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Commission on Colleges

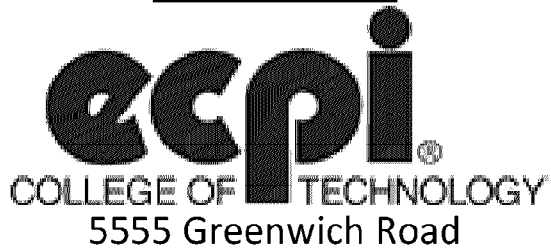
Attention: Redacted by HELP Committee

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FIRST MONITORING REPORT

Core Requirement 2.8 and Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1

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Introduction

Background

ECPI College of Technology (the “College” or “ECPI”) is an independent, private, for-profit institution of higher learning offering the bachelor of science, associate of science, associate of applied science degrees, and diploma programs in computer and information science, criminal justice, electronics engineering technology, business, health sciences, and culinary arts. The programs offered vary by campus. The Colleges’ main campus is in Virginia Beach, Virginia and operates branch campuses in Newport News, Northern Virginia (Manassas), and Richmond, Virginia; Charlotte, Greensboro and Raleigh, North Carolina; and Charleston, Columbia and Greenville, South Carolina.

Mission

ECPI College of Technology’s primary mission is to provide quality collegiate education. The College is committed to being a premier institution of higher education with an innovative, student-centered learning environment. The curriculum is designed to foster inquiry, research, analysis, and critical thinking. Instruction is delivered in a variety of effective formats to enhance student access to the College educational programs and learning resources. The College responds to the educational needs of the communities it serves through cooperative efforts with students, faculty, alumni, businesses, organizations, professional associations, and government. ECPI is dedicated to assisting graduates with career development and the pursuit of lifelong learning.

History of ECPI College of Technology

ECPI College of Technology was founded in the Commonwealth of Virginia in February 1966 to meet the needs of employers for well-prepared data processing specialists. ECPI quickly established a reputation for providing high-quality instruction in certificate and diploma programs while using industry standard equipment and teaching the computer applications and software most in demand by employers. Classes were small, and instructors had industry experience, academic credentials, and teaching ability. Successful student outcomes, including high graduation rates and program-related employment, were considered of primary importance. These values continue to serve the institution, its students, and graduates.

In subsequent years, program offerings expanded into electronics and computer technology, and were followed by business, medical, and nursing programs. Branch campus locations began to be established in other cities. In 1990, the Associate of Applied Science degree was offered in most program areas. More degrees have since been added including the Associate of Science and Bachelor of Science. In 2006, a Culinary Arts program was added at the Virginia Beach campus and offers the Diploma and Associate of Applied Science degree.

Throughout its history, the College has maintained a strong relationship with industry and employers. Program advisory boards regularly meet and provide valuable feedback regarding employer needs and industry trends. This feedback often translates into curriculum revisions that both add value and help to make the College's programs effective.

ECPI College of Technology Relationship with the Commission

ECPI College of Technology was initially accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (the "Commission") in 1998 as a Level I institution

offering associate's degrees and was reaffirmed in 2003. In 2004, the College was authorized by the Commission as a Level II institution to offer the Bachelor of Science degree. In December 2008, the Commission continued accreditation following a review of the College's off-campus sites in Richmond, Virginia and Columbia, South Carolina. The College submitted its Fifth-Year Interim Report to the Commission in September 2008.

In December 2009, the Commission placed the College on warning for failure to comply with the *Principles of Accreditation*, specifically Core Requirement 2.8 (Faculty) and Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1 (Institutional Effectiveness – Educational Programs). The institution is scheduled for its reaffirmation review in 2013.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to address the Commission's concerns expressed in the January 12, 2010 letter and to demonstrate the College's compliance with Core Requirement 2.8 (faculty) and Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1 (Institutional Effectiveness – Educational Programs) of the *Principles of Accreditation*. A copy of the January 12, 2010 Commission letter is included as Attachment 1.

Core Requirement 2.8 (Faculty): 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.

Recommendation from the Commission's December 2009 Meeting

The recommendation of the Board of Trustees of SACS Commission on Colleges at its December 2009 annual meeting, as stated in the January 12, 2010 letter to the College:

CR 2.8 (Faculty)

The institution has not yet demonstrated compliance because, although data are provided regarding the percentage of full-time versus part-time faculty as well as courses taught by each faculty member on each campus, the course load for a number of faculty per semester seems excessive. For example, on page 20 of Volume 1a, the column "courses taught" in fall 2009 lists 10 courses for faculty #79 at the Virginia Beach campus; page 6 shows 8 courses for faculty #17 at the Greensboro campus; page 4 shows 9 courses for faculty #11 at the Charleston campus, and so forth. The data show that a number of faculty members in both fall 2009 and spring 2009 taught 7 to 10 classes per semester.

A further report is requested which should demonstrate the number of full-time faculty is adequate to ensure the quality and integrity of academic programs and that faculty workloads are not excessive so as to impair the quality and integrity of academic programs.

Source: January 12, 2010 Letter from the Commission to ECPI College of Technology

History of the Responses to Recommendation

In 2008, the College submitted its Fifth-Year Interim Report, which was reviewed by the Commission at its December 2008 Commission meeting. As a result of the review, the College was required to submit a Monitoring Report to the Commission, as the Committee on Fifth-Year Interim Reports reported that it had found “significant deficiencies with Core Requirement 2.8 (Faculty).” In its letter dated February 19, 2009, the Commission outlined the requirements of the required monitoring report to address these deficiencies. This report was submitted to the Commission, as requested, on September 8, 2009.

The Commission reviewed the Monitoring Report at its December 2009 meeting and notified the College, in a letter dated January 12, 2010, that the College was placed on Warning for six months. In its letter to the College, the Commission noted that the Committee on Compliance and Reports did not authorize a Special Committee to visit the institution.

Current Request from the Commission

The Commission has requested the following:

A further report is requested which should demonstrate the number of full-time faculty is adequate to ensure the quality and integrity of academic programs and that faculty workloads are not excessive so as to impair the quality and integrity of academic programs.

Total Number of Faculty

As noted earlier, the College has hired new faculty members, both Full-time Faculty and Adjuncts in 2009 to serve the growing College enrollment. Additional faculty members were hired to ensure compliance with the College's revised Workload Policy described above. The total number of faculty is 749, of which 534 are full-time Faculty and 215 are Adjuncts. This represents an increase of 132 faculty between the Fall 2009 semester and the faculty reported in the previous monitoring report to the Commission and Spring 2010 semester as presented below:

	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Difference	% difference
Faculty (full time)	367	534	+ 167	45%
Adjunct	266	215	-51	-20%
Total	633	749	+132	21%

A majority of the College's total faculty, or 71 percent, are full-time. The assimilation of the new full-time faculty during one semester was achieved through hiring Adjunct faculty who had taught at the College for at least one semester. The new full-time faculty were employed across the 10 campuses, with the Virginia Beach (main campus) experiencing the largest number of new faculty. The Virginia Beach campus hired a total of 25 full-time Faculty and 28 Adjuncts across all the programs. The 25 new full-time Faculty included 12 Adjuncts who were promoted to full-time Faculty positions. The remaining nine campuses each added several new full-time Faculty. Aside from the Virginia Beach campus, no branch campus added more than four full-time Faculty in any individual program. The following chart represents the total full-time Faculty and Adjuncts for the College, by program area:

Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1 (Institutional Effectiveness –Educational Programs)

Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1 (Institutional Effectiveness – Educational Programs): 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)

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

Recommendation from the Commission’s December 2009 Meeting

Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1 (Institutional Effectiveness – Educational Programs)
The institution has not yet demonstrated compliance because, although the institution provided data on course completion rates, graduation rates, and curriculum changes, evidence was not found regarding the extent to which goals are matched to student outcomes, or how assessment results are used for improvement.

Source: January 12, 2010 Letter from the Commission to ECPI College of Technology

History of the Responses to Recommendation

As a result of the Commission’s review of the Fifth-Year Interim Report at its December 2008 Commission meeting, the College was required to submit a Monitoring Report to the Commission. The Committee on Fifth-Year Interim Reports reported that the Commission found “significant deficiencies with Core Requirement 2.8 (Faculty) and Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 (Institutional Effectiveness) – 3.3.1.1 Educational Programs.” In its letter dated

February 19, 2009, the Commission outlined the requirements of the required monitoring report to address these deficiencies. This report was submitted to the Commission, as requested, on September 8, 2009.

This Monitoring Report was reviewed by the Board of Trustees at the Commission's December 2009 meeting. The College was notified in a letter from the Commission, dated January 12, 2010, that the College was placed on a sanction, Warning, for six months. The Committee on Compliance and Reports did not authorize a Special Committee to visit the institution.

Current Request from the Commission

A further report is requested and should provide evidence that the institution has analyzed student outcomes and has used the results of the analysis for improvement.

ECPI College of Technology Response

The College recognizes that the presentation of the data in the Monitoring Report reviewed by the Commission at its December 2009 meeting led to the conclusion that the College was not "closing the loop" in regard to analysis and improvement within the institutional effectiveness process, as the examples cited did not document the process used by the College to close the loop. To demonstrate that the College does "close the loop," the institutional effectiveness process and use of results for improvement are briefly summarized in the following paragraphs. The analysis and data are used in a cycle of continuous improvement of the College's educational programs. This narrative and the examples are presented to demonstrate the College's compliance with this Comprehensive Standard.