

Assurance Argument

College of the Muscogee Nation

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**Higher Learning Commission
Standard Pathway: Comprehensive
Evaluation
Year 4**

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Introduction

Hensci (Hello):

The College of the Muscogee Nation is the institution of higher education for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, a federally recognized Indian tribe. We began offering associate degree courses in the fall of 2003. CMN opened its doors with 2 classes, 27 students and 2 employees. Since then it has grown to offering more than 60 courses each trimester, 10-fulltime faculty, a budget of more than four million dollars, student housing, 3 educational facilities with 2 more buildings to be added in 2021, and a 45-acre campus.

Since receiving Initial Accreditation in November 3, 2016, the College of the Muscogee Nation has continued to pursue institutional improvement; continuing to upgrade our systems, improving academically, and expanding our campus. Of significant note is that our faculty and staff have been involved in extensive planning and implementation for the assessment of student learning, completion of program reviews for degree programs, upgrading of faculty credentials, increasing our student services, and the addition of three new degree programs. While building our college, we know anything is possible, as we pursue the dream of higher education for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and its tribal members.

The process for developing the Assurance Argument resulted in an excellent opportunity for faculty and staff throughout the College to discuss their specific responsibilities and achievements within their departments and to reflect on the character of the tribal college. The Assurance Argument is the product of the work of all CMN faculty and staff that demonstrates our commitment to developing a quality institution of higher education. It is with this in mind that the College of the Muscogee Nation submits this Assurance Argument to the Higher Learning Commission.

Mvto (Thank you)

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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.

Argument

1.A.1

In 2004, the College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) was established as a tribal college, the institution of higher learning for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, a federally recognized Indian tribe. Within this context of a rich heritage, culture, traditions and Native language, the college mission was developed. College leaders who understood both the need for a functional statement and one that would withstand the test of time facilitated the framework for the Mission Statement.

Thus, results from their work resulted in a [Mission Statement](#) that has served as the em pvtakv (foundation) of the college that was formally adopted by the Board of Regents (BoR) at their April 2005 meeting. Developed from the framework through a process that included input from CMN staff, students, Board of Regents, and stakeholders, the mission created a culture of community. In

addition, it provided focus for the implementation of the college's goals, vision, and planning; all of which are aligned with the mission's emphasis on Native culture, values, and language. Under the Strategic Plan, the mission statement was up for review in 2018; however, no changes were made. The mission statement will be reviewed in 2023.

1.A.2

The CMN Publications Committee is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that mission documents remain current and uphold a standard and consistent message. In an ongoing process of update, the Publications Committee reviews CMN handbooks, related documents and public statements to maintain a clear and constant depiction of the mission. While this process ensures a current message of the institution's mission, the college emphasizes the following constructs in daily practice.

Mission tenets of teaching excellence and instructional quality have been embedded into instructional effort and endeavors through faculty development and assessment. Paired with curricular and co-curricular assessment, these opportunities ensure that the faculty is supported in quality teaching. Faculty meet on a regular basis to collaborate on institutional programs and course outcomes. In addition, the Academic Dean regularly updates faculty on activities and events (i.e. accreditation, assessment) relating to the college.

An important aspect of the mission is to be of service to the local and tribal community. CMN facilities are open for community and tribal activities and events, and are toured regularly by the public. For example, important emphasis is placed on faculty, staff, and student involvement in service learning and volunteer experiences in the community.

As a tribal college, it is critical that the Muscogee culture is presented, practiced, and conveyed in all aspects of the college's operation. From academic classes to co-curricular activities, the essence of Muscogee culture is recognized at every opportunity. The mission guides the institution's operations and will be revised as the college continues its growth and development.

1.A.3

As a Sovereign Nation, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN) recognizes the importance of education as shown in the 1866 Treaty, to "erect buildings within Creek Country for educational purposes...". As stated previously, the college was created to be an institution of higher education for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, a self-governance tribe. Our mission clearly identifies the nature, scope, and constituents of the institution.

Students are encouraged to become lifelong learners and develop personally, professionally, and intellectually. CMN programs and courses are designed to address cultural values, language, and self-determination. These classes are integral to the growth and development of tribal and non-tribal students.

1.A.4

Academic programs offered at the college are steeped in Native culture and values. CMN offers six associate degrees and two certificate programs. Criminal Justice, Gaming, General Studies, Native American Studies, Natural Resources, and Tribal Services are the current degree programs, which are consistent with CMN's stated mission. Certificate programs in Gaming and Mvskoke Language Studies further demonstrate the mission of CMN. Courses such as Indian Land Issues, Native American History, Tribal Court Systems, Introduction to Native American Gaming, and Native American Tribal Government are examples of CMN's commitment to the mission throughout degree programs. In addition, a requirement of all degree programs is the Beginning Mvskoke Language course. Students not only learn basic phrases and communications, but the principles of Mvskoke Life: em liketv (clan), em etvlwv (Tribal Town), cuko-rakko (ceremonial ground), and mekusvpkv-cuko (church).

The college's student support services are consistent with its mission of encouraging life-long learners for personal growth and professional development. The Student Success Center (SSC) provides these student support services through a variety of programs. Some examples are first time and transfer student academic advisement, counseling, community outreach, orientation, testing services and student involvement. Also housed in the SSC are the Admissions office, Bursar, Financial Aid, and Registrar. Other services designed to enhance the mission and support students are available through the Health and Wellness office. The Case Managers facilitate services for students as necessary for behavioral health, health clinics, social services, and domestic violence. Case Managers may also refer students for mental health and substance abuse counseling. In addition to the aforementioned services, tutoring services are available to students through the Learning Resource Center to support academic success.

To foster a community of intellectual advancement, as stated in the mission, CMN has allocated \$675,000 for scholarships and tuition waivers for students. Providing 17% of the CMN budget for academic financial assistance to students, the college has made a priority of aiding a traditionally underserved population. With this availability of student funding a greater number of Native American students are provided with the opportunity to become contributing members of a global society.

Additionally, CMN is focused on providing greater access to higher education for Native Americans. In the [2018-19 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data](#)

[System \(IPEDS\)](#), the college reported a 12 Month Enrollment of 275 unduplicated headcount and a fulltime equivalency (FTE) of 198. The enrollment profile for Fall 2019 indicates that the General Studies degree has the highest number of students enrolled, most students are female, and a majority are full time, with the greatest number of students are Muscogee (Creek) Tribal members. Of the 204 students, 106 were female and 98 were male. There are 180 Muscogee (Creek) tribal citizens, 22 other federally recognized Tribal Nations and two non-natives. Although a majority of students are tribal members, the college provides a positive learning environment for non-tribal and non-native students.

Accentuating the college's mission to provide higher education opportunities for tribal citizens, CMN's enrollment count continually reflects a majority of Muscogee (Creek) citizens as students. The number of enrolled students representing the Cherokee Nation, Seminole Nation, Choctaw Nation, Chickasaw Nation, and other Native American tribes reflects a culturally focused setting concentrated on Native Americans. The benefits of college planning and support of our external constituencies are evident in the community and the diverse student body.

1.A.5

Recognizing the importance of articulating the mission, the academic nature of this guiding statement is translated into the daily activities of faculty, staff, and students. The Mission Statement is publicly displayed in several locations:

- Outdoor Marquee
- Posters in Hallways
- Classrooms
- College Promotions
- Website
- Catalog
- Consumer Information Guide
- Student Handbook

After formally adopting the Mission Statement, it provided the foundation by which CMN established the [Vision Statement, Core Values, and Goals](#). The Vision Statement encourages students to learn about their 'sem ekerkv (identity) and participation in the Muscogee (Creek) tribal, Native American and global communities. The statement provides guidance in all aspects of the college curriculum, degree programs, and the concepts found in the following documents: College Catalog, Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, and Board of Regents Manual.

Along with the Mission, CMN emphasizes and incorporates its Core Values. CMN clearly articulates its core values and encourages students to demonstrate those values in their actions. The core values are traditional for Muscogee people,

and in turn shape the cultural environment of the college. The implications of this extend into society, as CMN students embody these values and will be aware of them throughout their future experiences.

The college has developed five Goals that are consistent with the Mission, Vision, and Core Values. One goal is to develop quality educational programs that give students a scholastic foundation. The CMN Dean of Academic Affairs recognizes the importance of accomplishing this goal with faculty meetings geared toward critical thinking, discussions, and program updates.

Another goal is developing co-curricular activities that respect tribal traditions and culture. This spring CMN's co-curricular assessment committee organized a student and staff social stickball game, inflatable obstacle course, voter registration and hand games. In addition, in recognition of Vhaky Em Pvtakv Nettv (Constitution Day), CMN staff provided an information booth. These activities promote inter-personal relationships, healthy lifestyles, and global citizenship which encourages campus engagement.

To ensure students continue displaying the values demonstrated in the mission, CMN recognizes the importance of instilling the desire for personal growth and life-long learning. In an effort to achieve this, CMN offers a one credit hour College Cornerstone course for incoming freshmen to acclimate students to the demands of the collegiate environment. This mandatory course introduces effective study tips, time management, Native life skills lessons, the importance of faculty/student communication, and other skills to facilitate student success. Furthermore, the college has also initiated co-curricular educational programs (Raven Ready, Healthy Lifestyle Challenge, Student Scholarship workshops) to promote success outside the classroom.

College of the Muscogee Nation upholds great respect toward Mvskoke culture. CMN has offered courses in Mvskoke (Creek) Hymns, Basket weaving, Flute Making, Shell Carving, Mvskoke Woodworking, 'Tokonhe (Stickball Stick) making and Mvskoke Traditional Foods. Mvskoke hymn singing, social stickball games, and stomp dance demonstrations are routinely held throughout the year on campus. In addition, student organizations have performed demonstrations at local schools. Faculty and students are encouraged to participate in cultural activities on and off campus to maintain Mvskoke culture as an institutional priority.

Sources

- CMN College Context
- CMN Mission Statement
- IPEDS 12-month Enrollment Data

1.B - Core Component 1.B

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.

Argument

1.B.1

Before the College of the Muscogee Nation was founded in 2004, Muscogee (Creek) citizens, completed a Needs Assessment survey to gauge the higher education preferences of the community. The responses were analyzed to determine and establish priorities as the basis for developing CMN. Through this assessment, degree programs were structured and implemented to address public needs. Since its inception, CMN has been active in the pursuit of serving public needs by providing culturally enriched educational opportunities to a traditionally underserved population. Recently, three new degrees, Criminal Justice, General Studies and Natural Resources were approved by HLC to be offered as Associate Degree programs.

The educational role of College of the Muscogee Nation as a tribal college is to serve the public and to support the community by regularly pursuing independent projects. CMN has participated in a wide range of [local and tribal community activities](#) that encompass the interest of the entire student body. CMN establishes public service by hosting several events throughout the year that encourage public participation. A sample list of Civic functions in which the college participated:

- Tulsa Global Alliance International Delegation (10/5/2017)
- U.S. Secret Service Informational Meeting (10/25/2017)
- Tribal Alliance for Pollinators Conference (1/26/2018)
- USDA Job Hiring Workshop (10/9/2018)
- American Indian Chamber of Commerce Meeting (3/11/2019)
- Oklahoma Court Reporters Board Meeting (4/27/2019)
- Native Alliance against Violence Grant Writing Workshop (7/1/2019)
- Oklahoma & Kansas Regional Learning Community Meeting (7/11/2019)

Other examples of serving the public include; providing facilities to groups conducting seminars, workshops, classes, and making presentations for the Muscogee Nation's Community Development program as well as its Conservation Department. CMN hosts the annual Creek Nation Challenge Bowl, in which approximately 500 elementary and secondary students compete. This competition includes Muscogee history, Muscogee culture, and Muscogee language. Approximately 15 area schools and over 40 teams competing attend this event. The CMN library is open to the public and provides numerous Native American materials. A variety of these items includes books, magazines, newspapers, journals, CDs, and movies.

An Employer Convening, which was held on February 27, 2020, invited outside constituents to the CMN campus. The discussions revolved around possible partnerships and employment opportunities for CMN students and graduates. The goal was to retrieve information on how CMN could better serve the community, and to promote community and capacity building. At this event, employers who had hired students and/or graduates were administered surveys and asked to rate their overall work skills. Feedback provided CMN information relating to the skills and knowledge that graduates and/or students have demonstrated as employees.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation encompasses eight counties of varying size, with both rural and urban populations. As noted, in serving the Nation, CMN's public service reaches far beyond its campus. Examples of CMN's civic involvement includes; participating in and hosting community events, providing public forums, and working in partnership with the communities. CMN's cultural perspective is provided to outside communities by demonstrating the college's core values.

1.B.2.

While CMN is dedicated to serving Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the communities, educational responsibilities take precedent over financial gain and external interests. MCN does not generate financial returns for investors, make contributions to a related or parent organization, and does not support external interests. Article VI of the MCN Charter indicates "no part of the net earnings of the College will inure to the benefit of, nor be distributed to its regents, administrative officers, or any other entity." Under [BoR Bylaws Article XVII](#), no stock can be issued. Funding for the college is received from tribal appropriations and federal grants and is used in maintaining operations at CMN.

1.B.3.

The College of the Muscogee Nation engages with external constituents and communities at the local, state, national, and tribal level. CMN responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow. During AY 2017-2018, CMN has

approved 143 Facility requests to host events for outside constituents. In AY 2018-2019, there were 163 Facility Requests submitted and approved.

Faculty, staff, and students are committed to giving back to constituencies by collaborating on various activities throughout the year. As demonstrated, CMN recognizes the diversity of its learners and constituencies. The college's Mission is clearly articulated publicly, it is the foundation for governing documents, and it guides CMN to maintain a cultural context in an academic setting.

Sources

- BoR By-Laws (Amended)
- BoR By-Laws (Amended) (page number 13)
- Community Facility Usage Report 2020

1.C - Core Component 1.C

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.

Argument

1.C.1

An example of where CMN encourages curricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship is in our capstone course [MGMT 2163 Project Management: Service Learning](#) in our Tribal Services degree program. Students plan, implement and participate in a tribal community or community service project. This allows students to develop a better understanding of the project management function. The course culminates with students developing a portfolio of their service learning experience, which addresses local needs, documents civic responsibility, and highlights project achievements. In addition, The Project Management course prepare our students for workplace success. Other courses that address civic engagement and informed citizenship are NAS 1213 Native American Tribal Government, POLS 1113 U.S. Government, HIST 1483/1493 U.S. History, and MVSK 2323 Contemporary Mvskoke Life. Courses that engage students in workplace success are MGMT 1353 Human Relations, MGMT Human Resources Management, GAM 2103 Casino Operations Management, GAM 2323 Supervision, and CJ 1133 Ethics & Professional Behavior in Law Enforcement.

The College of the Muscogee Nation encourages co-curricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success. Under the [Co-curricular Assessment Plan update \(2019-20\)](#), Tvsekvyyv (Citizenship) outcome was included. Tvsekvyyv (Citizenship) outcome states students will engage in responsible global citizenship. Students will be able to demonstrate a habit of service to the community of which they are a part and exercise responsibilities as a citizen. Tvsekvyyv will be assessed during the 2021-22 cycle. Some notable co-curricular activities include student advocates on Capitol Hill for Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU's). During American Indian Higher Education

Consortium's (AIHEC) Legislative Summit and Institutional Work-study, sub-committees hosted a MCN voter registration drive as an activity for co-curricular week in fall 2019. A student led activity Indigenous Peoples Day celebration was initiated by the CMN student organization, Tribal Leadership Circle (TLC). The CMN Board of Regents approved [TLC Resolution 2017-01](#) to Establish Indigenous Peoples Day on November 13, 2017. Other activities include Constitution Day, Co-curricular Week, and Native American Heritage Month.

CMN encourages co-curricular activities for workplace success in our Achieve the Dream (ATD) Paid Internship program. According to the [CMN Project Success Final Report](#), thirteen students have completed an internship, and twelve of those have either re-enrolled or graduated the following term. One of the interns was hired full time where the student interned, after graduating. Another event included CMN holding a [Career Readiness Fair](#) which included a resume building workshop for students. In addition, the college's Institutional Work Study (IWS) program has employed 25 students in FY 2018 and 28 students in FY 2019.

1.C.2

As a public Tribal College, CMN is open to all students and provides a positive learning environment for tribal citizens, Native American and non-native students alike. Many of our students are tribal citizens that come from many different backgrounds. CMN Health and Wellness offers a Campus Health Shelf for all students if they are in need of personal items. Health and Wellness provides many different types of training from Suicide Prevention (QPR), substance abuse, stress management, healthy relationship and [LGBTQ](#). As an event of ATD in 2017, faculty and staff began looking at equity with our students and on campus.

On October 1, 2014, CMN received Land-Grant status when it was designated as a "1994 Institution" under the Farm Bill. Oklahoma is unique as it is the only state with all three Land-Grant institutions OSU 1862, Langston 1890 and CMN 1994. Recently, OSU, Langston and CMN have begun the discussion and planning of event, Coming Together for Racial Understanding Oklahoma. The first training will be held on the CMN campus November 2020, which is Native American Heritage Month. The second training will be held on the Langston campus in February 2021, during Black History Month. CMN is also on the steering committee for [Racial Equity in the Food System Workgroup](#).

1.C.3.

As stated in the College of the Muscogee Nation's mission to encourage lifelong learners, personal growth, professional development, and intellectual advancement; student organizations and on-campus services support an environment built on core values. The Office of Student Affairs oversees the six student organizations. The student organizations consist of the American Indian

Business Leaders (AIBL), American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), Student Housing Organization (SHO), Student Senate, Phi Theta Kappa, and Tribal Leadership Circle (TLC). CMN recognizes its responsibility to create an atmosphere that emphasizes Vrakkeuckv (Respect), one of CMN's core values.

During October 2017, CMN established Indigenous Peoples Day through a resolution drafted by CMN students and the faculty advisor of the student organization, Tribal Leadership Circle. The annual celebration pays homage to all indigenous heritages, achievements, and Native individuals. The day entailed traditional hymn singing, recognition of tribes, motivational native speakers, cedar blessing, collaborative art project, Native hand games and traditional stickball game with students, faculty, staff and the community. The institution's Student Success Center implements events that reflect the mission and promote tradition, culture, and respect. The SSC Senior Speaker Series occurred during the spring trimester. The activity encompasses the importance of respect for tribal elders and encourages constructive conversations, thus allowing students to understand the value of knowledge and traditions, our tribal elders retain. The College of the Muscogee Nation in pursuing institutional improvement strives to fulfill its Mission with both, Native American culture and intellectual advancement.

Sources

- BoR Meeting Minutes 11.13.17
- Career Readiness Fair Flyer 2019
- CMN PS Paid Internship Final Report 2020
- Co-curricular Assesment Plan Update 2019-20
- LGBTQ Staff.Faculty.Student Training
- Racial Equity in the Food System Workgroup
- Student Portfolio 2

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

The mission for the college was developed collaboratively with faculty, staff, and students during the early years, and has been revised and adopted by the Board of Regents. The mission is articulated publicly through the website, primary documents such as the Catalog, Faculty and Student Handbooks, and is posted throughout college buildings. With emphasis to the mission, the budget has steadily increased areas related to the mission, such as the positive learning environment, offering exemplary academic programs, and providing instructional quality.

As a tribal college for a federally-recognized Indian tribe, the college acknowledges its unique status, both as a public tribal college and as a 1994 Land-Grant institution. This standing supports the mission in that it educates tribal and non-tribal students as citizens of a tribal and global society. In addition, CMN upholds its commitment to the public good and civic engagement as we encourage our faculty, staff, and students to demonstrate their support of the community through service projects and volunteering.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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.

Argument

2.A.1

The College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) has established policies and procedures for the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff to ensure adherence to our mission, and to fulfill legal and public standards for ethical conduct and disclosure. CMN's policies and processes are communicated through public documents, which are revised, as necessary, annually to ensure institutional integrity.

Board approved policies and processes demonstrate CMN's intent to adhere to our Core Values of integrity and accountability. They also outline the goals, policies, benefits, and expectations for CMN employees. Policy documents can be provided in paper form upon request or accessed electronically. Human Resource (HR) policies are also provided to new employees on a USB Flash Drive during orientation.

2.A.2

Financial

The Board of Regents and the administrative staff are responsible for upholding and monitoring the established ethical financial policies and procedures for the College of the Muscogee Nation. As set forth in the [NCA 11-040](#), "The books and records of the Board shall be audited each year by an independent Certified Public Accountant in accordance with generally accepted auditing procedures."

The [independent auditor report](#) state that audits are conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the

standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. CMN has [Accounting](#), [Bursar](#), [Cash Handling](#), and [Procurement](#) policies to ensure consistency and compliance with standards set by our governing board. These policies are updated annually, as needed.

To inform the public of our financial functions, and the integrity with which we operate, the audit results are provided as public information. Paper copies are distributed to the Board of Regents and stake holders. Electronic copies are provided to US Government Agencies on eZ-Audit and the Federal Audit Clearing House and to CMN faculty and staff on a shared drive. The audit report is also made available upon request to the general public. The [audits](#) have reflected the adherence to tribal college policies and procedures regarding procurement, inventory, travel, contractual procedures, and grant management.

Academic

The Board of Regents has the authority to award degrees, which is based on the academic programs of the institution, thus the responsibility to sustain this institution of higher education is at the pinnacle of the Board's academic responsibility. Since the very beginning of the college, the Board has adopted policy of the college, administration, faculty, and staff in their duty to maintain academic integrity, instructional excellence, and quality degrees.

The Dean of Academic Affairs is the administrative head for instruction and curriculum, who in turn, is accountable to the President. This structure of checks and balances reinforces integrity, reliability, oversight, and concerns regarding academic operations. Consequently, the Dean provides oversight of policies that support instructional quality, procedures, and assembling resources that support effective teaching, by being responsible for:

- accuracy of academic program reporting;
- program development integrity;
- faculty engagement;
- program curriculum oversight;
- student learning assessment.

The foundation for academic integrity is based in established policies and procedures regulating the development of curriculum and the instruction of students. The [Faculty Handbook](#) is the guiding document outlining faculty policies and processes. Faculty responsibilities cited in the handbook include honesty, leadership, academic freedom, and integrity. A [Faculty Council](#) was established and bylaws adopted in 2010. This council continues to provide a general forum for faculty involvement in policy formation, implementation, and encourage communication between faculty, staff, and administration.

The Academic Affairs/Curriculum Committee is a main component in the integrity incorporated into our academic programs. Specific contributions that this committee makes to the integrity of academic affairs are as follows:

- ensure CMN maintains current academic policies;
- review academic programs and services;
- approve course and degree revisions;
- evaluate new courses and degree programs;
- submit above list to the Board of Regents and external entities.

Members include: Dean of Academic Affairs (Chair), Regents Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Faculty Representative, and the Librarian.

Assessment enhances faculty integrity by measuring student learning as compared to the intended outcomes. This process increases the validity of academic programs by providing guidelines which are followed by faculty. As outlined in the [CMN Assessment Plan](#), student learning is linked to institutional, general education, program, and course learning outcomes. These formative assessment methods incrementally measure student learning, which allows faculty to assess student learning and make necessary adjustments of teaching strategies to impact overall summative assessments, conducted at the end of the trimester. Instructors' oversight of student learning is increased, and aids in the collection of assessment data for future program evaluation.

Human Resources

Fair and ethical policies start with selection of the five member Board of Regents, each having a Bachelor's degree, five years of professional, educational or related experience and be a tribal citizen. Members of the Board are appointed by the Principal Chief with the approval of the Muscogee National Council, and serve five-year staggered terms, which ensures stability within the Board and College. No Regent may be seated until the National Council confirms the Principal Chief's appointment. The Board determines management policy, employs the President, has responsibility for general governance, and possesses the authority to make decisions affecting institutional integrity.

Should conflicts arise for the Board or College, there are remedies within the laws, policies and precedents in the tribal courts to ensure that the Board and the College administration are able to act ethically and responsibly in the best interest of the College. The integrity of the institution is enhanced with NCA 11-040 Legislation and Policies which address *Conflict of Interest* in sections 113.E.2. (*prevention of nepotism*) and 113.F. (*procurement policies and procedures*). In addition these are also addressed in the CMN's [HR Policies and Procedures](#), Section 3 General Employment and in CMN's Procurement Policies, and apply to all Administrators.

Fair and clear policies and procedures are followed in personnel matters regarding integrity, ethical conduct, grievance, and the absence of harassment and discrimination. These are outlined in Employee Policies, [Title IX Policies](#), [Information Technology Policies](#), Faculty Handbook, [Student Handbook](#), and annual training sessions. Faculty and staff are provided access to the [organizational chart](#), their position description, and handbooks appropriate to their classification, which outlines CMN expectations.

CMN is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer, giving preference to Native Americans, which is specified in job postings. Vacant positions are advertised and posted to ensure fair and ethical hiring practices. Applications are screened and interviews are conducted by a committee who then recommends their selection to the President for final approval. A new faculty/staff orientation is required upon being hired and an annual employee meeting is held to review institutional policies and procedures.

The Faculty Handbook is distributed to all instructional staff at the beginning of their employment. The handbook is a training tool and reference guide ensuring consistency among faculty. Some of the information provided is: faculty service, employment, academic classifications, academic freedom, faculty evaluation, leave and absences, fringe benefits, travel policies, college services, student related responsibilities, academic and administrative support, purchasing procedures, fire regulations, security, and emergencies.

Student privacy is protected by CMN's adherence to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). All faculty, staff, and student workers are required to sign a statement of confidentiality before starting work. FERPA training is provided annually.

All staff at CMN undergo annual performance evaluations to determine whether position goals are being met, and to facilitate communication between employees and supervisors. In addition, all upper level staff provide updated [vita](#) to the Human Resources Department as a current record of their qualifications. Recognizing the importance of communication in responsible conduct, CMN maintains an open door policy at all levels.

CMN has several standing committees and ad hoc committees to plan and implement policies, projects, and events that allow employees to have a voice in decisions. This committee approach promotes employee ownership and institutional transparency, which in turn increases an employee's commitment to the success of the College.

Auxiliary Functions

Auxiliary services available to CMN students include student housing, Raven's Nest Bookstore, Core Values Café, and the fitness center. Hours of operation for

each of the auxiliary services are posted on the website, student planner, and in the catalog, as well as outside the location. These services are reviewed each trimester and changes are made as student needs are identified.

CMN has an ethical responsibility to provide safe and suitable housing, as defined in the [Student Housing Handbook](#) which outlines policies and clarifies student rights and responsibilities. The student residence units are a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded project, which requires residents to sign a HUD contract, comply with income requirements, and pass a background check. The price of student housing is published on the CMN website, and on the Bursar's page. Laundry facilities are located in the student housing area, with affordable prices for students. Indoor and outdoor recreational activities are available for student residents to utilize, internet connection and phone service is available. The Turtle Lodge has been added to the student housing area for students. It includes an office for the Housing Manager, a computer lab, and a recreation area for all CMN students to assemble for leisure or study.

The Raven's Nest Bookstore provides books, course materials, school apparel, and small personal necessity items. Additionally, the bookstore provides a list of textbooks required for courses and respective prices each trimester to be published on the CMN website. Federal compliance requires this information be readily available to students through the [Consumer Information Guide](#). CMN has an ethical responsibility to provide students textbook prices for their courses, allowing them to search for more affordable options. Recognizing the high price of books and supplies, CMN provides institutional scholarships that help cover the costs of textbooks and basic school supplies.

The Core Values Café provides reasonably priced meals for residents, commuters, employees, and the general public. With service three times a day, the monthly menus for breakfast, lunch, and dinner are posted outside the café. Nutritious meals are supplemented with drinks, salad bar, and soup available for lunch and dinner. In line with our mission to act with integrity, when students submit menu or café suggestions in the publically displayed suggestion box, if realistic, the items are incorporated into the service.

A Fitness Center is available at no cost to students and employees. The exercise area is equipped with treadmills, free weights, multi-exercise station, and a stair master. Lockers are available for personal items to be secured. In continuing our obligation to student health, through various grants we have provided an outdoor walking trail with exercise stations and solar lighting.

In our commitment to having a safe and secure campus, all areas are monitored by CMN security. The campus is patrolled with a security vehicle, with backup from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthorse police department available. Four call-boxes are located in the student housing area in case of emergency. By using these boxes, students are automatically put in contact with CMN security to report

the situation and request assistance. The Rave Alert Notification System referred to as Raven Alert has been installed to provide messaging services (Via phone, text and email) to all students and college personnel.

To meet our Core Value of fvtcetv (integrity), CMN provides annual training for FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), employee CPR, Active Shooter, ethics, mental health, suicide prevention (Question, Persuade, and Refer), Title IX, and others to all employees. Many of these training opportunities are also presented to students.

Sources

- 2019 Annual Financial Statements and Independent Auditors Report
- 2019 Single Audit
- Accounting PP Manual 2017
- Assessment Plan 2019-2020
- BoR By-Laws (Amended)
- BoR By-Laws (Amended) (page number 8)
- Bursar Policy and Procedures 2018
- Cash Handling Policies and Procedures 2018
- CMN Title IX Policy 2020
- Consumer Info Guide 2020-2021
- Employee VITA 2020
- Faculty Handbook 2019-2022
- Faculty_Council_Bylaws
- HR Policies and Procedures Official 2018
- IT Policies and Procedures
- NCA_11-040_Enabling_Legislation
- Organizational Chart
- Procurement Policy and Procedures 2018
- Student Housing Handbook 2020-2021

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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.

Argument

2.B.1

The College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) presents itself clearly by maintaining accurate, accessible, and direct communication with our students, faculty, staff, and public. The CMN website, Catalog, Consumer Information Guide, Faculty and Student Handbooks and [Human Resources Policies and Procedures](#) are primary sources utilized to seek information regarding CMN's programs, requirements, student costs, governance structure, and external relationships. All materials are produced, updated, reviewed, and submitted for approval to the Website/Publications Committee prior to publication.

Information regarding the college's programs and requirements are available on the CMN website, and in various college handbooks and publications. The College Catalog is the primary document that the college relies on for clear and complete presentation of information relevant to students and the public. The Catalog is available on the website with the paper document distributed throughout campus offices for reference purposes. The website is available to students, prospective students, public, external constituents, and is compliant with federal laws and regulations as required by the Higher Learning Commission, Department of Education, and other applicable agencies.

The Student Handbook is provided to students on the website, available upon request through the Student Affairs office and in the library. The intent is to make policies and procedures that affect students widely available at all times during the academic year. The Consumer Information Guide has a dedicated section of the CMN website and includes all federally mandated disclosures; it is available to the public.

College documents are updated and published annually to assist faculty, staff, and students on campus as they pursue their institutional goals. These documents can be found in the Evidence File and further discussed in various sections of the Assurance Argument.

Academic Offerings

Academic offerings are presented to the public through the CMN website, admissions documents, and Catalog as well as academic policies, general education courses, degree requirements, program learning outcomes, and degree program descriptions. Degree program outcomes are clearly posted in the catalog to ensure consistency between learning concepts and outcomes. Degree programs are subject to periodic review and findings. These are translated to faculty, administration, and adjusted accordingly to stay aligned with the CMN Mission.

Requirements

The College of the Muscogee Nation follows policies and procedures of two primary entities, Higher Learning Commission and the United States Department of Education. It is the institution's responsibility to provide information that assists students to make informed decisions relating to their education, future, and to present ourselves honestly to the public.

Title IV, HEA Aid and FERPA are major federal initiatives for which CMN demonstrates compliance and presents information accurately and ethically. The Consumer Information Guide is distributed to staff, faculty, administration, and students annually. In order for all faculty and staff to be cognizant of the application and use of FERPA, mandatory training is provided annually.

As an institution of higher education for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the College is required to comply with tribal legislation that enabled the institution to be established. The requirements include quarterly reports, annual financial audits, and the Board of Regents governance responsibilities met in their monthly meetings. Tribal sovereignty is important to CMN; however, it does not prohibit the College from complying with Federal guidelines and requirements set forth by external constituencies.

Academic requirements for an Associate Degree, Admission, Tuition/Fees, Net Price Calculator, Satisfactory Academic Progress, Refund Policy, and Graduation Requirements are all presented in the Consumer Information Guide, Catalog, and/or website. These resources are all accessible to students and the public.

Faculty and Staff

In order for students and the public to identify and locate administration, faculty and staff, the College of the Muscogee Nation presents updated faculty and staff information via:

- Website Directory – photograph, name, title, email address, college address, and phone number;
- College Catalog – titles and degree credentials of faculty;
- Student Handbook – name and title of administrators and faculty;
- Student Information System (CampusVue) – faculty contact information;
- Class Schedule – instructor name;
- Syllabi – instructor name, contact information, office location, office hours.

Costs to Students

The cost of tuition, fees, and housing is available in the college Catalog and on the CMN website. Located on the Bursar's information page, a clear and complete indication of the cost of attendance is available to the public. Additionally, as required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act, the net price calculator is located on the CMN website located under the 1.) Important Information tab, 2.) Consumer Information which has a 3.) Financial category containing the 4.) Net Price Calculator.

Governance Structure

CMN is a public tribal college, as defined in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation legislation NCA 11-040. The Board of Regents is made up of five individuals nominated by the Principal Chief and confirmed by the MCN National Council. Their monthly meetings are open to the public, posted five days in advance, with opportunities for questions and discussions. Minutes of meetings are kept by a Recording Secretary, and are available for review upon request from the President's Executive Assistant.

Accreditation Relationships

Publicly available information regarding the accreditation status of CMN is found on the website with the Mark of Affiliation and in the Catalog. The Higher Learning Commission awarded Initial Accreditation to CMN in November 2016. Accreditation status can also be found on the Higher Learning Commissions website: <https://www.hlcommission.org> under Student Resources, Find Institutions.

2.B.2

Co-curricular programs at CMN emphasize culture and values, which complement academics to promote learning inside the classroom as well as

outside. As stated in the Student Handbook, individual students and student organizations shall be free to examine, discuss all questions of interest to them, and to express opinions publicly and privately. Students have the right to assemble, select speakers, and discuss issues of their choice. CMN Faculty/Staff ensure that processes are set for a reasonable time, place, and manner in order to maintain the regular class schedules and the rights of other students on campus.

Students have embraced the opportunities of college life by being involved with the Student Senate, Tribal Leadership Circle, Student Housing Organization, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, Phi Theta Kappa, and American Indian Business Leaders student organizations. Individuals who participate and are involved in college activities impact other students and the campus community. These organizations are involved within the campus community, the local community, and Muscogee (Creek) Nation activities. Students exhibit *vraakkueckv* (respect) for the college and themselves as they participate in activities such as the annual Muscogee (Creek) Nation Festival Parade, Health and Wellness events, and the White House Tribal Youth Gathering in Washington D.C. Respect is also demonstrated through community service such as participation in Earth Day activities and volunteering at the Iron Gate Grocery Pantry in Tulsa, OK. CMN student organizations also host activities that give back to the community, such as a Coat Drive for local children, and card decorating for Muscogee Elders and Veterans.

Student organizations at CMN enhance scholarly development by providing opportunities for students to share cultural experiences with peers that have common interests. Off-campus and co-curricular activities such as the American Indian Higher Education Consortium(AIHEC) and the Oklahoma Native American Students in Higher Education(ONASHE) conferences provides students with leadership opportunities. Those attending these conferences also participate in the annual hand game competition, knowledge bowl and attend sessions on a variety of leadership and education topics.

November is Native American Heritage month and is filled with cultural events. Students participate in traditional stomp dances, hymn singing, cultural and historical presentations, and student forums. In 2019, a student veteran gave a presentation in a ceremony held to honor Native American Veterans. In addition, a traditional food tasting was held; with food being prepared and provided by the Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative.

In 2019, Student Affairs offered student-centered services necessary to provide an environment that supported positive individual growth while encouraging student participation through social, recreational, cultural, and wellness activities. Examples included, presentations and events open to the public, Health and Wellness HIV/Hepatitis C testing, alcohol awareness events, suicide prevention activities, mental health screenings, and annual spring career fair, and financial aid workshops.

Students are encouraged to accept leadership positions outside organizations, the community and CMN student organizations. In recent years, a CMN alumna was selected as Miss Muscogee Creek Nation where she served as an ambassador for the tribe. Annually, students attend the American Indian Higher Education Consortium's White House Tribal Youth gathering in Washington D. C.. This event gives students the opportunity to interact with White House Administration officials and the White House Council on Native American affairs. This experience provides an excellent opportunity for students to practice and strengthen their civic responsibilities and leadership skills.

Recognizing the importance of co-curricular activities on the overall educational experience of students, CMN has established a co-curricular assessment committee to assess the effectiveness of activities held on campus. This committee has assessed selected fitness and cultural activities held with students, and looks to expand their focus in future events.

One of CMN's core curricula is the Mvskoke language, which is directly linked to its mission and is evident by our learning outcomes through the Core Values written in the Mvskoke language. Claims that a positive learning environment is provided for tribal and non-tribal students is demonstrated through the service learning component. Service learning is conducted in, and meets the needs of the community; it is coordinated by CMN and participating communities. To enhance the student's learning experience, a [Service Learning Packet](#) is provided with a description of the project requirements.

It is CMN's intent to foster civic responsibility through the service learning course, which is integrated into the academic curriculum of the students. Examples of recent service learning projects in the Tribal Services program include a Mvskoke language program at a local school, a clothing closet for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's (MCN) job placement program, creating a food pantry in a tribal community church, and a voter registration campaign. Several examples of the Native American Studies service-learning projects include a Mvskoke language program at the MCN's childcare, the translation of Mvskoke words on maps for the MCN's Cultural Preservation office and assisting with the MCN archives. Students are able to address the many challenges associated with the duties of these workplaces as well as gain experience that addresses local needs, documents civic responsibility, and highlights project achievements.

Students have indicated that their desire to enhance their knowledge and personal development were reasons for participating in the service learning project. Upon completion of their experience, students indicated they had a more positive attitude toward CMN and it enhanced their ability to work and learn independently. Students reported a sense of achievement and an increased sense of social responsibility. The course culminated with students developing a portfolio of their service learning activities in relation to their educational experience.

The college envisions experiential learning as a process which will involve student participation in community activities and serve as a capstone for their Associate of Art and Sciences degree studies. By virtue of aspects of the Mission such as emphasizing Native culture, community engagement, professional development, and intellectual advancement, service learning brings a unique approach to students' educational experience.

Sources

- HR Policies and Procedures Official 2018
- Service_Learning_Packet

2.C - Core Component 2.C

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.

Argument

The Board of Regents acts independently of any MCN entity in determining the course of direction and policies for CMN. The Board of Regents is identified in [Article XIII](#) of the Muscogee (Creek) Constitution, and in Tribal Legislation NCA 11-040 as the governing body of the College of the Muscogee Nation. This enables the Board to act autonomously, maintain stability and act in concert with other MCN branches of government. Only the citizens, through an appropriate referendum, can amend that authority in the Muscogee (Creek) Constitution. The primary source for the relationship with the Principal Chief and National Council is through the nomination and confirmation of the Board of Regents. The Board holds the legal authority to confer degrees granted by the tribal college.

2.C.1.

The College provides a [manual](#) and training for the Board. The training on [February 10, 2020](#), covered items such as: ethical obligations, familiarity with bylaws, conflicts of interest, tribal law, open meeting acts, and other relevant subjects to ensure the board fulfills its legal and fiduciary responsibility to the institution. In addition, Regents have participated in training through the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education Regents Education Program, the Governance Institute for Student Success, as well as the Higher Learning

Commission's Conferences giving them knowledge to make informed decisions about financial and academic policies and practices. CMN holds annual training such as: Title IX, CPR, active shooter, suicide prevention, and many more, which the Board may attend.

The trainings provide information and understanding that allow Regents to perform their public responsibilities and to govern successfully. The Board's training ensures they can successfully guide CMN into the future while preserving the past and keeping the Mission at the forefront.

2.C.2.

Priorities of the Board are to ensure the institution is adhering to its Mission, to make decisions in the best interest of the institution, and to assure its integrity. When considering decisions made by the institution, the Board focuses on fulfilling the Mission and how potential changes would affect the student body. Utilizing the [Strategic Plan](#), the Board provides direction for the college's development by approving goals, objectives, and priorities that focus on the future.

During the Regents meeting on [March 9, 2020](#), members reviewed and approved the [annual audit](#). The Board evaluates and employs the President and has the authority to terminate. [Self -Evaluations](#) are completed by the Regents. The Board approves management policy, [budget](#), oversee academic policies and procedures, and has responsibility for general governance, which includes the authority to make decisions helping to preserve the institutional integrity.

2.C.3.

The Regents hold monthly, public meetings at which they consider policy items for the College. The President and Regents Director for Institutional Effectiveness attend each of the meetings in order to keep the Board informed of College operations, and to provide an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Reports may also be presented to the Board by student organizations, employees, administrative departments, and the public. All new policy and procedures, revisions, and review of reasonable and relevant internal and external constituencies are considered. A MCN Council representative, acting as a liaison to the tribal legislative body attends the monthly meetings.

Meetings are posted publicly in accordance with NCA 11-040 §4-109, so that internal and external constituents have access to the agenda, time and location, and how to request to be on the agenda. Regents recognize the ethical responsibility of acting with integrity in all actions pertaining to the interests of the College in accordance with the by-laws, which ensures that all business considered is responsive to the needs of students, faculty, staff, and the community.

2.C.4.

The Board of Regents preserves its independence by understanding and operating within the foundational support from the following primary sources:

- Article XIII
- Muscogee Nation Constitution
- College Charter
- College Legislation
- Board of Regents By-laws
- Board Manual
- College Mission
- Laws of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation
- CMN Strategic Plan

These documents clarify powers, duties, and responsibilities of the Board. The documents also include a [conflict of interest policy](#), located in the Board's manual, and training covering ethical issues. This framework for decision-making protects the College from undue influence and the established checks and balances enable the integrity of the College to be maintained.

Additionally, bylaws and policies protect the Board from external influences and authorizes them to act in the best interest of the College. In the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Code, Title 31, Chapter 1 under the heading, "Removal of Officers" protects the College from unlawful action of board members. These laws, legislation, and documents insulates the College from political influence and coercion, which safeguards the integrity of the college.

2.C.5.

In Section 4-107, B. 16 of the NCA 11-040 legislation, it specifically states that the Board "will abstain from the involvement in day to day operations," which effectively prevents micromanagement. The NCA 11-040 Sections 4-107, B. 7 and 4-111 D delegate authority to the President for expenditure of funds and hiring. The Board of Regents Bylaws also reiterate delegation of primary responsibilities to the President in section 6.4.

The governing structure of the College, approved by the Board of Regents, affords all academic responsibilities to the Academic Dean and faculty, with support from the President. Recognizing the faculty needed a venue through which academic affairs could be advanced, the Board approved the Faculty Council Bylaws, appendix B section II in the Faculty Handbook. Through this Faculty Council, faculty has a mechanism by which instructional policy items can be proposed and adopted by the Board. Faculty also utilizes curriculum, assessment committees, and CMN data to further ensure academic integrity.

Sources

- 2019 Annual Financial Statements and Independent Auditors Report
- Board of Regents Manual 2020
- BOR Biography Self Evaluations 2020
- BoR Meeting Minutes 02.10.20
- BoR Meeting Minutes 03.09.20
- FY 2020 Budget
- MCN_Constitution_Article_XIII
- Strategic Plan 2019- 2023
- TC 12.02 Conflict of Interest Policy

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

The College of the Muscogee Nation provides a tribal experience that promotes life-long learners and produces leaders within the community. Academic freedom and freedom of expression, along with the pursuit of truth, is an integral part of this process due to its significance in developing broad, integrative, and diverse perspectives. CMN allows self-expression and the pursuit of distinctive viewpoints are encouraged; however, the institution recognizes the duty in ensuring these are consistent with ethical and equitable practices.

Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is an assurance to those who teach and pursue knowledge and, thus, pertains to rights of expression regarding teaching and research within specific areas of recognized professional competence. Academic freedom is part of the faculty handbook. The College of the Muscogee Nation encourages all faculty to exercise their academic freedom in the classroom and through their research work.

The College of the Muscogee Nation Faculty Council is an organization of the faculty designed to facilitate democratic participation in the development of applicable institutional policies. This is accomplished in accordance with the Council Bylaws through its elected representatives of the Faculty Council, serving as the liaison between the faculty and administration. The Faculty Council President may call a faculty meeting if requested by majority of the faculty. Faculty members have an obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public and tribal understanding of academic freedom. CMN Administrators protect, defend, and promote academic freedom.

Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression is a fundamental right that students, staff, and faculty enjoy. Not only as citizens of Tribal Nations and America, but also as active participants within the realm of higher education. Our students are guaranteed the freedom to speak their Native languages, share their culture, and participate in traditions while attending CMN. This freedom adheres to the CMN mission in developing personal growth, professional development, intellectual advancement, and is stated in the [Faculty](#) and [Student](#) Handbooks.

Quality Education

In addition to the basic constitutional rights, students at CMN have specific rights related to academic freedom and their status as students. Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom.

Academic Freedom

Freedom to learn depends upon appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom, on the campus, and in the larger community. In the classroom, students are free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students are expected to exercise their freedom with responsibility.

Speech and Assembly

Individual students and student organizations are free to examine and to discuss all questions of interest to them, and to express opinions publicly and privately. They are free to support causes by orderly means that do not disrupt the regular and essential operation of the institution.

Students have the right to assemble, to select speakers, and to discuss issues of their choice. The College establishes a reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions to assure that the assembly does not substantially disrupt the work of the institution or interfere with the opportunity of other students to obtain an education or otherwise infringe upon the rights of others.

Instructors have responsibilities to their students and actively use multiple instructional formats that would benefit their individual learning styles, such as individual and/or small group and lecture in order to research, communicate, and acquire information. This exposure to knowledge, information, and dedicated practice supports the College's core value of hoporenkv (wisdom). Co-curricular sponsors and student services are accountable to their student organizations, students, and events to provide opportunities for free expression. They encourage unrestricted communication through face-to-face interactions, suggestions, student support services, student surveys, and meetings. This opportunity for free expression supports the CMN mission to develop students professionally and intellectually outside of the classroom and to ensure free expression is maintained for all co-curricular activities and are subject to assessment.

CMN welcomes expressive freedom and it will be obtained and utilized with the College's core value fvtcetv (Integrity). To ensure students are aware of the ethical constraints associated with using information there are workshops and materials which are provided to students throughout the year covering database research, plagiarism, and ethical use of information. Students are informed of the consequences of not following academic honesty, integrity, and abuse with

freedom of expression in Consumer Information Guide, Course Syllabi, Student Handbook, Catalog, and Website.

Pursuit of Truth

The pursuit of truth and freedom of expression coincide to accomplish CMN's mission to provide a positive learning environment for our students. Faculty members compel students to pursue truth through information received in the classroom and in co-curricular activities. That is why CMN employs a number of scholarly events to highlight this such as writing research papers, presenting speeches, giving presentations, utilizing critical thinking skills, and co-curricular activities. This element of research, in particular, is essential at CMN; however, students must convey their research, thoughts, words, and actions responsibly and ethically. The consequences of irresponsible and unethical conveyance are posted in the [Consumer Information Guide](#), Course Syllabi, and student plagiarism systems such as *Turn It In*.

By creating an environment that encourages the pursuit of truth, CMN students are free to undertake observation, theory, cognitive meaning, objective reference, and build upon grounds of knowledge. This atmosphere provides students with opportunities to express their thoughts and ideals with enthusiasm. This responsibility falls on the student and organization as a whole to ensure ethical accountability and integrity are maintained. At CMN, the pursuit of truth is approached with the Mission, Goals, and Core Values in mind.

Sources

- Consumer Info Guide 2020-2021
- Faculty Handbook 2019-2022
- Student Handbook 2020-2021

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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.

Argument

2.E.1.

The College of the Muscogee Nation has a united research focus among faculty and students. Professional standards are maintained by faculty members by remaining current in their field of study. Students acquire and discover knowledge through hands-on, and on-line learning opportunities guided by faculty. Students follow course syllabi which outlines specific course details such as instructor information, course objectives, weekly schedule, textbook and other related materials.

Instructors monitor student-led research. Research proposals must be submitted through the [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) for approval before it is conducted. IRB approval is granted for a period of one year. Researchers who receive approval, must reapply every year.

Established on July 26, 2010, the IRB is responsible for reviewing all incoming research proposals, with the goal of protecting human subjects. Additionally, the IRB ensures research is unbiased, and the benefits and risks of the research are distributed fairly. All research findings must be reported to the IRB for final review. This ensures proper protocols protect the rights of the subjects and an accurate representation is reflected within the research.

The IRB meets as needed during the academic year and the summer. Research results can be seen through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and are retained for a period of three years.

CMN recognizes the importance of ethical behavior by its faculty, students, and staff. Faculty members are expected to follow the policy regarding Academic Responsibility in the [Faculty Handbook](#).

Academic Responsibility

Faculty members are responsible for the quality of instruction they provide and participation in the academic community. All CMN faculty exercise self-discipline and judgment to extend knowledge and while practicing intellectual honesty.

Faculty members have responsibilities to their students, their colleagues, and CMN, their community, and the tribal community. Responsibilities include:

- Encouraging students in the pursuit of an independent mind, while holding before them the highest scholarly and professional standards,
- Showing respect for the student as an individual and adhere to their proper role as an intellectual leader and counselor,
- Deriving common membership in a community of tribal college scholars,
- Respecting and defending the free inquiry of their colleagues,
- Maintaining their right to academic freedom, they observe the stated regulations of the institution,
- An obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public and tribal understanding of academic freedom.

Standards of Student Conduct

The College of The Muscogee Nation promotes the integration of traditional Native American values within each of its programs. CMN expects students to respect the rights and property of the College of the Muscogee Nation Community and its students, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation community and its citizens, and to know and observe, tribal, federal, state and local laws. Traditional Muscogee teachings charge us with seeking the values of Vrakkeuckv (respect), Fvtcetv (integrity), Mecvlke (responsibility), Eyasketv (humility), and Hoporenkv (wisdom). In keeping with this spirit, students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which is a credit to themselves, The College of the Muscogee Nation, their families, and communities. Students are expected to follow the policies regarding student conduct outlined in the Student Handbook.

2.E.2.

To ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice, students are expected to follow the Academic Integrity Policy stated in the [Student Handbook](#). This policy defines and outlines academic misconduct, and consequences for violating this policy. Students who conduct research are provided a rubric by their instructor, which describes the format and scoring chart for all research projects.

Additionally, students ensure the integrity of research by following the requirements within the course syllabus. To ensure scholarly practice of students, instructors may require students to provide research papers or poster presentations to exhibit research results or as a final exam. CMN may assist students with funding to purchase research materials. Another support service provided to ensure the integrity of student research and scholarly practice is access to academic research databases available to students free of charge. These databases are located on the CMN website.

CMN faculty hold regularly scheduled meetings to assess courses and programs to ensure scholarly practice. Academic development of faculty is encouraged by the College. Therefore, CMN supports academic development of faculty by budgeting funds for faculty to attend conferences and seminars to keep faculty members current in their respective fields of study. The Academic Affairs Department reviews course syllabi, and holds committee curriculum reviews to ensure the quality and accuracy of instruction. The Curriculum Committee reviews and approves course and degree revisions and new courses and degree programs before submission to the Board of Regents for final approval.

2.E.3.

The CMN Library, as indicated in its [Handbook](#), exists to serve the research, teaching, and learning needs of the college community and the citizens of the Muscogee Nation at large. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of research, and information resources via educational sessions during orientation programs and library workshops. The library provides resources such as a collection of books totaling 7, 678; 1,896 DVD's; 32 journals; 25 laptops; 50 textbooks; and a collection of tribal newspapers from different tribal nations.

The library also supports students by providing instructional handouts, hosting database research, and Modern Language Association (MLA) style guide workshops each trimester that includes information on plagiarism. Library workshops are focused on proper academic writing format, providing information on properly citing sources, gathering research, and the use of database information. After the workshops, instructors may require students to write a short paper including citations. The paper must demonstrate the student's acquisition of knowledge throughout the entirety of their work.

2.E.4.

CMN acknowledges that academic honesty and integrity are vital to the success of its students. These policies and practices are in place, and are enforced through standards of student conduct. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, following the course syllabi provided by the instructor, while upholding the core value *Fvtcety* (*Integrity*). To avoid intentional

and accidental plagiarism, instructors provide materials for citation formats, and the reasoning behind citations.

Additionally, “Turn It In” software is used to detect, and protect the student against accidental, and intentional plagiarism. Acts of academic dishonesty shall be addressed according to the Student Handbook (pg. 12). Should an act of academic dishonesty present itself, instructors have the authority to not accept the assignment or test in question, and record a “zero”, require the student to redo the assignment or test, or require the student to complete a substitute assignment or test. Instructors may submit written recommendation of a student’s suspension from CMN in cases of repeated academic dishonesty.

Sources

- Faculty Handbook 2019-2022
- Faculty Handbook 2019-2022 (page number 16)
- IRB Handbook 2020
- Library Handbook 2020
- Student Handbook 2020-2021
- Student Handbook 2020-2021 (page number 15)

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

The College of the Muscogee Nation has established policies and procedures for the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff to ensure adherence to our mission, and to fulfill legal and public standards for ethical conduct and disclosure. It is with these ethical responsibilities in mind that the college strives to present itself in an honest, transparent manner to students and the public.

In accordance with tribal legislation, the college is required to have an audit conducted each year by an independent Certified Public Accountant in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Procedures. These audits reflect adherence of the tribal college to policies and procedures regarding procurement, inventory, travel, contractual procedures, and grant management.

The Board of Regents is identified in Article XIII of the Muscogee (Creek) Constitution and in tribal legislation NCA 11-040 as the governing body of the college. In addition to these laws, the bylaws and policies protect the Board from external influences and refrain from micromanagement of CMN daily operations. The Charter for the college details that there will be no financial gain of board members from funds received by the college.

Academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth are fundamental rights that students, staff, and faculty enjoy, not only as citizens of tribal nations and America, but also as active participants within the realm of higher education. Students are guaranteed the freedom to speak their native languages, share their culture, and participate in traditions while attending CMN. To ensure students are aware of the ethical constraints associated with using information, workshops, and materials are provided to students throughout the year covering database research, plagiarism, and ethical use of information. Students are informed of the consequences of not following academic honesty, integrity, and abuse with freedom of expression.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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).

Argument

All course offerings at the College of the Muscogee Nation are on campus, through face to face class meetings except in recent situations involving the [COVID 19 pandemic](#) which required CMN to offer classes online. The CMN campus is a 45 acre area with two buildings that have a total of nine classrooms, one computer lab, and one science lab. Recently the college has received funding for a 4500 sf Natural Resources/Cultural Arts building that should be completed in October of 2020. In addition, HUD/tribal/USDA/DOE funding has been received for 20,000 sf Math/Science Classroom and Exhibit hall, construction is expected to start in February of 2021. The three credit hour classes meet twice per week for fifteen weeks, for a total of forty-five hours of in class sessions.

The [Faculty Credentials Committee Policy](#) ensures that all faculty members are qualified in their specific area of study to teach their respective courses. The committee also reviews the credentials for all general education instructors to ensure they have either a master's degree in the specific area or a master's degree and eighteen graduate hours in the assigned general education course area. In addition, CMN has established a Curriculum Committee that reviews changes to the programs, textbooks, and syllabi. The Office of Academic Affairs provides regular faculty development meetings to encourage all faculty to continue to improve on their course curriculum, methods, and modes of teaching.

3.A.1

Courses in all degree and certificate programs have appropriate and relevant resources for teaching and learning related to the content of the subject matter. CMN maintains updated materials in courses/degree programs by using current edition textbooks, SMART board technology (recently updated to ViewSonic), online research databases, and a wide range of Native American periodicals. The College also provides a computer lab, laptops available for students to check out from the library, and the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) and recently as the college changed to online classes; computers and hotpots were provided to all fulltime students. A critical part of the formula for courses and programs to remain relevant involves continued professional development by CMN faculty. A variety of seminars, training, webinars, and involvement with professional groups associated within their field of study are utilized in sustaining their knowledge base and cultivating new ideas and concepts.

CMN utilizes several committees to ensure that courses and programs are at levels appropriate to the degree awarded. The curriculum committee reviews the course syllabus, textbook requests, and discusses alignment with the degree program. The curriculum committee also participates in the program review process by verifying the information and analysis presented if needed.

Faculty development is a crucial part of CMN to courses and programs staying current. Faculty underwent a curriculum redesign in the 2019-20 academic year with the guidance of Achieving the Dream (ATD). During the discovery phase of the ATD project, faculty identified their highest need as professional development in areas of curriculum and methodology. Academic Affairs created a committee for developmental course composed of faculty to lead the initiative. Data showed that students were able to complete the cycle of developmental courses to college level courses on to graduation for CMN was less than 10% in previous years. The ATD project on faculty professional development was a developmental course redesign. All faculty participated. During the fall 2019 CMN faculty engaged in several training sessions from a virtual conference, video presentations, and site visit to a neighboring community college.

3.A.2

CMN is an associate degree and certificate granting institution. The institution has set the learning outcomes for the institution, general education, and programs. All faculty have been a part of CMN's Assessment Academy team since 2017. The progress through the academy has led to the redesign of outcomes at these three levels. In addition, each course has an identified learning outcome. Each program and certificate undergoes an assessment review every three years. Faculty members collaborate to discuss institution goals and learning outcomes, solve issues and concerns that involve student learning, and prepare achievable course objectives for students in the classes they teach. Additionally, faculty members

ensure the inclusion of traditional cultural aspects in the learning outcomes. The institutional and general education learning outcomes are posted in each classroom. Faculty members develop measurable course objectives included in the syllabi, which are an integral part of the assessments for student learning in the course.

3.A.3

The College of the Muscogee Nation, through its institutional goals, ensures program quality and learning outcomes are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations. CMN operates one main campus in Okmulgee, OK and the mode of delivery is in class except recently when online classes began to be offered due to the pandemic. Faculty members have academic freedom to determine their curriculum based on the direction of the course learning outcomes. The learning outcomes for each class was developed by the curriculum and undergo periodic review during the annual assessment review.

Sources

- COVID Response
- Faculty Credentials Policy and Procedure

3.B - Core Component 3.B

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.

Argument

3.B.1

The purpose of the general education component of all CMN degrees is to prepare students to be lifelong learners and gain a broad, interrelated appreciation of cultural, economic, political, tribal, and social context. This provides students broad experiences and rich cultural knowledge, both of which prepare students for living in a tribal and democratic society. The general education program for the associate degree programs consists of thirty-nine credit hours. The requirements for all degrees are listed in the current CMN Course Catalog, which is updated every academic year. The catalog is made available on the CMN website and in print format distributed on campus. Each program conducts a [program review](#) on a three year cycle. The program review consists of a thorough look at the program's connection to the mission, faculty credentials, student demographics, course offerings, resources, graduation rates, assessment, and student feedback. Each general education learning outcome is assessed on a three year cycle. The learning outcomes rotate each year and the assessment committee determines the level of the assessment to be conducted. This level is based on Bloom's Taxonomy of knowledge, application, or synthesis. The committee utilizes the curriculum map to pinpoint the assessment method within a designated timeframe based on the level of learning. Example: the communication general education learning outcome will be assessed at the knowledge level in the speech class

during the fall 2019 term. This type of curriculum mapping ensures CMN's general education program is appropriate to the mission, course offerings, and degree levels.

3.B.2

Students are made aware of CMN's General Education Outcomes through the Catalog and the website. The outcomes are also posted in classrooms. All students participate in common academic experiences, defined as the general education requirements. The outcomes were developed by faculty with the mission goals and education philosophy in mind. The general education relating to all CMN degree programs is strongly grounded in mission focused cultural assessments. All faculty are members of the HLC Assessment Academy Team, and as a part of this project we have created assessment methods specific to our Muscogee (Creek) culture. During the three years we have been a part of the Assessment Academy, CMN has revised the institutional and general education learning outcomes to be more manageable and meaningful. The team then reviewed program outcomes. As the team continuously improve on the assessment process, it has shifted to our current practices of integrating Native American cultural practices into assessment methods. General education and program level courses share knowledge of foundational aspects of Native American life such as language and cultural practices to incorporate into writing and research assignments. CMN courses also keep in line with standard practices of higher education assignments in order to teach basic skills of the general education philosophy. The general education learning outcomes are: global awareness, ethical conduct, information literacy, communication, and critical thinking.

3.B.3

One of the previous assessment plans focused on the learning outcome of global awareness. Students created projects on their impact globally and the importance of communicating across cultures. As an institution that primarily serves a diverse population of Native students, CMN incorporates opportunities for students to partner with national organizations. Many of these opportunities facilitates the co-curricular emphasis of collaboration and encourages students to be life-long learners who value diversity. Students gain valuable experience traveling to national conferences and engaging with other students from various types of institutions and organizations. Specifically, students have participated in the American Indian Higher Education Consortium conferences in Washington, D.C., Santa Fe, and Billings, Montana with other tribal college students. Other conferences CMN students have attended include American Indian Students in Engineering and Science (AISES) which CMN hosted, First American Land-grant Consortium Conference (FALCON) and the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Conference.

3.B.4

CMN faculty have contributed to scholarship in their respective fields by creating course curriculum, submitting grant proposals, journal articles, and conducting research on campus. In 2019, CMN received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to augment our Humanities curriculum. The project enhanced the Field Lab in Mvskoke Culture curriculum to add study on the historical homelands of the Muscogee people who were originally from present day Georgia and Alabama. As part of the course, students and faculty traveled to the historic homelands of the Muscogee people to experience the culture of the environment. Each student was given a [Guidebook](#) before traveling to the southeastern United States and upon return created a presentation of their experience during the trip, as a way to share what they learned and saw in relation to the curriculum which they presented to the class on returning. CMN utilizes a cultural garden and outdoor classroom to supplement several courses, and the garden also provides some produce to the CMN café. Faculty and staff members who serve on the garden committee wrote a journal article about this experience which was published in the Tribal College Journal. A CMN administrator recently conducted research conducted at the tribal college on the correlation of improved social and emotional skills with student success. This research was published in the Tribal College and University Research Journal. All of these works have extended to the development of course, program, and institutional goals of encouraging personal growth through academic excellence.

Sources

- MVSJ 2343 Field Lab in Mvskoke Culture Guidebook
- Tribal Services Program Review 2016-17

3.C - Core Component 3.C

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.

Argument

3.C.1

CMN's mission as the institution of higher education for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation strives to reflect the overall composition of its constituencies by hiring and giving preference to Native Americans. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation is a federally recognized tribe in the United States and therefore reserves the right to allow preference in hiring its own tribal members or other members of a federally recognized tribe. The CMN faculty is ninety percent Native American and seventy percent Muscogee (Creek). The annual program review also shows a breakdown of the demographics of faculty members and students in each program. CMN faculty demographics match the demographics of the student population. CMN instructors teach their classes under the principles of updating pedagogy, staying current in technology, and recognizing changing student demographics; each of which enhances student academic performance through effective teaching.

The involvement of faculty members in non-classroom responsibilities is critical to the effectiveness they experience in their classroom roles. A non-classroom role is faculty participation on the Curriculum Committee, which is composed of a faculty member (chair), Dean of Academic Affairs, the librarian, registrar, and the Regents Director of Institutional Effectiveness. This Committee is responsible for review of the curricula of new and modified courses and programs, as well as curriculum evaluation of the degree programs, and syllabi review.

Courses taught across all modes of delivery require qualified faculty. The philosophy of the College is to provide the proper support of student learning, which starts with a faculty of excellence. This begins with a position description that requires full-time faculty with a master's degree preferred and at least a bachelors. Faculty that teach in general education are required to have a master's degree in the specific field taught or have any master's degree plus eighteen graduate credit hours in the discipline in which they teach. The college has an Eminent Scholar policy for part-time faculty who do not possess college degrees but in lieu of, have specialized knowledge in such areas as the Muscogee language, traditional Native foods, Creek Hymn singing and cultural traditions.

3.C.2

CMN's commitment to continuous improvement and ensuring programs have sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members for both classroom and non-classroom roles is demonstrated in the annual program review. The degree programs employ at least one full-time faculty member, and based on the size of enrollment, an adequate number of adjunct faculty members. All faculty serve periodically on one of several committees including: curriculum, assessment, faculty credentials, and engage in faculty development.

3.C.3

All CMN faculty are reviewed for appropriate credentials prior to being selected for an initial interview. CMN also engages in a faculty credentials review of all current faculty to ensure instructors are teaching the appropriate courses based on their level of education and type of degrees. All general education classes that may be transferred for a bachelor's degree are reviewed to ensure each faculty member has a Master's degree in the field they teach or a Master's degree plus eighteen additional graduate hours in the subject matter they are teaching.

3.C.4

CMN faculty are evaluated by the Dean of Academic Affairs annually based their individual performance. The majority of the faculty's work is done in the classroom or creating curriculum for the classroom and not observed by their supervisor. CMN faculty engage in a [self-evaluation](#) based on teaching, faculty scholarship, and tribal cultural enrichment. The self-evaluation allows faculty the

opportunity to express in their own words, their individual philosophies and methods of teaching. The scholarship portion also acknowledges each faculty member's commitment to life-long learning while demonstrating how their course curriculum engages the most recent information in their field of study. The section of tribal cultural enrichment facilitates the overall mission of the college by ensuring each instructor has knowledge of Native American culture.

Students have the opportunity to electronically evaluate instructors with the [Instructor/Course Evaluations](#). These were developed to provide administrators and faculty members with data to determine the perception of students regarding the instructor and effectiveness in which the course is taught. Upon completion of the surveys, the results are tabulated and a report is generated for faculty on each class.

3.C.5

CMN faculty engage in faculty development that addresses current research in curriculum development and teaching methodologies. In the fall 2018 term, faculty participated in a one day virtual conference hosted by NISOD that covered topics on student engagement, persistence, and providing student resources. Several videos on developing a co-requisite model for the developmental course were viewed by all faculty members. Faculty also visited the Oklahoma City Community College to discuss strategies of CMN's approach to addressing issues of students not completing the developmental course sequence. Faculty, staff, and administrators have utilized this professional development to update course curriculum and policies regarding student placement in developmental courses.

Professional development available to faculty and staff includes traveling to conferences and training, continuing education classes, webinars, course and degree completion, and sabbatical leave. Two groups of faculty members have attended the Assessment Workshop hosted by the Higher Learning Commission in order to strengthen the assessment program at CMN.

Faculty Development includes program reviews, assessment training, scholarship development, curriculum development, and instructional pedagogy. Full-time faculty members are supported in a variety of discipline specific associations with a yearly stipend available for membership dues. In addition to these offerings, CMN employees enjoy a fringe benefit allowing Career Development through tuition reimbursement if they wish to seek further educational opportunities.

All adjunct instructors are invited to participate in faculty development activities. Training for adjunct faculty has also been implemented to include information on assessment, the new student information system, administrative duties, and instructional strategies. CMN is committed to supporting all adjunct and full-time faculty in their professional development in order to retain high-quality programs.

3.C.6

CMN employs ten full-time faculty members who hold regular office hours daily. However, during the pandemic faculty have office time, both from their home and their office. Students may also email, call, or D2L message faculty about questions or concerns and are responded to promptly during classes on campus or online. Days and times of office hours are displayed at each faculty office and listed on each course syllabus. Faculty also participate as student organization advisors and engage students during regular on campus activities. Faculty provide class handouts and lecture notes to the Student Learning Center for students to access outside of the classroom for makeup work or in some cases extra credit.

3.C.7

Staff members providing student services meet the institutional set requirements for qualification based on the support service type. All CMN employees participate in annual policy training as well as refresher training on FERPA, Title IX, and campus safety. CMN has a set of published handbooks that are updated each year to be used as guides for faculty and student service professionals. CMN's co-curricular committee has outlined initiatives for trainings that have led to institutional change or the addition of resources such as student work study training and peer tutors.

Financial aid advising is primarily handled within the Financial Aid Office under the administrative responsibility of the Coordinator, who has a master's degree and experience in financial aid processing and advising. This office provides information on loan counseling, awards, aid packaging, scholarships, FAFSA, and verification. The Financial Aid Coordinator stays current with federal, state, and tribal regulations, laws, and government policy that could affect policies and procedures. Open dialogue is maintained with faculty and advisors, speaking to them regarding their role in Title IV, HEA regulations, Satisfactory Academic Progress standards, attendance, and Return of Title IV funds. Regular communication with the faculty ensures advisors are conveying accurate information to students as regulations may necessitate.

Sources

- Faculty Self-Evaluation Template
- Instructor Course Evaluation Sample

3.D - Core Component 3.D

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).

Argument

3.D.1.

CMN has student support services tailored to the needs of the diverse student body. The student services provided are physical and academic accommodations, academic advising, academic placement and ACT residual testing, financial aid, bursar, advisement and enrollment, registration, library, stationary and mobile computer labs, health and wellness, an auxiliary center, and a tutoring center. These services are accessible and offered to students throughout their time at CMN.

CMN offers a variety of student support services on campus to assist with both in class and out of class issues. CMN operates a library that is open to the public and students to use Monday through Friday. The library houses a wide collection of print, audio, and video media for research or personal interest. In addition, the CMN library has an extensive Native American collection of books. The library database system offers resources such as ERIC, JSTOR, and ProQuest to research a variety of journals and publications. Students can print at the library free of charge using the desktop computers or laptop computers available for checkout. CMN utilizes a [Student Success Center \(SSC\)](#) to assist first year students with program and course advisement. SSC representatives also provide academic placement and enrollment for first year students. This attention provided by SSC helps students through their first year of college and supports students during this critical transition period for many who are first time students. CMN offers a

Health and Wellness program to assist students with issues relating to behavioral health, wellness, and also a health shelf available for students needing hygiene items. CMN also offers assistance to students compliant with ADA regulations for physical accommodations as well as academic accommodations.

3.D.2.

The Student Success Center's (SSC) main goal is to provide new and transfer students with services that will make their college experience as successful as possible. From the time a student applies to this institution until their first year of courses are complete, the students are advised by the SSC. The SSC administers the ACT residual and Next Generation ACCUPLACER testing, enroll students in courses that are suitable for them, and prepare and guide them for post-secondary institutions. After completing the first year, students are then advised by their degree program coordinator through graduation.

CMN offers the ACT residual on campus at regular dates throughout the year. The Student Success Center also provides Accuplacer testing for students who do not meet the required score for college level placement. The Accuplacer test ensures students are scored at the appropriate level of ability in mathematics, reading, and writing in accordance with the [test placement guide](#). To supplement decision making for placing students in developmental courses based solely on test scores, CMN has developed a [policy](#) and process titled [Multiple Measures](#) which uses other sources of information such as high school transcripts, Bridge Camp performance, career goals, etc.. CMN offers developmental mathematics, reading, and writing courses designed to remediate students to complete corresponding college level course sequence.

3.D.3.

CMN's Student Success Center offers academic advising to all students during their first year at the college. This approach was also designed so the SSC staff members could stay connected with the students to ensure they stay on track for graduation. As indicated previously, during the second year of their program, students are then advised by degree program coordinators or faculty advisors. Information regarding degree program requirements and graduation requirements are published in annual CMN handbooks for students to access online or in print format.

There are multiple locations on campus for students to access computers including the Learning Center (LC), library, Turtle Lodge, two computer labs, and two mobile laptop carts. The Learning Center (LC) was added as a component of the Student Success Center and offers students' academic resources outside of the traditional classroom. It provides students with tutoring, test proctoring, scholarship application assistance, computer access, and spaces for individual or group work. The learning center is operated by the academic resource specialist

alongside two student peer tutors and a mentor tutor. The academic resource specialist coordinates with faculty to proctor exams, personalize student learning, and to increase student retention. Materials available for students to check-out are voice recorders, noise-canceling headphones, and calculators. There are many other academic resource materials accessible to students. The LC is a safe space for students to use as a forum for solitude between courses. The academic resource specialist stays in close communication with faculty to support them in better assisting their students. The faculty often visit the learning center to interact and work with students in a more relaxed environment.

Our campus library is furnished with desktop computers and has laptops for students to check out. There is a portable laptop cart available in the student center as well and a computer lab in the Turtle Lodge. The Turtle Lodge computer lab is open on the weekends to accommodate students. The library is also equipped with several academic databases for research projects, audiovisual materials, a Native American collection, and access to many books, periodicals, and newspapers. There are also two quiet study rooms. The librarian assists students with writing workshops, proofreading papers, among other services.

3.D.4.

CMN's infrastructure includes high speed internet with wireless capability, computer labs, science labs, and educational technology. All classrooms are equipped with a classroom desktop computer and a View Sonic board. The View Sonic board can serve as a white board and can also show videos or power point presentations. The science lab is complete with the capabilities to hold safe experiments using burners and chemicals. It has all necessary safety measures in place such eye wash and decontamination stations. As noted the library houses an extensive collection of books, journals, periodicals, and videos. The library is also equipped with desktop computers for students to use with printing capability. The two fixed computer labs on campus, as well as three mobile laptop carts can be requested by instructors for classroom use.

CMN's [Health and Wellness \(H&W\)](#) department plays a critical role in supporting our students by offering awareness and resources in the following areas: stress relief, mental health, behavioral health referrals, and drug and alcohol prevention activities. This department is so important because of the diverse demographics of our students. Many of our students come from rural areas where they may have experienced poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, bullying, mental health issues, and physical or sexual abuse. These students, being away from home for the first time, may struggle when they come to college. CMN health and wellness services are another way to retain students. CMN does not have a licensed counselor on campus, however, referrals are provided to MCN's Behavioral Health department to set up an initial appointment for the student. The H&W services also offers a community resource guide for students to provide them with services that will give them more peace of mind while in college and

after graduation. For example: food distribution, Okmulgee food pantry, MCN transit system, MCN child care assistance, and Okmulgee Indian Health Center.

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

Sources

- AccuplacerNextGenInfo
- Health and Wellness Resource Guide 2020-2021
- Multiple Measures Petition 2020
- Multiple Measures Placement Policy 2020
- Student Success Center Information Guide 2020-2021

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

Courses in all degree and certificate programs offered at the college have suitable and relevant resources for teaching and learning to enhance the content of the subject matter, and are appropriate to higher education. Academic Affairs has set the learning outcomes for the institution, general education, and programs. All faculty have been a part of CMN's Assessment Academy team since 2017. The progress through the academy has led to the redesign of outcomes at these three levels. In addition, each course has an identified learning outcome. Student performance appropriate to the degree awarded is addressed in the design of each degree program's learning outcomes.

The college integrates general education learning outcomes across all programs, which encourages students to collect, analyze, organize information, and present to their peers in a variety of formats. The Native worldview is a significant part of our Mission and Core Values, thus, the college has welcomed numerous international groups to campus. In addition, human diversity is promoted through student involvement with various youth, women's, and men's initiatives.

The institution has adequate full-time, permanent faculty members to teach courses in the degree programs and general education/core subjects. For those faculty members that teach general education, each possesses a master's degree in their subject area or have completed 18 graduate hours in the general education subject area in which they teach. Instructors are evaluated annually, using performance self-evaluation forms and classroom observations, by the Dean of Academic Affairs in order to obtain useful feedback on classroom practices. In each class, instructor/course evaluations are conducted with results provided to the faculty after course grades are submitted. Faculty members are required to post their office hours and course schedules on their offices and course syllabi. Also, students are able to communicate to faculty members by phone, mail, email, D2L, and text messaging.

To support students in their academic pursuits, a variety of services are provided throughout the college. Tutoring is provided for students through the Learning Center under the direction of Academic Affairs. Financial aid advising is administered through the Financial Aid Coordinator, who meets regularly with students and parents. Academic advising is required for first year students through the Student Success Center, and is transferred to faculty degree coordinators for a

student's second year. Student activities planned on campus as a co-curricular component of education are coordinated through the Dean of Student Affairs.

CMN serves a student population with a wide range of life experiences and academic backgrounds, including significant numbers of first generation and low-income students. Student support services include the Student Success Center, Learning Center, Health and Wellness, Student Services, and the Student Center. This college is dedicated to building an institution that provides students access to a high quality and culturally sensitive education. The library, tutoring program, disability accommodations, entrance testing, learning Center, and Student Success Center all assure students have the necessary tools for advancing their education.

CMN's technological resources strengthen educational programs both in the classroom and throughout the campus. Providing students and instructors access to current technology and educational resources in a variety of methods is a priority of the college in order to maintain high quality teaching and learning. Students have access to quality resources, and are counseled in their use during information literacy instruction, provided for classes in each of the degree programs.

Co-curricular programs at CMN emphasize culture and values, which complement academics to promote learning inside the classroom as well as outside. Recognizing the importance of co-curricular activities on the overall educational experience of students, CMN has established a co-curricular assessment committee to assess the effectiveness of activities held on campus. This committee has assessed selected fitness and cultural activities held with students, and looks to expand their focus in future events.

A core curricula at CMN is the Mvskoke language, which is directly linked to its mission and the value of the language is evident by our learning outcomes through the Core Values, written in the Mvskoke language. Claims that a positive learning environment is provided for tribal and non-tribal students is demonstrated through the service learning component. Service learning is conducted in, and meets the needs of the community; it is coordinated by CMN and participating communities.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

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.

Argument

4.A.1

The college has performed program reviews on all 5 of the degree programs and two certificate programs.

The program review consists of the following components:

- Mission and Progress

- Faculty Characteristics and Qualifications
- Quality of Curriculum and Student Learning
- Student Enrollment and Success
- Class Size
- Student and Constituent Feedback
- Resources and Institutional Capacities
- Summary Conclusions, Program Goals, and Recommendations

The Department of Academic Affairs has an organized process that involves the faculty, academic administration, and institutional administration in the completion of each program review. Under the leadership of the Dean of Academic Affairs and the involvement of the curriculum committee, program reviews were conducted by the degree program coordinators.

The [Program Review](#) (under revision) process is a three-year cycle. Each degree program and certificate are evaluated according to the three-year cycle presented in the succeeding table.

Program Review Cycle

Academic Programs and Certificates	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Tribal Services	X					X		
Gaming		X					X	
Gaming Certificate					X			
Native American Studies			X				X	
Mvskoke Language Studies Certificate					X			
Police Science/Criminal Justice				X				
General Studies					X			X
Natural Resources								X
General Education	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Communications	X				X			
Social Sciences		X				X		
Critical Thinking			X		X			X
Natural Sciences				X			X	

The review process was initiated with all degree programs in 2014-15; the 2015-16 academic year beginning the five-year review cycle. Through our growth in the past four years and our continued involvement in the HLC assessment academy CMN saw a need to process our program reviews more frequently, in 2019 the program review process policy was amended from a five-year cycle to a three-year cycle.

As discussed, CMN has taken responsibility for the quality of its educational programs by involving each degree program in a systematic review process conducted on a regular basis. This program review allows one to determine its feasibility by identifying faculty qualifications, student enrollment, graduates, and available resources. An essential part of this process is the involvement of an Academic Department Curriculum Committee, which provides input for improving the quality of the degree program. This committee provides leadership in developing and reviewing curriculum philosophy and implementing changes as the program review indicates. The committee also makes recommendations to the academic and institutional leadership concerning policy and regulations relating to the degree program.

4.A.2

Acceptable transfer credit is evaluated on a course-by-course basis for college-level credits earned at institutions that are fully accredited. The evaluation is based on course content, as described in the catalog of the institution. Evaluation of transfer credits may require documentation such as program requirements and course syllabi to determine acceptable transfer credit courses. International transcripts, submitted for transfer, must be evaluated by a member agency of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES). Students must request and receive both the official college transcript and the evaluation summary prepared by the Evaluation Services Committee to the Registrar's Office. Advanced standing credit awarded to a student must be validated by the successful completion of twelve or more credit hours of academic work at CMN. All credit earned through advanced standing shall be so designated the neutral grade of pass (P) on the transcript following the course entry. Any advanced standing credits are evaluated by CMN on a course-by-course basis.

Credits transcribed at CMN are evaluated and awarded based on the CMN credit hour policy. Policies assure that courses meet the minimum contact minutes per credit hour regardless of whether the course is offered in a standard 15-week term or through an alternate format. The credits that are received for courses taken at CMN are recorded on official transcripts to document the successful or unsuccessful completion of coursework. Faculty is responsible for evaluating student performance in courses, determining the criteria for grading, and assigning grades. Grades are then submitted in the CampusVue Student

Information System and verified by the Registrar. The Registrar is responsible for assuring the integrity of all credit that CMN transcripts. Students may transfer up to 30 credits for college-level courses completed at other institutions.

4.A.3

CMN accepts transfer credits earned at other regionally accredited institutions. Students must submit official transcripts from all previous institutions attended. Once the official transcripts are received and verified by the Registrar, courses and grades are keyed into the CampusVue Student Information System. Students receive credit for courses that are successfully completed. Transfer students that have a cumulative GPA below 2.0 are admitted on probation.

For Oklahoma colleges and universities, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Course Equivalency Tables are used to approve transfer credits. If a course is not listed in the tables, transfer credits are evaluated on a course-by-course basis. The evaluation is based on the course description, as presented in the college catalog of the respective institution. Evaluation of transfer credit may require documentation such as program requirements and course syllabi to determine acceptable transfer credit courses.

4.A.4

In the enabling legislation and Charter, the Board of Regents maintains and exercises authority over all courses offered by CMN. Every degree/certificate program must be approved by the Regents before being offered as an official degree/certificate program of the college. Prior to submission to the Regents, the college's Curriculum Committee will ensure the rigor of courses, prerequisites, and expectations of student learning by reviewing the degree program curriculum and course content. While CMN does not offer any dual-enrollment courses or programs, the institution does allow high school students to enroll in concurrent courses, and holds the same expectations for high-school and college students.

The courses included in each of the degree plans are designated as general education, core, and specialization classes. Students are advised to complete general education courses prior to enrolling in the more advanced courses of their degree program, to ensure proper academic sequencing. Prefixes for courses are controlled by the Registrar, and are used to determine the order in which students would enroll in classes, also detailing the prerequisites required for each. It is a critical responsibility of the advisor to direct students into courses that will satisfy prerequisites and build academic skills that will help to ensure academic success as students complete their degree programs.

CMN faculty meets regularly to discuss best practices of course and degree rigor, to share information about their courses, and communicate evaluation of student assessment of courses. Additionally, these sessions allow faculty to establish a

consistency of how courses can be taught throughout the trimester, and discuss implementation of the most effective pedagogy. By collaborating with one another, the rigor of courses is maintained and developed to ensure that student learning is effectively assessed. The curriculum committee further reinforces course rigor by reviewing and approving new courses and course modifications.

The expectations for CMN's student learning are based in the college's core values. Hoporenkv (*wisdom*), which encourages students to gain insight from scholarly learning and the knowledge and experience of elders, is incorporated into the curriculum and instruction provided by faculty. Classroom instruction is supplemented with academic support services, and the appropriate resources to create an environment that is conducive to learning. Another important component of this support is the communication of expectations to students. The institutional and general education learning outcomes are posted prominently in each classroom.

Accessibility has been a vital need of the CMN student body since the Needs Assessment was undertaken in 2003. The college ensures this accessibility to learning resources through several avenues, both on and off campus. The CMN Library allows students to access online databases for research available through the website and EBSCO, JSTOR, ProQuest, and American Indian databases. Evening courses are offered each trimester, in order to increase access of courses to non-traditional students who may be working or have family obligations during the day. Additionally, during the pandemic all courses were offered online. Tutors are scheduled throughout the day for students to have access to enhanced learning resources as necessary. CMN classes utilize the D2L program, which allows students another method of instructor contact when they are off campus. In addition, since the pandemic CMN courses have been approved for distance education, which will be facilitated through D2L.

Qualifications for hiring an instructor are priority for the college. The selection process begins with administration issuing a job announcement that clearly describes the principal duties, functions, educational qualifications, experience, and job requirements for applicants to consider. These announcements are publicly posted with an invitation to complete an application and submit a resume. Applicants are screened and interviewed through a committee process, with recommendations based on a point system. The President has the sole authority to hire faculty and staff.

4.A.5

The College of the Muscogee Nation does not currently offer any programs requiring specialized accreditation. In the event that CMN creates a program that requires discipline specific accreditation, CMN will apply for accreditation through the appropriate agency.

4.A.6

The college has held twelve graduation ceremonies, totaling 382 graduates. An exit Graduate Survey was conducted in 2013, 2014, [2015](#), 2016, 2017, [2018](#), 2019 and 2020 to obtain feedback about the impact of students' CMN experience and future plans. The survey was created by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and has evolved into a yearly survey of graduates, given on the day of graduation. The surveys are gathered and analyzed, and followed by a report, which is distributed to faculty and staff to help with campus-wide focus on continuous improvement.

Another important measure of graduate success is the graduate Follow-Up Survey, most recently conducted in [2014](#) among CMN alumni. The intent of this survey was to obtain information about employment, income, the current pursuit of another degree, the highest level of education, benefits of CMN experience, and recommendations for improvement. After compiling the data, a report was created and shared with faculty and staff so that the results could be incorporated into other aspects of college development. Conclusions from the data, such as; *“Respondents indicated that they are more confident in their ability to contribute to society because of the skills they obtained while pursuing their degree(s), indicating that they recognize the benefit of their CMN experience in obtaining employment and learning skills, which enhanced their ability to become upwardly mobile contributors,”* indicate that CMN is fulfilling aspects of its mission through the experience of graduates as they enter the workforce.

Future plans for this survey are to be electronically incorporated into Survey Monkey for ease of use and distribution. This information is intended to help assess the impact CMN has on students' lives and possible changes for ensuring CMN students are successful after graduation.

The CMN Student Success Center staff are currently working on creating an alumni event. The goal of this event is to obtain information to help the college engage our stakeholders more efficiently. Today CMN has an engagement that is an organic connection to stakeholders, through a tight connection to the community, OSUIT, our president reporting monthly to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council, and working with employers in our Achieve the Dream Internship program created in 2018. In building on these, CMN plans to develop advisory groups for appropriate degree programs. These advisory groups will be made up of alumni, industry specific leaders, community leaders, and students.

Sources

- Assessment report 2015
- Graduate Follow Up Survey Report (2014)
- Graduate Survey 2018

- Program Review 2016-17

4.B - Core Component 4.B

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.

Argument

4.B.1.

The creation of learning outcomes and course objectives is rooted in the CMN goals, which are consistent with the Mission, Vision Statement, and Core Values, shared in the [Catalog](#). As stated previously, these institutional, general education, and degree outcomes are prominently posted in each classroom and in the Catalog. From these overarching outcomes, course learning objectives have been developed in a parallel manner and are listed in each course syllabus. The stated course objectives are measurable, direct assessments of student learning, indicating how well the college is fulfilling its mission and institutional goals through classroom practices. The Dean of Academic Affairs convened the faculty to work on learning outcomes, rubrics, and assessment measures that initiated the process consistent with the [Assessment](#) and [Strategic Plans](#).

Two of the college's programs require service learning courses prior to graduation. These courses are designed to showcase the achievement of student learning goals and offer faculty a chance to ensure that the program's stated goals have been achieved.

The college has addressed these recommendations through faculty attendance of HLC assessment academy, assessment workshops, developing more assessable learning outcomes, and creating standard rubrics to be used throughout the curriculum. Of special note is the CMN presentation by the Academic Dean and faculty member on Tribal College Assessment at the Annual HLC Conference.

In order to effectively assess how well the college is fulfilling its mission, general education learning outcomes are defined and posted in classrooms. The general education learning outcomes outline skills that CMN students are expected to

possess upon graduation and were developed through a collaborative process among the faculty. All [syllabi](#) clearly state course learning outcomes, as well as an assessment of course objectives. While CMN also articulates institutional, program, and course learning outcomes, the general education outcomes provide a broad perspective of areas in which students are assessed. Clarification of the general education learning outcomes is listed below:

Global Awareness

Demonstrate social, cultural, and global responsibility.

Ethical Conduct

Demonstrate honesty and accountability.

Information Literacy

Utilize resources and information.

Communication

Apply effective written, oral, and multi-media skills.

Critical Thinking

Evaluate information to reach valid conclusions.

These clearly stated goals for general education outcomes are an example of CMN's commitment to educational achievement and improvement of student learning. In order to maintain an effective process of assessment, CMN has detailed techniques that are to be used in the assessment of student learning. When assessing students, faculty utilize different methods and tools. The assessment process is articulated by the faculty member, which will begin with a method that is determined to be most effective. Methods are strategies for assessment that faculty choose to be compatible and consistent with the course or degree program, generating results that will determine what students learned.

Methods

Capstone Courses: In the curriculum [MVSK 2163 Project Management](#) and [MVSK 2333 Mvskoke Literacy Project](#), are the culminating courses within the Tribal Services and Native American Studies degree programs, respectively. These courses are designed to enable students to review, evaluate, integrate, and synthesize information and skills gained from other courses in the programs. Program goals and general education goals are assessed in these courses, since these are culminating experiences for students to integrate the entire program's

knowledge and skills. Students present through a PowerPoint and speech presentation, their course-long project and how it brought together these skills learned throughout the program. Consistent rubrics are utilized by faculty and staff evaluating these presentations to assess communication, technology, and speech as an exit level assessment of skills.

Authentic Assessment: In selected courses, faculty choose opportunities to engage students in real-life problem simulations that must be solved using the knowledge and skills gained in the course. CMN faculty have found that a single project can be structured to assess both competency of course content and attainment of program goals, as well as selected general education goals, such as skills in communication, critical thinking, and social values. A specific example used by the Tribal Government instructor involves students in the role of a tribal council member who must make a decision concerning a relevant issue. Students conclude the assignment by researching both sides of the issue and delivering a persuasive speech or writing an action plan. Through an oral presentation, students are assessed on the above skills based on a rubric evaluation, or writing skills that have evaluation criteria for the written action plan option.

Course-Embedded Assessment: Program or major goals and general education goals may be assessed through assignments embedded in required courses. Writing assignments, such as summaries or reports, and oral presentations are used to assess students' competency of course content as well as their writing, reading, critical thinking, or speaking skills and use of the library or other information source. Another type of assessment is used in the Computer Literacy course, where students' competency is assessed using a pre and post-test, with course embedded indicators of student learning throughout the course. With faculty planning, a single assignment or project can be designed to assess a number of different program goals as well as general education goals.

Tools: Instructors use these instruments with the various methods of assessment to determine the level of competence that students have reached in relation to the institution, program, general education, and course. Faculty select the most appropriate method and tool for the course in which they are assessing.

Rubrics: For scoring consistency with longer open-ended assignments such as essays, research papers, or performances, rubrics have been developed. CMN Faculty define rubric as a criterion based scoring tool that specifies levels of competency (e.g., Advanced, Competent, Developing, and Beginning) for each dimension of the outcome. As part of the rubric, criteria are provided that describe what constitutes the different levels of competency. These rubrics are shared with students, so the levels of performance are openly communicated. For example, in Speech classes, a rubric detailing the content on which a student will be assessed (e.g., Introduction, Timing, Voice, Visual Aids, etc.) provides a standard tool to measure this course and other courses where speeches are given.

Portfolios: An accumulation of student-produced work, a portfolio is designed to assess a student's attainment of program or major goals. The same portfolio is used to assess general education goals such as communication skills or the development of skills to enhance life-long learning, the ability to use the library and other appropriate sources to retrieve information. Portfolios that contain early or unrevised work as well as later or revised work can assess the growth of skill development. Portfolio rubrics are clear and shared with the student prior to compilation, and final results are communicated back to the student after assessment is complete.

Journals: Faculty utilize journals or learning logs in composition courses as a tool for improving student writing, increasing motivation for writing, and for assessing students' writing skills. In addition, faculty have assigned journal topics that are used in assessing achievement of general education and program goals.

Writing Samples: Writing assignments are used to measure students' competency of course content and attainment of program goals. These are used as a direct measure of the general education communication skills goal as well as an indirect assessment of critical thinking skills. Faculty assess writing in the form of essays, research or term papers, answers to essay questions on tests, book reports, summaries, and lab reports.

Oral Presentations/ Oral Exams: Depending on the nature and content of the course, oral presentations are tailored by faculty to assess students' competency of the subject and attainment of general education goals. Oral presentations are a direct measure of students' communication skills, both written and oral, and critical thinking skills in the course focus.

In order to achieve clarity in establishing goals for student learning and effective processes for student assessment, the Dean of Academic Affairs and faculty follow the academic assessment procedures in the Student Learning Assessment Plan. The complexity of this process requires that the faculty understand the step-by-step manner in which the order of tasks will be completed are described according a rubric created by faculty.

Learning outcomes. All faculty are educated about assessment, and students are informed of the role assessment plays in their courses and completing educational goals. Faculty identify and refine learning outcomes and develop tools to measure learning outcomes. Courses outcomes are assessed at entry, mid, and exit levels for each program. The faculty include outcomes on syllabi and articulate activities (i.e., projects, assignments) in which these outcomes will be assessed. CMN faculty have achieved a better understanding of assessment and the overall process and in 2018 started to take ownership of the assessment by using a unique strategy of making assessment tailored to us as indigenous people by creating lessons and assessment based on our own culture, language, and history. This

created a more relatable assessment process for us as indigenous educators and also students. Our faculty have responded well to engage in this development.

Implementation of the learning outcomes. Consistent with the previous levels of assessment, students are assessed at the established levels for determining institutional outcomes. Results are tabulated and analyzed with the entry, mid, and exit assessment data, and presented to faculty for consultation of the results. In faculty meetings, the assessment data is discussed for ways of improving and revising the curriculum. This process is documented through the creation of an assessment report, which is utilized to improve student learning.

These processes were developed by faculty as a method in which each assessment level can be effectively measured. In addition to the general education outcomes previously discussed, program outcomes are measured using the same process. Assessment of program outcomes includes service learning course assessments, portfolios, performance evaluations, and written exams as prescribed within each program. The benchmark for program success will require 80 percent of the students to reach a competency level based on the assessment tool chosen by the individual instructor.

The assessment process uses consistent instruments across programs. The institution uses a consistent rubric scale for the measurement of competency. The Assessment Committee made reporting of student outcomes a major point of emphasis and underscored the need to improve the data gathering process by collecting data for multiple assessments to create a spreadsheet system database. Based on these results, the faculty will revise course and program strategies for effective teaching.

4.B.2.

A focus on the achievement of curricular student learning outcomes remains an institutional priority for the tribal college. CMN faculty mapping program and general education learning outcomes to courses and use specific methods of assessment (e.g., assignments, test questions, writing samples, etc.) to determine the student's competency of course objectives. When faculty administer the appropriate instrument, the student's demonstrated performance is examined to determine how well the student is grasping the intended course objective by referencing a scoring rubric. If these direct assessments indicate student competency, then this serves as evidence that the learning outcome is being met.

The College of the Muscogee Nation assesses the achievement of learning outcomes consistent with the Student Learning Assessment Plan. The Dean of Academic Affairs has organized the faculty into an Assessment Committee where discussions are held to address methods for planning and developing the assessment plan. As discussed in Criterion 3, the curricular learning outcomes are

to be assessed according to an assessment cycle. Specific courses are identified in each year's assessment plan in order to assess specific learning outcomes.

Students' capstone presentations are assessed in the Project Management Service Learning course according to rubrics developed by the Academic Assessment Committee. A faculty and staff panel is involved in the direct assessment of the capstone presentations, which reveal the level of competence demonstrated by students for communications and speech at an exit level. Based on these analyses, the instructor for the course will determine if benchmarks are met on respective outcomes, and plan improvements for future courses.

Indirect assessment is also an important part of the assessment process. The college conducts a variety of indirect assessment surveys, including Faculty/Course Evaluations, Graduate Follow-up Survey, and Graduate Survey. These measures indicate a student's level of perception about various aspects of their college experience, which are beneficial for the college as future plans are developed. The college is involved in [external comparisons](#) with other tribal colleges considering various subjects relating to student success, such as developmental math, developmental writing and composition, college math, and English composition.

CMN acknowledges that student learning takes place outside as well as within the curriculum.

One of the established goals set by CMN is to provide co-curricular activities that respect tribal traditions and culture. CMN's Co-curricular activities provide an enriched educational environment and contribute to the educational experience of the students. CMN Co-curricular education is the teaching of valuable life-skills, which complement the academia of CMN as well as the culture of the Muscogee people. CMN's Co-curricular program warrants and demonstrates how all facets of the campus contribute to student learning and development in support of the college mission. By using assessment as a resource to measure the efficacy of the programs and services CMN provides, they exhibit examples of good stewards of the campus' assets.

[Co-curricular assessment](#) is important because it promotes accountability of CMN student services to analyze, improve, and develop learning outside of the classroom. CMN established

Co-curricular Assessment Committee to help develop and contribute to the Assessment Plan.

The Registrar serves as the committee chair. The committee established Co-curricular program outcomes and is developing learning objectives for the outcomes. In addition, the committee will assess student organization and institutional work-study outcomes. As an example, [Co-Curricular poster](#)

[presentations](#) were displayed in the commons area to demonstrate the work of each committee. Four learning outcome statements were agreed upon as provided below:

Co-Curricular Program Learning Outcomes:

Mvskoke Values

Identify tribal norms, historical events, ceremonial, and traditional customs of the Muscogee Nation.

Enhomahtv

Students will demonstrate responsible leadership that allows all individuals to inspire and promote change collectively towards a shared vision or goal. Students who meet this outcome will be able to:

1. Recognize their strengths and those of others to work towards a shared vision.
2. Implement change from anywhere within an organization.

Tvsekvyyv

Students will engage in responsible global citizenship. Students who meet this outcome will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a habit of service to the community of which they are a part of.
2. Exercise responsibilities as a citizen (voting, staying current with important issues, etc.)

Cvfencvke

Students will engage in a healthy lifestyle. Students who meet this outcome will be able to:

1. Identify the importance of engaging in physical activity.
2. Demonstrate a healthy lifestyle by implementing good nutrition techniques.
3. Describe the effects of substance abuse on themselves and others.

DESIRED OUTCOME

The benchmark for program success will require 70 percent of the students to reach a competent level in each Program, Institutional, and General Education Learning Outcomes assessment.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

The subcommittees will develop their Template for Planning and Assessing Programs and

Services for assessing their Learning Outcome. The Template encompasses the Program Overview, Program Details, Timeline, Instrument, Method and Participation, Results, Planning and Use and Conclusions and Recommendations.

REPORT

The Co-Curricular Committee will close the loop on the cycle in the Summer trimester and generate a Co-Curricular Assessment Report for the Learning Outcomes. Due to CMN going online during the summer trimester the report has been delayed. In addition, an annual report will be given along with the annual academic assessment report at the annual assessment day.

Co-Curricular Assessment Cycle

Co-Curricular Program Outcomes	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Healthy Lifestyle	X				X			
Respect of Culture		X				X		
Personal Growth			X				X	
Self-awareness				X				X
Lifelong learners				X				X
Institutional Outcome								
Information Literacy	X				X			
Mvskoke Values		X				X		
Global Awareness			X				X	

To measure these each subcommittee has developed a tool such as a rubric to measure the learning outcomes of student's knowledge through writing samples, portfolios, surveys, journals, or oral presentations.

4.B.3

The college uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning by determining the effectiveness of instructional methods, student services, and student activities. Faculty members collect student data in relation to learning outcomes for the purpose of understanding the achievement of program competencies. Therefore, as the trimester progresses, in faculty development meetings, instructors share the results to determine what is working and suggested areas for improvement.

When faculty administers the appropriate instrument to measure designated learning outcomes, the results are used to establish the student's level of performance. As an example, faculty are able to review the results and advise individual students, or aggregate data for the class to modify instruction or methodology for teaching more effectively. These direct assessments are valuable in not only determining student competency but also in providing specific evidence that the learning outcome is being met or not met.

Assessment has variety of practical applications when faculty use assessment tools to improve student learning across the curriculum. For example, a CMN faculty member indicated that the use of a pre and post-test to determine students' levels of competence allowed matching instructional processes with student abilities as demonstrated on the pre-test. In addition, there was more information about the abilities of students that could be used in positive reinforcement situations. Preliminary assessment of student knowledge in relation to learning outcomes allowed the instructor to be aware of the range of student abilities present in class. As the trimester progressed, the instructor modified instruction to maximize the students' comprehension of the main concepts as determined through embedded assessments. The pre and post-test assessment provided the most valuable assessment feedback, with the post-test providing data as an overview of the class that is utilized in the implementation of the next course. This instructor also reported utilizing rubrics to assess multi-media competence to determine students' level of conceptualization for a critical thinking exercise.

Another example involved student capstone presentations in the MVS 2163 Project Management Service Learning course when the instructor assessed utilizing communications rubrics for speech and multi-media, developed by the Academic Assessment Committee. These presentations were assessed by a faculty and staff panel witnessing these presentations, which provided indicators on exit level student performance. This valuable experience enabled students to put into practice such things as eye contact, transitions between PowerPoint slides, as well as obtain feedback from a panel of individuals with no previous knowledge of

their projects. While this was a capstone course, it was our belief that students can use the results from this assessment in their pursuit of an advanced degree or employment. Results from previous presentations (communication assessment report) indicated that students were having difficulty with a well-developed introduction, so students were prompted on how to introduce their projects to the panel properly. The information gathered through these analyses provided assessment data for faculty to utilize as they determined competency, based on benchmarks and plan improvements for future courses.

Since the 2016 site visit CMN has been able to use assessment data to create positive change in student learning by creating the tutoring center to address a need to improve students writing skills, which was noticed by our 2015- 2016 assessment cycle focusing on communication. Through assessment we have seen students that are students going on to a Bachelors program have need for additional courses to transfer. Working with many institutions to create these bridges to support and encourage our students to continue on their higher education journey. 2017-2019 CMN assessment plan was on a five year rotation and we looked and realized five years for associates degrees is too long so we changed it to three years. April 2019 we developed a strong foundation of assessment but felt that we wanted to make it our own not just the same as other institutions of higher learning. In fall 2018, we incorporated the Mvskoke and Indigenous culture into our assessment plan. An excellent example of CMN's assessment program was presented as a [PowerPoint](#) on September 18, 2019 during Assessment Day.

Process of Mission Focused Cultural Assessments:

- The assessment committee created mission focused cultural assessments that facilitate a theme for the assessment of student learning utilizing Native American culture.
- One such cultural theme is the ohsofke corn plant that is iconic in Native American culture and has provided nourishment to our ancestors and to current generations.
- The committee, by creating rubrics for assessment of student papers, presentations, or activities enables faculty to assess the student learning about ohsofke corn.
- A critical aspect of this process is that as assessment methods are determined, lessons will be provided to support effective faculty instruction.
- This cultural theme will be carried forward to facilitate an in depth look into assessment through Native American culture.

Many of the courses and Degree programs had multiple learning outcomes in many instances over 10. Many outcomes overlapped so we focused on creating three to four solid measurable learning outcomes on all levels.

Another method of feedback for instructors is the Faculty/Course Evaluations completed by students each trimester. The college has implemented an electronic process of collecting these surveys through Survey Monkey in order to provide more timely feedback for instructors. This allows faculty to incorporate suggestions provided by students in their teaching strategies, providing a greater level of student learning.

Graduate and Follow-Up surveys have been administered to graduating students and alumni to gain insight into the positive aspects of the institution. The findings provided through these indirect assessment measures has led to the implementation of expanded co-curricular and cultural activities held for students on campus. These activities promote retention and student learning by providing campus-wide personal interaction by allowing students to be part of the higher education community.

Finally, the process of program review for each degree has been incorporated into the improvement of degree plans. All degree programs at CMN have gone through the process of program review, and will continue to be reviewed in accordance with a three-year cycle. These reviews provide information critical to degree planning, budgeting, and assessing the effectiveness of the program. By remaining focused on student learning through appropriate course design and instructional methods, CMN ensures that this process of program review contributes to the improvement of student learning.

4.B.4.

CMN administration, faculty, and staff have participated in external organizations where processes and methodologies can be shared and studied. Since the beginning of the college, personnel have been encouraged to engage in professional development organizations where best practices can be observed and replicated for the tribal college. The performance of these best practices in all areas of the college, including processes and methodologies for assessment of student learning, demonstrates the commitment CMN has to educational achievement and continual improvement. As a reflection of our capacity and capability as an institution of higher education, three regarded external entities have approved CMN for participation: Member of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), initial Accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission, and designated as a 1994 Tribal Land-Grant institution.

Faculty driven initiatives are designed to evaluate courses, general education, and program assessments. CMN's ten member faculty team has worked together to create rubrics specifically within general education requirements that can be utilized across all courses (i.e., essay creation, speech development, and visual presentations). Faculty development meetings are held regularly to collaborate on assessment plans. The teamwork approach is resulting in the creation of consistent outcomes and benchmarks across all programs of study. This has resulted in a true

faculty driven assessment approach that is implemented throughout the curriculum.

Sources

- Assessment Day Power Point 2019
- Assessment Plan 2019-2020
- Co-Curricular Posters 2020
- Co-Curricular Process for Assessment Update
- Governance_Institute_for_Student_Success_-_CMN_Report
- Strategic Plan 2019- 2023
- Student Portfolio
- Student Portfolio 2
- syllabus template Fall 2020

4.C - Core Component 4.C

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.)

Argument

4.C.1.

The defined goals for CMN that relate to retention, persistence, and completion are cited in the Strategic Plan as priorities 4.3.1 *defining goals*, 4.3.2 *collect and analyze information*, 4.3.3 *use information to make improvements*, and 4.3.4 *processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing data*. These priorities establish the college's commitment to retention, persistence, and completion in its degree and certificate programs.

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium report Key Indicator Systems (AKIS) American Indians Measure Success (AIMS) for 2017-2018 indicated that the new student cohort to be reported on for CMN was 147 . Challenges affecting retention, persistence, and completion are the high number of first-generation students enrolling at the College of the Muscogee Nation. Also, the high percentage of students who have taken the Accuplacer Next Generation assessment test and were placed in remedial/developmental courses based on the results which were as follows: Reading (51%), Writing/Comprehension (43%) and Math (91%). Comparatively speaking, 71% of CMN students taking the skills assessment test were placed in remedial/developmental courses. In comparison, 40.2% of the students entering Oklahoma state colleges and universities were required to take at least one remedial course, whereas the national rate was 32%.

Considering these two variables of first-generation students and enrollment in remedial courses, the College has designed a Retention Strategy and Student Success program with goals to focus on these issues.

Within the [Retention Strategy](#) (under review), the College has designed a process to improve the current retention rate, and to increase retention by 1% of first-time, full-time degree-seeking students. Students enrolling in fall 2017 and returning in fall 2018, the retention rate for first time students was 55% at CMN, and based on the established goal, the retention rate is projected to be 56%. The CMN 2016 complete graduation rate was at 31%. CMN has a projected goal of a 5% increase for graduation rate year over year, based on increased retention goals (1% per year) and the strategies implemented to support them. It is reasonable to expect a higher graduation rate based on retention rate level and its positive relationship with graduation rates, which is when retention rates increase, graduation rates increase.

The CMN [persistence rate](#) for all full-time degree-seeking students who enrolled in the Fall of 2019 and returned in the Spring of 2020 was 79.38%. CMN has also seen consistent improvement with the retention and graduation goals. As a result CMN will expect an improvement in the persistence rate likely at the same level.

The goal for retention was set by a Retention Strategy committee with seven related objectives. This committee consists of the Regents Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Academic Dean, Registrar, Research Specialist, and Criminal Justice Instructor. It was decided that this committee was the appropriate body for establishing the goal as its primary purpose was to support retention and the strategy taken to help students in their retention efforts. Utilizing approaches outlined in the CMN Retention Strategy, faculty and staff were provided with detailed processes that positively impact a student's higher education experience and support them through graduation. A key to the Retention Strategy is early detection for first-year students based on attendance and grades. Instructors communicate with SSC about these students, and SSC reaches out to the student to make sure communication is reestablished and the proper guidance to get back on track in the course or courses.

4.C.2

At the beginning of the trimester, enrollment numbers are calculated for each of the courses offered. These values are an indicator of current enrollment, which is analyzed over time for graduation, retention, persistence, and completion information. Other information relating to retention, persistence, and completion is collected by faculty and staff in order to facilitate student success when barriers are identified.

As the trimester progresses, attendance is documented by the instructor, who tracks students to determine any difficulties that students may be encountering.

The instructor will determine the avenue of remediation that best fits the student's situation when absences reach the criteria identified in the retention strategy. Faculty are proactive in student success and implement the strategy to address student absence. Before a student reaches the Administrative Withdrawal (AW) criteria, faculty and Student Success staff contact students through email and telephone to assess the situation and determine a course of action.

These procedures were developed to remain more intimately aware of variables that may affect the retention and graduation of students. In identifying issues leading to absences, faculty provide focused attention and remedies to student problems for the student to remain focused on academic success. CMN has seen substantial gains in retention and graduation rates since 2010. Much of this is contributed to our focus on the success of the First trimester and first-year students' connection to the Student Success Center and our Retention strategy. Graduate and follow-up surveys have been distributed to faculty and staff to consider the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for improving retention and graduation practices.

4.C.3

The primary source for institutional efforts and programs that address student retention, persistence, and completion has been obtained from the Student Success Center and Academic Affairs-Faculty. As an example, the College received funding for a Title III funded program to address the need for student advisement and academic counseling. With this funding, CMN developed the Student Success Center, which is centrally located for new and incoming students to access all of the services necessary for enrolling and succeeding in their first academic year.

The initial focus for improving retention at CMN is through the Student Success Center. The SSC provides an outreach program to public schools, advisement of first-year students, and the early alert initiative, all of which can impact retention, persistence, and completion. The SSC works in collaboration with faculty according to the Retention Strategy to notify and communicate with students identified as chronically absent or those who are not completing work assignments, which may indicate that these students are at-risk. The outreach program offered to high school students prepares them for college expectations. First year advisement is a critical factor in completing general education requirements before moving into a degree program.

The CampusVue student information system has been purchased to expand the capacity and capability of our student data related to practices that could support higher retention, persistence, and completion. This system enables faculty and staff to track students' grades, attendance, financial aid disbursement, and degree progress. The SSC utilizes this system to monitor student attendance and degree progress. If a student is identified as high-risk, the counselor contacts the student for further discussion of student success.

Another connection, specifically between CMN and at-risk students, occurs with our tutoring services. Started with grant funds in 2010, CMN's tutoring program is an integral part of improving retention. After analyzing the tutoring program and its effectiveness, the College continues to support the program by dedicating necessary funds from the budget. The success of this program has been expanded to a dedicated tutoring center with peer tutors and professional tutors on staff. The tutoring center has been integrated as part of the Retention Strategy to provide focused attention on the academic needs of individual students, which sometimes becomes a barrier to completing their degree.

The College, through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, employs several data collection processes, which provide CMN with the information necessary to improve retention, persistence, and completion rates. For example, [student information](#) is collected and shared with faculty and staff. Graduate and Follow-Up Surveys have been developed and administered to gain insight into positive aspects of the institution, gaining feedback from individuals who were successful at the College. Some responses from these instruments indicate that CMN should continue supporting student organizations, co-curricular activities, and expanding service-learning opportunities, which are linked to persistence and community involvement. Further review of the surveys revealed that the provision of scholarships offsets the costs associated with College, which allows many of our students to pursue higher education without the worry of student loan debt.

Students have also indicated a desire to interact with faculty and staff outside of the classroom setting. CMN has implemented a co-curricular assessment committee to develop and assess other methods of student engagement. These activities help promote retention through campus-wide personal interaction and allowing students to be a part of a community.

Through the various methods of data collection and inferences, CMN has been mindful of students and their experiences on and off-campus. These reports have shaped the development of activities, programs, and facilities to create a healthy atmosphere during a student's college experience. A variety of methods (e.g., comment cards, survey questions, Student Senate-Student Forum) has been utilized to improve various aspects of the College with the intent of improving student retention, persistence, and completion.

4.C.4.

Information gathered by CMN on student retention, persistence, and completion reflects good practices. The Office of the Registrar has completed a Student Success Report that provides recommendations for improvement and analyzes data from the following sources. Data is generated from admission and enrollment information that is consistent with CampusVue student information system, [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System \(IPEDS\)](#), and American Indian Measurements of Success (AIMS) reports. AIMS is a report required by the

American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). The Registrar generates reports for IPEDS and AIMS, which address the student and institutional criteria set forth by each. Reports are distributed internally and to the appropriate agencies, respectively, the U.S. Department of Education and AIHEC.

A list of [Key Performance Indicators \(KPI\)](#) has been completed, reviewed by staff and approved by the Board of Regents. The data relating to the respective KPIs will be regularly produced and reviewed by faculty and staff to be used for evaluating success and identifying opportunities for improvement.

Consistent with the IPEDS definitions and terms, the Registrar has completed the 2019-2020 Fall Collection Survey. To be accessible to our internal and external constituents, the reports are available for public review. Recently IPEDS data was submitted for the fall 2019 report, which will be located on the CMN website under the link College Navigator, and will be included in the official report. The Registrar regularly attends conference focusing on development on reporting and improved effectiveness of the Registrar's office and data used and collected by the Registrar's office.

Since 2008, CMN has been collecting and analyzing student data to annually complete AIHEC's [AIMS](#) report. This AIMS report is given each year to the AIHEC Board of Directors for institutions to remain in good standing. The AIMS report has two parts, including quantitative and qualitative indicators. Some quantitative indicators (AIMS Report) are First-Generation Status, Skill Assessment/Placement Test Results, Cohort Retention, Cohort Graduation, Enrollment, and Graduation Information. Qualitative indicators relate to narratives describing the institution's growth, fundraising for various projects, and information on Native language and science-related student research. The collection of this data are examples of the processes and methodologies in practice at CMN, and how they reflect suitable methods for collecting and analyzing information on retention, persistence, and completion.

Sources

- AIMS Key Indicator System (AKIS 2019 Report)
- CMN Rate of Persistence
- Fall 2019 Student Characteristics Chart
- IPEDS 12-month Enrollment Data
- Key Performance Indicators CMN 2015
- Retention Strategy 2015-2016

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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.

Summary

Throughout the Criterion 4 review you will see the steps that College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) has taken to improve all stages of learning all while implementing a cultural aspect. CMN implemented initiatives focused on improving student outcomes related to guided pathways, improving student services, accelerated learning paths and engaging in best practice strategies for student learning. We have revised our placement process by utilizing Next Gen, Bridge Camp and a Multiple Measures waiver, which more accurately places students in the appropriate courses. The institution created goals and assesses learning outcomes for curricular and co-curricular programs.

CMN has demonstrated a commitment to show improvement of assessment practices that covers academics, co-curricular, retention, graduation, and strategic planning. The institution has established clearly stated goals and ways to achieve those goals related to achievement and institutional improvement. CMN continues to report gains in retention and graduation rates. Though there is room for improvement, a higher proportion of students are retained during and after the first trimester. Many aspects have went into retention including program reviews, learning environments and support services.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

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.

Argument

5.A.1.

Campus-wide shared decision-making is an integral process at the College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) which promotes communication and interactive cooperation to fulfill the mission. The college engages its internal constituencies through a structured process that involves a series of policy handbooks for the Board of Regents, faculty, staff, and students. By providing access to the policy handbooks through the CMN shared drive and website, internal constituencies can reference and review material that is relevant to promote effective leadership and collaborative processes. The ease of accessibility of these policies is important as CMN strives to include all relevant constituencies in the fulfillment of its mission.

Administration, faculty, staff, and students work in collaborative roles within the college organization, facilitated by standing committees and student organizations. Academic Affairs/Curriculum, Assessment, Accreditation Steering, Publications/Website, and the Executive Committee are established committees that meet regularly. Other committees work together to coordinate student events

and provide resources, such as the Heritage Month and Graduation Committees, Fall Fest, institutional considerations, and disciplinary actions.

Within the structure of the college, internal constituencies utilize committees for consistent communication to create policies. Students may meet with the President to discuss the development of setting requirements or developing policy, and have are invited to attend and participate in the monthly Board of Regents meetings. Through the established structures that are currently in place, the college enables involvement of the Board, employees, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes.

The Board of Regents, that derives its authority from the MCN Legislation, is engaged through by-laws and the [Board of Regents Manual](#). Within these documents are clarifications for their authority, powers, duties and responsibilities that guide them in their role as the governing board. The Board approves CMN's updated policies and procedures as well as any grants for which CMN applies.

Faculty roles are enhanced by the accessible information in the [Faculty Handbook](#) and [Advisement and Enrollment Handbook](#). Furthermore, communication is improved because the [Faculty Council by-laws](#) provide an avenue through which their voice is heard. Considering the availability of faculty policy documents, collaborative processes are more productive.

The college has an [organizational chart](#) that depicts the relationships between all departmental functions and positions, which supports effective communication throughout the institution. In addition, CMN makes available the [Personnel Policies and Procedures](#) to provide organization operations information to educate staff about specific rules and regulations. All personnel, at the beginning of their employment, are provided with an orientation to the tribal government, the history of CMN, and attend a Board of Regents meeting to introduce themselves to the Board.

Students are an internal constituency who reference policies through the [Student Handbook](#), [Student Housing Handbook](#), and [Consumer Information Guide](#), which defines their rights and responsibilities at the college. Students serve on several standing committees such as the Grade Appeals Committee, Student Conduct Hearing Committee, Housing Judicial Hearing Committee, Native American Heritage Month Planning Committee, and the Library Committee. CMN has several student-led campus organizations including the [Student Housing Organization](#) (SHO), [Tribal Leadership Circle](#) (TLC), [Student Senate](#), the [American Indian Science and Engineering Society](#) (AISES) and the newly established student organizations, American Indian Business Leaders (AIBL) and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society. Full-time faculty and staff serve as advisors for the student organizations, increasing the collaborative efforts of staff, faculty, and students. Faculty and staff currently serving as advisors include the Resident Manager for SHO, Tribal Services Instructor for TLC, Gaming

Instructor for AIBL, Student Success Center Coordinator, Counselor for Student Senate, and Science Course Instructor for AISES. Each student organization has by-laws, which provide a framework for purpose and responsibility, resulting in a greater understanding of becoming citizens of a tribal and global society. Student members of the organizations attend the monthly Board of Regents meeting to report on and discuss student activity updates.

During unprecedented times, such as during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, CMN maintains its use of shared governance to determine the actions of the institution to continue serving students. In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, students were provided with a technology survey prior to Spring Break to determine how many had internet and computer access in the event that CMN should move to online instruction. The survey data indicated that approximately 30% of respondents did not have either a laptop or internet access. This information was communicated to faculty so they could prepare to distribute paper copies of class assignments to students without internet or computer access. Furthermore, throughout the era of the pandemic, weekly administration meetings were held to maintain communication, conduct planning, and make informed decisions. CMN's President distributed communication letters to staff and students almost weekly to provide consistent information. In order to keep the community informed letters were also distributed to all Muscogee (Creek) Nation employees, posted to CMN's social media pages, and posted on the CMN website. During this extraordinary time, CMN maintained its use of shared governance to continue to serve students and key stakeholders.

Following is list of functioning committees that engage internal constituencies:

Achieve the Dream (ATD) Committees- CMN and ATD collaborate to improve campus student services to increase student success. These committees include the Core Team, the Emergency Aid Committee and the Paid Internship Program Committee. Committee members include the Regents Director of Institutional Effectiveness (Chair), Research Specialist President, Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Affairs, Director of Business Affairs, Registrar, Admissions Officer, Student Success Center Coordinator, and one faculty member.

Bridge Camp (BC) Planning Committee- Bridge Camp is a one-week instructional camp for first-time freshman testing into developmental courses. This committee is comprised of the Learning Center Academic Resource Specialist (Chair), President, Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Affairs, Admissions Officer, Cafeteria Manager, Bookstore Manager, Facilities Supervisor, Network Administrator, Resident Manager, and Lead Security Officer.

Campus Safety Committee- The purpose of the Campus Safety Committee is to consider issues related to the safety of students, faculty, staff, and visitors to the campus and work to improve overall campus safety. This committee is comprised

of the President (Chair), Dean of Student Affairs, Dean of Academic Affairs, Regents Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Director of Business Affairs, Lead Security Officer, and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthouse Tribal Police.

Co-Curricular Assessment Committee- CMN's Co-curricular program warrants and demonstrates how all facets of the campus contribute to student learning and development in support of the college mission. The Co-curricular committee was divided into subcommittees to develop learning objectives and assessment methods. The three subcommittees are Program Learning Outcomes, Student Organization Outcomes, and Institutional Work Study Outcomes. This committee is comprised of the Registrar (Chair), Dean of Student Affairs, and Librarian. Subcommittees include two Health and Wellness Case Managers, Student Success Center Coordinator, Bursar, American Indian Business Leader Advisor, American Indian Science and Engineering Advisor, Phi Theta Kappa Advisor, Tribal Leadership Circle Sponsor, Book Store Manager, Café Manager, Business Affairs staff member, Student Housing Manager, and Academic Resource Specialist.

Curriculum Committee- The Curriculum Committee reviews and approves course textbooks, syllabi standards, course curriculum, and academic program reviews. This committee is comprised of the Dean of Academic Affairs (Chair), Registrar, Librarian, the Regents Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Research Specialist, and one faculty member.

Faculty Council- The College of the Muscogee Nation Faculty Council is an organization of the faculty designed to facilitate democratic participation in the development of applicable institutional policies. This is accomplished in accordance with the Council Bylaws through its elected representatives of the Faculty Council, serving as the liaison between the faculty and administration. The Council is comprised of ten full-time faculty and the Dean of Academic Affairs. One faculty member is selected annually by their peers to serve as Committee Chair. Additional discussion can be found in 5. A. 3.

Fall Fest Committee- The purpose of the Fall Fest Committee is to plan and organize the annual back to school event, Fall Fest. Comprised of the Dean of Student Affairs (Chair), Office of Student Affairs Administrative Assistant, Director of Business Affairs, Cafeteria Manager, Health and Wellness Case Manager, Student Success Center Counselor, Student Success Center Coordinator, and one to two faculty members.

Graduation Committee- The purpose of the Graduation Committee is to plan and organize CMN's annual graduation. This committee is comprised of the Dean of Academic Affairs (Chair), President, Dean of Student Affairs, Director of Business Affairs, Health and Wellness Case Manager, Admissions Officer, Registrar, Regents Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Financial Aid Coordinator, two faculty members, Network Administrator, Facilities Supervisor, Student Success Center Coordinator, Learning Center Academic Resource

Specialist, one Board of Regent member, Librarian, Executive Assistant, and the Office of Student Affairs Administrative Assistant.

Housing Judicial Hearing Committee- The purpose of this committee is to hear procedures for allegations of violations of housing rules and regulations. The committee is comprised of the Dean of Student Affairs (Chair), two faculty/staff members, and one student Residential Assistant. The committee is chaired by the Dean of Student Affairs.

Institutional Review Board- The history of research involving Native American people has shown a need to protect the rights of human subjects. In past research involving Native American people, language and cultural differences often lead to misunderstandings concerning the intent and the content of such research. More often subjects were not informed or given the opportunity to decline participation in the research. Sacred knowledge, objects and sites have often been violated for the sake of such research. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) has the responsibility for reviewing all research involving humans as subjects that is conducted by faculty, staff, and students of CMN, as well as research conducted through outside agencies partnered with CMN. The IRB is comprised of Research Specialist (Chair), Regents Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Dean of Academic Affairs, and one faculty member.

Library Committee- The purpose of the library committee is to assist the library in achieving its mission to serve the research, teaching, and learning needs of the college community and the citizens of the Muscogee Nation at large. The library committee is comprised of the Librarian (Chair), one faculty member, one administrator, one staff member, and one student.

Native American Heritage Month Planning Committee- The purpose of this committee is to plan and organize cultural activities and events for the month of November, Native American Heritage Month. Comprised of the Dean of Student Affairs (Chair), the Office of Student Affairs Administrative Assistant, Health and Wellness Case Manager, Registrar, two faculty members and three to four students.

Non-Academic Review (NAR) Committee- The NAR process provides CMN applicants with an opportunity to be considered for acceptance into CMN when the applicant does not meet the Non-Academic Criteria. The committee reviews applicants and approves or denies entry into CMN. The committee is comprised of the Admissions Officer (Chair), Dean of Student Affairs, Registrar, a faculty member, and Case Manager.

Policy and Procedures Committees- The purpose of the Policy and Procedures Committees are to annually review and update CMN's policies and procedures. The committees create and/or update policies which are routed to the Board of Regents for final approval. The committees are comprised of the President

(Chair), Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Affairs, Director of Business Affairs, Regents Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Registrar, Financial Aid Coordinator, and Research Specialist.

Publications Committee- The purpose of the Publications Committee is to review submitted updated publications and correct grammatical errors as needed. The committee is comprised of the Research Specialist (Chair), President, Librarian, Dean of Student Affairs, Dean of Academic Affairs, Regents Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Registrar, and one faculty member.

Reaffirmation of Accreditation Steering Committee- The purpose of the steering committee is to initiate and develop the Assurance Argument and evidence necessary for the argument. Faculty and staff come together throughout the College to discuss their specific responsibilities within the major functions of the institution, and to reflect on the character of CMN. The steering committee is comprised of the Regents Director of Institutional Effectiveness (Chair), Research Specialist (Co-Chair), President, Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Affairs, Director of Business Affairs, Registrar, Librarian, Admissions Officer, and the Financial Aid Coordinator.

Raven Ready Planning Committee- The purpose of this committee is to plan and organize the annual fall Raven Ready new student orientation. This committee is comprised of the Dean of Student Affairs (Chair), Office of Student Affairs Administrative Assistant, Cafeteria Manager, Health and Wellness Case Manager, Student Success Center Counselor, Student Success Center Coordinator, three faculty members, Registrar, Learning Center Academic Resource Specialist, Librarian, Financial Aid Coordinator, Bookstore Manager, and the Network Administrator.

Student Conduct Committee- The purpose of this committee is to hear procedures for allegations against a student where suspension or expulsion from CMN is possible and for student discrimination and sexual misconduct grievances. The Student Conduct Hearing Committee is comprised of the Dean of Students Affairs (Chair) and a minimum of 10 faculty or staff members appointed annually by the President.

Website Committee- The purpose of the website committee is to update and maintain the CMN website. This committee is comprised of the Network Administrator (Chair), Dean of Student Affairs, Grants Coordinator, Computer Tech, and Regents Director of Institutional Effectiveness.

5.A.2.

CMN's administration use data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents. Academic program reviews are part of the college-wide process that occurs each year on a rotating schedule. This practice

allows CMN to evaluate how its academic programs can be improved and make plans for the future. A comprehensive review of the program includes evaluation of the relationship between the College's mission and the program learning outcomes. Degree coordinators/faculty will provide a written report on program faculty qualification, student data, and activities to the Academic Affairs/Curriculum Committee for review and the President for final approval.

Other data collected for informed decision making includes course evaluations. Each trimester, course evaluations are made available to students on D2L. Students are provided the opportunity to evaluate their courses and instructors for quality improvement. Questions asked on the evaluations include identifying course strengths and concerns, if the course developed specific learning skills, instructor timeliness with grading and providing feedback, and instructor preparedness. The data from a course evaluation is utilized to evaluate the instructor and the overall course to assist with course improvement and course delivery.

Additional data collected are [Key Performance Indicators](#) (KPI) which has been reviewed by staff and approved by the Board of Regents. CMN defines Key Performance Indicators as performance measures for evaluating success and identifying opportunities for improvement. KPI data is utilized to improve existing CMN programs as well as establish new programs. Programs that continue to be improved upon includes the Learning Center Tutoring Lab, College Cornerstone Course, and the Student Success Center. Programs developed directly to improve upon KPI data include Raven Ready New Student Orientation and Summer Bridge Camp. These programs support the overall student success experience at the college. The data relating to the respective KPIs will be regularly produced and reviewed by faculty and staff to evaluate success and identify opportunities for improvement.

The following are CMN's Key Performance Indicators:

Retention Rates: Number of full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students who enter the institution for the first-time in the fall and who return to the same institution the following fall (as either full- or part-time), divided by the total number of full-time, first-time degree/certificate seeking undergraduates in the fall of first entrance.

Graduation Rates: The total number of individuals from a given cohort of full-time, first-time, degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates who completed a degree or certificate within 150 percent of normal time (for the degree or certificate), divided by the entire cohort of full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates minus any allowable exclusions.

Time to Completion: The average number of years (trimesters) for students who completed an associate's degree.

Persistence: All full-time degree seeking students attending college and measured from returning from fall term to spring term.

Developmental Student Success- (a) English (b) Math: The percentage of developmental students who successfully complete their last developmental (a) English, (b) Math course, who then successfully complete their first college-level (a) English, (b) Math course.

Course Pass Rate: Course success rates for all courses taken during academic year.

Additional data is collected from other areas of the college including Bridge Camp, Raven Ready, Co-Curricular Assessment Committee, Achieve the Dream's (ATD) Center for Community College Engagement (CCSSE) survey as well as the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE). Data collected from these programs are utilized to reach informed decisions for students and staff when determining new programs and updates to current programs.

ATD's Center for Community College Engagement (CCSSE) survey: This purpose of this survey is to provide a clear picture of institutional practices and student behaviors that are correlated with student learning and retention. Significant data from this survey includes the following: 85% of CMN students agreed or strongly agreed that College of the Muscogee Nation is preparing them for what they plan to do in life, 13% of students reported feeling neutral about this, 2% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed that the college is helping them in this area. This data has been used to inform decision making regarding student engagement efforts between students, staff, and faculty.

ATD's Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE): The purpose of the SENSE survey is to provide a clear picture of student behaviors in the earliest weeks of college and the institutional practices that affect students during this critical time. According to the SENSE survey, 59.3% of new CMN Students felt that they were provided with a clear academic plan and pathway to reach their end goal of completion. 58.1% of new CMN students responded that they persisted because of a strong early connection to someone at the college. Other feedback from incoming freshman was collected as a result of the survey. This data was utilized to improve the onboarding experience at CMN by updating the advisement and enrollment process, adjustments were made to Raven Ready new student orientation, and Bridge Camp.

Bridge Camp (BC): BC is a one-week instructional camp for first-time freshman testing into developmental courses. The Academic Resource Specialist (ARS) collected students' test scores before, during, and after Bridge Camp to gauge if the instruction throughout the program had an effect on students' scores. The ARS also tracked participants' course grades at the end of their first trimester after Bridge Camp to determine if they were retained after the first trimester and

what their course grade was. This retention information can then be compared to first-time students that did not participate in Bridge Camp. The ARS also tracked the number of students that utilized multiple measures (alternative method for developmental placement) for enrollment to compare them to BC students that did not utilize multiple measures to determine if multiple measures students pass their courses. Data concluded that in 2018, 16 out of 31 students used multiple measures; 13 passed their next level course. In 2019, eight out of 22 students used multiple measures; six passed their next level course. This data supported the use of multiple measures by CMN advisors.

Co-Curricular Assessment Committee: Data from the Co-Curricular Assessment Committee is utilized to make recommendations and strategies for continuous improvement of co-curricular activities and student organizations (SOs) on campus such as the Institutional Work Studies and healthy lifestyles on campus. Previous recommendations for SOs include more support for the student organization budget and defining the role of SOs on campus as well as including leadership training for SO officers. Co-curricular assessment at CMN is ongoing.

Raven Ready (RR) New Student Orientation: Raven Ready is designed to empower freshman and transfer students with knowledge of campus resources and services including advisement, important dates, Raven's Nest Bookstore information, meal plans, and much more. Data collected from RR attendees include the overall effectiveness of the session and the campus tour which was conducted by orientation leaders. RR data generated from the 2019 student group that 69% of attendees stated they had a better understanding of student services available at CMN after attending the session. Of attendees 74% stated they had a better understanding of the college's academic expectations and requirements for its CMN students. Of the attendees, 74% stated they felt better prepared for their first day of class and 80% indicated that they received valuable information on the campus tour with their orientation leader.

5.A.3.

CMN's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures. Through the collaborative process that is currently in place, the college enables involvement of the Board of Regents, employees, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes. Within the organization of the college, internal constituencies utilize committees for consistent communication to create policies. Each month, members of CMN's student organizations attend the Board of Regents meeting to update the regents on monthly activities and accomplishments.

One example of this shared governance is the use of the Curriculum Committee. This committee is chaired by the Dean of Academic Affairs and is comprised of the Registrar, Librarian, the Regents Director of Institutional Effectiveness, and

one faculty member. The purpose of the Curriculum Committee is to discuss and vote on course curricula and accompanying elements such as textbooks, course syllabi standards, and new and existing courses.

Another example of shared governance is the implementation of the recently updated academic skills evaluation software. During the spring of 2018, CMN began the process of migrating from the ACCUPLACER software to the ACCUPLACER Next-Generation software. The migration included setting placement cut scores and standards for the test. The Student Success Center Coordinator, facilitated efforts for this transition by including staff, faculty and administration to assist with the process. Those involved with the setting of the cut scores and standards included the Admissions Officer, Dean of Student Affairs, the Admissions and Registration Administrative Assistant, Learning Center Academic Resource Specialist, the Student Success Center Counselor, the Research Specialist, and ten full-time faculty. Once cut scores and standards were determined, the information was reviewed by the Board of Regents for approval.

The Faculty Council, representative of shared governance, is comprised of ten full-time faculty and the Dean of Academic Affairs. The Faculty Council is designed to facilitate democratic participation in the development of applicable institutional policies. This is accomplished in accordance with the Council Bylaws, through its elected representatives of the Faculty Council serving as the liaison between the faculty and administration. The Faculty Council Chair may call a faculty meeting if requested by majority of the faculty.

Sources

- Advisement and Enrollment Handbook 2020-2021
- AISES Constitution_Summer 2020
- Board of Regents Manual 2020
- Consumer Info Guide 2020-2021
- Faculty Handbook 2019-2022
- Faculty_Council_Bylaws
- HR Policies and Procedures Official 2018
- Key Performance Indicators CMN 2015
- Organizational Chart
- Student Handbook 2020-2021
- Student Housing Handbook 2020-2021
- Student Housing Organization Constitution
- Student Senate Constitution
- Tribal Leadership Circle Constitution

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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.

Argument

5.B.1.

Through technical development of job descriptions, the Human Resources Officer initiates the process to fill positions as needed. Detailed screening is given to selecting the best candidates to be hired. This is done through the interviewing process, background checks and drug testing. Preference is given to Muscogee Creek tribal citizens, Native Americans from other tribes and Native American Veterans. It has been noted that many of the CMN employees who have selected through this process bring a higher level of education and experience than is required from their job descriptions.

When interviewing, the selection committees are well aware that the hiring of operational staff is most important to the organization because of the skills needed for daily operations and programs. In addition, with the employment of faculty, the committee must be diligent in selecting these professionals because of their valuable role and skills required to instruct, develop lesson plans and maintain student learning. As a result, the institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles. Specific examples of their instructional responsibilities include providing oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff, and involvement in assessment of student learning.

The governing Board of Regents is comprised of members who have diverse backgrounds and expertise in areas of education, tribal affairs, law and gaming. Policies and procedures are approved by this governing board.

The Information Technologies Department (IT) specializes in keeping the college current for the technology needs of students, faculty and staff. Wi-Fi is available campus wide, smart boards have been replaced with interactive flat panels and improved sound systems. The CMN electronic marquee is operated by IT. Student organizations and administration use it for advertising student affairs, conferences, graduation and upcoming events. The CMN website (cmn.edu) is also maintained by IT.

CMN Security enforce campus safety rules and regulations and focus on meeting the safety needs for the college. In addition to a safe and secure campus, they provide first CPR training, and Active Shooter training to the faculty and staff. Security staff are actively involved with the student body by being present at housing meetings and providing educational/information training. Other examples of training provided include bystander intervention and suicide prevention training. Bystander intervention training involves encouraging people to overcome their resistance to stepping-up and stepping-in to help out. These programs help the college campus to thwart sexual misconduct/harassment/assault, abusive alcohol/drug use, dorm damage and concerns about suicide, depression and eating disorders, abusive relationships, and stalking or cyberstalking.

The CMN cafeteria, The Core Values Café, is open to the general public, CMN students and residents. The Food Services Supervisor brings years of food service experience including event catering, food safety certification, casino food service experience and military food service. The CMN five core values are displayed on a wall in the café dining room. Each station in the Café has signage written in Muscogee Creek and English, illustrating the importance of the Muscogee Creek language. Fresh fruits and vegetables grown in the CMN tribal garden are provided to the cafe. Also, the tribal garden greenhouse uses a hydroponic watering system which can produce vegetables throughout the year. Students with special needs diets are addressed to the best of the cafe's ability.

To meet the informational needs of CMN staff, supervisors and managers have quarterly, monthly or weekly meetings with their staff. By doing so, employees are current on information and programs. Particularly with the pandemic creating change in how the college provides instruction to its students, communication is essential to all CMN employees, students and its constituents.

5.B.2.

The CMN purposes incorporated in the mission statement are realistic and achievable. The CMN Mission Statement serves as the foundation of the college and provides focus. The mission statement was carefully constructed and developed with input from the CMN staff, students, Board of Regents and stakeholders. It provides guidance for the implementation of the college's planning and maintains alignment with native culture, values and language.

In addition to the Mission Statement, the college emphasizes the Core Values, which are clearly articulated to the college community. The Core Values are described as follows: VRAKKUECKV (Respect): We value our Native culture, language and community, honoring the rights and dignity of all people; FVTCETV (Integrity): We are fair, honest and accountable for our actions; MECVLKE (Responsibility): We are loyal, reliable, and diligent in all tasks; EYASKETY (Humility): We are kind, concerned for the well-being of others and embrace equality; HOPORENVK (Wisdom): We gain insight from scholarly learning and the knowledge and experience of our elders.

Consistent with the Core Values, the college has five goals, listed below, that support teaching and learning.

1. Offer academic degree programs that are unique and reflect Mvskoke culture, history and language.
2. Create educational opportunities that are accessible to the Native community and tribal members.
3. Provide co-curricular activities that respect tribal traditions and culture.
4. Develop quality educational programs that give students a scholastic foundation to pursue higher academic degrees or to achieve their career objectives.
5. Maintain a focused learning environment in a safe and secure campus.

These directive views further create a stable foundation within the context of the principal documents of the college.

5.B.3.

The budgeting and monitoring process of finances at the College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) is well developed and is in accordance with tribal law. The process begins first with the budget requirements being introduced through an Executive Order from the Principal Chief's office. It is then directed through the Office of the Controller to initiate the budget process. The last step requires that CMN establish its budget. The Board of Regents review and approve the financial plan, which is then directed to the Tribal Executive Budget Committee and adjusted if needed. If changes are required, the budget is sent back to the CMN Director of Business Affairs for corrections, then resubmitted to the Regents for review. The budget is reviewed and approved by legislative committees and National Council and will become the [annual budget](#) for the Tribal College. The CMN Director of Business Affairs has responsibility for general supervision of the accounting procedures. All expenses require approval of the Director of Business Affairs and President consistent with CMN policy. The college has internal policies to monitor budgets and grant funds. Policies include the accounting procedures, the bursar's standard operating procedures, cash handling, grant policies and procedures, student cafeteria policies, human resource management, information technology, bookstore, procurement, and records retention. On a regular basis, the

college has a Statement of Expenditures vs Budget Appropriations (SEBA) to report expenditures, encumbrances, and balances of each line item. SEBA information enables the administration to control and manage the budget effectively.

Federal legislation requires annual audits in compliance with the [Single Audit Act](#). The Single Audit Act is conducted in accordance with the Office of Management and Budgets (OMB) Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments and Nonprofit Organizations. Audits maintain transparency and may be reviewed by the tribal Executive and Legislative branches, the CMN Board of Regents, and college personnel. Audits are made available to the public by request through the Business Affairs office.

5.B.4.

CMN has a [strategic plan](#) in place to ensure its educational purposes are achieved. The College of the Muscogee Nation has no institutional debt and maintains a reserve of two million dollars. CMN has accomplished this by focusing on short term and long term comprehensive perspectives aligned with current growth and future growth. The college is able to plan and allocate funds for day-to-day operations by analyzing the current budget, projecting government funding and anticipating economic conditions. The annual budget funded by Muscogee (Creek) Nation with consideration for the current needs of students and college community contribute to the development of the overall financial plan. This financial plan is met through established institutional goals, using allocated resources, and funding the organization. Consequently, the Strategic Plan guides our effectiveness in ensuring that CMN's educational purposes are achieved.

CMN has a [master site plan](#) in place that ensures planned campus growth and expansion, which includes future buildings and classrooms in the planning stage that will be built. Smart board (replaced by ViewSonic) technology has been included in each classroom, conference rooms, library, and is accessible to all faculty, staff, and students. WIFI is provided for all of the CMN campus. By utilizing an annual budget and applying for grants where needed, CMN has effectively managed to accomplish its mission with careful planning and management of resources.

Sources

- 2019 Single Audit
- CMN Masterplan-6.19.2020
- FY 2020 Budget
- Strategic Plan 2019- 2023

5.C - Core Component 5.C

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.

Argument

5.C.1.

This institution's ability to carry out its mission is evident in its development of the 2019-2023 strategic plan and deliberate management of its human and physical resources which enhances institutional effectiveness. The results can be seen in the development of the campus infrastructure, course rigor within the degree programs, and availability of new material and technology for students, faculty, and staff. CMN's ability to align its resources has contributed substantially to building a quality higher education institution. As an example, the funding of research grants, including NIFA, BIE, and USDA, have allowed the school to move forward with several new Degree programs including: Criminal Justice, Natural Resources, and General Studies. Partnerships with entities such as Langston University, Oklahoma State University, USDA, and local school districts have increased this institution's capacity as a 1994 Land Grant institution.

Funding from the grants have also allowed the college to operate a Cultural Garden, which contributes healthy food to the institution's Café. The Cultural Garden will also be used as a teaching tool for classes in soil studies, natural resources, and tribal heirloom gardening. A drone has been purchased to teach students how to map out drainage patterns in fields, identify improper fertilization patterns, and with the drone thermal imager student will be able to know how to

locate field hot spots. Another cooperative arrangement will be with the drone department of Okmulgee Independent School District in topographical, drainage, and line mapping of various sites within the county. The drones can also be utilized to assist Okmulgee County Extension Service and MCN Conservation Services with mapping for tribal landowners' property to obtain better production with their land. All of these tools and techniques align with CMN's mission statement of providing a quality and positive learning environment for tribal and non-tribal students to become productive citizens of the global society.

5.C.2.

The College of the Muscogee Nation is continuing its development to link data-driven decision-making, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting. Assessment data of student performance has been a primary focus for the institution. The development of the Student Success Center (SSC) has contributed to an increase in student performance. Programs developed by the SSC such as Bridge Camp have assisted students to address the gap in performance in English composition and mathematics skills. Bridge Camp has seen a reduction of developmental (zero-level) courses taken by students, which helps students to stay on schedule to graduate with their degree. In the 2018 Bridge Camp, 3 out of 8 students tested out of Math 0143, 7 of 16 students tested out of Math 0153, 17 of 26 students tested out of English 0143, and 10 of 23 students tested out of Reading 0143. The number from 2019 Bridge Camp show an 80% remedial passing rate of students in Math and English. This allows more students to begin courses that count toward their degree plan. CMN is utilizing this information to continue improving Bridge Camp and budget activities and materials for the camp.

Another program headed by the SSC include tracking student success, progress, and [attendance](#) within classes. The use of paid and peer tutors are made available to students to ensure continued progress in courses to aid in degree completion. Raven Ready and College Cornerstone are two additional programs that provide support to promote student success. Data from the past 5 years show that the retention rate has gone from 41% in 2014 to 55% in 2018. Graduation data shows that rates in 2014 were at 18%, in 2018 the rates were 35%.

Raven Ready is a program that is offered the week before the fall trimester. The program provides information to incoming new students and their parents to help ease the anxiety of locating classrooms, cafeteria, fitness center, SSC, counseling center, bookstore, and tutorial centers. Information about degree plans, traditions, study habits, note-taking techniques are given to the students to increase the students' achievement. College Cornerstone is an 8 week 1 hour credit course, that supports Raven Ready initiatives, is designed to emphasize survival tips such as transitioning, dorm-life, and strategies on how to study for course quizzes and exams.

A newer program is “Achieve the Dream” (ATD) which began in 2017. ATD, through cooperation with CMN, strives to improve campus student services while collecting data to continuously evaluate student service operations. ATD and CMN focus on three core components including emergency aid money for students facing financial hardships, the paid internship program, and GradReady financial literacy. The emergency aid program named Oretv (achieve) assists eligible students facing financial hardships by providing up to \$1000 dollars for assistance with rent, car repairs, gasoline, groceries, utilities and childcare to ensure financial need does not lead to a student dropping out. The paid internship program allows students to gain real-world experience in their field of study. The GradReady financial literacy component teaches students how to manage their money, pay for college, and how to maintain basic financial skills after graduation. As CMN continues to evaluate the operations of these programs, planning and appropriate budgeting will continue.

5.C.3.

Strategic planning for CMN began with the Tribal College Work Study Group in 2003, which later became the Strategic Planning Task Force. This group, composed of Muscogee (Creek) citizens, tribal employees, tribal leaders, and Oklahoma State University executives, provided a broad spectrum of representation for the planning process, including cultural Mvskoke values and traditional academic perspectives.

The strategic plan has evolved from a series of planning events beginning with the Operational Unit Plans that were organized by college function and provided direction for each of the departments. A second plan was broader in scope and maintained short term focus. The most current plan will take a longer range approach with more comprehensive perspectives aligned with accreditation criteria.

College of the Muscogee Nation utilizes the framework and plan provided in the Strategic Plan 2019-2023 as the basis for systematic and integrated planning. This plan provides the institution with updated changes, priorities for the institution and a future timeline.

Input from both internal and external stakeholders have been incorporated in assessing data and priority identification. Perspectives of constituent groups, such as:

Steering Committee: This committee comprised of CMN administration and administration of our former partner institution (external constituent), meets quarterly to discuss planning for the college. Under direction of the mission statement and strategic plan, the Steering Committee is tasked with ensuring the college’s goals are being recognized.

Bureau of Indian Education (BIE): This federal agency conducts site visits to approve CMN for continuing funding to this institution.

Intertribal Council (ITC) of the Five Civilized Tribes: As protocol to the sovereignty of neighboring member tribes of the ITC (Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, and Muscogee Creek) a resolution of support for the college plan that was approved in 2003. Students from these tribes regularly enroll at the college.

American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC): The College holds membership in AIHEC, an organization consisting of 37 tribal colleges throughout the United States. Within this organization, CMN networks with other institutions, acquires institutional support, participates in professional development activities, and our students attend AIHEC conferences.

Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology (OSUIT): OSUIT served as a partner institution with both institutions mutually approving a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE): CMN meets periodically to keep the Regents staff updated on the development and progress of the college. Even though OSRHE does not have authority over the tribal college we opted to maintain a line of communication with them. We work to be a part of the higher education community and to network through professional organizations and with other institutions.

In considering the perspectives of internal and external constituencies, planning at the college has a broad focus. This network allows the college to share its distinct mission, while providing students experience in a global society.

5.C.4.

Through CMN's participation in Achieving the Dream (ATD), the College of the Muscogee Nation has a better understanding and ability to respond to future needs. By utilizing the tools at our disposal, specifically the Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT) and coming together for discussion as a group in the Capacity Café, we are able to evaluate our strengths and concerns as well as any opportunities we might be overlooking, shown in the [ICAT Results Summary](#). The institutional planning process involves CMN evaluating our Leadership and Vision, Data and Technology, Equity, Strategy and Planning and Teaching processes and using the data collected to make educated decisions that can be incorporated into the Strategic Plan. This process has helped the college to have a broader perspective of its future and to ensure that internal nor external downturns have a limited negative impact on the college. Should fluctuations in revenue occur, the college, through experience and planning, will be better prepared to address these changes.

Revenue has, throughout the years, remained constant or increased from its primary source, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. However, as the college has developed, funding opportunities have increased. These funds allow CMN to diversify its economic base by providing a variety of program specific resources established by identifying student needs. Cash outlays for any major debts are not an issue as CMN is debt free and plans to remain as such. An economic downturn, fluctuation in income, or reduction in enrollment would have less of an impact.

5.C.5.

Institutional planning at CMN has recognized the importance of anticipating emerging factors within a college environment. The college, as part of its information technology vision, is committed to providing a strategy and infrastructure for a current state of the art campus that supports student learning. This is evidenced by the recent upgrade of the CampusNexus student information system, Wi-Fi campus wide, and an emergency notification system in every building on campus.

With the use of more sophisticated reporting tools in CampusNexus, CMN has projected a demographic shift to greater enrollment of traditionally aged college students. As a result, the college purchased a plot of land adjacent to the north end of campus. With guidance from the existing strategic plan, administration is in the process of building a 4,600 square foot Natural Resources/Cultural Arts classroom building to accommodate students enrolled in the Natural Resources program.

5.C.6.

The administration sets realistic goals for the college and works together with internal constituencies to critique and improve performance through various forms of assessment. The systematic and integrated planning that occurs at the college is enhanced through participation of administration, faculty, staff, and students regarding academic requirements, policy, and processes.

Data from assessment initiatives is critical as CMN plans for the future and ensures that the institutional capacity is sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of educational offerings, and respond to future challenges. Each program coordinator conducts a program review every three years. The Curriculum Committee audits the review. Participation in the Higher Learning Commission's Assessment Academy has provided valuable insight to faculty in establishing student outcomes.

The systematic improvements at the college have been initiated and conducted throughout the history of the college, which began with a needs assessment, and then flourished into a variety of data collection methodologies, research projects, and funded programs. Considering the short time that the college has been in

existence, faculty and staff have accepted greater responsibilities to serve the higher education needs of our students.

Sources

- Attendance Policy
- ICAT Results Summary_College of the Muscogee Nation

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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.

Summary

CMN continuously plans for maintaining and strengthening the future by hiring qualified staff and faculty, incorporating realistic goals within the mission, carefully budgeting and monitoring finances, and ensuring that fiscal allocations fulfill our educational purposes. CMN ensures that staff and faculty are qualified in their respective fields by judiciously created job descriptions, ensuring that applicants meet the specified criteria, and ensuring that staff and faculty are up to date on training required to serve students. The goals incorporated into the mission are met by faculty and staff whose teaching reflects Native American values and creates a sense of community. Co-curricular activities, such as ribbon dress sewing and moccasin making, teach and respect tribal traditions and culture. The budgeting and monitoring process of finances at the College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) is well developed, is in accordance with tribal law, and is upheld by the Board and qualified staff.

CMN's systematic and integrated planning and improvement is exhibited by the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, management of resources, and collaborative efforts with internal and external stakeholders. CMN is continuing to develop the infrastructure of the campus, maintain the rigor of courses within degree programs, utilizing new material and technology by students, faculty, and staff. Incorporation of research grants, including NIFA, BIE, and USDA, have allowed the school to move forward with several new Degree programs which include Criminal Justice, Natural Resources, and General Studies. CMN continues to utilize assessment tools and external resources to continue integrated planning and improvement to better serve our students and the community.

As presented in Criteria Five, it is apparent that the College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) has the institutional structure necessary to serve its students in accordance with its mission. Effective leadership is provided by the governing board which has oversight of CMN's financial and academic policies and practices. The systematic and integrated planning that occurs at the college is enhanced through participation of internal constituents including the administration, faculty, staff, students, and the governing board with regard to academic requirements, policy, and procedure. The administration sets realistic goals for the college and works together with internal constituencies to critique and improve performance through various forms of assessment. Data from assessment initiatives is critical as CMN plans for the future and ensures that the

institutional capacity is sufficient to fulfill its mission and improve the quality of educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Sources

There are no sources.