Williamsburg Technical College

Institutional Effectiveness Summary Report

July 2004

Introduction

Williamsburg Technical College is a public, two-year college which grants associate degrees, diplomas, certificates, and continuing education units. Its purpose is two-fold: to provide quality, affordable, and accessible opportunities for students to acquire the knowledge and skills to achieve their educational goals and to provide a fiscally, administratively, and academically sound and supportive environment in which these educational goals may be achieved.

Williamsburg Technical College is committed to serving every citizen, business, industry, and organization in Williamsburg County. While no two educational and training needs may be the same, we strive to meet all needs, no matter how short or long term; basic or advanced, or low or high tech based. We are here to enhance the economic development of Williamsburg County.

Full and Interim Reports 2004

As required by the South Carolina General Assembly and the South Carolina commission on Higher Education's Effectiveness Program, Section 101-350 (formally known as ACT 255), and the requirements of section 59-103-30 through 45 (formally known as ACT 359), Williamsburg Technical College submits reports on the following components according to a staggered matrix developed by the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education: Academic Advising, Majors or Concentrations, Success of Transfer Students, and Providing a Technologically Skilled Workforce.

Academic Advising

Williamsburg Technical College facilitates student advisement through a combination of methods, but the overall goal remains the same: guiding first-time students and supporting continuing students in their academic choices.

The academic advising section of the Williamsburg Technical College Catalog notes that each student in a degree, diploma, or certificate program plans a program of study with the assistance of a faculty advisor. Each student is assigned to an advisor at his/her first registration. Students are placed in entry-level courses commensurate with their abilities. For example, students who do not demonstrate sufficient preparation to enter college-level courses are placed in developmental courses and are advised by the developmental director until they have achieved required competencies.

To guide both advisors and students, there is a suggested sequence of courses outlined in the college Catalog for each degree, diploma, or certificate program. To further assist faculty in offering sound advice, there is a section in the Faculty Handbook regarding academic advising.

As a result of the regular review and evaluation of this process and in response to the changing requirements of today's academic environment, continuing (not first-time) students have the option of using WebAdvisor to register for Fall 2004. In addition to the option for on-line registration, WebAdvisor provides the student with on-line, real-time access to program evaluation models, unofficial transcripts, and grade reports.

Advisors are evaluated by the Student Opinion Survey and advising is incorporated within their annual Faculty Performance Management System review.   Survey results continue to indicate a high degree of student satisfaction with faculty, with results remaining in the 90 – 95 % satisfied to very satisfied categories. In 2004 a "point of service" card offers an additional rating method. Each student is given a card with the advisor's name written on it. The student rates the service received from his/her advisor and returns the card to a drop box.

Majors or Concentrations

Williamsburg Technical College assesses specific majors on a five-year cycle through a Program Evaluation process. The effectiveness of programs is assessed by program review, surveys of students and employers, and by advisory committee recommendations. Factors examined include enrollment, retention, placement, number of graduates, and student satisfaction. The following programs were reviewed during 2003-2004: General Business, Early Childhood Development, and Microcomputer Business Applications.

General Business Technology

The Associate of General Business degree program is designed to prepare students to seek jobs in various fields of business. Since success in the business world requires general knowledge as well as experience with changing technologies, the curriculum requires courses in General Education, humanities, economics, and computer technology. Job opportunities include marketing, finance, accounting, personnel, banking, information management, and related fields.

In response to local business and industry needs, the General Business Degree Program was expanded to include an alternative program track, General Business- Computer Resource Management, which incorporates the State core program requirements for both General Business and Computer Technology. Over the last four years the number of General Business students has averaged 62 per semester, which includes those who had a concentration in Computer Resource Management. Over the last three years the average number of graduates for General Business has been 12. Based upon responses to the graduate surveys, the General Business Technology program had a 92 percent placement rate for 2003.

General Business is the only program at Williamsburg Technical College that is eligible for separate accreditation by an outside agency. All the programs falling under the General Business umbrella have been nationally and internationally accredited by ACBSP (Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs) since 1998. Williamsburg Technical College was approved for an initial 7-year period and has been renewed without reservation each even year since that time. The 2004 ACBSP Renewal Report is due August 31, 2004, and the college expects to receive unqualified approval from the association. This accreditation reflects properly certified instructors and acceptable class loading along with sufficient administrative and financial support.

On student surveys, students continually express satisfaction with the courses they have completed and with their advisors. One hundred percent (100%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the instructors knew the subject matter being taught, presented the subject in a practical, understandable way, communicated on the students' level when explaining new concepts, and were willing to listen when students had problems in the course. Employers responding to WTC employer surveys report satisfaction with the WTC graduates hired.

In spite of the impressive ratings from students and graduates, advisors of the General Business program have sought to further improve the program by heeding advice from the Business Advisory Committee, a group of community business and industry leaders who meet at least annually to review the courses and procedures and to make suggestions. As a result of these annual reviews, the college has strengthened the math requirement, added a required fine arts course to the curriculum, and installed two "Smart" classrooms for course delivery. In addition, student computer labs are constantly upgraded to the latest software versions and provide wireless Internet connections.

While this is not considered a transfer program, approximately 15% of the graduates successfully continue their business education at nearby colleges, such as Francis Marion University, Limestone, and Coker College.

Early Childhood Development

The Certificate in Early Childhood Development curriculum prepares graduates for employment in educational programs for children from birth to age eight. Students obtain a basic understanding of the developmental needs of young children and learn how to create a nurturing environment in preschool programs. Job opportunities are available in public and private nursery schools and in kindergarten programs.

Overall the Early Childhood Development curriculum at Williamsburg Technical College has performed very well. Faculty evaluation results for the past six semesters were combined for these courses, and students were found to have positive opinions of the instructors' knowledge, competence, and fairness. One hundred percent (100%) agreed or strongly agreed that the instructors knew the subject matter being taught, presented the subject in a practical, understandable way, communicated on the students' level when explaining new concepts, and were willing to listen when students had problems in the course.

While the Early Childhood Development curriculum is not new at the College, there have been several recent positive developments. A fully qualified master's degree instructor was employed to oversee and teach the courses along side one or two necessary adjuncts. This instructor is leading the effort to

expand the certificate into a standalone degree, an associate degree in Public Service with a concentration in Early Care and Education.

The proposed expansion of the program is due to the large demand for graduates in Williamsburg County, where there are over 159 Daycare centers. Developments in the field of Early Childhood Education point to the need for a high level of quality in childcare programs and for more teachers who are specifically trained to work with young children. In addition, National Head Start has recently increased the educational requirements of their teachers. As of September 30, 2003, "at least one-half of all Head Start teachers in center-based programs must have an Associate of Arts, Bachelor of Arts, or advanced degrees in Early Childhood Education or in a related field with preschool teaching experiences."

New regulations for day cares will be implemented soon requiring centers to be evaluated using the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale. Additionally, the federal No Child Left Behind Act and the State of South Carolina's First Steps to School Readiness legislation place greater emphasis on improvement of the quality and training of child care providers. The proposed associate degree program at Williamsburg Technical College will help provide these qualified teachers as well as qualified paraprofessionals within the school system.

WTC hosted an Early Childhood Providers' Conference in March 2004 for the Williamsburg County Daycare providers. A survey completed at that time indicated that there are 77 full time child care staff openings expected over the next three years, including 10 positions due to attrition. Also 51 part time staff openings are projected. Both the Early Childhood Advisory Committee and the WTC Academic Council voted unanimously to proceed with the development of the two-year degree.

Enrollment has been steady over the past several years averaging 20 students, with a current enrollment of 17 students in the certificate program and 38 students in the Associate Degree in Occupational Technology with a concentration in Early Childhood Development. Seventy-three (73) have graduated over the past four years, an average of 18 per year. The 2003 Graduate Placement Survey documents a placement rate of 89 percent.

Microcomputer Business Applications

The Microcomputer Business Applications certificate program prepares the student for employment as a microcomputer business applications specialist. It is designed primarily for the student who is seeking employment or who is currently employed by a business that uses or wants to use microcomputer word processing, spreadsheet and database software packages. This program of study prepares the student in basic business concepts as utilized in a wide variety of commercial software programs.

This focused program encompasses 39 credit hours, mostly relating to computer technology, but also includes required General College and Business courses. The program is targeted towards career development students and seeks to enhance current job skills. The 2003 Graduate Placement Survey indicates an 80 percent employment rate. Graduates can be found in local offices and at computer help desks.

Success of Transfer Students

Williamsburg Technical College had a total of 17 students to apply for admission to a South Carolina's state-supported four-year college or university in the fall of 2003. Of these 17 students, 70% were accepted, 18% were rejected, and 12% failed to complete the application process. Of the 12 students accepted, 9 actually enrolled.

In reviewing the performance of enrolled transfer students from Williamsburg Technical College to one of the state's four-year colleges or universities, data was collected on the GPA's of WTC students and those of native students at the four-year colleges or universities. At four out of five receiving institutions, the WTC students' GPA was higher than the GPA of the native students of the receiving colleges and universities. For the seven students enrolling at Clemson, USC-Columbia, Francis Marion, and Coastal Carolina, the aggregate GPA's of the WTC transfer students was higher than the aggregate GPA of the native students by a range of .13 to .75. At SC State University, the aggregate GPA of the two transfer students from WTC was below that of the native student population by a small fraction (.16).

In prior years, the performance rate, based upon aggregate GPAs, of WTC transfer students transferring to state's four-year colleges or universities was slightly below that of native students. Changes in college transfer math and English courses were incorporated as a result of the transfer analysis in 2001 and have resulted in an improved performance rate of WTC transfer students.

Providing a Technologically Skilled Workforce

Williamsburg Technical College is committed to insuring that academic programs support the economic development needs in the State by providing a technologically skilled workforce. From its mission statement to its strategic plan to its policies and procedures, Williamsburg Technical College has incorporated a consistent goal of support and alignment with local business and industry in the development and enhancement of the technological skill level of the workforce in Williamsburg County.

Local business/industry leaders are involved in all aspects of academic program identification, development, and review. Williamsburg Technical College utilizes periodic county-wide business/industry surveys to identify training needs, graduate performance ratings, and changing technology requirements. Through academic advisory committees, DACUMs, and curriculum development workshops, local business/industry leaders work directly with the Dean of Instruction, department heads, and faculty in defining and continually assessing workforce competencies and skill levels essential to meeting industry standards.

Williamsburg Technical College has committed its resources to providing a technology enhanced environment for training the workforce in Williamsburg County. This is evident in almost every instructional area of the college, including smart classrooms, an enhanced distance learning classroom, state-of-the-art computer labs, programmable logic robotics for welding and machine tool shops, and wireless internet connections in all areas of the college. Assisted by industry donations and grants, the industrial technology labs provide students the opportunity to gain practical experience with industry standard machinery.

The Center for Accelerated Technology Training (CATT) in conjunction with Williamsburg Technical College provides pre-employment training for new and existing local business and industry in the areas of insurance sales agent, computer technician, and production technician. These training classes are customized and developed to meet the both the specific job competency and technology skill level identified by the individual employer.

In addition to efforts focused at training the adult population of Williamsburg County, Williamsburg Technical College in partnership with the Tech-Prep Program provides an outreach program targeted at the youth of Williamsburg County. Technologically gifted county 8th graders, accompanied by a parent,

can attend the WTC Techno-Camp. Eighth graders recommended by their school guidance counselors participate in mini courses from two areas: Cosmetology, Industrial Maintenance, Machine Tool Technology, or Criminal Justice. Hands-on activities provide campers and parents direct technological experience.