implement EAB Navigate360, a powerful technology that unites administrators, faculty, staff, and students in a collaborative network that supports the entire student experience, from recruitment to career, in July 2024 to address previously identified concerns regarding data collection and case management tracking. This system will enhance our ability to track student interactions, disaggregate data by student demographic factors, and compare advising engagement with overall student outcomes. The use of Navigate360 will also allow us to collect qualitative data through student narratives, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of advising on student success.

Future Plans:

Moving forward, we will continue to refine our data collection and analysis processes to ensure that we can effectively assess the impact of academic advising including longitudinal analysis. This will involve developing a five-year assessment plan with specific themes for each year, such as modernizing and standardizing data collection, analyzing engagement data, and comparing our advising outcomes with peer institutions. We will also focus on improving and training our advisors to become data experts in EAB Navigate360, which will enable them to better support students and track their progress. To this end, we will:

1. Implement EAB Navigate360 to enhance data collection and analysis.
2. Develop and implement a five-year assessment plan with specific themes for each year.
3. Improve and train advisors to become data experts in EAB Navigate360 and advising best practices.

Timeline and Measures of Success:

Our timeline for these initiatives is designed to ensure continuous progress and measurable outcomes. In the first year, we will focus on modernizing and standardizing our data collection processes and implementing EAB Navigate360. In the second year, we will begin analyzing advising engagement data and developing a communication plan to share outcomes with key stakeholders. In the following years, we will focus on training advisors, improving our advising model, and comparing our outcomes data with peer institutions.

- Year 1 (2024-2025): Modernize and standardize data collection processes and implement EAB Navigate360.
- Year 2 (2025-2026): Initial analysis of advising engagement data and development of a communication plan.
- Years 3-5 (2026-2030): Improve and train advisors, compare data with peer institutions, and renew assessment practices.

Concern 5: Data Literacy and Application

We acknowledge NECHE's concern regarding the need to enhance data literacy and application across college departments. We agree that equitable access to data and the ability to interpret and apply data insights are crucial for informed decision-making and continuous improvement.

Actions Taken:

To address this concern, we have taken several steps to improve data literacy and application across the institution. The Strategic Analytics team has developed a series of dashboards in Tableau that provide comprehensive access to data. These dashboards also include information related to external reporting requirements, such as IPEDS (Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System) and the Commonwealth's PMRS (Performance Measurement Reporting System), through a significantly increased data transparency lens. Additionally, we seated a new Director of Enrollment Analytics & Solutions position within Student Services and Enrollment Management. This new role focuses on increasing access to student and enrollment data, producing analytical reports, and driving strategic enrollment management initiatives.

We worked to strengthen our partnerships with subject matter experts across the college to develop dashboards that support internal decision-making, ensuring that our data tools are relevant and useful for various institutional stakeholders. This collaborative approach ensures that our data tools are relevant and useful for various stakeholders, allowing them to make data-informed decisions that align with our strategic goals. The increased access to data has already had a positive impact on our ability to monitor and assess key performance indicators related to student success, enrollment, and retention. As demonstrated by access reports and integration of data into decision-making processes related to new program creation.

Future Plans:

Moving forward, we will continue to expand our data literacy initiatives by offering targeted training programs and workshops for faculty and staff for our various data solutions. We will also work to enhance our data infrastructure by developing an internal data warehouse that will facilitate more effective data analysis and reporting. This will involve connecting data from disparate systems to provide a comprehensive view of institutional performance and support data-driven decision-making. To continue to support this finding, we will:

1. Partner with subject matter experts to develop dashboards that support internal decision-making.
2. Connect financial budget allocations more directly with data-based rationale.
3. Offer targeted training programs and workshops to increase data literacy among faculty and staff.

Timeline and Measures of Success:

Our timeline for these initiatives is designed to ensure steady progress and measurable outcomes. In the immediate term, we will focus on developing initial dashboards with subject matter experts and providing targeted training programs. In the short term, we will work on connecting financial budget allocations with data insights and enhancing our data infrastructure.

In the long term, we will implement the internal data warehouse and assess its impact on institutional performance.

- Immediate (0-12 months): Develop initial dashboards with subject matter experts and provide targeted training programs.
- Short-term (12-18 months): Connect financial budget allocations with data insights and enhance data infrastructure.
- Long-term (18 months-3 years): Implement internal data warehouse and assess its impact on institutional performance.

Concern 6: Development of a Data Warehouse

We acknowledge NECHE's concern regarding the need for a data warehouse to store and longitudinally track snapshot data. We agree that developing an internal data warehouse will significantly enhance our data integrity and our ability to analyze and benchmark data at the student level, thereby supporting data-driven decision-making and promoting student success.

Actions Taken:

To address this concern, we have initiated a project to move our student information system to the Ellucian cloud. This highly extensible and open platform will allow us to connect data from unlimited sources into a centralized data warehouse. As part of this initiative, we have completed a readiness assessment to guide our preparations for cloud adoption and have begun mapping timelines for the project. The Ellucian cloud platform will enable us to modernize our processes and improve our ability to track and analyze longitudinal data.

In addition to the cloud migration project, we have taken steps to enhance our current data infrastructure. This includes utilizing audit tables, data files, and a robust set of data dashboards to provide key information for decision-making. These efforts have laid the groundwork for developing a more comprehensive data warehouse that will support our institutional goals and improve our ability to track student success over time.

Future Plans:

Moving forward, we will focus on developing and implementing the internal data warehouse component of the Ellucian cloud platform. This will involve integrating data from various systems and ensuring that our data infrastructure is capable of supporting comprehensive data analysis and reporting. We will also work to enhance our data literacy initiatives to ensure that faculty and staff can effectively utilize the data warehouse for decision-making. Specifically, we will:

1. Develop an internal data warehouse to enhance data benchmarking and promote student success.
2. Integrate data from disparate systems into the data warehouse.
3. Validate data and ensure clean data has functional utility and is reliable.
4. Enhance data literacy initiatives to support effective use of the data warehouse.

Timeline and Measures of Success:

The timeline for these initiatives is designed to ensure a systematic and thorough approach to developing and implementing the data warehouse. In the first year, we will focus on completing the initial phase of the cloud migration project and developing the data warehouse component. In the second year, we will begin integrating data from various systems and enhancing our data literacy initiatives. In the long term, we will assess the impact of the data warehouse on institutional performance and student success.

- Year 1-2 (2024-2026): Complete the initial phase of the cloud migration project and develop the data warehouse component.
- Year 2 (2025-2026): Integrate data from various systems and enhance data literacy initiatives.
- Year 3 (2026-2027): Assess the impact of the data warehouse on institutional performance and student success.

Summary:

The comprehensive evaluation and site visit conducted by NECHE in March 2024 identified several key areas for improvement at Bristol Community College, focusing on leveraging assessment findings, implementing High Impact Best Practices (HIPs), advancing diversity and equity initiatives, assessing the impact of academic advising, enhancing data literacy, and developing a robust data warehouse. Despite the progress made in developing programs, GenEd competencies, rubrics, and curriculum maps, as well as the successful implementation of various initiatives, NECHE's report underscores the necessity for continued efforts to fully realize the benefits of these actions and promote continuous improvement in teaching, learning, and institutional practices.

Bristol Community College is resolutely committed to addressing these concerns with a structured and data-driven approach. We plan to enhance our data infrastructure, expand professional development and training programs, and implement comprehensive assessment frameworks to ensure ongoing progress and measurable outcomes. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement, increasing access to data, and promoting equity and inclusion, we aim to create a supportive and inclusive educational environment that empowers all students to succeed. Our resolve to address NECHE's findings reflects our dedication to academic excellence, institutional effectiveness, and our mission of providing accessible, innovative, and inclusive education to our community.