Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

REPORT OF THE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

Statement Regarding the Report

The Commission on Colleges is responsible for making the final determination on reaffirmation of accreditation based on the findings contained in this committee report, the institution's response to issues contained in the report, other assessments relevant to the review, and application of the Commission's policies and procedures. Final interpretation of the Principles of Accreditation and final action on the accreditation status of the institution rest with the Commission on Colleges.

Name of the Institution: **Vernon College**

Date of the Review: **October 7 – 9, 2008**

COC Staff Member: **Dr. Steven M. Sheeley**

Chair of the Committee: **Dr. Martin Gonzalez**
Interim Vice President of Instructional Affairs
Pensacola Junior College
Pensacola, FL

Part I.   Overview and Introduction to the Institution

The Reaffirmation Committee of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools visited Vernon College on October 7-9, 2008. The purpose of the visit by the On-Site Review Committee was to conduct a focused evaluation at the College to finalize issues of compliance with the Core Requirements and Comprehensive Standards, evaluate the acceptability of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), and provide consultation regarding the issues addressed in the Quality Enhancement Plan.

The Wilbarger County Junior College District along with Vernon Regional Junior College was created in 1970 with construction of the campus in 1971. The institution held its first classes on the Vernon Campus on September 5, 1972. The institution currently has its main campus in Vernon, three branch centers in Wichita Falls, TX, and a Vocational Nursing Program in Seymour, TX. The institution also offers selected academic, workforce and continuing education courses in high schools and other facilities in the area. Vernon College serves approximately 7500 credit students each year along with another 3600 continuing education students.

The Mission of Vernon College: "A comprehensive community college that integrates education with opportunity through our instructional programs and student services". The College provides Technical programs, vocational programs, freshmen and sophomore transfer courses in arts and sciences, continuing adult education, counseling and guidance, workforce development, and adult literacy programs. (Catalog 2008-2009).

During the visit by the On-Site Committee to Vernon College on October 7-9, 2008 the On-site Committee evaluated the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan and determined the institution's compliance with fifteen items referred to the On-Site Committee by the Off-Site Committee. Those fifteen compliance issues included One Core Requirement (2.11.1) and fourteen Comprehensive Standards (3.2.2.3,3.2.3,3.2.12,3.2.14,3.3.1,3.3.1.2,3.3.1.3,3.3.1.5,3.4.1,3.4.5,3.4.6,3.7.1,3.7.2, 3.9.2).

The Reaffirmation Committee expresses its gratitude to Mr. John Hardin III , Interim President of Vernon College, faculty, staff, students, and administrators for their gracious hospitality shown to the Reaffirmation Committee.

This report reflects the consensus of the Reaffirmation Committee. The Committee hopes that the recommendations and supporting narrative will assist the College in a process of continuous improvement.

Sections A thru E to be completed by the Off-Site Review Committee and the On-Site Review Committee. An asterisk before the standard indicates that it will be reviewed by the On-Site Review Committee even if the Off-Site Review determines compliance.

A.   Assessment of Compliance with Section 1: The Principle of Integrity

1.1   The institution operates with integrity in all matters. **(Integrity)**
(Note: This requirement is not addressed by the institution in its Compliance Certification.)

The Off-Site Committee found no evidence of noncompliance.

B.   Assessment of Compliance with Section 2: Core Requirements

2.1   The institution has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies. (**Degree-granting Authority)**

Vernon College (VC) has degree-granting authority as specified in the Texas Education Code Chapter 130, Section 130.00.11, Public Junior Colleges: Role and Mission. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is the governmental agency responsible for overseeing the College.

2.2   The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is the legal body with specific authority over the institution. The board is an active policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from it. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting members of the board are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution.

A military institution authorized and operated by the federal government to award degrees has a public board on which both the presiding officer and a majority of the other members are neither civilian employees of the military nor active/retired military. The board has broad and significant influence upon the institution's programs and operations, plays an active role in policy-making, and ensures that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from the board except as specified by the authorizing legislation. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting board members are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution. **(Governing Board)**

According to Texas Education Code, Chapter 130, section 130.040, Vernon College, governed by a seven member board, has the specific legal authority over the governance of the College. According to the Vernon College Board Policy Manual the board has specific policy making authority. The guidelines for

policy making and approval are outlined in this policy manual. Board policy requires that board action only be taken as a body. However, the President of the Board may take individual action if the entire Board authorizes the President of the Board in the specific action.

Although neither the presiding officer of the board nor the majority of other voting members of the board have contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution, the committee notes that one board member's wife is currently employed by the College. However, one member does not constitute a majority.

The Off-Site Committee does have concerns that there appear to be no policies of the College to ensure the distinction between board member and employee. Also, the documentation included policies that governing financial interests that create the potential for conflicts of interest.

See the recommendation of the On-Site Committee in section CS 3.2.3 of this report.

2.3   The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution and who is not the presiding officer of the board. **(Chief Executive Officer)**

The President's responsibilities are clearly defined and describe his/her specific requirements to fulfilling the board policies for the College. Dr. Stephen Thomas has been serving as president since 2000. The Board Chairman, Mr. Bob Ferguson, is the presiding officer.

2.4   The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission statement that is specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service. **(Institutional Mission)**

The mission of the College is clearly defined. The mission statement details the type of College, its area of service, and its appropriateness as an institution of higher education. The mission statement is published in the appropriate publications. The mission statement fully addresses teaching and learning along with public service in the form of workforce development and adult literacy.

2.5   The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. **(Institutional Effectiveness)**

VC has a systematic planning process that engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research based planning and evaluation. A 21-member Planning and Assessment Committee designs, implements and annually evaluates the planning and assessment process. Two documents, Vernon College 2006-2007 Annual Plan and Vernon College 2007-2008 Annual Plan provide the annual

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effectiveness plans that are prepared by the divisions and units. The 2006-2010 Strategic Plan provides the framework for the planning process and is reviewed periodically. The mission statement, developed during a strategic planning retreat August 11, 2004, provides the framework for the strategic plan and is reviewed periodically.

There are ten planning priorities that are reviewed and updated as necessary on an annual cycle. These priorities provide the framework for the unit and division annual effectiveness plans. A flowchart, "The Vernon College Planning Cycle" visually depicts the annual planning cycle and the components of that cycle. The Annual Planning Calendar outlines the planning model process.

All academic programs participate in a five-year cycle program review. The Program/Discipline Evaluation Task Force, after reviewing the results of the research-based program review, makes recommendations for deactivation, probation or continuation of programs. Other areas of the College use student surveys to monitor institutional quality. These include the CCSSE (2005 through 2007), Student Survey of Library Services (2003 through 2007), Graduate Survey (2006-07), and Student Survey of Instruction (2006-07).

2.6   The institution is in operation and has students enrolled in degree programs. **(Continuous Operation)**

The institution is in operation and began enrolling students in 1972. The THECB College Profile for Vernon College indicates the College was founded in 1970. Vernon College Enrollment Trends displays enrollments from 1997 to 2007. The THECB College Profile for Vernon College provides enrollment information for 2005 and degree information for 2004-05 graduates.

2.7.1   The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification for all degrees that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit.   **(Program Length)**

The THECB determines the requirements for the associate degree at VC. All associate degree programs have a mandated length of 60-66 semester hours. Workforce Education degrees may contain 60-72 credit hours.

2.7.2   The institution offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. **(Program Content)**

As a comprehensive community college which integrates education with opportunity, VC provides technical programs leading to associate degrees or certificates, continuing adult education programs, workforce education, and

freshman/sophomore courses in arts and sciences leading to a bachelor's degree program. All programs are developed in accordance with the THECB.

2.7.3 In each undergraduate degree program, the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification if it allows for fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit of general education courses. **(General Education)**

VC provides documentation that identifies the general education core as a component of the undergraduate degree program, and provides information to demonstrate a coherent rationale through the Texas Common Course Numbering System, which lists course descriptions for general education courses that are shared statewide through a combined course library. Further documentation was provided by the College in the *Vernon College 2007-2008 General Catalog* where each associate degree program is listed and the prescribed plan of study is delineated. The plan of study for each associate degree includes the requirement of a general education component at the collegiate level of a minimum of 15 semester hours drawn from and including at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts; social/behavioral sciences; and natural science/mathematics.

2.7.4 The institution provides instruction for all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees. If the institution does not provide instruction for all such course work and (1) makes arrangements for some instruction to be provided by other accredited institutions or entities through contracts or consortia or (2) uses some other alternative approach to meeting this requirement, the alternative approach must be approved by the Commission on Colleges. In both cases, the institution demonstrates that it controls all aspects of its educational program. (*See Commission policy "Core Requirement 2.7.4: Documenting an Alternate Approach."*) **(Course work for Degrees)**

The brief narrative supplied in the College's *Compliance Certification* states "Vernon College provides instruction for all course work in at least one degree program at each level for which it awards degrees." The institution supports this statement by referencing the programs of instruction printed in the *Vernon College 2007-2008 General Catalog* and the course offerings listed in the *Vernon College 2008 Spring Schedule*.

*2.8 The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs. **(Faculty)**

VC employed 148 faculty members in the fall semester of 2007. Of this number, 75 were full-time and 74 were part-time. The 75 full-time faculty members taught 73.3% of all credit contact hours during the 2006–2007 academic year. This exceeds the Texas state average of 68% of course sections being taught by full-time faculty. The College employs "at least one qualified, full-time faculty member for each discipline … offered through the institution." One requirement for VC faculty to be considered full-time is that each faculty member meets the minimum qualifications established by SACS and by the THECB.

The On-Site Committee conducted interviews and reviewed pertinent documentation in support of the institution's case for compliance and sustained the Off-Site Committee's findings.

2.9 The institution, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections and services and to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered. Collections, resources, and services are sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs. **(Learning Resources and Services)**

The VC library meets the guidelines set forth in its mission statement; surveyed students and faculty are satisfied with services offered. The library has an adequate book collection to meet patron needs. The Wright campus has a collection in excess of 29,000 volumes; the other campuses have smaller collections but intercampus book loans are available. As a member of the Texas library consortium, students have access to books from other colleges, eBooks and online databases. In addition to consortial databases, the library subscribes to online databases that cover general information as well as subject specific topics such as nursing. The library also subscribes to RCL web, a collection management tool, which is used to better assess collection needs.

The library offers adequate hours of operation. An 'ask a librarian' as well as an 'online reference chat' site have been added to the library webpage to further serve student needs.

The library maintains formal agreements with the Texas library consortium, TexShare, and receives several services from them. Also, the library has a formal agreement with Sheppard Air Force Base to meet the needs of students taking classes at that site.

*2.10 The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students. **(Student Support Services)**

VC provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission and that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students. Compliance with this standard is evident in the typical services offered

as well as the programs and efforts designed to, "promote a culture of success" such as the comprehensive new student orientation and the Proactive Assistance for Student Success (PASS) Centers.

The On-Site Committee conducted interviews and reviewed pertinent documentation in support of the institution's case for compliance and sustained the Off-Site Committee's findings.

2.11.1 The institution has a sound financial base and demonstrated financial stability to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.

The member institution provides the following financial statements: (1) an institutional audit (or *Standard Review Report* issued in accordance with *Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services* issued by the AICPA for those institutions audited as part of a systemwide or statewide audit) and written institutional management letter for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent certified public accountant and/or an appropriate governmental auditing agency employing the appropriate audit (or *Standard Review Report*) guide; (2) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year; and (3) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board. **(Financial Resources)**

VC provided documentation of an institutional audit for the most recent fiscal year and summarized analytical information on unrestricted net assets and affects of operations. The institution provided statistical supplements and a data driven financial statement audit that made financial stability quickly recognizable.

The College failed to address the annual budget or that it is preceded by sound planning and sound fiscal procedures. There is no indication that the governing board approves the budget or that the College has a budget planning process.

The On-Site Committee's review of the College's annual budget Process as evidenced in its Policy and Procedures Manual and Employee Handbook confirms that the annual operating budget is systematically planned and provides for the maintenance of a sound financial base. The VC College Policy and Procedures Manual, Section (CC LEGAL), defines authorized expenditures, provides guidance for overall preparation, requires appropriate adoption by its Board of Trustees, details distribution, and cites legal ramifications for noncompliance with budget requirements. Section (CC LOCAL) of the Policy and Procedures Manual ties the budgetary process to overall program planning, defines procedures for budget preparation and budget hearings, describes authority limits upon adoption, and provides for subsequent budget amendments if necessary. Section H of the VC Employee Handbook provides a descriptive timeline and outline for the individual departmental budget process from capture of initial data through approval by Board of Trustees. A review of the August 2007 minutes of its Board of Trustees meeting provided proof of its review and approval of the annual operating budget.

2.11.2 The institution has adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services. **(Physical Resources)**

The College provided a copy of the VC Master Facilities Plan 2007-2011 to document the adequacy of physical resources. This plan addresses the physical features of the institution as well as the deferred maintenance and upkeep of the physical plant. The plan also addresses future expansion and growth.

2.12 The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that (1) includes a broad-based institutional process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment, (2) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution, (3) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP, (4) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, and (5) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement. **(Quality Enhancement Plan)**

*(**Note:** This requirement is not addressed by the institution in its Compliance Certification. If a recommendation(s) is warranted during the on-site review, include only the number and the recommendation under 2.12. Narrative, rationale, and evidence supporting the recommendation, as well as any other comments regarding the committee's assessment of this Core Requirement, should be included in Part III of this report. Delete this note prior to printing the final report.)*

Comment:

The institutions Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) was determined by the On-Site Committee to be acceptable on all five of the requirements listed above in Core Requirement 2.12.

C. Assessment of Compliance with Section 3: Comprehensive Standards

3.1.1 The mission statement is current and comprehensive, accurately guides the institution's operations, is periodically reviewed and updated, is approved by the governing board, and is communicated to the institution's constituencies. **(Mission)**.

VC provided evidence that the mission statement is current and comprehensive. As part of the Strategic Planning Committee's responsibilities, the mission is reviewed annually with recommendations to be sent to the President's Council. This is done in conjunction with the development of the College budget, College directives and departmental goals. The current mission statement was approved by the governing board in January of 2005.

3.2.1 The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the periodic evaluation of the chief executive officer. **(CEO evaluation/selection)**

As outlined in the Vernon College Policy Manual under Section BAA Legal, the Board is responsible for appointing and evaluating the College President.

According to the minutes provided, the College President's performance, along with the terms of his or her contract, are evaluated in February of each year. Section BFB Local of the VC Policy Manual provides that an evaluation may also occur other times as the Board may deem advisable.

3.2.2 The legal authority and operating control of the institution are clearly defined for the following areas within the institution's governance structure: **(Governing board control)**

3.2.2.1 The institution's mission

According Education Code 11.151(b), 51.352(b), and 130.082, the legal authority and operation control of the institution's mission is clearly defined.

3.2.2.2 The fiscal stability of the institution

According to the Vernon College Board Policy Manual Section BAA legal, the board is responsible for financial functions related to the operation of the College in the matter of: Tax Collection, Annual Budgeting, Annual Auditing, Annual Reporting, Bequests and Gifts, Endowments, Eminent Domain, and Property Acquisition to name a few. Each of these areas outlined in the VC Board Policy Manual reference a state law that governs the proper execution of the board policy.

3.2.2.3 Institutional policy, including policies concerning related and affiliated corporate entities and all auxiliary services

The College has clear statutory authority to operate the College. However, the College operates auxiliary enterprises such as the bookstore, recreation room, snack bar, and cafeteria. The visiting committee should further review policies related to the operation of the auxiliary enterprises.

The Off-Site Committee indicated that while the College has statutory authority to operate the College, it failed to provide policies related to the operation of the auxiliary enterprises. While the statements on pages 8, 9, and 10 of the Focused Report (Employee Handbook, p.82) outline procedures, College policies concerning each of the auxiliary enterprises were not provided. Documentation which provides evidence of board control and supervision for the auxiliary enterprises is needed. The College should also ensure that all auxiliary enterprise operations are apparent within its organizational chart.

Comment: The On-Site Committee interviewed the Dean of Administrative Services and reviewed both the prescribed policies and procedures and expanded organizational charts addressing all auxiliary enterprises. The foodservices program is contracted with an outside vendor. Clear evidence was provided for oversight authority for each operation. There are no affiliated corporate entities.

3.2.2.4 Related foundations (athletic, research, etc.) and other corporate entities whose primary purpose is to support the institution and/or its programs

According to the Memorandum of Understanding between Vernon College and the Vernon College Foundation, Inc., the operational control is clearly defined. The President sits on the Foundation which is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit corporation. The responsibilities of both the College and the foundation are provided in the MOU.

3.2.3 The board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members. **(Conflict of interest)**

According to the VC Board Policy Manual, Section BBFA Local, a code of ethics should be followed by every board member. However, the Review Committee should review the policies dealing with conflict of interests, as the current policy could potentially allow Board members with conflicts of interest to act on issues where these conflicts exist. In particular, the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Policy regarding "Majority Conflict" states, "if a Trustee is required to file and does file an affidavit, that trustee shall not be required to abstain from further participation in the matter or matters requiring such an affidavit if a majority of the Trustees are likewise required to file and do file affidavits of similar interests on the same official action." The policy seems to place the College in a vulnerable position from activities in which a majority of the Board of Trustees has a financial interest in the business transactions with the College.

The current policy allows a conflict to exist. "Majority conflict" interpretation in the response does not guarantee that decisions made under this policy are in the best interests of the College.

Comment: The Off-Site Committee indicated that the current board policy potentially allows board members with conflicts of interest to act on issues where conflicts exist "If a majority conflict" stipulation in existing policy does not guarantee the public's interest is protected or the college's integrity is maintained in matters where conflicts are present.

Recommendation: Therefore, the committee recommends that the institution demonstrates that the board has in place a policy that properly addresses conflicts of interest for its members.

3.2.4 The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies and protects the institution from such influence. **(External influence)**

The Code of Ethics, along with the Coordinating Education Board of Texas which provides training, ensures that undue influence is removed from the operation of the College affairs.

3.2.5 The governing board has a policy whereby members can be dismissed only for appropriate reasons and by a fair process. **(Board dismissal)**

The Vernon College Policy Manual outlines the procedures for election and replacement of a board member. Also, specific details are provided for the removal of a board member. Supporting documentation was provided describing the requirements of the state of Texas in the Texas Education Code, Section 130. 0845 which further describes the requirements of each board member.

3.2.6   There is a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy. **(Board/administration distinction)**

The College primarily executes its policies through the President. Section BH Local of the Vernon College Policy Manual outlines the specific responsibilities of the President. The College provided policy information about the faculty committees and the role that it played by the faculty in the execution of board policies.

3.2.7   The institution has a clearly defined and published organizational structure that delineates responsibility for the administration of policies. **(Organizational structure)**

VC provided the organizational chart that clearly defines the responsibilities of each administrative unit. The chart is provided in the *Vernon College Employee Handbook.* The President fulfills the implementation of policy through the College administrative units that are headed by an administrative officer. The Administrative Officers make up the President's Council. The Council meets weekly.

*3.2.8   The institution has qualified administrative and academic officers with the experience, competence, and capacity to lead the institution. **(Qualified administrative/academic officers)**

The administrative and academic officers of VC all have graduate degrees that qualify them for the positions they hold. All have extensive experience in the positions they hold and/or in related positions. Each is a member of multiple professional organizations related to the position held.

The On-Site Committee conducted interviews and reviewed pertinent documentation in support of the institution's case for compliance and sustained the Off-Site Committee's findings.

3.2.9   The institution defines and publishes policies regarding appointment and employment of faculty and staff. **(Faculty/staff appointment)**

The College defines and publishes policies for the appointment and employment of faculty and staff in the *Vernon College Employee Handbook*. The information is available to all employees, including those with full-time, part-time, permanent, and/or temporary appointments, in the handbook. The *Vernon College Board Policy Manual,* Section DC Legal, defines hiring practices; Section DC Local

describes filling position vacancies; and Section DN Local authorizes positions and defines requirements of job descriptions. The College Board appoints full-time personnel upon the recommendation of the President, and the President is responsible for the employment of part-time personnel.

3.2.10 The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its administrators on a periodic basis. **(Administrative staff evaluations)**

VC evaluates the effectiveness of its administrators with annual evaluations. The evaluations are based on performance of job duties, assignments and planned activities and follow-up as evidenced in the appraisal forms on file.

3.2.11 The institution's chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate administrative and fiscal control over, the institution's intercollegiate athletics program. **(Control of intercollegiate athletics)**

The President monitors the activities through designation of his athletic director who is also the Dean of Student Affairs, an Administrative Council Position. The day to day supervision of the men's baseball, women's softball, women's volleyball, and co-ed rodeo are supervised through the Dean of Student Affair's/Athletic Director's Office. The Athletic Committee, which recommends scholarships, is also named annually by the President.

3.2.12 The institution's chief executive officer controls the institution's fund-raising activities exclusive of institution-related foundations that are independent and separately incorporated. **(Fund-raising activities)**.

The President has designated that fund-raising should be coordinated through the Office of Institutional Advancement. According to the *Vernon College Employee Handbook*, all gifts, donations, endowments, and gifts in kind are to be handled through this office. However, any club functions or athletic camp functions were not described. Although, this section seems to be compliant, further investigation of other fund raising activities should be investigated by the visiting committee. Listed in the *Vernon College 2007-2008 General Catalog,* page 46 under organizations, there is an extensive list of groups that could have potential fund raising activities.

The Off-Site Committee indicated that investigation of fund-raising activities should be conducted by the visiting committee. "…there is an extensive list of groups that could have potential fund-raising activities."

Documentation is needed that provides evidence of review and/or approval of fund-raising activities by the Dean of Student Services, who, according to the Focused Report, has been delegated this authority by the President. The Focused Report indicates that financial reports on all fund-raising activities are submitted to the Office of Student Services. Copies of the financial reports as approved by the Dean of Student Services would assist in providing documentation of control of fund-raising activities

Comment: The On-Site Committee met with the Associate Director of Student Services and reviewed the processes in place for administering fund-raising efforts by Vernon College student clubs and athletic programs. Evidence was provided which confirmed that each fund-raising activity is approved by Student Services and is considered only after submission of a Student Fund Raising Approval Form. Each club or program has a unique designated fund maintained by Administrative Services for accounting purposes.

3.2.13 Any institution-related foundation not controlled by the institution has a contractual or other formal agreement that (1) accurately describes the relationship between the institution and the foundation and (2) describes any liability associated with that relationship. n all cases, the institution ensures that the relationship is consistent with its mission. **(Institution-related foundations)**

Comment: The Vernon College Foundation operates under the terms agreed upon under the Memorandum of Understanding between the College and foundation. The President, the Dean of Administrative Services, and the Director of Institutional Advancement serve as ex-officio members of the 11-member board. Also, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees is an ex-officio member with voting privileges. The President of the College also serves as the executive director of the foundation.

3.2.14 The institution's policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of all intellectual property. These policies apply to students, faculty, and staff. **(Intellectual property rights)**

VC has an Intellectual Property Policy published in the *Vernon College Instructor Handbook* that clearly addresses the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of all intellectual property by employees, which is presumed to include both faculty and staff. However, the institution's publications do not address this matter for students. The *Vernon College 2007-2008 General Catalog* and the *Student Handbook* contain an Academic Integrity Policy which clearly addresses plagiarism and academic misconduct, but is silent with regard to the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of intellectual property.

The institutional policy developed by Vernon College governing the intellectual property rights of students that is published in the 2008-2009 Vernon College Student Handbook adequately addresses this issue. No discussion of the procedure followed in the development and adoption of the policy was supplied.

*3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas **(Institutional Effectiveness)**:

All units evaluate goals at the end of the academic year and identify how results will be used. This information is summarized by the Planning and Assessment Committee which establishes priorities for the next year. Units, during the annual

planning process, complete a template that contains outcome results, and each unit identifies required improvements, budget considerations, and equipment/personnel requirements. The templates did not reference the assessments, such as CCSSE, graduated students, and VConfirm the Core, in demonstrating use of results.

The On-Site Committee conducted interviews with the Interim Dean of Instructional Services, the Associate Dean of Career & Technical Education, and a Computer Science Faculty Member, who coordinates the V-Confirm the Core efforts. The Committee also reviewed relevant documentation. The institution demonstrated a defined process for identifying expected outcomes and assessing the extent to which it achieves them. The institution also provided multiple years of data and evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results of assessment.

3.3.1.1 Educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

Educational program outcomes and assessments have historically been dependant on a 5-year cycle program review that did not contain learning outcomes. The College has developed learning outcomes and is in the process of beginning to assess them. These assessments have been added to the 2009-2010 five-year rotation plan to ensure that the general education core and all academic disciplines are assessed. During the spring and summer 2008, pre/post tests that have been adopted to assess learning outcomes will be revamped. The procedure will be revamped by May 2008 and the pre/post tests will be developed by July 2008. Examples were not provided to demonstrate that pre/post tests are being used as the assessment tool nor was there evidence of improvements based on the use of results.

The On-Site Committee conducted an interview with the Interim Dean of Instructional Services and the Associate Dean of Career & Technical Education, and reviewed Program/Discipline Evaluation Reports for the following programs/disciplines: EMS, HVAC, Chemistry, and Business Administration. Learning Outcomes have been identified for all programs and disciplines. A variety of measures, including course grades, completion rates, course/instructor evaluations, licensure/certification rates were considered as part of the program/discipline review process. The institution is re-introducing a pre/post test model for some courses.

The Committee encourages the institution to continue to refine, integrate, and streamline their overall assessment model, focusing on determining quality as well as tasks completed.

3.3.1.2 Administrative support services

In the administrative support services areas a WebCT environment for team building and self development for members of the SGA was implemented and a new roof was installed on Colley Center. However, a link between the cited assessments used and outcomes was not apparent.

3.3.1.3 Educational support services

An internet/ITV student testing center was established and a recommendation to increase adjunct faculty pay was requested but denied. However, a link between the cited assessments used and outcomes was not apparent. CCSSE, library survey, and other survey instruments were identified in 2.5 as assessment tools. There was no indication of a direct link to the cited assessments used to measure achievement of the outcomes.

3.3.1.4 Research within its educational mission, if appropriate

Not Applicable

3.3.1.5 Community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate

The institution identifies a planning priority for expansion of public service; however, expected outcomes and assessments were not identified. Therefore, a determination could not be made as to using assessment to result in improvements.

3.4.1 The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded is approved by the faculty and the administration. **(Academic program approval)**

The institution presented a "Curricula Review Process" that was excerpted from the *Vernon College Employee Handbook*. This process states that program and curriculum changes are "primarily initiated by academically qualified full-time faculty." Such changes are then reviewed by a Division Chair, the Dean of Instructional Services, the Academic Council, College President, and the Board of Trustees. Minutes of the November 20, 2006 meeting of the Academic Council were presented. At this meeting a new activity course and four program changes, including changing the Pharmacy Technician Program from a non-credit continuing education program to a credit program, were approved. Minutes of the April 27, 2007 meeting of the Board of Trustees of the College, where the trustees approved the change in the Pharmacy Technician Program, were also presented. There is a lack of detail on the faculty role in the council such as method of faculty choice, number of faculty serving, and length of service time on the committee.

The explanation supplied on page 37 of the Focused Report relating to the procedure for selecting faculty members to serve on the Academic Council along with interviews by the On-Site Committee demonstrates the involvement of faculty in the program approval process of Vernon College.

3.4.2   The institution's continuing education, outreach, and service programs are consistent with the institution's mission. **(Continuing education/service programs)**

VC has initiatives which meet and exceed the charge to provide continuing education, outreach and service programs in the 12-county service area. These initiatives are documented in evaluations of the courses, seminars, and participant satisfaction with the Kids College and Emeritus Institute Programs.

*3.4.3   The institution publishes admissions policies that are consistent with its mission. **(Admissions policies)**

The institution has a general open admission policy and has established procedures for students to be admitted through each admission category into coursework or programs of study from which they may substantially benefit. The categories are described and published in the *Vernon College 2007-2008 General Catalog* and on the website.

The On-Site Committee conducted interviews and reviewed pertinent documentation in support of the institution's case for compliance and sustained the Off-Site Committee's findings.

3.4.4   The institution has a defined and published policy for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution's own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript. **(Acceptance of academic credit)**

The College may award credit for experiential learning, proficiency exams on selected courses for currently enrolled students, advanced Placement exam scores, CLEP, military service schools, DANTES, and thorough articulation agreements with local secondary schools for courses taken in grades 11 and 12. Supporting documentation is located in the catalog and the student handbook. The On-Site Committee conducted interviews and reviewed pertinent documentation in support of the institution's case for compliance and sustained the Off-Site Committee's findings.

3.4.5 The institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice. These are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution. **(Academic policies)**

VC publishes its academic policies widely in a variety of publications. However, there was no discussion or evidence presented to support whether these policies adhere to principles of good educational practice.

On page 39 of the Focused Report, Vernon College states that the academic policies of the institution adhere to principles of good education practice because those policies comply with the standards of SACS/COC, with the rules and regulations of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and with the Academic Council of the institution.

Based on the On-Site Committees review of documentation provided, Vernon College policies comply with the rules and regulations of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and with the Academic Council of the institution and, therefore, adhere to principles of good education practice.

3.4.6 The institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. **(Practices for awarding credit)**

The *Compliance Certification* indicates that course credit is awarded "in accordance with standards outlined in THECB *Lower Division Academic Guide Manual* (ACGM) and the *Workforce Education Course Manual* (WECM)," but access to the two manuals mentioned were not supplied by Vernon College to support this statement or provide documentation for this committee. The College supplied only the *Vernon College 2007-2008 General Catalog* and meeting minutes from one meeting of the Academic Council as documentation that the Institution awards credit in the following manner: "Course credit is based on the semester hour unit. Generally, a lecture course without a laboratory meets three hours each week during a sixteen (16) week semester, and a student is granted three semester hours of credit for successfully completing such a course." The College's narrative further states, and is supported by information found in the *Vernon College 2007-2008 General Catalog*, "In most instances, a laboratory course meets three hours for lecture and three hours for laboratory each week during a sixteen week semester, and a student is granted four semester hours of credit for successfully completing such a course."

Based on the limited supportive documentation and narrative supplied by the College, no judgment can be rendered regarding the awarding of credit or the lack-there-of by the College, for experiential laboratory work, clinical practice in health programs, or work experience, such as cooperative education.

The narrative of the *Compliance Certification* also states that, "Vernon College offers courses through traditional face-to-face, online, through the Virtual College of Texas, Interactive Television, and hybrid delivery methods," and that "the applications of these standards apply to all course delivery formats."

Relevant documentation mentioned in the *Compliance Certification*, but not supplied, would be helpful in discerning the College's compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.4.6.

The On-Site Committee reviewed the standards outlined in the THECB *Lower Division Academic Guide Manual (AGCM)* and the *Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM)* for awarding credit. In particular the Committee reviewed the standards for awarding credit for experiential laboratory work, clinical practice in health programs, and work experience, such as cooperative education. The institution also provided the *Vernon College 2008-2009 General Catalog* which listed the courses offered and the required number of contact hours per week.

Courses offered online through the Virtual College of Texas, interactive television, and hybrid delivery methods use the same credit and use the same course numbers, titles, descriptions, and outcomes as on-campus courses. The College provided for documentation syllabi and course outlines for English composition in a traditional format, online format, and interactive format.

3.4.7 The institution ensures the quality of educational programs and courses offered through consortia relationships or contractual agreements, ensures ongoing compliance with the comprehensive requirements, and evaluates the consortial relationship and/or agreement against the purpose of the institution**. (Consortia relationships/contractual agreements)**

The institution, as a member of the Virtual College of Texas (VCT), is able to offer and assure its students access to quality instruction and support in line with its mission through other colleges while maintaining a level of control equal to that it holds over its own courses. Evidence of compliance is confirmed through local review of the agreement and approval of the VCT and its member institutions for accreditation by SACS-COC.

3.4.8 The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience. **(Noncredit to credit)**

VC does award academic credit for coursework taken on a non-credit basis in four different ways:

1. When a non-credit course or program offered by the College, or a professional certification earned through other methods, has been reviewed and approved by appropriate faculty to be converted to credit upon request.
2. When accepted educational practices have been adopted (as in the case of credit requested for approved military courses).
3. When courses taken in a secondary school are awarded credit according to an articulation agreement developed by the College and the secondary school.
4. When credit for experiential learning is awarded for required external work experiences courses.

Selected non-credit coursework/programs and professional certifications are either designed or pre-assessed to be equivalent to corresponding credit-bearing courses.

3.4.9 The institution provides appropriate academic support services. **(Academic support services)**

The institution provides appropriate academic support services as evidenced through program offerings that support its learner centered focus such as: the New Student Group Advising, general academic advising (either through the Texas Success Initiative or an Individual Development Plan), special services and accommodations, the Proactive Assistance for Student Success Centers (PASS), access to faculty, and other typical services. Those faculty and staff who deliver academic support services are also provided training to assure quality delivery and positive student outcomes. The services are appropriately provided at all locations.

3.4.10 The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty. **(Responsibility for curriculum)**

The Vernon College Board of Trustees states in its mission statement on academic freedom and responsibility that the responsibility for planning and revising curricula "…should reside primarily with the faculty…" The College's Curricula Review Process states that programs are to be evaluated on a five-year rotating basis with preliminary evaluations to be assigned to faculty members, division chairs, and a program/discipline subcommittee. The schedules for evaluation of instructional programs for the year 2007 – 2008, for evaluation of general education for the year 2008 – 2009, and for evaluation of teaching discipline were presented.

*3.4.11 For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration. **(Academic program coordination)**

The College states that there are five instructional divisions: Behavioral and Social Science(s), Mathematics and Science(s), Communications, Information and Industrial Technology, and Career and Technology Education. It was further stated that each division is headed by a chair. The Organizational Chart was reviewed to determine who the divisional chairs are. According to the Organizational Chart, four of the divisions are indeed led by a "chair." Career and Technology Education is led by an associate dean. The Organizational Chart also shows a Division of Distance Learning led by a division chair. The Faculty Roster indicates that the people who lead the divisions identified above are qualified to teach in their specific disciplines. The Dean of Instructional Services and five Division Heads are responsible for program coordination and curriculum development and review. Division Heads are assisted by program coordinators or directors of developmental studies, allied health, and distance learning.

The On-Site Committee conducted interviews and reviewed pertinent documentation in support of the institution's case for compliance and sustained the Off-Site Committee's findings.

3.4.12 The institution's use of technology enhances student learning and is appropriate for meeting the objectives of its programs. Students have access to and training in the use of technology. **(Technology use)**

VC has a comprehensive technology plan that is reviewed and updated annually. Input is sought from divisions to ensure that programs and courses have special software and/or equipment. Students have access to 16 computer labs; specific software to support curriculum is available in certain labs. The College has 51 smart classrooms at the five service locations; portable equipment is available for classrooms without permanent equipment. Accommodations are made for students with disabilities.

Using Blackboard, the College continues to increase Internet/hybrid courses with 291 sections offered in the 2006-07 year. Students may request assistance from a help desk during regular business hours.

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which graduates have attained them. **(College-level competencies)**

Vernon College realized the need to directly assess learning outcomes in 2001 and began by determining learning outcomes in all courses taught at the College. This commitment continued to grow as the College, in 2006, expanded the effort to an identification and development of college-level competencies within general education courses. Through the Student Core Competencies Committee that began work in the spring of 2006, core competences were developed and a model sought that would adequately assess those competencies. VC chose to utilize a model developed by Pensacola Junior College because it best fit with the Vernon College mission and general education philosophy. The model, once adopted by Vernon College, was named the *VConfirm the Core* model established to provide the necessary assessment measures in a non-threatening and readily understandable manner. This assessment of student attainment of

general education competencies utilizes the following methods and provides data on:

- Percentage of Course Completers
- Course Success
- Graduate Satisfaction
- Pre/Post Test Assessment

Based on the data provided from this information, the College decides what actions the departments should take to improve student success for each outcome.

Student Learning Outcomes are based on course completion statistics; course success rates; professional licensure exam pass rates; and perceived graduate satisfaction.

3.5.2 At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. In the case of undergraduate degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns 25 percent of the credits required for the degree through instruction offered by the participating institutions. **(Institutional credits for a degree)**.

 According to the *General Degree and Certificate Requirements* policy, VC requires degree applicants to have completed satisfactorily at least 25% of college-level courses required for the certificate or degree in residence at VC.

3.5.3 The institution defines and publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education components. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. **(Undergraduate program requirements)**

 General Education requirements follow standards outlined by the THECB. The institution offers the Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Science (AS), and Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degrees. The AA and AS degrees both require a minimum of 62 semester hours credit. According to the *Vernon College 2007-2008 General Catalog*, a forty-four semester hour core curriculum is required for either of these degrees. This core curriculum, as presented on page 73 of the catalog, conforms to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs by including courses in communications, mathematics, natural sciences, visual and performing arts, and humanities. The AAS degree programs all require a minimum of 15 or 16 semester hours of general education courses in communications, mathematics or natural science, and humanities or fine arts. These requirements are published in the catalog from page 106 to page 143. The total hours required for an AAS degree ranges from a minimum of 60 to a maximum of 72 semester hours. Specific courses required for Certificates of Completion are also published in the catalog from page 106 to page 143.

3.5.4 At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each major at the baccalaureate level are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree— usually the earned doctorate—in the discipline, or the equivalent of the terminal degree. **(Terminal degrees of faculty)**

 Not Applicable

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3.6.1 The institution's post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, and its master's and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than its undergraduate programs. **(Post-baccalaureate program rigor)**

Not Applicable

3.6.2 The institution structures its graduate curricula (1) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (2) to ensure ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences. **(Graduate curriculum)**

Not Applicable

3.6.3 The majority of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through institution offered by the institution awarding the degree. In the case of graduate and post-baccalaureate professional degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns a majority of credits through instruction offered by the participating institutions. **(Institutional credits for a degree)**

Not Applicable

3.6.4 The institution defines and publishes requirements for its graduate and post-graduate professional programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. **(Post-baccalaureate program requirements)**

Not Applicable

3.7.1 The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty. **(Faculty competence)**

VC states that it employs competent, dedicated faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. A review of documentation of faculty qualifications provided for the Off-Site Review Committee found that additional verification of credentials or materials is needed to ensure that all faculty are in compliance with this standard of the *Principles* – as well as the criteria established by Vernon College. See attached faculty list.

The Off-Site Committee could not determine that six faculty members are qualified to teach the courses assigned. Two of the faculty members are no longer assigned to teach courses for which their credentials were in question. Copies of letters placed in faculty files were provided as documentation to the On-Site Committee. An official transcript was provided for the one faculty member who had a transcript "issued to student" in his file. An official transcript was also provided for one faculty member to document the completion of three additional graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline. The On-Site Committee could not determine that one faculty member teaching English composition had the appropriate credentials.

Recommendation: Therefore, the committee recommends that the institution document the qualifications of its faculty.

(See Attached "Request for Justifying and Documenting Qualifications of Faculty", for the name of the faculty member in question).

3.7.2 The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status. **(Faculty evaluation)**

The institution publishes its Evaluation of Faculty policy and procedure on page 59 of the *Vernon College Employee Handbook*. According to this procedure, each instructor, whether full-time or part-time, is to be evaluated annually by the instructor's division chair and by the instructor's students. The evaluations are to be reviewed by the Dean of Instructional Services. A schedule for the student evaluations is provided. The institution has provided blank evaluation forms to be used by the supervisor and by the students. However, no examples of completed forms are presented as evidence that the institution has actually performed these evaluations.

An examination of a random sample of faculty files in the Human Resources office by the On-Site Committee indicated that the institution does regularly evaluate its faculty. However, the faculty evaluation process could be improved by adopting an increased emphasis on faculty improvement through the use of a more formal professional development planning process.

3.7.3 The institution provides evidence of ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners. **(Faculty development)**

Comment: The VC *Code of Professional Ethics, Instructor Duties and Responsibility Form,* and the *Supervisor Evaluation of Faculty* instrument all document the expectation that VC faculty members maintain competence in their respective disciplines through continued professional development activities.

3.7.4 The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom. **(Academic freedom)**

Comment: The academic freedom policy for employees of VC is published in the *Vernon College Employee Handbook* and the *Vernon College Instructor Handbook*. This information lists five points that enumerate the College's stance

regarding academic freedom. The College points to number two on that list of enumerated academic freedoms as proof that faculty are allowed to have input into the courses they teach. Point number two states: "The mastery of a subject makes a faculty member a qualified authority in that discipline and competent to choose how to present its information and conclusions to students. The following are among the freedoms and responsibilities which should reside primarily with the faculty, with the advice and consent of the Dean of Instructional Services: Planning and revising curricula, selecting textbooks and readings, selecting classroom films and other teaching materials, choosing instructional methodologies, assigning grades, and maintaining classroom discipline." The College further asserts that: "Faculty members of Vernon College are citizens, and therefore, possess the rights of citizens to speak freely outside the classroom on matters of public concern and to participate in lawful political activities."

3.7.5 The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters. **(Faculty role in governance)**

VC communicates its expectation of faculty participation in governance through a variety of publications. Faculty may participate in governance through VC Standing Committees, which forward their requests to the College President for final action. Of the 23 standing committees, faculty members serve on 21 of them, holding 31% of total positions. Key standing committees include the Academic Council, Student Core Competencies Committee, and the Planning & Assessment Committee.

3.8.1 The institution provides facilities and learning/information resources that are appropriate to support its teaching, research, and service mission. **(Learning/information resources)**

Students are provided access to the library on and off-campus using various methods for service delivery. Faculty and students alike are informed about library services available. As a result of surveys and in an effort to improve services, the library is using live chat as a reference tool to assist students with library needs. Also, the electronic subscriptions budget has been increased substantially in recent years to meet the growing demands for accessible information. The library is also using new software which allows students to obtain this information more efficiently. When surveyed, students and faculty were satisfied with library services.

As a member of TexShare, the Texas library consortium, Vernon patrons have access to online databases and interlibrary loan services. Also, students are issued a library card which allows them to borrow materials onsite at participating libraries throughout Texas. The consortium also provides continuing education for Vernon library staff.

Student computers are provided at all five Vernon facilities. The Wright and Century City campuses have large spaces to accommodate study carrels, AV equipment and tables and chairs for studying. The other campuses have limited physical space with only minimal room for students who want to study. All campuses have on-site library staff with the exception of the Vocational Nursing

Program site; in lieu of on-site library staff, a webcam has been setup which allows students to obtain one-on-one assistance from library staff on the Wright campus.

3.8.2 The institution ensures that users have access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources. **(Instruction of library use)**

While the library does not offer any prescribed library instruction, librarians are providing opportunities for students to have structured library instruction. At the request of faculty, librarians offer customized (subject-specific) library instruction to students. Additionally, students may request assistance one-on-one through orientations offered in the library. Database searching tutorials are available on the library webpage. Library staff are developing research subject guides for student use. In survey results, faculty (100%) and on-site students (93%) were pleased with library instruction with on-line students (76%) less satisfied.

3.8.3 The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff—with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources—to accomplish the mission of the institution. **(Qualified staff)**

VC employs a sufficient number of staff to meet the needs of its students. Libraries are fully staffed at the Vernon and Central City campuses while the Sheppard Learning Center, Skills Training Center and Seymour Nursing program employ part-time staff and/or use webcams to assist students. Compared to other colleges in the area, Vernon ranks near the middle with the number of library employees. As indicated by survey, students are satisfied with staff assistance.

A roster detailing education and library experience was provided for each full and part-time employee. The library director and librarian hold ALA accredited degrees; however, transcripts were not provided for verification.

3.9.1 The institution publishes a clear and appropriate statement of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement to the campus community. **(Student rights)**

The institution publishes a clear and appropriate statement regarding the student code of conduct and academic integrity policy and disseminates the statement to the campus community in the *Vernon College 2007-2008 General Catalog* and *Student Handbook* both in hardcopy and electronically. These policies are reviewed in the New Student Group Advising sessions, the freshman orientation program, and are confirmed by signature on the admission application. Students' rights and responsibilities are handled appropriately as evidenced in the hearings, grievances, and appeals procedures which assure due process.

3.9.2 The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records and maintains special security measures to protect and back up data. **(Student records).**

The institution protects the security, confidentiality and integrity of its student records as evidenced by the use of FERPA in granting access to records, use of electronic servers, imaging, microfilm, and other archival processes to maintain its records and to address the storage, retention and disposal of records. Because records are stored in several locations, a more detailed plan to further secure access to and disaster management of records should be available. However, the institution did not provide clear evidence of appropriate planning and management of records stored in multiple locations.

The On-Site committee found a more detailed security and disaster management plan for student records in section G of the College Employee Handbook 2007-08. The procedures clarify the responsibility of each record custodian to secure access, maintain confidentiality and protect the integrity of all student records regardless of campus or center location. An inspection of the facilities revealed that records are located in a secure environment.

3.9.3 The institution employs qualified personnel to ensure the quality and effectiveness of its student affairs programs. **(Qualified staff)**

VC provides services which support its mission with the help of qualified personnel who assure the quality and effectiveness of those services. The current personnel listing of student services staff confirms that these individuals are sufficiently qualified and experienced to deliver the services and are encouraged to participate in ongoing professional development and evaluation.

3.10.1 The institution's recent financial history demonstrates financial stability. **(Financial stability)**

The institution provides adequate documentation for the last 5-year period on operating revenues, expenditures, and net assets. The financial statement audit report includes statistical summaries of operations that support the financial stability of the institution.

3.10.2 The institution provides financial profile information on an annual basis and other measures of financial health as requested by the Commission. All information is presented accurately and appropriately and represents the total operation of the institution. **(Submission of financial statements)**.

The institution provided the annual financial profile information to the Commission on Colleges. Financial statements present evidence of total operation of the College.

*3.10.3 The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. **(Financial aid audits)**

The College is a state supported institution that is governed by the Office of Management and Budget's Circular A-133. The audited financial statements include a schedule of federal awards that identify major federal programs subject to the Single Audit Act A-133. Financial aid certification and approved application is provided for federal programs.

The institution employs an independent accounting firm to audit the financial statements, and financial aid programs are audited annually.

The On-Site Committee conducted interviews and reviewed pertinent documentation in support of the institution's case for compliance and sustained the Off-Site Committee's findings.

3.10.4 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial resources. **(Control of finances)**

The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial resources and documents the process through several means such as the purchases and procurement process along with its internal control measures.

3.10.5 The institution maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs. **(Control of sponsored research/external funds)**

The institution's financial statement audit has been used as the basis for documenting financial control over externally funded grants. The audit found no audit concerns with externally funded grants. The College has an established policy that encourages faculty and staff to seek and secure external grants that are consistent with the role and mission of the institution.

3.11.1 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its physical resources. **(Control of physical resources)**

The State of Texas mandates that state colleges maintain accurate records of college property in order to adhere to guidelines set forth by GASB standards. The College has personnel who are responsible for monitoring assets for depreciation purposes.The institution operates according to the state purchasing guidelines in acquiring materials and supplies.

3.11.2 The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community. **(Institutional environment)**

The College has policies and procedures in place to provide a healthy, safe and secure environment through a standing committee which helps to establish policies and procedures. The College has safety and security policies and procedures that are disseminated during the new employee orientation process. A disaster preparedness plan is used by the campus police department. The College has certified police officers who patrol all campuses except the campus located on the military base. The institution is perceived to be a safe and secure environment by the campus community.

*3.11.3 The institution operates and maintains physical facilities, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities. **(Physical facilities)**

The institution uses surveys of its students to document the appropriateness of the physical facilities. A pictorial campus tour of the buildings and facilities gave a good indication of the sufficiency of the physical facilities. The VC Master Facilities Plan 2007-2011 provides detailed description of properties and future plans for maintenance of existing facilities and growth for new construction.

3.12.1 The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes. **(Substantive change))**

Since its last reaffirmation of accreditation, the College submitted and received approval from COC for two substantive changes, both involving distance learning through the Virtual College of Texas. Clarification might be needed by the On-Site Committee regarding the current status of off-campus sites.

3.13.1 The institution complies with the policies of the Commission on Colleges. **(Policy compliance)**

(Note: This requirement is not addressed by the institution in its Compliance Certification.)

Comment:

3.14.1 A member or candidate institution represents its accredited status accurately and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of the Commission in accordance with Commission requirements and federal policy. **(Publication of accreditation status)**

The College represents its accredited status accurately and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of the Commission on Colleges in accordance with Commission and federal policy as demonstrated in the *Vernon College 2007-2008 General Catalog*, the online version of the catalog, and on the College's website.

D.   Assessment of Compliance with Section 4: Federal Requirements

*4.1 The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates. **(Student achievement)**

The College evaluates achievement through participation in the THECB's State Level Institutional Effectiveness (IE) process. Table D1: Percentage of Course Completers Official Census Date Contact Hours VS End of Semester Contact Hours displays information concerning the completion rates of students. The table, Data Resources for Perkins Measures and Standards/Program Year 2006-07 Measure VI Employment and Education Outcomes, has three-year placement rates and 2004 licensure data by program of study (CIP). Degree attainment is also illustrated in a table. The table for 2006 Statewide Licensure Report 2002-2005 contains licensure scores for five programmatic areas.

The On-Site Committee conducted interviews and reviewed pertinent documentation in support of the institution's case for compliance and sustained the Off-Site Committee's findings.

*4.2 The institution's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded. **(Program/curriculum)**

Keeping in mind the mission statement of VC, the VC Board of Trustees and the THECB approve all new degree/certificate program proposals. Degree/Certificate offerings of up to two years in length include associate degrees or certificates; vocational programs leading directly to employment; and freshman/sophomore courses in arts & sciences for transfer.

The On-Site Committee conducted interviews with the Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid and the Assistant Registrar, who submit the THECB and IPEDS data, and reviewed pertinent documentation in support of the institution's case for compliance and sustained the Off-Site Committee's findings.

*4.3 The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies. **(Publication of policies)**

The institution makes available to students and the public, the current academic calendars, grading and refund policies. These are available in print and online format in the *Vernon College 2007-2008 General Catalog* and *Student Handbook* as well as in the VC 2008 Spring Schedule.

The On-Site Committee conducted interviews and reviewed pertinent documentation in support of the institution's case for compliance and sustained the Off-Site Committee's findings.

*4.4 Program length is appropriate for each of the institution's educational programs. **(Program length)**

Program length of 60-66 semester hours for associate degrees is set by the THECB. Such degrees must incorporate VC's core curriculum. Workforce education degrees are limited to 60-72 semester hours.

The On-Site Committee conducted interviews and reviewed pertinent documentation in support of the institution's case for compliance and sustained the Off-Site Committee's findings.

*4.5 The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints. **(Student complaints)**

The institution has an established policy for the resolution of student grievances. There is a standing committee on both Vernon and Wichita Falls campuses. The formal policy, hearing procedures and time frames for handling grievances are published in the student handbook. Evidence that the institution follows these

procedures may be documented through reviews of grievance and appeals forms as well as records of hearings; an appropriate sample was provided for review.

The On-Site Committee conducted interviews and reviewed pertinent documentation in support of the institution's case for compliance and sustained the Off-Site Committee's findings.

*4.6   Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices and policies. **(Recruitment materials)**

The recruitment materials and presentations which are accessible by electronic means accurately represent the institution's practices and policies. Additional evidence is needed to assess typical department and related printed materials. A trifold institutional overview brochure is provided as a sample of printed materials.

The On-Site Committee conducted interviews and reviewed pertinent documentation in support of the institution's case for compliance and sustained the Off-Site Committee's findings.

*4.7   The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the *1998 Higher Education Amendments.* **(Title IV program responsibilities)**

The College provides copies of its Letters of Eligibility and Program Participation Agreements with the Department of Education. The audited financial statements include a schedule of federal awards that identify major federal programs subject to the Single Audit Act A-133. The institution employs an independent accounting firm to audit the financial statements and financial aid programs are audited annually.

The On-Site Committee conducted interviews and reviewed pertinent documentation in support of the institution's case for compliance and sustained the Off-Site Committee's findings.

E. **Additional Observations regarding strengths and weaknesses of the institution. (optional).**

Part III.   Assessment of the Quality Enhancement Plan

To be completed by the On-Site Review Committee.

A.   Brief description of the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan

Vernon College (VC) proposes to increase engagement by fostering collaboration and connectivity between students, faculty, and support personnel. The college will use three strategies to increase engagement: 1) transform curriculum and instruction; 2) train faculty in engagement by providing professional development opportunities; and 3) create a technology-rich environment for instruction and student support services. Under the direction of its SACS Leadership Team and a QEP Planning Committee, the college reached consensus on a QEP topic using a college-wide and community-wide consensus building process; developed working definitions of engagement, collaboration and connectivity; developed a rubric for assessing the level of student engagement; established a timeline for activities intended to foster student engagement; and developed an evaluation plan to determine the effectiveness of individual classroom instructional interventions, as well as the overall progress of the project. The college has already begun implementation of the project. Pilot projects in three general education courses and library services were conducted in spring 2008.

B.   Analysis of the Acceptability of the Quality Enhancement Plan

1.   ***Broad-based Process***. *The institution uses a broad-based institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment.*

VC is concerned that rapid enrollment growth may compromise the quality of student learning and success. Enrollment has increased over 59% during the past decade. A significant increase occurred when the college opened its Century City Center in Wichita Falls in 2004. The original QEP topic was selected, in part, to address this concern. Faculty and staff worried that extended campus locations at Wichita Falls and Sheppard Air force Base, and an increase in the use of web-enhanced, on-line, and ITV courses, were inhibiting student-teacher and student-staff interaction, thus negatively affecting student success and retention.

Engagement (CCSSE) to monitor the level of student engagement. CSSE has been developed based upon the premise that student learning and success, and thus retention, are best improved by increasing the level of student engagement, inside and outside the classroom. The QEP Planning and Development Committees used the CCSSE results to frame a discussion of how the college might create an environment that engaged students in activities known to enhance the quality of student learning in order to combat the impact of rapid expansion and enrollment increases.

2.   ***Focus of the Plan***. *The institution identifies a significant issue that (1) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and (2) accomplishes the mission of the institution.*

The focus of the VConnected plan is clear: increase student learning by increasing student engagement. The plan is comprehensive—it addresses instruction, student support services, and use of technology—and is intended to bring about long term change. However, the cause and effect relationship between student engagement and student learning could be more clearly articulated. Engagement is a good thing, but it is only a means to a more important end—student learning—and not an end in itself.

The plan relies too heavily on a single measure of success—the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). CCSSE measures the extent to which students perceive they are engaged in the classroom and elsewhere in the institution. Although CCSSE provides a wealth of detailed information regarding student perceptions of engagement, it is nonetheless an *indirect* measure of student learning. If the overall goal of the project is to improve student learning, then the college needs to couple CCSSE with *direct* measures of student learning. Developing direct measures of learning could be incorporated into the work of the VConnected Teams. The Engagement Assessment Rubric seems to suggest that such direct measures will be developed by the teams, but it is difficult to know for sure because the rubric uses terms like "methods," "criteria," and "expectation" ambiguously, and at times, interchangeably. The college should take care to articulate the relationship between instructional methodology and student learning, and ensure that evidence is collected to document the impact of a change in instructional methodology. The Engagement Assessment Rubric should be reworked to clarify this relationship.

3. *Institutional Capability for the Initiation and Continuation of the Plan. The institution provides evidence that it has sufficient resources to initiate, implement, sustain, and complete the QEP.*

The college has demonstrated that it has adequate fiscal and human resources to implement the VConnected QEP. The most expensive items in any education budget are personnel-related, and the VC QEP project is certainly no exception. The college plans to hire a full-time QEP Director, a full-time Curriculum Designer, and adjunct faculty sufficient to release six full-time faculty each semester for a total of 68 sections of instruction over six years. In addition, there is approximately $15,000 devoted to faculty professional development travel each year. Since the VConnected QEP is a teaching and learning project, the bulk of the budget should be spent giving faculty and staff the release time and expert advice they need to develop sound instructional interventions to improve learning outcomes. The budget reflects this professional development emphasis. If the college is to reach its goal of revising every course by 2014, then the expenditures identified in the budget are certainly reasonable. As noted earlier, however, revising every course is an ambitious goal. The college might consider limiting course revision to General Education courses should balancing the budget become a concern—particularly those General Education courses that are heavily enrolled and typically taken during the student's first or second semester of enrollment, when research shows that it is most important for a student to experience success in the classroom.

4. **Broad-based Involvement of the Community**. The institution demonstrates that all aspects of its community were involved in the development and proposed implementation of the Plan.

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VC began the QEP topic selection in spring 2006. A QEP Planning Committee was appointed and given the charge to solicit input college-wide and identify an appropriate topic. Topics were solicited from faculty and staff. Altogether, twelve proposals were received and evaluated using a locally developed "topic evaluation" rubric. Stipends were awarded to the three best topic proposals, and the three finalists were invited to present their proposals to the SACS Leadership Team, which provided written feedback. Finalists were then asked to present their revised proposals to the college and the community-at-large. Announcements inviting community members to the presentations and soliciting their input were published in the local newspapers. College (faculty, staff, and students) and community stakeholders (alumni, community members, and the VC Board of Trustees) were then asked to select the most appropriate topic using a balloting survey. The "VConnected" student engagement topic was selected by 48% of the respondents. The topic was refined by the QEP Development Committee, which consisted of representatives from full-time and adjunct faculty, IT services, student services, student relations, and the student body.

The QEP topic was developed and vetted with significant college-wide and community-wide input. Just as importantly, the topic has the potential to transform the day to day teaching and learning behaviors of faculty, staff, and students college-wide. As noted earlier, it is the goal of the project to infuse active learning strategies in all courses by 2014, as well as involve other student support services. Library Services, for example, was included as a pilot project. Interviews with faculty and support staff during the site visit indicated that college leadership were committed to moving the project beyond the classroom. For example, the New Student Group Advising Process was cited as one area where reworking the process using active learning strategies could improve the ability of new students to make sound educational planning and problem solving decisions.

The Engagement Assessment Rubric (discussed below in Section B.5) can be used to design, implement, and measure the success of engagement interventions in areas outside the classroom. The college is advised, however, not to try to do too much too quickly. Infusing engagement in areas other than the classroom might best be undertaken a bit later in the implementation timeline, after the college has had an opportunity to troubleshoot the student learning assessment process.

During interviews with representatives from the QEP Planning and Development Committees, it came to light that the representatives were surprised at the outcome of the balloting process for a QEP topic.They felt that two other topics, one addressing developmental math and another addressing study skills, would have been favored over engagement. Faculty and staff who might be disappointed over selection of the engagement topic, shouldn't be. The VConnected topic is broad enough to allow both development math and study skill concerns to be addressed. Developmental math faculty could use the VConnected project to reach consensus on how best to improve developmental math classes using active learning strategies, and likewise, faculty in any given discipline might choose to use active learning strategies to improve study skill behaviors. In short, it is up to the faculty and staff to reach consensus on which kind of student behavior they want to address since the VConnected topic is ultimately about making use of a particular instructional method to improve

student performance, regardless of what kind of student performance that might be. Active learning strategies can be applied to improve the learning of foundational math skills, study skills, or any other kind of skill faculty or staff agree is important. In this way, the VConnected topic has the potential to work its way throughout the academic and student support units in the college.

5. ***Assessment of the Plan***. *The institution demonstrates that it has goals and a plan to access their achievement.*

As noted earlier, the focus of the VConnected project is clear: increase student engagement in order to increase student learning. What is less clear, however, is how the college will evaluate whether or not student learning has improved—and thus whether or not the project is successful. The plan assumes that an increase in the number of student engagement activities will produce an increase in learning. On page 18 of the plan, for example, three "student learner" outcomes are identified as a guide for the VConnected Teams. Each one describes an activity that could lead to an increase in student learning. Although it is not unreasonable to assume that such activity will improve student learning outcomes—particularly since that is the claim CCSSE makes—it is important that the college evaluate the effectiveness of engagement activities by linking them to specific measures of student learning. The table on page 18 presents only *process* measures associated with the timely implementation of the overall project. It does not present any direct measures of student learning. VConnected Teams should be asked to develop learning assessment measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the engagement interventions they intend to implement in the classroom. As faculty and staff develop interventions, they should be able to answer the following question: how will we know if a particular intervention made a difference in student performance or learning?

The Engagement Assessment Rubric included in Appendix X gives some indication of how VConnected will go about measuring learning outcomes and could be a useful tool for implementation, but it is nonetheless confusing. The content of the categories for each column appear to overlap. For example, it is not clear how "methods & criteria to assess outcomes" in column three differ from "identify & collect baseline data" in column five. The Engagement Assessment Rubric is not so much a rubric as it is a template for listing the variety of ways an instructor or a professional staff person might go about building a student learning project. Presumably, each VConnected Team member will use the rubric to pick a target area for improvement ("where expectations are addressed"), link that target area to a specific kind of assignment or activity to be measured ("method & criteria to assess outcomes"), identify an acceptable level of student performance ("level of expected performance"), then collect and examine outcome data in order to refine and improve the active learning intervention ("identify & collect baseline data"). If the focus of the VConnected project is to be student learning, then the relationship between instructional methods, learning assignments and activities, learning assessment methods, and learning outcomes need to be clarified and the Engagement Assessment Rubric revised accordingly.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that the institution clarify the relationship between student learning outcomes, active learning instructional interventions, and assessment methods so that faculty and staff can provide evidence of improved student learning based upon analysis of results.

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C. Analysis and Comments for Strengthening the QEP

Strengths of the QEP:

The VConnected QEP has the potential to be a transformative institution-wide project. It addresses an important issue directly related to student learning. The project will give faculty and staff an opportunity to implement research-based best practices that can make a significant difference in student success and retention. The enthusiasm of the leadership team and pilot project personnel is readily apparent. They are excited about the project and committed to successful implementation. Moreover, the development of pilot projects has proven to be an effective first step in implementation. It has built momentum for the project, has created a team of local "active leaning" practitioners whose efforts can serve as a model for other faculty and staff, and has enabled faculty and staff to discuss and clarify what it means to be a "learning-centered" institution.

Challenges for the Successful Implementation of the QEP:

The college should consider reducing the number of committees involved in assessing implementation. On page 77 of the plan, four separate committees are identified in the assessment cycle; five if the members of the VConnected Team are counted since they are included as members of the QEP Implementation Team. The QEP Implementation Team itself could serve as the committee responsible for overseeing implementation, collecting data (including qualitative and anecdotal data), and preparing periodic progress reports. They could submit these reports directly to the college's standing Planning and Assessment Committee for further review, but more importantly, they could schedule periodic evaluation meetings with the standing committee to monitor the overall progress of the VConnected project. These periodic meetings would enable the Implementation Team to make mid-course corrections to the overall plan, thus embedding a continuous improvement methodology at the "overall project" level. The project should be stronger if those responsible for developing, implementing, and piloting interventions have the primary responsibility for assessing the success of their efforts. The standing Planning and Assessment Committee can serve as a vehicle to ensure that QEP efforts are accounted for in the college's overall annual planning process.

The college should also consider identifying a currently employed VC faculty member who has established credibility as a responsible colleague and an effective instructor and appointing them to the position of Instructional Designer. The college is correct to recognize the need for such a position, but the project will be better served if someone with well-recognized instructional credibility and knowledge of the local organizational culture is responsible for facilitating instructional development. In fact, the pilot projects, have already begun the process of developing local instructional design "experts." QEP dollars could be used to provide professional development in instructional design and learning outcomes assessment for any one of these people, and the college could grow its own instructional designer, and during the course of the project, develop a cadre of faculty intimately familiar with instructional design and active learning pedagogy. Such a course of action would virtually ensure that the VConnected project would transform the teaching and learning culture of the college.

Likewise, the college should consider staffing the QEP Director from within its own ranks—for the same reasons as those just described. The project needs an "owner," someone with an established track record of commitment to VC, who can speak to his or her colleagues with credibility. Staffing from within the organization will expedite implementation and increase the likelihood of long term, transformational success.

Finally, there are two books that faculty and staff should consider reading and discussing to help them frame the key issues associated with implementing a student learning project:

- Classroom Research: Implementing the Scholarship of Teaching, Patricia Cross and Mimi Steadman. Cross and Steadman do a wonderful job of explaining how teachers can design practical classroom research projects designed to improve student learning outcomes. They argue that quantitative statistics have dominated the assessment landscape for too long and suggest ways that faculty can develop qualitative and non-threatening quantitative measures that will help faculty assess the effectiveness of their classroom practices.

- Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition, Vincent Tinto. Tinto analyzes virtually all of the significant retention research in higher education. His primary finding is clear: students who succeed in class are students who return. Thus, it behooves educators to make the best use of contemporary active learning strategies to improve the academic success of students since such strategies are known to be more effective.

APPENDIX A

Roster of the On-Site Review Committee

Dr. Martin Gonzalez - **CHAIR**
Interim Vice President of Instructional Affairs
Pensacola Junior College
Pensacola, FL

Ms. Sherry M. Anderson
Vice President of Learning Initiatives
West Kentucky Community and Tech College
Paducah, KY

Ms. Crystal A. Baird
Associate Dean of Planning
  and Library Services
Davidson County Community College
Thomasville, NC

Dr. Karen E. Blythe-Smith
Associate Dean of Instructional Services
Gadsden State Community College
Gadsden, AL

Dr. Eric A. Brown
Dean of Student Services/Financial Aid
Williamsburg Technical College
Kingstree, SC

Dr. David C. Cole
President
Itawamba Community College
Fulton, MS

Mr. Grady E. Smith
Vice President of Financial Affairs
Southwest Mississippi Community College
Summit, MS

LEAD QEP EVALUATOR

Mr. David Schuermer
Director of Grants, Planning, and Effectiveness
Madisonville Community College
Madisonville, KY

APPENDIX B

Off-Campus Sites or Distance Learning Programs Reviewed

Century City Center (Campus) located at 4105 Maplewood Avenue, Wichita Fall, Texas:

Vernon College's Century City Center occupies a modern renovated shopping complex with over 138,000 square feet of available classroom, lab and office space. The Center offers a full range of college services as well a both transfer degree programs as well as a variety of Career and Vocational programs. A sample of the programs offered at Century City includes Cosmetology, Criminal Justice, Emergency Medical Services, Health Information Technology, Pharmacy Technician, Vocational Nursing and Surgery Technology. The Center is located adjacent to the campus of Midwestern State University and students at the VC Center have permission for full use of the library facilities at MSU.

Skills Training Center (Campus) located at 2813 Central Expressway East, Wichita Falls, Texas:

The Vernon College Skills Training Center occupies a modern renovated manufacturing building in Wichita Falls. This modern facility will state-of-the-art equipment as well as a well trained faculty offers a wide variety of Career and Vocational Programs including Computer and Information Sciences, Basic Heat, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning, Industrial Automation Systems, Machining as well as Welding.

Sheppard Learning Center located at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas:

The Vernon College Center at Sheppard Air Force Base consists of an entire floor of a building dedicated to the College. The facility consists for a variety of well equipped standard classrooms as well as two computer equipped classrooms. The Center also has a room equipped with computers connected to all of the college's library data bases. Vernon College offers testing services at the Center and has computers as well as a Test Technician available for this service. The Sheppard Center has a full-time Center Director, along with two support staff members, who are available to assist students as well as faculty.

APPENDIX C

List of Recommendations
Cited in the Report of the Reaffirmation Committee

Recommendation 1:

>Therefore, the committee recommends that the institution demonstrates that the board has in place a policy that properly addresses conflicts of interest for its members.

Recommendation 2:

>Therefore, the committee recommends that the institution document the qualifications of its faculty.

Recommendation 3:

>Therefore the committee recommends that the institution clarify the relationship between student learning outcomes, active learning instructional interventions, and assessment methods so that faculty and staff can provide evidence of improved student learning based upon analysis of results.