



HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

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May 11, 2021

Dr. Hara Charlier
President
Central Lakes College
501 West College Drive
Brainerd, MN 56401-3900

Dear President Charlier:

Attached is a copy of the Multi-Location Visit Report completed following the visit to Central Lakes College. As detailed in the report, the pattern of operations at the locations appears to be adequate and no further review or monitoring is necessary.

Within the Multi-Location Visit Report, you will find brief comments on the instructional oversight, academic services, student services, facilities, marketing and recruitment information and adequacy of assessment of student performance. Please consider these comments as advice for continued improvement of the additional locations.

Per HLC policy, completion of these visits and fulfillment of the requirement will be noted in your institution's history record and the completed report will be included in your institution's permanent file.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the Multi-Location Visit or the attached report, please contact Pat Newton-Curran (pnewton@hlcommission.org).

Sincerely,

Higher Learning Commission



Multi-Location Visit Peer Review Report

Institution: Central Lakes College

Additional Locations Visited:

Location Name	Location Address (<i>street, city, state and ZIP code</i>)	Date Reviewed
Central Lakes College Staples location	1830 Airport Road, Staples, MN 56479	5.3.21
Onamia High School	35465 125 th Avenue South, Onamia, MN 56359	5.4.21
Upsala High School	415 South Main Street, Upsala, MN 56384	5.3.21

Peer Reviewer

Name: David Wendler

Institution: Martin Luther College Title: Vice President for Academics, Emeritus

Instructions

In order to document effective administrative systems for managing multiple additional locations, please complete the following. For each item, check **adequate** or **attention needed**, and indicate in Comments the institution's strengths and/or opportunities for improvement in controlling and delivering degree programs off-campus. If comments pertain to a specific location, they should be included along with the identity of that location.

Submit the completed report as a PDF file at hlcommission.org/upload. Select "Final Reports" from the list of submission options to ensure the institution's materials are sent to the correct HLC staff member. The report is due within 30 days after the last additional location is visited.

Overview Statement

Provide information about current additional locations and the institution's general approach to off-campus instruction. Describe the growth pattern at the institution since the last review of off-campus instruction. Provide information about the involvement of external organizations or other higher education institutions.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

Central Lakes College (CLC) Brainerd campus has an additional location in Staples, MN, offering associate degrees, certificates, and diplomas.

CLC also partners with 45 Independent School Districts across the state to offer college credit courses in the high schools in a form of dual enrollment referred to as College in the Schools (CIS). The general approach that CLC takes to off-campus instruction is to offer opportunities to students who would not otherwise have access to college courses. CLC has been National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) accredited since 2012, with the most recent re-affirmation occurring in 2019. This accreditation certifies that the processes for program admission, course requirements, pedagogy, assessment, and course outcomes mirror that of on-campus processes.

CLC's College in the Schools (CIS) focuses on serving high schools and high school students in rural areas. The CIS program serves low-income, minority, and first-generation students by providing access to college credit.

Institutional Planning

What evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively plans for growth and maintenance of additional locations? Identify whether the institution has adequate controls in place to ensure that information presented to students is adequate. Describe whether the financial planning and budgeting process has proven effective at additional locations.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

The CLC budgeting process begins with requests from faculty, staff, and administrators for staffing, equipment, facilities, and professional development. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs explained that personnel at the Staples location are included with the Brainerd campus planning. Grass roots planning and budgeting input is followed by town hall meetings and meetings with deans to provide two-way communication.

The Dean of Enrollment Management & Student Success and the CIS Coordinator explained the various meetings with high school personnel. These regular meetings include fall meetings with superintendents and fall and spring meetings with high school counselors and teachers. High school personnel referenced these meetings in interviews. Records and admissions staff join these meetings to receive input and any requests that impact budgeting and planning.

A CIS Advisory Council meets annually to review budgetary information and student success and to give input into planning.

Institutional planning is comprehensive and involves appropriate personnel.

Facilities

What evidence demonstrates that the facilities at the additional locations meet the needs of the students and the curriculum? Consider, in particular, classrooms and laboratories (size, maintenance, temperature, etc.); faculty and administrative offices (site, visibility, privacy for meetings, etc.); parking or access to public transit; bookstore or text purchasing services; security; handicapped access; and other (food or snack services, study and meeting areas, etc.)

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

A systematic review of program data, equipment, spaces, and student evaluations is completed annually for each department located on the Staples campus to ensure the facilities meet the needs of each program. For high school locations, the Dean of Enrollment and Student Success, collaborating faculty, and the CIS Program Coordinator make several annual site visits to each location. Classroom site visits are also conducted by college faculty who serve as collaborators to ensure that each location is meeting the curriculum needs of the college course. A tour of facilities at each of the sites confirms the adequacy, currency, and sufficiency of equipment and technology. The high schools conduct ITV classes with the college campus and/or other high schools utilizing CIS instructors. The tours of high school facilities confirm that classrooms and laboratories are equivalent to college classrooms.

Instructional Oversight

What evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively oversees instruction at the additional locations? Consider, in particular, consistency of curricular expectations and policies, availability of courses needed for program and graduation requirements, faculty qualifications, performance of instructional duties, availability of faculty to students, orientation of faculty/professional development, attention to student concerns.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

Annually, all departments participate in a Division Analysis process utilizing Curriculum Navigator data (enrollment, student success, costs) to identify potential gaps or concerns. At Staples, college faculty are observed and evaluated by the Dean of the Staples campus. Annually, the Staples faculty participate in various college-wide course and college assessment activities. Program reviews are completed on a 5-year rotating basis looking at enrollment, completion, and placement data. Regularly scheduled Division Meetings are held to discuss campus wide initiatives and concerns. The Dean also schedules regular meetings with each program to discuss needs and future planning. Interviews at the Staples location revealed that college administrators (VP Academics & Student Affairs, CFO, Deans) spend several days each week at the Staples site.

The CIS faculty, CIS Coordinator, and Dean of Enrollment Management & Student Success all confirm that college faculty collaborators visit each CIS high school classroom, observe faculty teaching performance, and maintain contact with high school faculty during the semester. While at the Upsala site, a college faculty collaborator was observing a high school instructor who was also on ITV with a distant

high school class. College faculty and high school instructors share assessment strategies whether taught at the college or at a high school location. Classes at all CIS locations are taught by high school teachers who have been approved by CLC to teach in the applicable academic discipline. Per HLC policy, high school instructors must be fully credentialed by 9/1/2023. The Dean of Enrollment and Student Success, college collaborators, and high school administrators are working with high school instructors who are not yet fully credentialed to ensure they are aware of HLC requirements and know what is required to teach CIS courses after 9/1/2023. Some of these high school instructors may qualify via tested experience.

Each high school teacher works with a collaborator who is a CLC faculty member. Collaborators share common course outlines with the high school teachers. CLC common course outlines are comprehensive documents that include the course descriptions, learning outcomes, methods of assessment, Minnesota Transfer Curriculum goal areas, topical outlines, and suggested textbooks. High school teachers are required to meet with collaborators and other college faculty in the discipline on the college campus during the annual college-sponsored CIS In-Service Day. Collaborators communicate regularly with high school teachers during the term, conducting a classroom visit at least once a term for an experienced CIS instructor, and twice a term if the high school teacher is teaching the college class for the first time. Collaborators are required to submit a report on rigor, materials, and teaching for each course taught in every term. The CIS Coordinator and the Dean of Enrollment Management & Student Success oversee the CIS program.

CLC has strong instructional oversight of these locations.

Institutional Staffing and Faculty Support

What evidence demonstrates that the institution has appropriately qualified and sufficient staff and faculty in place for the location, and that the institution supports and evaluates personnel at off-campus locations? Consider the processes in place for selecting, training, and orienting faculty at the location.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

Classes at all CIS locations are taught by high school teachers who have been approved by CLC to teach in the applicable academic discipline. CLC maintains transcripts for each high school instructor and ensures each instructor is qualified to teach specific courses.

A high school teacher seeking to teach a CIS course for Central Lakes College submits his/her credentialing materials such as: resume, cover letter, CIS application, along with graduate and undergraduate college transcripts as documentation of his/her teaching qualifications to the CIS Program Coordinator. Applications and transcripts are then reviewed by the Dean overseeing the discipline/program and are either approved, provisionally approved if they are not yet fully credentialed, or denied.

At the Staples campus, employees in the AFSCME, MAPE and MMA unions are supported through designated professional development funds (\$1500 every two years) as well as annual training events focused on topics such as telework, diversity, equity and inclusion, and student success. Full-time probationary faculty are evaluated each semester for three years. Once they become tenured, faculty are

evaluated every three years. Part-time and adjunct faculty are evaluated once each semester. Each faculty evaluation includes a self-evaluation and observation.

Conversation with high school instructors confirm that training of faculty for CIS courses starts with a NACEP mandated orientation to the CIS program. The new teacher learns about college resources (such as library access), how to use e-Services (accessing class lists and entering grades), and additional responsibilities of an instructor. Additionally, all new instructors meet with their college faculty collaborators to review common course outlines for the courses they are scheduled to teach, along with grading and assessment procedures. All CIS instructors are required to attend the annual discipline-specific professional development in-service to discuss course content, course delivery, assessment, evaluation, and/or research and development in the field. Faculty collaborators work with CIS instructors throughout the course and observe teaching every semester, making suggestions about improvement in content, instruction, and assessment. A high school instructor summarized, "If I need anything, CLC is there." A high school music instructor shared how CLC provided instruments for students.

Instructors at these locations are well supported.

Student Support

What evidence demonstrates that the institution delivers, supports, and manages necessary student services at the additional locations? Consider, in particular, the level of student access (in person, by computer, by phone, etc.) to academic advising/placement, remedial/tutorial services, and library materials/services. Also, consider the level of access to admissions, registration/student records, financial aid, and job placement services, as well as attention to student concerns.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

CLC ensures academic advisors, financial aid support, disability services, and student activities are available for students enrolled on the Staples campus. Campus facilities include a bookstore, cafeteria, and library with computer lab to support students on the campus. Advisors are available Monday-Friday and connect with students and faculty on a regular basis to provide support. Staples faculty said students are supported with tutors, disability services, counselors, TRIO and Raider Connect coaches for both academic and social/emotional support. The Food Pantry at the Staples site, where 76% of the students are Pell eligible, serves 400 students a week.

For all students (main camps, Staples, and high school), the same electronic system enables students to access all electronic resources. This includes web-based service such as e-Services, D2L Brightspace, CLC Online Bookstore, Student Email, Dynamic Forms, and askclc@clcmn.edu.

Askclc@clcmn.edu provides one access point for students to ask any questions or raise concerns. Once a student submits an email to askclc@clcmn.edu, the necessary staff member follows up with the student. Students confirm the responsiveness of this system. CLC staff, including the CIS Program Coordinator, work closely with high school counselors to ensure students have quick access to services and information. To ensure that high school counselors are well prepared for such a role, the CIS Program Coordinator holds meetings with partner school counselors every semester.

Interviews with high school counselors showed how these counselors approve high school students' entrance into the CIS program, how they closely monitor student performance, and how they provide support services if needed. Student interviews confirm that CLC students have daily access to the high school counselor and to CLC's virtual services.

CLC administrators relayed that they are developing an app that will connect all student resources. Interviews with students indicate that whether they are at the Staples site or in the high schools, they are well supported.

Evaluation and Assessment

What evidence demonstrates that the institution measures, documents, and analyzes student academic performance sufficiently to maintain academic quality at the additional locations? How are measures and techniques employed at a location equivalent to those for assessment and evaluation on the main campus? Consider, in particular, the setting of measurable learning objectives, the actual measurement of performance, and the analysis and use of assessment data to maintain/improve quality.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

Central Lakes College conducts student learning assessment at the department/program level. Each department has an assessment plan for how to measure course and program student learning outcomes (SLO). The department assessment plan includes at least one direct and one indirect measure for each SLO. The plan indicates a timeline, method, and assessment tool. The results, analysis, and action items are reported each spring. Each student learning outcome for the department/program has been mapped to college-wide and Minnesota Transfer Curriculum learning goals. Assessment at the Staples site is a part of the CLC main campus in Brainerd. Faculty at this site shared that feedback from employers and advisory boards provides input into assessment and evaluation discussions.

College in the Schools (CIS) is also included in this process. CLC faculty collaborate with CIS instructors in their departments to design assessment methods, tools, and processes that gather data across both CLC and CIS courses. This may be accomplished via a paired assignment, a common rubric or checklist. In late spring, CLC hosts a full Assessment Day for CLC faculty, and CIS instructors are invited to attend. If CIS faculty cannot attend this event, CLC faculty share a summary of the day's activities/outcomes along with the department assessment report. Assessment results and planning are addressed at the August in-service day for CIS instructors, providing an ongoing cycle of planning, data gathering, analysis, and revisions.

Asked about disaggregating assessment results for CIS students and comparing them with other CLC students, CLC faculty and administrators indicated that comparisons are now based on grades. Since CIS students are taught by adjunct high school instructors, CLC is encouraged to seek other means, such as common assessments, to compare high school students' achievements with college students' achievements.

Continuous Improvement

What evidence demonstrates that the institution encourages and ensures continuous quality improvement at its additional locations? Consider in particular the institution's planning and evaluation processes that ensure regular review and improvement of additional locations and ensure alignment of additional locations with the mission and goals of the institution as a whole.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

Continuous improvement includes processes such as program review, assessment of student learning, and the budget request process. Faculty site visits ensure that CLC courses offered through the CIS program are the same as courses offered on the CLC campus and that improvements to both instruction and facilities are promptly identified and addressed. Site visit reports are documented and maintained in a digital archive overseen by the CIS Program Coordinator. The CIS Program Coordinator reviews all collaborator reports and forwards issues noted in the reports to the Dean of Enrollment Management and Student Success.

CLC has a continuous improvement mindset.

Marketing and Recruiting Information

What evidence confirms that the information presented to students in advertising, brochures, and other communications is accurate?

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

All publications and public communication need the approval of the Marketing/Social Media Department. The Director of Marketing and Public Relations ensures that all materials are truthful and accurate. In addition, promotional materials are reviewed annually by the Dean of Staples Campus and program faculty. CIS related material is reviewed by the CIS Program Coordinator and the Dean of Enrollment Management of Student Success. In addition, Central Lakes College is a member of the Minnesota State System, which provides procedures for Central Lakes College to ensure all materials are accurate. The CLC Webmaster conducts an annual review of the CLC website to ensure the accuracy of all links provided on the website.

Summary Recommendation

Select one of the following statements. Include, as appropriate, a summary of findings.

- ☒ Overall, the pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations appears to be adequate, and no further review or monitoring by the Higher Learning Commission is necessary.

- ☐ Overall, the pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations needs some attention as defined in this report. The institution can be expected to follow up on these matters without monitoring by the Higher Learning Commission. The next scheduled comprehensive review can serve to document that the matters identified have been addressed. **[Identify specific areas needing organizational attention.]**
- ☐ The overall pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations is inadequate and requires attention from the Higher Learning Commission. **[Identify the specific concerns and provide a recommendation for HLC follow-up monitoring.]**

Summary of Findings:

Central Lakes College operates these locations with integrity. The same policies and procedures at the main campus in Brainerd are applied at these locations. Oversight is evident with the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and Dean of the Staples campus ensuring adherence to CLS policies at the Staples location. The CIS Coordinator and the Dean of Enrollment Management & Student Success ensure the same for the high school students in the CIS program.

Notification Program for Additional Locations Approval Form

Complete this form **only** if an institution has been granted access to the Notification Program for Additional Locations. The Institutional Status and Requirements Report for the institution will indicate whether the institution has access to the Program under "Location Stipulation."

The institution has been accredited by HLC for at least 10 consecutive years with no record of any action during that period for sanction or show-cause.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
HLC has not required monitoring of issues related to the quality of instruction or to the oversight of existing additional locations or campuses in the past 10 years.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The institution has demonstrated success in overseeing at least three locations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The institution has no other HLC or other legal restrictions on additional locations and/or programs offered off campus.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The institution has appropriate systems to ensure quality control of locations that include clearly identified academic controls; regular evaluation by the institution of its locations; a pattern of adequate faculty, facilities, resources and academic/support systems; financial stability; and long-range planning for future expansion.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No