

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

2.A.1.

As described in 1.A, SCC's Mission Statement was developed through a comprehensive, collaborative, and data-driven process and was transparently outlined for stakeholders in the [Strategic Plan Process Report](#). SCC's [Board of Governors approved](#) the Mission Statement in January 2020, and the Mission is cited in [Board policy and procedure](#), the [College Catalog](#), on the [public website](#), and in [SCC public spaces](#). [Board policy](#) codifies the expectations and frequency with which the Mission, Vision, Values and strategic goals/objectives are reviewed.

2.A.2.

With a focus on transparent, fair, and ethical practice in all operations, the College's [Core Value of Integrity](#) drives the decisions and actions of all financial, academic, and personnel functions. SCC complies with federal and state laws that protect the privacy of personal financial records, educational records, and personal information. In addition, to facilitate fair and ethical behavior and practices, the College makes the following policies and procedures easily accessible on its [website](#):

- [Student Code of Conduct \(Handbook\)](#)
- [Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination-Admission](#)
- [Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination-Employment](#)
- [Equal Opportunity is the Law \(29 CFR Part 37.30\)](#)
- [Title IX Statement](#)
- [Access-Employment and Admission](#)
- [Privacy Statement](#)
- [Student Right to Know](#)
- [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#)
- [Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act](#)
- [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996](#)
- [Pregnant and Parenting Students](#)
- [Website Privacy](#)

- [Computer Security](#)
- [Safety and Security](#)
- [Student Concerns and Complaints](#)
- [Board of Governors Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Administrative Policies and Procedures](#)

All College policies and procedures are easily accessible [on the public website](#). The website also lists [recently updated policies](#) to communicate changes to employees. College administrators follow policies and procedures to fulfill their roles and responsibilities fairly and ethically. Administrators provide fair, accurate, and complete consumer information about [costs](#), [financial aid assistance](#), [educational programs](#), [student outcomes](#), [health and safety](#), and [accreditation status](#) as directed by [College Policy](#).

Policies and Processes for Financial Integrity

As stated in [Nebraska law](#) and [College Policy](#), the state designates the power and duties to the community college boards, including the ability to develop and oversee a budget of revenues and expenditures that reflects the optimum interests of the public, the students, and the College.

The Board of Governors follows Board policies and procedures to fulfill its roles and responsibilities fairly and ethically. The College's legal counsel prepares the Conflict of Interest Statement for Board members to read during the monthly financial statement approval. Board members comply with the [Conflict of Interest policy](#) by abstaining from voting on bills and claims when a conflict arises. For example, a Board member would abstain from voting on the monthly financial statement after receiving [travel reimbursement](#) that month. Recently, a Board member had a family member who owned a paint supply company that the College used for facilities projects. That Board member [abstained](#) from voting action regarding the related voucher numbers.

The Vice President of Administrative Services, in conjunction with the President, oversees the [budget development process](#). At each Board meeting, the [President presents](#) a [financial report](#) that compares budgeted and actual revenues and expenditures by month to ensure the Board is aware of the College's budgetary net position throughout the fiscal year. The [Financial Fact Book](#), published on the SCC website, gives public access to the College's financial information, including assets and liabilities, revenue, revenue by type, expenses by function, expenses by type, and scholarships.

Each year, an independent accounting firm audits the College's financial statements and provides a [report to the Board of Governors](#). The College has a long record of consecutive unqualified audits, indicating that financial statements are presented fairly and, in all material respects, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. These reports are also available for public view on the [College's website](#). The Vice President of Administrative Services and the President share [composite financial index](#) (CFI) results with the Board for use in future planning. These data are also included in the College's [strategic metrics](#) and are available to internal and external constituencies [on the website](#).

As required by [state statute](#), the College submits an annual [Uniform Budget Document](#) to the State Auditor of Public Accounts Office each year. The document includes actual versus budgeted expenditures for the total budget, unrestricted funds authority, cash reserve percentage, allowable growth rate, and spending limit. It also includes a [Notice of Budget Hearing and Budget Summary](#), which is published in the College's service area's media outlets, and the official Board vote counts for the budget and tax resolutions. The Uniform Budget Document is available online to the public

following the College's annual budget and tax hearings each September.

In addition to having Board oversight, each campus business office works under the direction of the [Vice President of Administrative Services](#). This department ensures consistent and transparent financial processes, as outlined in [College Policy](#) and the [Purchasing Handbook](#). The College is also a member of the National Association of Education Procurement and subscribes to its [code of ethics](#).

The College follows [guidelines for purchasing](#) quotations and bids for capital construction projects, equipment, and supplies, as approved by the Board of Governors and in accordance with state statute.

The College's [financial policies and procedures](#) are reviewed according to the established [policy and procedure review schedule](#). In 2020, the College began expanding its fundraising efforts to include capital giving; as a result, a new [policy and procedure on gift acceptance](#) was established to further strengthen integrity in financial operations.

Policies and Processes for Academic Integrity

To maintain integrity of content and relevance, all instructional programs follow a seven-year cycle of program reviews and meet annually with Program Advisory Committees or Workforce Leadership Teams. SCC's policies and processes related to academic integrity – including [program review](#), [Curriculum Committee](#), [complaints and concerns](#), [Workforce Leadership Teams](#), and [DACUM](#) – are discussed in depth in 2.D, 2.E, 3.A.1, and 4.A.1.

Faculty and staff follow [policies and procedures](#) to ensure they fulfill their roles and responsibilities fairly and ethically. Administrative supervisors ensure that new employees are oriented to SCC's [Strategic Plan](#), [Code of Ethics](#), and other College policies and procedures (e.g., [Workplace Relationships](#); [Concern/Complaint Resolution](#); [Information Technology](#)) that promote fair and ethical behavior.

Policies and Processes for Human Resources Integrity

The [Office of Human Resources](#) oversees the hiring and orientation process for employees. The following [policy](#) is in place to ensure integrity in hiring practices:

Any person seeking employment at Southeast Community College shall be afforded every consideration provided under equal opportunity, access, and fair employment standards. Application for employment and other personnel matters shall be considered regardless of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, age, marital status, national origin, veteran status, sexual orientation, disability, or other factors prohibited by law. Job requirements, including probationary conditions and length of term, as well as required qualifications, performance standards, work schedules, salary and benefit provisions, will be fully communicated to all new employees.

To support the [2015-2019 Strategic Plan](#), the College approved [156 new positions](#) between July 2015 and June 2020, with the majority added between July 2015 and August 2017. Three of these positions are in the [Office of Human Resources](#) to support the integrity of hiring processes and the increased number of employees. Prior to adding these positions, the College had only a Vice President for Human Resources and an administrative support staff member and did not have the capacity to deliver standard human resource functions for more than 1,000 employees.

After the President authorizes a position to be filled, SCC follows the [procedure](#) outlined in College

Policy. A list of all personnel can be found in the [College Catalog](#) and on the [public website](#).

The College included an objective in its [2015-2019](#) and [2020-2024](#) Strategic Plans specifically designed to create an organizational environment for promoting professionalism and positivity. The focus of Goal 9 is to “strengthen the organizational climate by promoting excellence in all College operations, policies, accreditation relationships, and data-driven decision making.” The [principles of Goal 9.6](#) are included in [job descriptions](#), [standard interview questions](#), and [performance appraisals](#).

New full-time employees complete an [orientation through Human Resources](#). Adjunct faculty [complete an orientation](#) within their assigned instructional division and part-time regular employees complete an orientation within their assigned department or division. [Checklists are available](#) as an optional resource for departments to use.

The College requires employees to complete ongoing training in [safety](#), [diversity](#), [professional development](#), and [cybersecurity and FERPA](#). Staff in four offices (the Office of Access, Equity, and Diversity; the Instructional Division; Human Resources; and Information Technology) share oversight of these processes to ensure that employees meet [annual training requirements](#).

As outlined in College Policy, all employees are expected to follow the tenets of the [SCC Code of Ethics](#):

- Be accountable and show respect for others.
- Be honest and demonstrate integrity.
- Pursue excellence in fulfilling responsibilities and job duties.
- Be kind and compassionate.
- Adhere to the principles of diversity.

College Policy contains [discriminatory harassment](#) and [grievance policies and procedures](#). The [Faculty Association](#) and the [Professional Association](#) have negotiated their own procedures that are communicated to constituents in the Constitution and Bylaws for each agreement.

The College continues to make improvements to policies that promote fair and ethical behavior. For example, since 2017-2018, [faculty contracts](#) have been based on a professional model to promote faculty autonomy while ensuring students receive the highest quality learning experience.

SCC operates with integrity by following the aforementioned policies and processes, which promote fair and ethical behavior. The College believes that operating with integrity contributes to a [low employee turnover rate](#) (3.C.1). In 2022, [76% of employees reported being satisfied with their work environment](#).

Policies and Processes for Auxiliary Functions Integrity

SCC supports and administers several auxiliary functions: the [Child Development Center](#) (Lincoln), [cafeterias](#) (Beatrice, Lincoln, and Milford), [student housing](#) (Beatrice and Milford), [Campus Stores](#) (Beatrice, Lincoln, Milford), [Course Restaurant](#), [Course Ground Coffeeshop](#), and the [Entrepreneurship Center](#) (Lincoln). All are intended to be at least partially self-supporting, and their revenue and expenses are included in the College’s [financial reporting system](#) and [annual audit](#).

Auxiliary services follow the same planning, budgeting, and assessment cycle as other College departments. With the exception of the cafeterias, these functions are staffed with College employees who have the same rights and responsibilities as other employees and are subject to SCC policies and

procedures. Three of the auxiliary functions, the Child Development Center, the Entrepreneurship Center, and Course Restaurant, are designed specifically to provide service to external as well as internal constituents. Auxiliary functions have strong administrative oversight and regular budget review from the Vice President of [Administrative Services](#) to ensure that activities support the College Mission and [Strategic Plan](#).

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

2.B.1.

Southeast Community College is committed to accuracy in its public information, as well as to the ongoing evaluation of evidence, in order to fulfill its Mission to empower and transform diverse learners in southeast Nebraska. Since 2015, SCC has added 10 new positions in [Marketing and Communications](#), [Institutional Compliance](#), and [Institutional Research](#) that have been integral in strengthening public information/relations, ensuring compliance with federal and state requirements, and developing a valid and reliable data infrastructure to support institutional operations.

The College presents itself clearly and completely through a variety of documents, static reports and interactive dashboards, including, but not limited to:

- [2021 Graduate Report](#)
- [2022 Annual Profile](#)
- [Interactive Fact Book](#)
- [2022-2023 College Catalog](#)
- [Annual Notice to Students and Employees](#)
- [Graduation, Transfer, and Retention Rate Information](#)
- [IPEDS Data Feedback Report](#)
- [Career Clusters](#)
- [Licensure Rates](#)
- [Student Athlete Outcomes](#)

To provide the public with fair, accurate, and complete information in accordance with federal requirements, the College annually publishes a [College Catalog](#) as well as a [Consumer Information website](#) and distributes an [Annual Notice](#) which contain the policies, procedures, rules, regulations, student rights and responsibilities, and general information pertaining to the College's educational programs. These documents and marketing materials are updated annually by the Instructional, Student Enrollment, and Student Success Divisions, as outlined in [College Policy](#).

Academic Offerings and Requirements

SCC's Catalog provides students and the public with clear information on all [programs of study](#), including the [requirements, curriculum, prerequisites, and descriptions for classes](#). The [program](#)

[pages](#) include information on associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates and state the requirements for admission and completion for all program areas. An electronic version of the SCC Catalog is available on the [College website](#) for public access. Student expectations regarding attendance, assignments, learning outcomes, and integrity of scholarship are outlined in course syllabi and course information documents. All syllabi are accessible to students on the [College's public website](#), [the intranet \(The Hub\)](#), and the [Canvas learning management system](#). [Course information documents](#) are available to students in Canvas courses and to faculty and staff on [The Hub](#).

Faculty and Staff

Faculty and staff names, positions, and credentials are identified in the [College Catalog](#) and in an [online directory](#) on the College's public website. Personnel changes are made available to the public at monthly Board of Governors meetings and in the [corresponding minutes](#). Each month, the Vice President for Human Resources presents personnel changes, including replacement, resignation, and transfer of employees, as well as updates on position vacancies. The [faculty and staff qualification policy](#) is also available on the public website.

Costs to Students

[Costs to students](#) are stated in the College Catalog, are easily accessible on the [SCC website homepage](#) and are [printed on program fliers](#). As outlined in its policies and procedures, the College goes through a [systematic process](#) to review tuition costs each year in a way that promotes transparency with students and the public. The Vice President for Student Success attends [Student Senate meetings](#) on each campus to discuss the impact of tuition and fee increases, and student and administrative recommendations are presented to the Board. The Board reviews [tuition and budget impact information](#), along with proposed tuition and fees at peer community colleges, and then [votes on a recommendation](#) each Fall.

Governance Structure

The [SCC website](#), [College Catalog](#), and [Board minutes](#) communicate the College's status as a public institution. The College is governed by a [Board of Governors](#), which is comprised of 11 elected officials from throughout the 15-county service area. Board membership, responsibilities, policies, and meeting agendas and minutes are accessible on the [website](#). [College leadership biographies](#) are published on the "About SCC" page, accessible from the website's home page.

Accreditation Relationships

The [College Catalog](#) and [public website](#) include SCC's accreditation information regarding the Higher Learning Commission, as well as information on [specialized program-specific accreditations](#). With the goal of promoting transparency across all levels of the College, accredited programs regularly [present updates to the Board of Governors](#).

Student Right-to-Know and Consumer Information

Students and the public can access safety and security information for SCC campuses on the College website and in campus offices. An annually updated [safety and security brochure](#) and the [Annual Safety, Security, and Crime/Fire Statistics Report](#) reveal preventative security measures the College has taken and statistics regarding crime, safety, and pertinent data.

2.B.2.

The College's focus on community engagement, experiential learning, resiliency skills, and relationship building are demonstrated in the Mission, Vision Statement, Strategic Plan, and programming.

SCC's [Vision Statement](#) notes that the College strives to be a national leader in developing high-contact technical and academic experiences through personal and sincere relationships with engaged and invested faculty, staff, and administrators. These personal connections will be coupled with intensive learning opportunities through co-curricular involvement, research, volunteerism, and public service. SCC's commitment to student transformation intentionally encompasses the development of [essential life skills](#), including reflective thinking, resiliency, and emotional intelligence proficiency.

In 2020, the College surveyed students on self-reported perceptions of emotional intelligence and academic resiliency skills. Student Climate Survey responses noted students reported feeling control over their own [academic success](#) and high confidence to [master course requirements](#). Students also reported perceptions of their [self-awareness](#), [self-management](#), [social awareness](#), and [relationship management](#). The Office of Institutional Research found positive correlations between self-management and self-awareness and [student GPA](#).

Aspects of the College's Mission, such as community engagement and experiential learning, are reinforced through the Institutional Learning Outcome-informed [co-curricular programming](#) that enriches [student experience](#). The College has identified the following co-curricular programs that are assessed on an annual basis:

- [Federal Work Study](#)
- [Student Senate](#)
- [Annual Speech Contest](#)
- [International Education Week](#)
- [New Student Enrollment](#)
- [TRiO/Student Support Services](#)
- [SkillsUSA](#)

[Student organizations](#) are [active in the community](#). For example, the Nursing programs conducted [student-led health screenings](#) at local schools; [Dental Assisting](#) students provided oral hygiene instructions and handed out supplies at a safety event; and [Culinary students](#) provided Thanksgiving meals to students who otherwise may not have had one.

As part of its institutional assessment process, the College maps CCSSE survey questions to the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) as another method of evaluating claims it makes for students' learning experience. For example, for the [Career and Professional Readiness ILO](#), SCC utilizes CCSSE data to understand students' perceptions of how the institution has contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in working effectively with others, developing clear career goals, and acquiring work-related knowledge and skills.

The majority of [SCC's career and technical programs](#) include a co-op, internship, clinical, practicum, or capstone project. SCC students consistently compete in the [annual Skills USA competitions](#). Career and technical programs embed hands-on learning into curriculum and instruction through [labs, simulation, and other methods of experiential learning](#).

In 2021, SCC expanded its [Student Success course](#), ACFS1015, and now requires its completion for the majority of academic programs. The course curriculum promotes the key leadership skills of resiliency and emotional intelligence. The College also has expanded its commitment to creating destination campuses by adding [new residence halls](#), [dining halls](#), a [coffee shop](#), and [personnel](#) to support these [expanded operations](#).

SCC and its graduates are key drivers in economic and workforce development. The College publishes and widely distributes an annual [Graduate Report](#), which provides employment and transfer data that demonstrate a vigorous contribution to local economic development. The Graduate Report is used for marketing to prospective students and community partners. The 2021 report revealed that SCC graduates achieved a [96% success rate](#) in obtaining employment or continuing their education upon graduation. Of those graduates who were employed, [87% reported working](#) in Nebraska and 67% in the 15-county service area.

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

2.C.1.

Southeast Community College's Board of Governors consists of [11 publicly elected members](#) — two from each of [five districts](#) of the College's 15-county area and one at-large member. The Board includes a professionally diverse group invested in carrying out SCC's Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan. Board members have the responsibility of representing their constituencies and [reporting updates](#) to the Board about the areas they represent. Because the Board is elected by local constituents rather than appointed, it can act autonomously in the best interest of citizens served by SCC.

Each January, the Board elects from its members a [Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer](#). In accordance with Board policy, the Board Chair appoints members to serve on the following [teams](#):

- Equity and Human Resources
- Finance and Facilities
- Planning
- Executive Advisory
- NCCA Representative
- TCA Joint Board Representative
- Ad Hoc teams (e.g., [President's Compensation Team](#))

The Board appoints a President of the College, the only employee who reports directly to the Board. The President, in conjunction with the [Administrative Team](#), is responsible for operations at all campuses and locations.

In response to [HLC Review Team feedback](#) in the 2017 Assurance Review, SCC's Board has maintained a focused commitment on reviewing existing policies and adopting new policies. Prior to 2018, many of the College's policies had not been reviewed in more than 20 years. SCC has worked closely with its HLC Liaison to ensure progress in developing a systematic review of policy and

procedure and reports [annual progress](#) in this area as part of the [HLC Action Agreement](#). Since 2018, the Board has adopted three new Board of Governors policies, three new Administration/Management policies, 15 new Educational Services policies, nine new Fiscal Management policies, four new Personnel policies, and conducted an extensive review and modification of all [five Board policy](#) sections. The College now has a collaborative, thorough, and [systematic process to review existing and develop new policies and procedures](#) on a [five-year cycle](#).

The [state of Nebraska](#) delegates Board rights and responsibilities in accordance with the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education's [statewide plan](#). New Board members are [onboarded](#) through an extensive [orientation](#) with the Board Chair and College President. To stay current with common interests and trends among Board professionals, members regularly attend [professional development trainings](#), such as those offered through the Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT).

In addition to monthly meetings, regular Board work sessions allow for in-depth dialogue into the College's strategic initiatives. These work sessions have been held on topics such as [enrollment management](#), [budget planning](#), [capital campaigns](#), [accreditation relations](#), and [facilities planning](#). This practice allows Board members to have adequate time to review and discuss these topics before acting upon them at monthly Board meetings.

Each monthly meeting includes a presentation from an instructional program or administrative department about its curriculum or work activities. Discussions of pertinent topics like [Learning Centers](#), [instructional programming](#), [advising transformation](#), and [technology](#) help the Board stay apprised of current and emerging priorities.

The Board's knowledge is reflected in [recent deliberations](#) around financial and academic policy responsibilities. In accordance with [Board policy](#), the College President and Vice President of Administrative Services present a [monthly financial report](#), which the Board [approves](#). The Board has established policies related to [gift acceptance](#), [naming rights](#), and [tuition and fees](#). The Board also reviews and approves the [annual audit](#) conducted by an external agency, [Dana F. Cole Company](#).

In addition, Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) has financial oversight responsibilities. CCPE maintains a [comprehensive statewide plan](#) that defines the roles and mission of higher education in Nebraska and reviews and approves all new instructional programs and capital construction projects over \$2 million.

In the last five years, the College has enhanced its focus on developing new academic programs and expanding credentials. In compliance with [College Policy](#), the Board [reviews and approves](#) new credentials prior to review and approval by CCPE, HLC, and the Department of Education.

SCC Board members recently [collaborated](#) with the College President and administration to develop a new [Board Orientation Manual](#). The development of this document provided an excellent opportunity to discuss Board roles and responsibilities versus College administration roles and responsibilities. The Manual was reviewed in depth with incoming newly elected Board members during their orientation [in December 2022](#), alongside the President's [presentation](#) of the College's Mission and strategic priorities.

2.C.2.

The Board oversees the governance of the College, offering a big-picture, long-term view and making

policy decisions for the best interests of the service area, institution, and students. Board members have access to information necessary for such decision-making through OnBoard meeting agendas and document repository. For example, the President presents financial information, including [fund balances](#), [investments](#), and [receipt of revenue](#) from multiple sources. The monthly report also includes [detailed expenditures](#) information.

As mentioned above, one of the standing Board agenda items is a [presentation from an instructional program or administrative office](#). The instructional presentations provide interactive demonstrations of what students are learning in the classroom and serve as important reminders for Board members as they deliberate budgetary and policy decisions that impact students.

Examples of Board decisions reflecting institutional priorities include the [approval of the College's Strategic Plan](#), [involvement in the Facilities Master Planning process](#), [adoption of bond resolutions](#), and [approval of expanded projects](#).

Board special work sessions are regularly held to discuss the [College's Strategic Plan](#), [budget-related topics \(including general and capital funds\)](#), [tax levy and tuition rates](#), [enrollment](#), [facilities](#), and [other strategic initiatives](#). The President and Administrative Team lead these discussions to [review trend and comparative data](#) and discuss budget scenarios to support Strategic Plan goals. Using a data-informed process, the Board annually approves [expanded project requests](#).

Board action items are [linked to strategic objectives](#) to demonstrate the College's commitment to aligning decisions with and in support of the Strategic Plan. Within the last seven years, the Board has approved more than [\\$200 million](#) of renovation and new construction projects completed as of March 2023. These approvals represent a strong commitment from the Board to preserve and enhance the institution through modernization of the College facilities in spite of a failed [bond](#) attempt in 2016.

2.C.3.

Representing the 15-county area, SCC's [Board of Governors](#) is comprised of elected officials who take into consideration the needs of internal and external stakeholders. [College Policy](#) communicates the responsibilities of the Board of Governors. New Board members participate in an [orientation](#), led by the Board Chair, that outlines their responsibilities. One of the Board [Standards of Conduct](#) is to recognize that the Board's duty is to represent the entire community while allowing for individual members to advocate for the particular concerns of their constituents. In 2021, the Board partnered with a consultant for a [redistricting study](#) using 2020 Census results. Prior to [2022 Board elections](#), a [Board work session](#) was held to study population changes and re-draw districts within the service area based on population data. This process ensured that each Board district represented constituencies of approximately the same size.

To better understand the interests of external stakeholders in the 15-county area, the SCC President, Administrative Team, Strategic Planning Team, and Board members traveled to each county in the service area in [2014](#) and [2019](#) to share information about the College in [open forums](#). This gave the President and Board members opportunities to engage personally with district constituents. With this outreach, the President and Board members engaged directly with service area constituents and gained valuable information that was [incorporated into](#) the Strategic Plans.

Both the [2015-2019 Strategic Plan](#) and the [2020-2024 Strategic Plan](#) represent the conduit through which the Board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and

external constituencies. The College's Strategic Plans are based on a [comprehensive environmental scan](#) of key trends and findings that inform the creation of strategic goals and objectives. Annual strategies [linked to these goals and objectives](#) are identified and implemented at the department and division levels via the College's Mission Action Plan (MAP) process. The Board's deliberations related to general fund and capital fund decisions are guided by strategy and project alignment with the College's strategic goals and objectives. For example, all [expanded budget projects](#) must be aligned with specific strategic goals and objectives before they are presented to the Board. Since 2015, the Board has approved more than \$11 million in [expanded positions](#) to support the strategic direction of the institution.

During the Board of Governors meetings, one of the standing agenda items is [Public Comment](#), which allows stakeholders to share their thoughts about any item on the month's agenda. In 2021, a [member of the general public](#) spoke in support of the College's academic programming and encouraged the College to expand educational programming in specialized high-skill industries.

During monthly meetings, Board members also report on [their individual activities](#) on behalf of the Board. Board members frequently participate in community events, volunteer work, professional organizations, and other avenues that connect SCC to the broader community.

Monthly [meetings include standard agenda items](#) that support Board roles and responsibilities:

- Ensuring that financial and human resources meet legal and fiduciary responsibilities:
 - Approval and ratification of bills and claims.
 - Approval of personnel changes for administrative and staff positions.
 - Approval of hiring/resignations/terminations of faculty positions.
 - Financial report from the Vice President of Administrative Services.
- Reviewing reasonable and relevant activities and priorities for internal and external constituencies:
 - Public Comment.
 - Board member and Board team reports on recent and upcoming activities.
 - President's report on recent activities and accomplishments.
 - Faculty Association report from the Faculty Association Area President.
 - Student activities report from a member of the Student Senate.
- Learning about college curriculum and work activities during [presentations](#) from instructional programs or administrative departments. These presentations help Board members understand the College more deeply and recognize the operational impact of policy decisions on internal and external constituents. Recent presentations have reflected these topics:
 - [Admissions and placement testing processes](#)
 - Agriculture, Transportation, and Welding Division [initiatives](#) to strengthen enrollment opportunities
 - Overview of the new [Biotechnology program](#) and industry partnerships

Each year, the Board receives a copy of the annual [Strategic Plan Progress Report](#). This report includes the year's strategic achievements and results associated with the College's Key Performance Indicators and strategic metrics. The Board [reviews](#) this report and other data reports in its decision making.

2.C.4.

The Board is committed to the proper operation of the College and requires that its members be

impartial and independent of personal interest as they address policy issues and other agenda items. College Policy outlines [Board Conflict of Interest](#) policies and procedures. It is the policy of the Board that any possible conflict of interest be handled through prompt and full disclosure and [non-participation in any vote](#) where conflict of interest may be involved.

In regard to private giving for capital projects, the Board preserves its independence from undue donor influence by adhering to its [policy related to naming rights](#) for campus facilities and spaces, which states that “a proposed name will not result in impermissible commercial endorsement or advertising benefitting the commercial enterprise.” All potential naming rights are [reviewed and approved by the Board](#).

The Board protects itself from undue influence from elected officials by monitoring the actions of state legislation that could negatively impact the College. Over the past several years, Board members have given testimony at Nebraska legislative hearings in opposition to potential bills that would have [removed the Board’s authority to levy property tax](#), a major source of funding for the College. Currently, [Nebraska state statute](#) provides community colleges with the authority to levy up to 11.25 cents of taxation per \$100 of property valuation. However, the Board has the authority to use a maximum of only two cents for capital construction. The Board and College President have worked together to [support legislation](#) to remove the two-cent maximum and to give the Board local control in determining the amount of its levy authority associated with general fund and capital construction expenditures.

In 2021, the Legislature [passed a bill](#) that required public entities with taxing authority to notify all taxpayers in their service area if the entity increased its tax levy above a particular threshold. Rather than basing its budget decisions on avoiding the notification requirement, the Board based its decisions on the resources needed to fulfill the Mission and strategic objectives. The Board [approved a budget](#) that required the College to mail postcards to all property taxpayers within its service area.

The Board also relies on legal counsel to review its deliberations, ensuring the Board’s independence from undue influence. A College-contracted attorney [attends all Board meetings and work sessions](#). Board meetings are open to the public, and minutes and agendas are available on [SCC’s website](#).

2.C.5

[College Policy](#) states:

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors to appoint, support, and evaluate the President and to delegate the responsibilities for the execution of its policies directly to him or her.

Board [Standards of Conduct](#) state that Board members are to avoid interference in the day-to-day administration of Southeast Community College and to support the President in carrying out the administrative duties of the College, including those regarding academic matters. The Board practices these responsibilities each year during the approval of the [President’s annual goals](#), which provide guidance on the President’s operational priorities for that year. At the end of each calendar year, the Board provides feedback on the President’s performance related to the [goals](#). The [results](#) are discussed in closed session.

The Board Executive Team and Chairperson meet with the President on a monthly basis to set the [Board meeting agenda](#), and the President provides [monthly reports](#) to update members on pertinent operational and strategic initiatives.

The Board Chairperson frequently educates members of their role during and outside of regular meetings. For example, in July 2022, Board members participated in a [special work session](#) led by the College's legal counsel regarding the Open Meetings Law and FERPA, executive session, and the role of administration related to day-to-day operation of the College.

SCC faculty oversee academic matters through [oversight of curriculum](#), [service on committees](#), assessment of student learning, advising, and other functions described in [College Policy](#) and the [faculty contract](#). See 3.C for additional information on faculty oversight of academic matters.

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

Southeast Community College is committed to truth and integrity in teaching and learning. The College's [Core Values](#) of Integrity and Innovation drive the decisions and actions of the institution.

Integrity: Continuous pursuit of fulfillment of Mission and goals through transparency and ethical practices in all College operations.

Innovation: Commitment to inquiry and the respectful challenging of assumptions to promote creativity, alternative points of view, and opportunities for ongoing discovery.

Additionally, [Goal 9.6](#) of the College's Strategic Plan focuses on maximizing a positive and engaging organizational environment by encouraging input, reflective and transparent communication, and compassion and respect toward the views and ideas of others.

As discussed in 3.A.3, [the College has standard syllabi](#) with common learning outcomes across course sections. Even though there is consistency in course expectations, faculty have the latitude and freedom to develop their course lesson plans that are unique to their professional backgrounds and interests.

SCC employees' freedom to pursue scholarship, creative expression, and research is demonstrated through policy and practice. Policies regarding [intellectual property](#) delineate how the College supports faculty's scholarly work. The Office of Human Resources and the Instructional Division collaborate to provide faculty with [in-person and online training](#) that supports continuing growth in ethical teaching and learning. SCC also has policies regarding the [use of campus facilities](#) and [peaceful assembly](#) that reinforce students' and employees' freedom to pursue scholarship, creative expression, and research.

College administration has strengthened its commitment to faculty research through [Strategic Objective 5.3](#): "Promote internal and external opportunities for leadership, professional development, and educational advancement to ensure a dynamic work environment." In 2017, the College began offering research sabbaticals for faculty members as outlined in the [Faculty Agreement](#). As the College was developing its [Quality Initiative](#), President's Illich's directive to the faculty-driven QI Curriculum Team was to ensure academic rigor and integrity were maintained while [embedding student resiliency skills](#) in existing curriculum.

Students and faculty have numerous ways of exercising their academic freedoms, including publishing their work in the College's award-winning creative works publication, [Illuminations](#), which features original art, photography, prose, poetry, and essays. Through the publication of SCC's newspaper, [The Challenge](#), students learn the ethical responsibilities of gathering and reporting news. Student clubs and organizations also offer students opportunities for free expression through civic engagement and dialogue.

SCC recognizes more than [20 student organizations](#), including, but not limited to: Student Senate, Phi Theta Kappa, Agriculture Club, Esports Club, Chess Club, SCC Pride, Psychology/Sociology Club, SkillsUSA, Student Veterans Organization, SCC Democrats, SCC Republicans, religious groups, Phi Beta Lambda, and Humanities Club. Each organization has a faculty or staff sponsor, who has the freedom to create unique personal growth and learning experiences through collaborative activities on and off campus.

Students reported in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement ([CCSSE](#)) that they often [asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions](#). The [biennial student survey](#) also validated students' freedom of expression, since most students reported they [did not witness or experience bias and discrimination](#) related to political views, religion, or other aspects of identity.

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2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2.E.1.

SCC's policies and procedures related to academic integrity are informed by the College's [Value of Integrity](#), defined as the "continuous pursuit of fulfillment of Mission, Vision, and goals through transparency and ethical practices in all College operations."

Integrity is infused throughout College Policy and guides instruction, student support, and operations. The College has made substantial progress in academic integrity since its 2012 comprehensive evaluation visit and now has a software solution, a refined process for tracking academic integrity processes, and a system in place to respond to student needs. SCC's [website](#), [College Catalog](#), [Code of Conduct](#), and [syllabi](#) outline expectations for students that are in alignment with College Values.

SCC's [Institutional Learning Outcomes](#) of Career and Professional Readiness and Innovative and Critical Thinking are infused with principles of academic freedom, integrity, and free expression. SCC's [General Education Learning Outcomes \(GELOs\)](#) Speech Communication (1), Written Communication (2), Critical Thinking and Problem Solving (3), Analytical, Quantitative, and Scientific Reasoning (5), and Career and Life Skills (6), which are incorporated into associate degree and diploma program requirements, also prepare students to evaluate ideas and the validity of arguments, acquire and integrate knowledge, synthesize information to solve problems, and demonstrate choices that reflect personal responsibility.

SCC's Office of Institutional Research has formalized [research request guidelines](#) for both faculty and external researchers. IR is responsible for creating and implementing guidelines and procedures for research approval; all research requests must be made through this process.

SCC does not have a formal Institutional Review Board (IRB), so all research projects that require interaction with SCC faculty, staff, or students, either person-to-person or through electronic communication, [must submit evidence that they have received IRB approval](#) (or exemption) from their affiliated institution. SCC procedures ensure that all projects involving human subjects will meet federal standards and that data will be used appropriately. These procedures have afforded faculty members pursuing graduate degrees with a path to receiving [approval to conduct thesis](#)

[research](#) on SCC campuses.

The new guidelines also streamline processes and ensure integrity of research when the College receives external requests to conduct research on its campuses. An example of such research is [UNL's College-Aged Substance Use in Educational Settings: Outcomes for Students with ADHD \(CASE4ADHD\) project](#), which is designed to enhance understanding of the functioning of young adults with ADHD in college settings over their first year.

SCC's Resource Development Office has two procedures in place to ensure regulatory compliance, ethical behavior, and fiscal accountability. The first is a [separation of duties for grant-funded purchases](#) that segregates financial procedures to preserve accuracy. The second is the [creation of a restricted cost center for each grant project](#) within the College accounting structure to prevent the commingling of funds and to accurately track revenues and expenditures for the grant.

SCC's [agricultural](#) and [biological sciences](#) faculty follow guidelines established by the [American Association of Laboratory Animal Science](#) to ensure animals are treated humanely in teaching, lab research, field research, and outreach activities. [Course syllabi](#) also include student expectations and learning outcomes associated with animal care.

2.E.2.

SCC offers students multiple resources for finding, assessing, and using information in an ethical manner.

Staff in the [Library Resource Centers \(LRC\)](#) and [Tutoring and Transitions Centers \(TTC\)](#) provide students and faculty with guidance in the ethical use of information resources and support for research. LRC staff offer [course-specific or individual orientations](#) on such topics as research resources and citation support. The utilization of these services decreased in 2020 and 2021; however, the College anticipates that when the Lincoln Campus LRC re-opens in 2023, the number of face-to-face orientations will increase to their previous levels. Writing tutors in the TTC assist students with source use and ethical citation both on-site and online via [Smarthinking](#).

In addition, the [LRC's Hub page](#) provides information on the evaluation of sources for credibility, the appropriate use of citation formats, and the ethical use of information. The page also features [external links](#) to a tutorial on academic applications of copyright law and to the U.S. Copyright Office.

As described in 2.E, four of the College's [General Education Learning Outcomes \(GELOs\)](#) are directly related to the ethical use of research (GELO 1, GELO 2, GELO 4, and GELO 6). Students take courses that satisfy the communications requirement in the general education core and include instruction in the appropriate use and citation of sources. For example, the objectives for [Composition I](#) state that the course will introduce the use of research skills to responsibly evaluate and ethically incorporate information using a standard citation method; the course will also introduce strategies for collection and evaluation of information from a variety of sources, including institutional databases and library resources.

The required [research-incorporated essay](#) in Composition I is scored with a [common rubric](#) that evaluates responsible integration of sources. In addition, individual disciplines across the College instruct students in appropriate citation formats and types of scholarly sources through a variety of course assignments, including annotated bibliographies and MLA/APA-cited research-incorporated

essays.

To reinforce the ethical use of information, many instructors use [Turnitin](#), an online plagiarism education tool that allows students to self-check their writing for faulty paraphrasing. The use of Turnitin has steadily increased since its integration into SCC's learning management system. SCC students sent [nearly 70,000 submissions to Turnitin in 2022](#), more than 12 times [the number of submissions in 2010 \(n=5484\)](#) when the College first adopted the software.

Evidence that students are actively utilizing academic support provided by the College can be seen in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and in tutoring usage. The [CCSSE results from 2021](#) show that 28% of SCC respondents reported using peer or other kinds of tutoring. While rate of usage is slightly lower compared to the College's peer institutions, the satisfaction rate reported by students is substantially higher.

Students have actively sought out the College's tutoring support services. In Spring 2022, [more than 500 students utilized SCC's tutoring centers](#) for face-to-face or online appointments and [more than 250 used Smarthinking](#), with most students seeking support on writing.

2.E.3.

The College has strengthened its commitment to academic integrity through implementation of activities and procedures. The [Student Planner](#) provides definitions of academic integrity and the consequences of academic dishonesty. Expectations of academic integrity are included in the [College Catalog](#). As part of its commitment to teach students ethical academic habits, SCC's academic integrity policy is included in all [syllabi](#), and ethical responsibility is a stated outcome of [general education](#). Additionally, the College utilizes an internal incident reporting and data collection system that allows for tracking of and response to instances of academic dishonesty. In 2022, SCC transitioned to [Maxient software](#), which enables the College to easily analyze trend data and support data-driven programming to inform academic integrity processes and training opportunities for faculty and students.

SCC's LRC team plays an important role in supporting students in the ethics of research and the use of information resources. The LRC ensures students have access to helpful websites and citation tools through [The Hub \(intranet\) and public website](#). LRC staff also regularly attend [professional development trainings](#) to stay abreast of current academic integrity education trends and resources.

2.E.4.

SCC uses an incident reporting system (previously TIPS and now [CCR – Concerns & Complaints Reporting](#) with [Maxient software](#)) where faculty and students can report [violations of academic integrity](#). As reports are submitted, they are assigned to the respective associate dean. The associate dean works with the faculty member to ensure the concern has been addressed with the student through proper education and course/program procedures related to the violation. When the system flags a student who is the subject of multiple violations, the associate dean requests a conference with the student.

As noted in [course information documents](#), many courses include academic integrity issues as grounds for failing. If deemed necessary due to the number or nature of the violations, the campus Dean of Students may meet with the offending student to discuss the Student Code of Conduct and potential sanctions.

Between 2019-2022, approximately [350 academic concern cases](#), including issues related to academic integrity, were reported and resolved. As noted in the [institutional review](#), the College continues to make strides to strengthen the integrity of these data processes.

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

SCC's policies and procedures promote fair and ethical conduct from the Board of Governors, faculty, staff, administrators, and students. All Collegewide policies are available on the public website and are reviewed on a five-year schedule.

Sources

There are no sources.