



# **Year Six (Standard Two)**

## **Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review (PRFR) Report**

Prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Bellingham Technical College  
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## Report Development Process

BTC's long-standing, cross-representational Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC) is one of the college's nine governance committees. Throughout the 2017-18 academic year and in Fall 2018, ASC engaged in a self-assessment process using the former standards. As NWCCU began reviewing and updating the standards, this preparatory work was put on hold until completion of NWCCU's process. In November 2019, ASC voted to use the new NWCCU standards for BTC's Year 6 and 7 reports, and began providing feedback on all elements included in the Standard One and Two reports - including identifying areas of strength and opportunity - throughout the Winter and Spring. BTC's Standard Two report was drafted and ASC review began in Fall 2020.

In Winter 2021, staff completed nearly 20 individual Subject Matter Expert input and review sessions to ensure Year 6 report content accuracy and completeness. ASC also formed two taskforces: one to prioritize, recommend and contribute areas for improvement across NWCCU standards; and a second to gather campus input for the Year 6 report and coordinate broader campus engagement in preparation for the Year 7 visit. Based on this work, an ASC sub-team hosted nine open campus sessions (hosted via zoom) in Winter 2021 to gather campus input on the nine elements included in the Year 6 report. Over 50 participants, including members of BTC's Associated Student Body Executive Team, attended these sessions and provided input.

After incorporating edits and suggestions as appropriate, ASC formally approved the report (April 2021) and sought review and approval through BTC's participatory governance structure, including the College Assembly, administration, and Board of Trustees (all three groups approved June 2021). Final updates based on late-Spring and Summer 2021 progress were integrated into the report in July and August 2021.

## Executive Summary: Mission Fulfillment

*Bellingham Technical College provides student-centered, high-quality professional technical education for today's needs and tomorrow's opportunities.*

The college's current mission statement was collaboratively updated and approved in August 2012 to incorporate a strong focus on student learning and achievement, and reaffirmed by the campus community in Spring 2017. BTC's mission is at the heart of everything that employees do at BTC.

BTC's Strategic Plan is used to guide the college's work as it strives to accomplish its goals and fulfill its mission. In 2017, BTC began the process of updating its previous Strategic Plan to develop a new five-year plan for 2018-23. This process centered around gaining a comprehensive understanding of the needs and direction of the college by implementing a collaborative, campus-wide discussion process which included BTC students, employees, and board members. The results of this work were used to develop new campus themes and a revised set of strategic goals organized by theme. For the 2018-23 Strategic Plan, the college developed a common set of accreditation and strategic planning themes and goals to align these two major institutional processes. BTC identified four overarching themes, 13 strategic goals, and 12 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for consistent, college-wide use. The cross-constituency Planning and Resource Allocation (PARA) committee and two PARA taskforces—one focusing on broad strategic planning and the second focused on identifying meaningful KPIs—worked together to develop the college's current themes, goals, and KPIs.

A combination of new and continuing KPIs are aligned with the college's mission, themes, strategic goals, and other major initiatives, and include both quantitative and qualitative measures. Major components of the KPI development process included: identifying guiding principles; reviewing relevant NWCCU standards; exploring existing KPI examples from other colleges and universities, as well as state and national frameworks; drafting BTC's KPIs and measurement details (e.g., baselines, standards, and targets); gathering campus feedback via 12 interactive events; and revising the draft KPIs and measurement details based on this feedback. The college has identified a five-year standard (reflecting a minimum performance expectation) and five-year target (reflecting a stretch performance expectation) for each KPI, and sets annual targets across each year of the Plan.

BTC defines mission fulfillment as (a) making progress across its strategic goals and (b) meeting standards for 80% of its KPIs. The Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC) reviewed and slightly revised its performance indicator evaluation framework during Winter and Spring 2019. In alignment with this structure, the ASC updated BTC's three categories of indicator accomplishment to: 1) Meets Target, 2) Meets Standard, and 3) Doesn't Meet Standard. Strategic goal and KPI progress is documented in an Annual Review that is shared with the Board of Trustees and campus community, and helps inform planning for the subsequent academic year. Performance indicator results are analyzed and documented via the KPI

dashboard, BTC Annual Review, Program Effectiveness Reports (one report per instructional program), and accreditation self-study reports.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Bellingham Technical College remains compliant with all NWCCU Eligibility Requirements.

### STANDARD TWO – GOVERNANCE, RESOURCES, AND CAPACITY

*The institution articulates its commitment to a structure of governance that is inclusive in its planning and decision-making. Through its planning, operational activities, and allocation of resources, the institution demonstrates a commitment to student learning and achievement in an environment respectful of meaningful discourse.*

#### GOVERNANCE

**2.A.1 The institution demonstrates an effective governance structure, with a board(s) or other governing body(ies) composed predominantly of members with no contractual, employment relationship, or personal financial interest with the institution. Such members shall also possess clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Institutions that are part of a complex system with multiple boards, a centralized board, or related entities shall have, with respect to such boards, written and clearly defined contractual authority, roles, and responsibilities for all entities. In addition, authority and responsibility between the system and the institution is clearly delineated in a written contract, described on its website and in its public documents, and provides the NWCCU accredited institution with sufficient autonomy to fulfill its mission.**

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) is responsible for administering the Community and Technical College Act and providing leadership and coordination for Washington's public system of 34 community and technical colleges. The SBCTC is a coordinating board and is governed by a nine-member board appointed by the Governor. The Washington State Community and Technical College system has an organizational structure that provides input to the SBCTC from WACTC, the statewide Presidents' group.

An online [SBCTC policy manual](#) provides direction on statewide procedures for instruction, student services, and administration. Employees from the colleges provide information and input from these areas from their respective campuses up through councils to commissions to the statewide President's Council. BTC employees also bring information on system-wide information and issues back to the campus from this system. Each college develops its own policy and procedure guide within the standards outlined in the Washington Administrative Code, [Revised Code of Washington](#) and the SBCTC Policy Manual.

Bellingham Technical College has a structured [system of governance](#) with [defined roles](#). Policies [105](#), [105.1](#), and [105.1.1](#) outline the college's Board of Trustees (BOT) organization

and bylaws, and are posted in the BTC Policy and Procedures Guide on the campus intranet.

Legal power and responsibility for the operation of Bellingham Technical College rests with the BOT. Five board members are appointed by the Governor for a five-year term, which can be extended by one term. [Meetings of the BOT](#) are open and held on a monthly basis. Employee constituency group representatives and student representatives may also attend. The protocol to present or add to the agenda is posted in the college's Policy and Procedures Guide. Each agenda includes an opportunity for Comments from the Public. Minutes are posted on the front page of the college's intranet under *BTC News and Campus Updates* and *Board of Trustees Minutes and Department Updates* (updates are monthly reports shared with the Board as part of each meeting). Since Fall 2015, the Executive Assistant to the President has also sent out a campus-wide email regarding key outcomes from each BOT meeting.

The President reports to the Board of Trustees, and the role and authority of the President is outlined in the BOT's bylaws. All organizational charts are posted on the college's intranet. The President's Leadership Team meets weekly: this group includes the vice presidents, Executive Assistant to the President, Executive Director of Human Resources, and Executive Director of Institutional Planning and Advancement. Governance committees and other BTC teams and workgroups route operational recommendations directly to the President's Leadership Team or to the appropriate administrator for review and consideration.

**2.A.2 The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of authority, responsibility, and accountability who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness.**

BTC administrators include the [President](#), [Vice President of Administrative Services](#), [Vice President of Student Services](#), [Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Learning](#), [Executive Director of Institutional Planning and Advancement](#), [Executive Director of Human Resources](#), and deans. These employees are responsible for moving the college toward its strategic goals and fulfilling its mission. The Administrative Team meets monthly. Annually, administrators report on the progress of Strategic Plan goal attainment to the Board of Trustees in an Annual Review (created based on employee input and shared with the college community).

Each member of the [BTC administration](#) and the [President's Leadership Team](#) (PLT), which includes the three Vice Presidents, two Executive Directors, and Executive Assistant to the President, has a clear position description and is responsible for the operation and effectiveness of their areas and its support of other areas for the college. Each member is scheduled to be evaluated every two years by their supervisor. The Leadership Team is responsible for supporting development of the Strategic Plan and assisting with gathering feedback and implementing strategies to achieve the college's strategic goals and initiatives.

PLT meets weekly to discuss issues and opportunities, make or offer recommendations on decisions related to the operations of the college, and address any recommendations from BTC governance committees. The team meets more frequently in times of intensive response and/or planning. For example, in the weeks and months following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, PLT met daily to consider new information and make plans to help keep the campus community safe. Almost all (96%) of BTC employees who completed a late-Spring 2020 survey reported that BTC's response to the pandemic was effective.

**2.A.3 The institution employs an appropriately qualified chief executive officer with full-time responsibility to the institution. The chief executive may serve as an ex officio member of the governing board(s) but may not serve as its chair.**

[Walter Hudsick](#), BTC's Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Learning, was [appointed](#) as BTC's [Interim President](#) and Chief Academic Officer in January 2021. Mr. Hudsick replaced Dr. Kimberly Perry, who had served as BTC's President for five years and retired in December 2020.

Walter Hudsick began his post-secondary education pathway with an Associate of Arts degree at a college in New York before obtaining a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and Philosophy from Excelsior College in Albany, New York and a Master of Arts in English Composition and Rhetoric from Eastern Washington University. He has a varied professional background which includes experience as a police officer, library associate and English teacher.

Mr. Hudsick's teaching experience began as a faculty member in the humanities, English and ESL areas. In higher education management, his particular strengths are in team building, instructional management and strategies, student support management, budget management, and faculty development. Hudsick is also an experienced grant developer and manager, overseeing major grants (including serving as a Project Director for Title III grants) from Federal agencies such as the Departments of Education and Labor.

Mr. Hudsick has served in a variety of roles with Bellingham Technical College since 2015, including as a dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Learning. During his time at the college, he has served on a variety of State Commissions and Councils and forged connections within state government and regional community organizations. He has also served as an Accreditation Evaluator for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. He is recognized and respected in the state system for his variety and depth of educational and professional experience.

Interim President Hudsick has facilitated critical cultural and systemic changes within the institution, including expanding current and adding new degrees and certificates and developing and institutionalizing improved communication and collaborative campus-wide planning efforts. Recently, Mr. Hudsick has found resources for and led the current development of BTC's Guided Pathways model.



The Board of Trustees delegates to the college President the authority and responsibility to administer Bellingham Technical College in accordance with laws, policies, and rules approved or sanctioned by the Board of Trustees. BTC policies 106 and 106.1 provide guidance for presidential hiring, appointment and evaluation processes. At the operational level, the President has administrative authority over all matters affecting the college. The President serves as secretary to the Board of Trustees.

**2.A.4 The institution’s decision-making structures and processes, which are documented and publicly available, must include provisions for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which each has a direct and reasonable interest.**

BTC maintains nine [governance committees](#), including its College Assembly. Each governance committee maintains its own operating guidelines (e.g., [Planning and Resource Allocation Committee guidelines](#)), has a membership that reflects broad campus representation, and meets approximately once per month to address relevant topics. These major groups facilitate cross-campus communication and problem-solving. The College Assembly is a cross-constituency group that provides input, policy direction, general advice and recommendations to the administration and Board of Trustees. Representatives from all BTC employee groups and student representatives serve on this deliberative body, which sets the institutional agenda for the college and monitors the college's progress toward achieving its goals.

To increase the effectiveness of its new participatory governance structure, BTC piloted a governance committee evaluation process in 2018-19, beginning with the College Assembly, and each of the remaining governance committees participated in this process over the following two years. Committees use this review process to identify areas of strength as well as any opportunities to improve committee operations. Participatory governance is also one of 12 Key Performance Indicators under BTC’s 2018-23 strategic plan. To help assess the effectiveness of BTC’s governance system, BTC conducts an annual employee survey measuring the percentage of employees who feel represented in BTC’s participatory governance structure. Almost 90% (89%) of employees who responded to the Spring 2021 survey indicated that they felt represented. The college plans to continue refining its participatory governance structure in the coming years.

The committees that provide governance-related input into the College Assembly are:

- Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC)
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEIC)
- Facilities Planning Committee (FPC)
- Instructional Council (IC)
- Planning and Resource Allocation (PARA) Committee
- Safety Committee
- Student Access and Success (SAS) Committee
- Technology Committee

The College Assembly submits formal recommendations to the administration or directly to the President. The President is responsible for accepting, amending or rejecting each

recommendation. If the recommendation is substantively amended or rejected, the President will provide their rationale in writing one week prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the College Assembly. The Assembly also serves as a communication network and a venue to maintain consistency of major college processes. Any BTC employee or student is welcome to attend College Assembly meetings as an observer and can contribute comments at the end of the meeting.

In addition to the committees represented in BTC's participatory governance system, prior workgroups and committees that contributed to BTC operations remained active. Depending on the group's charge and role, members volunteer, are appointed, are selected by employee groups, or are chosen based on a combination of these processes.

Governance-related questions, issues, or recommendations made on the part of operational committees or workgroups may be received and considered by college governance committees and shared with College Assembly; relevant issues and questions identified by these committees may come before the Board. Schedules for meetings are developed by the groups. Campus-wide emails (including regular publications such as the monthly Notable News newsletter), open campus forums, and internal campus-wide events such as Campus Kick-Off and Faculty In-service Days are all vehicles to help keep the college community involved and updated on issues and decisions.

Monthly faculty meetings are faculty-only (as needed) or are jointly facilitated by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Learning (VPAASL) and faculty leaders. Identified issues, recommendations and changes in processes are presented at these meetings for broader input and feedback. The Vice Presidents of Administrative Services and Student Services, Student Services Directors and other support staff join the monthly faculty meetings when invited or as appropriate to help facilitate communication and gather input on issues related to their areas. Deans hold area faculty meetings periodically to facilitate communications and address current issues.

BTC instructional deans and directors also meet together on a weekly basis to facilitate communications. BTC's Student Services department holds monthly All-Staff meetings, while the Student Services Leadership Team holds a weekly 'Team Huddle' to briefly share information and updates which are emailed out to all Student Services employees. The Leadership Team also meets on a bi-weekly basis to address issues and engage in student services planning. The Associated Students of Bellingham Technical College (ASBTC) follows procedures set forth in their organizational bylaws. These bylaws are established to comply with state law governing student organizations ([RCW 28A.325](#)). Executive Team members are hired annually, and one or two representatives from each program on campus can serve on the Student Senate, depending on class size. BTC's Director of Student Life works closely with the ASBTC. The ASBTC Executive Team meets weekly with this Director, and meets with administrators as needed to assess any student concerns or issues.

Three collective bargaining agreements with employees help define workloads, compensation

and policies, and other working conditions. Each association/union (Bellingham Educational Association – faculty, Bellingham Educational Support Team – classified, and General Teamsters Local Union #231 – classified) selects its own leadership and meets as needed. Each of these unions represents a constituency group, as do the Exempt Consortium and Administrator Group. The Exempt Consortium and Administrator Group are consortia of non-represented BTC employees.

In Fall 2013 and Fall 2017, job actions occurred between the college and two of BTC’s unions (BEA and BEST). The issue of input into decision-making and governance, while not a negotiation issue, came forward on both occasions. The campus community has and is working to address these and other concerns. Ad-hoc representative campus committees have worked to improve climate and communication issues after each action. These committees included 1) the 2013 Collaboration and Commitment Committee, which was formed to help address climate issues on the BTC campus; 2) the Decision-Making/Governance Ad Hoc Task Force, which created BTC’s participatory governance structure and handbook in 2016; and 3) the Heart of BTC Design Team in 2017, which helped the college respond to employee concerns regarding campus communications, culture and climate. Following the 2017 action, and based on recommendations of the Heart of BTC Design Team, the college implemented a three-phase process, including hiring an external consultant to conduct interviews and focus groups across campus that involved all BTC employees; open sharing of that data collection and analysis; and development of collaboration, management and communication strategies based on those results. The college plans to continue building upon the strengths of these successful collaborations moving forward.

Based in part on increased focus on open communication and collaboration, faculty and classified staff have both recently completed contract cycles that were considered more collaborative by all parties and resulted in on-time agreements. Based on employee suggestions, and as included in the faculty contract, BTC established and implemented a Labor/Management Communication Committee in Fall 2019, whose purpose is to promote communication and information-sharing between BTC administration and the college’s labor groups. A focus of this group, which includes union and administrative leaders, is discussion and resolution of workplace issues and improvement of climate for employees.

## ACADEMIC FREEDOM

### **2.B.1 Within the context of its mission and values, the institution adheres to the principles of academic freedom and independence that protect its constituencies from inappropriate internal and external influences, pressures, and harassment.**

BTC’s Academic Freedom Policy ([301](#)) is included in the BEA (faculty) [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) and is published in the college’s Policy and Procedures Guide. The policy specifically addresses the college’s responsibility to protect the academic freedom of its constituents, and includes language verifying that the college and the faculty association “agree that academic freedom is essential to the fulfillment of the purposes of the college and acknowledge the

fundamental need to protect faculty from censorship or restraint which might interfere with their obligations in the performance of their professional duties.” The Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Learning is responsible for maintaining Policy 301.

**2.B.2 Within the context of its mission and values, the institution defines and actively promotes an environment that supports independent thought in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. It affirms the freedom of faculty, staff, administrators, and students to share their scholarship and reasoned conclusions with others. While the institution and individuals within the institution may hold to a particular personal, social, or religious philosophy, its constituencies are intellectually free to test and examine all knowledge and theories, thought, reason, and perspectives of truth. Individuals within the institution allow others the freedom to do the same.**

Academic freedom for faculty ([Policy 301](#)) is addressed in section 5.5 of the [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#). Passage 5.5.4 states that “faculty members shall be guaranteed full freedom in classroom presentations and discussions and may explore controversial materials relevant to course content.” Faculty members must develop curriculum content that is consistent with the mission of the college: to provide student-centered, high-quality professional technical education in their particular program. Within these parameters, faculty have the freedom to implement innovative teaching and learning methods in relation to identified professional and technical skills.

BTC complies with the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), including [RCW 28B.10.039](#), which mandates that state higher education institutions adopt policies to accommodate student absences for reasons of faith or conscience or for activities conducted under the auspices of a religious organization. BTC syllabi include information for how to obtain accommodations for absences based on reasons of Faith or Conscience.

The college encourages its employees and students to share research and information with others, and supports employee and student attendance at conferences, council meetings, and in other venues. Professional development, which includes opportunities to participate in events/presentations, is addressed in all three collective bargaining agreements (Faculty [BEA] and Facilities [Teamsters]) and in all employee handbooks (Administrator, Exempt, BEA, BEST, Teamsters).

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**2.C.1 The institution’s transfer-of-credit policy maintains the integrity of its programs and facilitates the efficient mobility of students desirous of the completion of their educational credits, credentials, or degrees in furtherance of their academic goals.**

Shortly after beginning the college application process, students must either take the college’s placement test or provide transcripts showing equivalent testing or coursework. Transitional Studies students, including English Language Learners, might not fill out a BTC admissions

application, but come directly to the Transitional Studies department to enroll in courses. These students attend a department orientation that includes an intake meeting with support staff, complete a Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) assessment, and engage in goal-setting and other intake processes prior to placement in a Transitional Studies program or course.

Students are assigned a College Navigator early in their onboarding process to encourage an early connection with advising and to help them continue a seamless pathway through the orientation process. College Navigators are trained to perform unofficial transfer credit evaluations for colleges within Washington State while the official transcript evaluation is in progress. This enables transfer students to progress more quickly through the admissions process and connect early with their College Navigators. Students who have applied to the college and completed assessment processes must sign up for a mandatory [GET Started](#) session to learn how to, among other things, navigate the website, register for classes, create an academic plan, and learn about college resources.

BTC students applying for admission into most Allied Health programs must complete and submit an application packet that includes transcribed evidence of pre-requisite course completion. Students can also use high school or previous college transcripts to show evidence that they meet entry requirements for BTC programs. BTC's Acceptance of Transfer Credit Policy ([331](#)) is clearly articulated in the [college catalog](#). Credit transfer guidelines, including for College Board Advanced Placement (AP) credit, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge, DANES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST), College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), and Career and Technical Education (CTE) Dual Credit, as well as courses from other regionally-accredited institutions, are clearly outlined in the college catalog and on the web. BTC transfer guidelines are based on [SBCTC standards for transfer](#). On its '[Transfer Student](#)' webpage, BTC maintains a linked [table of courses](#) it accepts in transfer from the other universities and two-year community and technical colleges. The college's Academic Credit for Prior Learning (ACPL) Policy ([332](#)) has been recently updated and is consistently followed by BTC's Credential Evaluator, working in collaboration with BTC's Director of Instructional Programs and Projects.

BTC's '[Transfer Options](#)' webpage contains instructions and information for students and others on transferring credit to four-year institutions from BTC. The site contains information on the college's direct transfer degrees, and a chart of articulated BTC programs and courses accepted at other institutions is available. BTC support staff discuss options and counsel students who are interested in transfer opportunities, and special programs such as TRIO Student Support Services sponsor activities encouraging BTC students to continue their education at the baccalaureate level.

**2.C.2 The institution’s policies and procedures related to student rights and responsibilities should include, but not be limited to, provisions related to academic honesty, conduct, appeals, grievances, and accommodations for persons with disabilities.**

The [BTC catalog](#) is primarily available online, and contains information on student rights and responsibilities, including policies on progress, attendance, conduct, and the process for appealing decisions regarding student conduct. Limited hard copies of the catalog are available upon request. The entire [Student Code of Conduct](#) has recently been updated, and reflects new information in a variety of areas, including new Federal Title IX regulations, academic dishonesty procedures, and potential educational sanctions based on conduct issues. The Code is published and available to students and the campus community in the catalog, through the Office of the Vice President of Student Services, and on the BTC Student Resources webpage.

Students in programs for special populations may be required to follow additional requirements: for example, Accessibility Resources (Policies [412](#) and [412.0.A](#)) provides students with guidelines for accessing these resources, including a [handbook](#) with information on disabilities policies, processes and documentation steps, which is accessible on the website and made available through BTC’s Accessibility Resources Office. Once students have completed their Accessibility Resources access planning and log in to the MyAR system (an online student portal for students to request accommodations thru Accessibility Resources), they are required to sign a Rights and Responsibilities agreement, which aligns with the BTC Code of Conduct.

Bellingham Technical College has a policy and procedure ([419](#)) posted on the institutional web site regarding the handling of grievances by a student against the application of a policy or practice of the college or college staff that is considered improper or unfair, or where there has been deviation from or misinterpretation or misapplication of a practice or policy. A grade appeal is not considered a grievance and is covered by a separate policy and process, as are appeals of student conduct decisions. The process for filing a grievance includes both informal and formal resolution processes and procedures, and was last updated in February 2020. Appeal processes are outlined as well.

If a student complaint is not resolved in the articulated informal process with the appropriate BTC employee, the student may initiate an informal process with the appropriate supervisor. If the student complaint is not resolved with the appropriate supervisor, or if the student wishes to appeal the supervisor’s decision regarding their complaint, the student may file a formal grievance using the grievance form available on BTC’s website, where it will be routed to the appropriate Vice President or designee to review and respond. If a resolution is not reached, the Vice President or designee convenes a Grievance Hearing Committee to review the complaint. The committee reviews the complaint and make a written report to the Vice President or a designee, which may include calling a full hearing if the committee determines that the nature of the grievance requires one. After the conclusion of a hearing, the committee has 10 business days to deliver a written disposition of the grievance to the involved parties. The student may appeal any final decision of the committee to the college President. Upon considering an appeal, the President issues a written decision to the parties involved within 30

business days of the receipt of the appeal, and may uphold the decision of the committee or may determine a remedy. The decision of the President is final and no further appeals within the college are considered.

The Vice President of Student Services' office keeps a record of all formally-submitted student complaints and related documentation. Records related to student grievances are maintained in the student's file and an online database in accordance with FERPA guidelines. The college maintains an electronic log to track and aggregate student complain information and the disposition of the complaints to determine whether improvements may be appropriate. In 2017, BTC contracted with Maxient, LLC, to upgrade reporting and case management options, which also included the creation of a user-friendly, easily accessible incident reporting form for student grievances. The tracking of formal student complaints and related documentation also migrated to Maxient, with the Vice President of Student Services' office collecting data from the system annually for review. In February 2020, the college updated the student grievance policy and procedure to provide clearer instructions for following the grievance process. As a result, the majority of complaints are being resolved through the informal resolution process and are not escalated to formal complaints.

Between 2014 and July 2021, BTC received 41 student complaints. Of those, the majority were related to program requirements, classroom management, or interactions with employees. Most of these complaints were resolved through the student meeting with a Vice President or designee, with fewer than five complaints proceeding to a full hearing by a Grievance Hearing Committee. In a few cases, students have also either withdrawn their complaint or declined to pursue resolution after submitting the initial documentation.

BTC has recently updated the Academic Appeal Process for grade disputes and academic sanctions. The policy and procedure for student grade appeals ([380](#), [380.A](#)) is included on the website and in the catalog, and describes the process a student should follow in order to appeal what they believe to be an incorrect final grade in any course. Grade appeals must demonstrate an arbitrary or capricious evaluation of student work or a calculation error. Information regarding informal and formal procedures are outlined, along with the process to appeal the initial decision.

The college's Academic Integrity Policy ([390](#)) addresses consequences for academic dishonesty or abetting in academic dishonesty. Policies and procedures governing the imposition of academic sanctions for academic dishonesty can be found in the college's Academic Integrity policy, course syllabi, and program handbooks.

**2.C.3 The institution’s academic and administrative policies and procedures should include admission and placement policies that guide the enrollment of students in courses and programs through an evaluation of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to ensure a reasonable probability of student success at a level commensurate with the institution’s expectations. Such policies should also include a policy regarding continuation in and termination from its educational programs, including its appeal and re-admission policy.**

BTC maintains an open [admissions policy](#). Admission to most programs is granted to any individual 18 years or older (or those under 18 years of age who satisfy the provisions of the local enrollment option) who complete and submit an admission application, and achieve program-ready reading, sentence skills and mathematics scores via the ACCUPLACER Next Gen<sup>®</sup> assessment ([405](#), [405.1](#), [405.2](#), [405.3](#)), through evaluation of official transcripts, or by demonstrating equivalency through alternative assessment options. Transitional Studies students may be referred to the Transitional Studies area as a result of Accuplacer assessment scores, or go directly to the department to complete an intake process and register for Transitional Studies courses or programs. Dedicated advising is provided to students, whether placing into pre-college or college-level, to assist with pathway planning.

In the past several years, the college has implemented several alternative placement methods. Students may now submit high school English and/or math GPAs from the last five years for evaluation, submit SAT and ACT test scores, or submit scores on other common placement tests (such as COMPASS, ALEKS, or Asset tests). BTC also accepts GED scores and the Smarter Balance 11th Grade Assessment. The college continues to look at improved placement policies and procedures, including using multiple placement measures, and has recently developed remote testing capabilities. BTC has also developed a placement dashboard that helps employees assess 1) where students are placing in general education coursework and professional technical programs, and 2) what methods they are using to fulfill college assessment requirements.

BTC information on assessment and placement options are included in the [Admissions welcome letter](#) (which goes out to every student who has applied to the college), are included on the admission steps webpage, and are discussed in admissions and advising appointments. Transitional Studies students fill out a special application online, and ELL students at basic language levels do intake and advising directly with their instructor or College Navigator. BTC policies and procedures guiding admission are published in the BTC Policy and Procedures Guide, and guidelines are summarized in the [BTC catalog](#), along with policies pertaining to special programs such as Running Start (high school dual-credit program). Several BTC programs across Nursing, Allied Health, and other professional technical areas have more stringent admissions requirements, including multiple prerequisites and/or internship and clinical site-specific expectations. Admissions criteria for each BTC program are specified on the BTC program webpages.

BTC employees perform transcript evaluations, assess the results of non-BTC placement tests, and conduct Advanced Placement assessment for students requesting coursework credit.



Faculty review any technical courses that are submitted for transfer credit approval and make the determination of whether or not to award credit. Student Services staff evaluate the transferability of any general education coursework submitted for [transfer credit](#) approval. When necessary, College Navigators provide unofficial transcript evaluations to expedite student enrollment into general education courses. BTC also awards Academic Credit for Prior Learning (ACPL). BTC Policy [332](#) specifies how the college may evaluate a student's existing knowledge and competencies for credit, including knowledge that may have been acquired through military training. Faculty may grant ACPL requests through student testing, course challenges, portfolios, or course crosswalks. The BTC Foundation recently established an ACPL fund and endowment to support BTC in further developing this program and provide scholarships to students who are eligible for ACPL.

Admissions procedures and policies are covered on the "Future Student" portion of the website, in the BTC Policies and Procedures Guide, and are available to students in Admissions and Advising. Students are sent email correspondence as they move through each step of the admissions process, and BTC employees continue to work on automating general information communications based on application responses to help prospective students navigate the process. Students in instructional programs that require additional admissions steps receive individualized emails with that information, and students eligible for specialized support programs (such as Veteran's Benefits), receive emails encouraging them to access related support resources. Transitional Studies students may be referred to the area based on assessment scores, and these students are also referred to support resources on campus as appropriate. Once students have completed all admissions requirements, they are emailed notification of their acceptance into their program of choice and when their program registration will begin. Over the past few years, a SAS subcommittee reviewed and edited college-student communications to increase clarity and inclusive language, and the college is currently working on an implementation plan to begin using text messages to communicate admissions information to incoming students.

In a collaborative effort between Instruction and Student Services, program waitlists (long a tradition at BTC) have been eliminated for most professional technical programs over the past few years, with the exception of a small number of programs that have a selective component in their admissions process. Students who meet the admissions requirements for most professional technical programs now enroll on a first-come, first-served basis during scheduled registration periods. Students seeking enrollment into a single course which is currently full and has a class waitlist available can add themselves to the class waitlist. Students are then moved into the class automatically when space is available through the first day of the quarter and after the first day, by instructor permission. This process is also outlined on the website and in the catalog.

Programs may have minimum GPA requirements; any special program retention requirements are reflected on the program web pages and in the catalog, and are covered in any special orientations for specific programs. Program completion forms, which can be completed and submitted online, electronic Degree Audit tools, and face-to-face or remote meetings with

support staff all assist students in assessing their progress towards degree completion. BTC has developed a caseload navigation system for all students with a certificate or degree intent. This system includes a requirement for all new students to meet with their College Navigator in a *GET Started* session prior to registration, and enables support staff to engage in proactive, individualized discussion of relevant BTC policies with students included in their caseloads. Some programs and areas have dedicated Navigators to assist students; for example, the IMPACT! Program, which serves at-risk youth. Navigation services have also begun to be integrated into high-enrollment, high-attrition courses on campus, such as General Biology and Intermediate Algebra. BTC integrated its advising/coaching into a campus-wide College Navigation structure in July 2021.

BTC student [academic progress](#) and [program re-admittance](#) policies are covered in the college's catalog and in the BTC Policy and Procedures Guide. Students receive regular communications if their quarterly GPA falls below the minimum requirement of 2.0. The college publishes information on the [withdrawal procedure](#) and refund policy on the website and in the catalog, and the BTC "Petition for Hardship Withdrawal" form, which contains information on the process, is available on the website.

#### **2.C.4 The institution's policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records must include provisions related to confidentiality, release, and the reliable backup and retrievability of such records**

Permanent student files are stored in a secure and fireproof campus location, and are retained in digital format. BTC has adopted and adheres to the Washington State Community and Technical College Records Retention Schedule and the American [Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers \(AACRAO\) Record Retention guidelines](#) regarding the secure retention of student records. BTC has electronic backup of student records at the SBCTC and BTC's Computer and Information Support Services (CISS) department. As a result of this shift to electronic access, staff can more easily access records, increasing efficiency. Records of current students are also maintained and stored in fireproof, locking cabinets within the Registration Office. Other areas, such as Transitional Studies or TRIO Student Support Services, may also maintain secure files on program participants. The college scans current student files for certificate and degree program students while retaining printed copies. The college limits access to Student Management System data, and restricts employee access to electronic files. The Registration area is restricted, with limited physical access to current student records. Employee electronic access levels must be approved by the Director of Registration and Enrollment for access to student records, and these access levels are periodically reviewed by CISS staff. CISS staff have created [IT Security standards](#) that cover student and employee data access protection and cybersecurity.

The Director of Registration and Enrollment is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)) Officer and is responsible for the maintenance of the confidentiality of records and implementation of the Student Records Privacy Procedures. The college [catalog](#) publishes details of the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy](#) Act of 1974, including a short list of

“directory information” items that may be released without written authorization from the student. Information on FERPA and student records are also included on the BTC website. Any employee who is approved for access to student records must go through the college’s FERPA training and successfully pass the quiz prior to access. FERPA and records retention policies, along with training and non-disclosure PowerPoint presentations, FAQs, forms, and guidelines can be accessed by employees on the college intranet site, and additional training is available upon request or to provide updates. The Director of Registration and Enrollment or a designee addresses group and individual FERPA questions and topics routinely for employees.

## INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

**2.D.1 The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its announcements, statements, and publications. It communicates its academic intentions, programs, and services to students and to the public and demonstrates that its academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion. It regularly reviews its publications to ensure accuracy and integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.**

Providing accurate, clear, and consistent information is a responsibility of everyone at BTC, but the Marketing and Communication Director has primary responsibility for public announcements, statements and publications. The Marketing and Communication team works collaboratively with each area of the college to ensure that announcements and publications, such as the website and cluster brochures, are accurate and faithfully represent the college’s mission. For example, in 2019-20, Marketing and Communication staff rebranded printed and online materials. Recently, a Student Services team, in collaboration with BTC committees such as the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and Marketing and Communications, reviewed and updated all emails from BTC’s Admissions and Advising areas. BTC Marketing and Communication staff work collaboratively with other BTC employees to preview or review publications and the website to ensure transparency and accuracy, and to ensure that internal constituents are aware of pending publications and website updates or changes to ensure responses are consistent.

The Director of Marketing and Communication also operates as the college’s Public Information Officer. The department has primary responsibility for overseeing information-gathering for and publishing of external publications, such as What’s Happening (which provides an overview of BTC’s programs, pathways, and continuing education opportunities), catalogs, associated program-specific brochures and handouts, and the website, as well as internal newsletters and communications such as Notable News (a monthly employee newsletter). Marketing and Communication staff work closely with all appropriate departments to ensure consistent branding for and input on upcoming publications. This area reviews all primary campus publications with input from administration and the campus at large to ensure accuracy. All publications and the college website are regularly reviewed by Marketing and Communication staff and campus leaders to provide ongoing assessment of their accuracy and design.

In 2019-21, BTC’s Marketing and Communication staff (including its Graphic Designer) worked

with a cross-departmental Website Implementation Team to select a new content management system (CMS) and create a completely new BTC website. The website redesign and new CMS employed best practices for user interfaces, which were intended to make it easier for students and employees to interact with content, keep the website current, alert employees to accessibility issues, allow real-time updates for a better user experience, and create clear navigation points. The team continues to make website improvements based on employee and student feedback and evolving best practices.

College employees are responsible for keeping their communications current. Some professional technical programs generate program-specific handbooks. These publications may contain information on student resources, behavior guidelines and requirements, typical student schedules, and timelines for completion of the certificate or degree. The college provides a variety of on-campus outreach events designed to inform students about educational pathways, including program information sessions where college representatives discuss BTC program offerings and admissions processes.

The Marketing and Communication team works with various departments and groups to post student information and notices on digital signage boards and kiosks around campus. The department recently completed a project to improve BTC's outdoor way-finding monuments (including kiosk signage and directions) and interior way-finding layouts.

Centralization of Marketing and Communications responsibilities and publication procedural standards assist the college in maintaining a uniform appearance and continuity of essential information contained in the website, [social media](#) platforms, and all college publications, including logo usage, design, and graphic standards. [Publication standards](#) were reviewed and updated in 2019 to reflect procedural changes.

Time to completion for each BTC program is specified on the program web pages, in information sessions, and a full schedule by quarter or a list of all required courses for each program is included. Nearly all new, degree-seeking students attend required, individual *GET Started* sessions prior to registration. At these meetings, College Navigators work with each student to help them create an academic plan. The college makes every effort to ensure that students enrolled in a program that has made substantial changes in requirements or that is being eliminated are able to finish the program. Information about the college's approach to program closures is in the BTC catalog and is reflected in [Policy 341](#). This process involves developing student options for completing the program which do not involve loss of current accumulated credit for the student. The college may use program cross-walks, recently updated and clarified ACPL procedures ([Policy 332](#)), or other strategies to assist students to finish on time. College policy ensures that a student may elect to graduate under the provisions in the catalog in force either at the time the student first entered the program or at the time the student applies for the certificate or degree, providing the student has been continuously enrolled and no more than four years have lapsed. The college makes every effort to contact both prospective and enrolled students impacted by changes, and strives to give impacted students a substantial amount of lead time to facilitate student planning for program

completion or change. These efforts can include sending emails via BTC's CRM system and/or calling each affected student to help students update their academic plans and graduate on time.

**2.D.2 The institution advocates, subscribes to, and exemplifies high ethical standards in its management and operations, including in its dealings with the public, NWCCU, and external organizations, including the fair and equitable treatment of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and other stakeholders and constituencies. The institution ensures that complaints and grievances are addressed in a fair, equitable, and timely manner.**

The college maintains high ethical standards in its management of the institution. BTC's mission, vision, values, and goals guide BTC's development and reflect rigorous ethical standards. The college's goals and initiatives focus on, among other things, providing equal student access and using resources effectively and ethically. Specific policies are brought forward and discussed on an as-needed basis in faculty and departmental meetings, and Human Resources sends out the minutes and news from the State Executive Ethics Board to all employees on a bi-monthly basis. These emails contain examples and information regarding ethics violations in the public sector (including higher education), information and reminders regarding statewide ethics resources, and BTC's Ethics Policy ([527](#)).

Procedures are in place to ensure fair and consistent treatment of students and employees. Campus-wide email notices on ethics, the [Whistleblower Act](#), and reminders of BTC policies on acceptable use of state resources are sent annually. The college engages in periodic, individualized training regarding ethical treatment of employees and students, including those with disabilities, as needed. The college follows statewide guidelines and requirements for ethical practices in areas such as institutional data collection and display, student counseling, and purchasing, and includes discussions of fair and consistent treatment of students in the college's new faculty onboarding process. BTC is currently developing a 'Respectful Workplace' policy to implement in the 2021-22 year. Additionally, multiple college initiatives such as Guided Pathways, Students Helping build an Inclusive Future for the Trades (SHIFT), and the work of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee intentionally contribute to ongoing equity improvements across campus.

Advisory committee members have received training in pertinent state ethics regulations. A discussion of ethics and referral to the statewide Washington State Executive Ethics Board website are provided for new employees during their orientation, and [Standards of Ethical Conduct/Conflict of Interest](#) information is included in all employee handbooks, in the BTC Policy and Procedures Guide, and is available online. The State Attorney General's office is available to provide ethics training for Associated Student Body (ASB) executive members, the college's Board of Trustees, or other groups as part of orientation or other processes.

All BTC policies and procedures are posted on the college's intranet HR site, and HR staff members routinely remind employees via email and other communications to consult that site for information. College hiring procedures are in compliance with the Equal Opportunity Act

and the college's Affirmative Action Policy ([504](#)). BTC maintains a cadre of Search Advocates who act as advisors to the search and selection process. These Search Advocates promote practices that advance inclusivity, diversity, and social justice, and minimize the impacts of cognitive and structural biases.

Employees are responsible for adhering to the BTC Policy and Procedures Guide. BTC's Assistant Attorney General provides guidance and reviews policies as requested.

Student or employee complaints and grievances are addressed promptly, and policies such as the Academic Appeal ([380.A](#)) for grade disputes and academic sanctions have been recently updated to be more equitable and accessible. Student issues are handled in accordance with the policy as published in the catalog and the BTC Student Code of Conduct [[WAC 495B-121](#)]. BTC's online "Incident and Behavior Report Form" is used to submit information regarding an individual's behaviors of concern to the college's Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation ([CARE](#)) Team. This team is composed of staff from across campus (Student Services, Instruction, and Administrative Services) who pool resources and experience to begin investigation and response to any reported employee or student issue within 24 hours. Employee complaints and grievances are handled as specified in appropriate [collective bargaining agreements](#), and through BTC's Progressive Disciplinary Procedures.

#### **2.D.3 The institution adheres to clearly defined policies that prohibit conflicts of interest on the part of members of the governing board(s), administration, faculty, and staff.**

BTC follows Washington State policy and law regarding ethical conduct and conflict of interest. [Board of Trustee bylaws](#) specifically address ethics in sections VI, Statement of Ethics, and VII, Conflict of Interests. Prospective board members submit signed paperwork to the Governor's office which addresses conflict of interest prior to being appointed to the Board of Trustees. Trustees file a Personal Financial Affairs Statement with the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission annually. Employees have full access to information on the Whistleblower program, the college's Affirmative Action Plan, and the college's [Standard of Ethical Code/Conflict of Interest](#) in the college's Policy and Procedures Guide and employee handbooks. BTC's HR department sends out regular reminders regarding conflict of interest and ethics violations in the public sector, and the college follows Washington State standards to avoid conflicts of interest with regard to processes such as [procurement of goods and services](#). The college is subject to a [compliance audit](#) by the State Auditor's Office every four years. There have been no findings by the State Auditor concerning conflict of interest or internal controls over the past ten years, and there have been no filings under the Whistleblower Act on the part of a college member for more than five years.

Employee standards of conduct are clearly delineated in the college's [collective bargaining agreements and employee handbooks](#) and are reflected in BTC's Policy and Procedures Guide, which includes policies on leave, hiring, employment of relatives and sexual harassment.

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

### **2.E.1. The institution utilizes relevant audit processes and regular reporting to demonstrate financial stability, including sufficient cash flow and reserves to achieve and fulfill its mission.**

BTC has an extensive collection of [financial resource](#) and [management policies](#) approved by the appropriate vice president, President's Leadership Team and/or Board of Trustees. These policies are published in BTC's Policy and Procedures Guide and impose strict requirements for maintaining the financial integrity of the institution. Employees in BTC's Business Office stay updated on [current rules and regulations](#) and [best practices](#) through state and regional meetings and trainings and appropriate listserv subscriptions. The college bases its policies and procedures on those established by the State of Washington Office of Financial Management - as documented in the State Administrative and Accounting Manual ([SAAM](#)) and the SBCTC Fiscal Affairs Manual ([FAM](#)). The college has a formalized cash management and investment procedure as suggested by the State Treasurer's office. The Washington State Auditor's Office annually audits college financial transactions and financial control procedures. All policies and procedures are intended to ensure that the college maintain its financial stability, including sufficient cash flow and reserves to achieve and fulfill its mission.

BTC began a regular schedule of annual, full [financial statement audits](#) (by the Washington State Auditor's Office) in Fall 2016. Auditor reports since this time, including the most recent audit in Winter 2021, have included no management letters or findings. The college continues to improve its financial controls and quality of financial reporting as a result of these regular audits, and plans to continue these audits on a yearly basis. The [BTC Foundation](#) also undergoes a full audit each year.

BTC's IT department also receives a periodic outside audit of IT internal controls by the Washington State Auditor's Office. The college is compliant, in all material respects, with the information technology security policy and standards established by the Washington State Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO).

All financial and administrative service departments report directly to the Vice President of Administrative Services. Financial departments reporting directly to the Vice President of Administrative Services include budgeting, accounting, payroll, and purchasing.

### **2.E.2. Financial planning includes meaningful opportunities for participation by stakeholders and ensures appropriate available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and comprehensive risk management to ensure short term financial health and long-term financial stability and sustainability.**

The college and its Planning and Resource Allocation ([PARA](#)) governance committee have engaged in exhaustive revenue and budget analyses over the past few years, with regular status reports and information distributed to the Board of Trustees and campus constituents.

Information is also delivered in the form of campus forums and workshops. Substantial time has been dedicated to creating meaningful opportunities for campus stakeholders to engage with and participate in BTC's financial planning and budgeting processes. Campus-wide presentations and small group information sessions are held each year. These events include information about topics such as BTC's budget development process and budget status, budget reduction process guidelines, and the college's resource request process, and have also helped gather ideas for how to reduce costs and/or increase revenues.

BTC's discretionary funding allocations from the State continue to decrease as a percentage of the college's overall operating budget, forcing a greater reliance on shrinking tuition and revenue resources. As state allocation funding levels have declined, losses have been partially offset by legislated tuition increases. Unfortunately, the college has experienced declining enrollment levels – and the pandemic accelerated this decline significantly. COVID-19 disproportionately impacted enrollments at technical colleges in Washington State due to the high number of hands-on training programs that were required to shift to online and hybrid instruction and implement extensive health and safety regulations for any on-ground instructional components. During the pandemic, BTC received Federal and State support to continue operations in the face of drastically-reduced enrollment levels. However, this aid is anticipated to end in 2022, while enrollment levels may remain depressed and negatively impact revenue potential.

### Fiscal Management

Despite budget stressors, BTC has been able to maintain its established budgetary reserves and adequate budgetary resources. The Board requires that the college maintain a minimum of 15% of the annual operating budget in financial reserves to supplement fluctuations in operating revenue and expenses; meet financial obligations should dedicated revenue sources unexpectedly diminish; and provide opportunities to fund non-recurring expenses such as program start-up costs, equipment purchases, unbudgeted emergencies, unplanned necessary expenditures, special college initiatives, and other situations as determined by the Board of Trustees. The Board regularly reviews the budget and operating reserves to determine adequate financial cash flow and reserves.

While the Board and President oversee the college's fiscal management, BTC's financial functions are centralized under the overall direction of the Vice President of Administrative Services. The Vice President for Administrative Services serves on and provides financial projections to PARA, assisting this group to make budget and budget process recommendations to College Assembly and the President's Leadership Team. The Vice President shares budget information with the BOT and President on an annual basis or as needed, and works with the PARA committee as it shares financial projections and other budget-related information with the campus.

### Fiscal Planning

Careful financial planning on the part of the college takes into account available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and appropriate risk management to ensure short-term



solvency and anticipate long-term obligations, including payment of future liabilities. This care has been evidenced by BTC's ability to maintain a stable financial status across economic cycles and dramatically decreased support levels from traditional funding sources. The college's stability is due in part to its focus on efficiency: over the past few years, several departments on campus have been restructured to increase budget efficiencies. The college has implemented PARA recommendations regarding budget reduction processes, which has resulted in a strategy of managed attrition and realignment of several employee positions on campus. BTC has focused on developing alternate funding sources and putting low-enrollment courses and programs on hiatus. The college has also increased tuition as approved by the state legislature, and implemented an updated student fee structure. As state discretionary funds continue to become less of a percentage of the college's total revenue, the college will continue to focus on finding alternative revenues to replace state dollars in the years to come.

Projections for the college's operating budget are generally for the coming year only. The Board of Trustees has authorized use of the reserve (when needed) in order to maintain a base level of infrastructure for continued operations and long-term stability. The college has done financial modeling and uses this forecast as one tool in budget development. BTC uses several data sources to create its projected budgets. Operating budget revenue projections are developed from state FTEs, student fees, student-supported classes, anticipated grants and contracts, and auxiliary and ancillary services.

BTC creates enrollment projections using state, census and college data. Enrollment management efforts at the college are directed by the Vice President of Student Services, working in collaboration with the SAS governance committee and the other vice presidents. These efforts are substantially assisted by BTC's Data and Research staff. Historic and current enrollment levels in courses and programs are carefully tracked through the collaborative efforts of Data and Research and Student Services staff. Campus policies and course tuition, fee, and FTE calculation templates help the Instruction area determine when to run or cancel courses.

As state discretionary funding levels have decreased, all areas of the college, such as the [BTC Foundation](#) and grant development area, have increased efforts to develop alternative sources of funding for educational programs and services. Many of these efforts begin and are continued at the program level, and include using college goals as criteria for developing and seeking private and public grants, increasing efforts to partner with private and public agency sectors, and escalating fundraising efforts. The college tracks historic and current patterns of donation amounts along with state allocation and grant fund balances. The BTC Foundation, in partnership with its Board of Directors, estimates donation amounts and multi-year grant awards based on historical patterns and current analysis to ensure that grant and donation fund support is projected realistically. The Foundation Board approves these multi-year projections.

### Budget Development

General guidelines and parameters for the college's budget development process can be found

in the bylaws of the Board of Trustees. Since 2017, the PARA committee has created annual budget assumptions with which the President's Leadership Team builds the budget and presents to PARA for discussion and review. PARA then shepherds the updated budget through the governance approval process.

A mid-year review of each organizational budget is scheduled to be completed by March of every year. The process begins with a [budget scour and projection process](#) in late January where budget authorities verify where they are with their budgets to-date and give up excess funds or make requests for additional monies. Authorities also identify projected fiscal needs for the next year's budget, including if any adjustments should become part of next year's base. The results of this process are summarized by the Budget and Financial Analyst and reviewed by the PARA committee, College Assembly and the President's Leadership Team, who then recommend a revised college budget to the Board of Trustees if necessary, based on the significance of changes to the overall budget. If recommended, the revised budget is reviewed with the Board at a special study session and approved at their June meeting.

BTC's budget development process for the next academic year typically also starts in January. To estimate the budget's salary component (which represents over 80% of the total budget), the Budget and Financial Analyst performs detailed projections based on current continuing positions, anticipated attrition and expected vacancies. Budget authorities review these projections for accuracy. During this process, employees may work with budget authorities and their area administrator to propose any desired new, changed or eliminated positions to add to the projections. The college's overall budget is comprised of over 200 separate budget codes made up of both instructional program and non-instructional services departments. Budget authorities are assigned to each organizational area and have visibility and authority on all expenses, especially their controllable expenses, which are primarily supplies, services and travel. The budget authorities go into the online BTC budgeting system and open a 'Budget Change' tab that includes historical expenditure levels (for reference) and an area to enter their budget and projection requests or changes. Once completed, these budgets are compiled by the Budget and Financial Analyst after being reviewed and approved by the area's administrator. This information is collated and reviewed by the PARA committee, College Assembly, and the President's Leadership Team, who then recommend the annual budget, once finalized, for approval by the BOT. The recommended budget is reviewed with the BOT in a special study session and approved at their June meeting. This budget development schedule, however, may be impacted by extraordinary events. For example, because so many budgetary factors were unknown in Spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020-21 budget was not finalized until Fall 2020.

### Resource Request Process

For the past several years, BTC has conducted an annual Equipment/Project Request process, which has been a component of the annual operating budget development process. Instructional equipment for its professional technical programs is a significant portion of the college's operating budget (outside of salaries and benefits). PARA and the President's Leadership Team recommends, and the Board approves, a lump sum for college equipment and

personnel as part of the annual budget approval in June of each year.

In 2019-20, the PARA committee (in response to constituent suggestions) developed and implemented a new [Resource Request process](#), which facilitates the collection and tracking of all material and personnel requests from employees into one centralized location. At the end of Fall 2019, all employees were invited to submit electronic Resource Request forms to their supervisors to ask for additional resources needed to help support their programs or departments. Request narratives had to clearly indicate how the request supported one or more of the college's strategic goals. These requests were reviewed, modified if necessary, and approved by the area's administrator. After multiple norming meetings, approved requests were reviewed and ranked by members of the PARA committee using a publicly-available scoring rubric. All committee member rankings were averaged together and used in the development of a prioritized list of resource requests. Request scores were tabulated in March of 2020.

In a typical year, this pilot process would have continued, with the information being shared with the campus community via emails from the Budget and Financial Analyst, and the priority rankings established by this committee being used by the President's Leadership Team to inform operating budget spending. These priorities would have also guided centralized prioritization and allocation of other funding sources obtained throughout the academic year, including grants and BTC Foundation fundraising monies. This normal process was disrupted in the Spring of 2020, however, as the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a rapid shift of BTC operations to an online-only learning and support environment. Budget projections which would normally have been finalized in Spring 2020 were delayed until Fall 2020, and the college, facing a rapidly-changing budget situation, did not fund the majority of the resource requests. Instead, BTC administrators launched efforts to identify and respond to emergent COVID-19-related technology and safety needs through student and employee surveys in Spring and Fall of 2020, using Federal CARES Act funds to help respond to those needs.

In late Fall 2020, BTC launched a second Resource Request process, which served to refresh and add to the prior year's list of requests. The college was able to fund over \$350,000 in resource requests by the end of the 2020-21 academic year.

The college is also developing an equipment replacement process, which will establish a separate fund to help address the ongoing, basic need for replacement of old/worn-out equipment, and allow the college to focus its Resource Request process on requests for new technology and equipment to support its professional technical programs and other operational areas.

### **2.E.3 Financial resources are managed transparently in accordance with policies approved by the institution's governing board(s), governance structure(s), and applicable state and federal laws.**

The community and technical colleges in the State of Washington employ a set of common

administrative systems to manage their fiscal affairs. The core financial systems were developed to comply with accounting and reporting requirements established by Washington State's Office of Financial Management ([OFM](#)), which has the authority to establish accounting policies and procedures for Washington state agencies.

BTC has regular internal procedural reviews that help the college identify any accounting errors. Budget authorities and accounting staff regularly review expenditure data for accuracy. The college's financial system also provides reporting tools for monthly analysis and review of accounting transactions to identify accounting errors and monitor spending levels to budget limits. Accounting staff regularly perform general ledger account reconciliations to ensure accuracy of financial data reported. The Procurement and Contracts Coordinator continually reviews established procedures regarding internal control and authority for transactions. The college manages cash and investments in compliance with guidelines from the State Treasurer's office and employs internal risk controls as established by the State OFM. BTC's Business Office employees stay updated on current rules and regulations regarding accounting practices through state and regional meetings and trainings and appropriate listserv subscriptions. The SBCTC performs periodic operating reviews to ensure appropriate accounting procedures, compliance, and adherence to applicable internal controls. The college began a regular schedule of annual, full financial statement audits in Fall 2016.

All accounting activity at BTC is performed by highly capable and trained employees. The Vice President of Administrative Services' immediate financial staff include the Controller, Procurement and Contracts Coordinator, and Budget and Financial Analyst. Each manager and supervisor direct their departmental staff members to carry out assigned functions. Members of the Administrative Services management team serve on the PARA governance committee and meet as needed with other governance committees or other groups to discuss areas of concern. Each director is encouraged to meet at least monthly with staff members, while the Vice President of Administrative Services typically meets weekly with most of his direct staff. This structure provides strong oversight of the Accounting area.

Capital budgeting is a separate process from operating budgeting in the State of Washington. All capital funding requests flow through the SBCTC to the State Legislature. Each biennium, a facility condition survey is completed by the SBCTC, which reviews the overall campus building conditions and deficiencies. This analysis is used to assist in determining needed capital repair budgets for colleges throughout the system. The college submits major construction requests for building renovations, building replacement and new building projects based on its Facilities Master Plan: 2020-2023, which is now aligned with the college's strategic planning cycle. BTC's Master Plan was created in 1993 and has been updated approximately every five years, most recently in June 2020 through the Facilities governance committee. The comprehensive revision process included vetting and approval by College Assembly, the President's Leadership Team, and the Board of Trustees. This extensive development process ensures that the Facilities Master Plan is strongly tied to and supports the college's mission, vision and Strategic Plan.

BTC construction project requests are submitted to the SBCTC, and project budgets reflect the

total cost of ownership, equipment, furnishing, and operation of new or renovated facilities. The college's requests are reviewed along with those from the other two-year colleges within the system. A committee formed of Washington State Community and Technical College Presidents; Business Affairs, Instructional and Student Services Officers; and Facility Directors ranks all of the projects submitted by the colleges, and the ranked projects are submitted to the President's commission and the Washington Association of Community and Technical Colleges (WACTC) for approval. After review, the SBCTC pursues funding for the project requests through the legislative body of the state. Once the legislature approves the capital budget, capital funding is allocated to the colleges on a biennium basis. It is expected that capital projects be completed during the biennium in which they are funded. The college may also use local fund reserves, donations, and grant funds as appropriate for the construction of new buildings or renovation projects.

Auxiliary enterprises on the campus include the Campus Store, Associated Students, Food Services, and Parking, along with the Copy/Printer Centers, which operate as an internal service fund. The college's general operations and auxiliary enterprises are tracked separately, and profits/losses are accumulated appropriately: the profit/loss of auxiliary functions are not commingled with general operating funds. Per college Policy [111.1](#) (Ancillary, Auxiliary and Contract Fund Balance), the institution's goal is that its auxiliary enterprises be self-supporting; however, general funds may be used to temporarily cover negative cash balances of those auxiliaries that may operate at a loss but are considered important to the college. The Associated Students fund was established in Fall 1998 as a result of revenue generated from the establishment of a student services and activities fee. The college also operates ancillary programs that provide services to the public as part of student training activities.

Overall, the college functions effectively, as evidenced by the consistently favorable Washington State full financial statement audits and accountability audit reports for BTC. Special audits of Federal or state programs such as Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) or Veterans Benefits also occur periodically.

The college responds promptly to any concerns addressed in internal or external audits. Internal control procedure recommendations are reviewed and discussed with the President and a copy of the report is provided for the President and [BOT](#).

The [BTC Foundation](#) is the main source of fundraising efforts for the college. The Foundation is recognized as a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization by the IRS and a Nonprofit Corporation by the Office of the Secretary of State. The Foundation follows IRS and relevant state laws or [guidelines](#). Pledges and gifts to endowment or annual funds and disbursement of these funds are made according to the terms of the endowment agreement and/or as directed by the Foundation's [Development Policy](#). This policy provides for distribution guidelines on all gifts made to the Foundation, including cash and in-kind gifts; real estate, stocks and bonds, bequests, and other planned gifts; and restricted, unrestricted and endowment gifts. Records are maintained and donors acknowledged for all pledges and gifts, including those to endowment and annual funds. In addition, the Foundation has a yearly financial audit by an

independent accounting firm.

The Foundation Board and staff have close connections with the college. The Director of the BTC Foundation reports to the Executive Director of Institutional Planning and Advancement and the Foundation's Board of Directors. The college has a clearly defined relationship with the BTC Foundation through a written [Quid Pro Quo Agreement](#) signed by the President of the Foundation Board and the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the college. The agreement is approved as to form by the college attorney. This document was written when the Foundation was established in 1995 and is reviewed annually and updated as needed.

The Foundation's mission and long-range goals are based upon the college's mission and Strategic Plan. Foundation goals include securing private support for the programs, needs and enhancements of BTC; optimizing student access to programs and services; and elevating the college's programs to excellence through fundraising, public awareness activities, and business partnerships throughout the community and in the northwest Washington region. Foundation fundraising goals are to raise money for 1) endowed and annual student scholarships; 2) program and equipment support; and 3) greatest need (unrestricted) support to benefit BTC students, programs and employees.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### **2.F.1 Faculty, staff, and administrators are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination.**

Employees are notified of conditions of employment through position descriptions, hiring letters, and [employee group handbooks and Collective Bargaining Agreements](#). Employee orientation materials include checklists for each type of employee. These checklists help supervisors and HR staff verify that the employee's conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation and retention are covered. Criteria and procedures for promotion are posted as opportunities arise. [Termination procedures](#) are covered in a separate checklist during the exit process. A signed copy of the checklist is kept in each employee's personnel file. Orientation and termination procedures for adjunct faculty and temporary employees are handled through their related departments.

Supervisors of exempt, classified BEST and classified Teamsters staff are scheduled to conduct regular evaluations of employee performance and discuss job performance expectations. Evaluations for administrators are scheduled every other year through a 360-review process, and faculty members are evaluated through tenure-track and post-tenure processes.

All collective bargaining agreements at the college contain information on evaluation processes and requirements for retention, promotion, and termination. All employees have access to additional information via employee group handbooks and the [BTC Policy and Procedures](#)

Guide. Specific groups have additional information guides that illustrate specific processes such as tenure-track or post-tenure faculty evaluation.

### **2.F.2 The institution provides faculty, staff, and administrators with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development.**

During the development of BTC's 2018-23 Strategic Plan, improving BTC's employee professional development systems emerged as a top interest on the part of BTC employees. BTC has identified professional development planning as a priority area, with a five-year KPI target of using "...employee input to develop a campus-wide professional development plan that is focused on increasing equitable support and participation in professional development activities, including onboarding and peer mentoring," and has established a group to create a workplan for the college in this area. BTC employee handbooks and Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) include information on professional development support and opportunities.

Based on the feedback that emerged from the strategic planning process, BTC targeted resource development efforts to help support employee professional development. For example, the focus of the college's new Title III grant is Guided Pathways implementation, and professional development is a key component. In addition to hiring an Instructional Designer to help BTC faculty create meta-majors (clusters of related programs with common cores), the college has identified faculty leaders to develop a Faculty Teaching and Learning Academy (TLA), which will assist BTC faculty adapt program content and delivery to remediate student equity gaps and develop a peer mentoring program for new faculty. The new, centralized faculty onboarding process will inform new [onboarding processes](#) for other employee groups. As part of the Guided Pathways initiative, BTC is also creating a technology training program that will help employees effectively research, plan and implement system improvements for teaching, learning and student support. Another component of the initiative is focused on helping to improve employee data literacy skills and fostering a culture of data-informed decision-making. This work includes developing and/or enhancing data dashboards and other tools to enable employees to analyze non-traditional student outcomes in order to identify and respond to barriers and service gaps for student populations.

Strong administrator and peer support also help strengthen informal learning networks. Based in part on the small size of the institution, mentoring between new and current employees forms part of the culture at BTC.

BTC's [Campus Kick-Off](#) and [Faculty In-service](#) Days are now organized by cross-representational planning committees and are offered in a conference style, with a variety of breakout sessions hosted by BTC employees and guests. Previous Campus Kick-Off events were based on a traditional lecture model. In response to feedback, BTC updated the Planning Committee to include a wider range of campus representatives, and the event has been updated each year by the Committee based on employee feedback gathered through an annual survey. Changes have included restructuring the entire event to include breakout sessions, and using feedback to determine what types of keynotes and workshops would be included in the next year's event.

Workshop topics have ranged from computer literacy to instructional methodologies to self-care strategies. Employee engagement with this new format is high – evaluations of the new structure have been overwhelmingly positive and the number of BTC employees who volunteer to lead workshop sessions is also high.

BTC's eLearning department, State resources, and national online professional development services such as Innovative Educators provide critical resources for employee learning. BTC's eLearning department supplies orientations, tutorials and troubleshooting for Canvas, Panopto, Big Blue Button and other educational technology, with a focus on inclusive digital design. Members of the BTC Reading Apprenticeship (RA) community of practice support each other in implementing the RA framework (designed to increase student reading comprehension) in classrooms.

Work groups such as BTC eLearning and the Library offer workshops and training sessions on a wide variety of topics, including copyright, academic honesty, how to use Open Educational Resources, and incorporation of digital library resources into instruction. These areas, as well as Accessibility Resources (AR), and governance committees such as the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEIC), have provided multiple resources for employees to access online or in-person, including a centralized professional development site for employees. This site provides extensive support for employees who were shifting to online instruction and/or services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as general professional development opportunities. BTC's AR department also collaborates with HR and the deans to connect with every new employee to go over AR resources, accommodation processes, and student rights and responsibilities. This department also hosts and refers employees to events and trainings around accessibility, and regularly develops and send out a smARt talk! email newsletter designed to keep accessibility topics and issues top-of-mind for employees.

BTC supports employee participation in a significant amount of off-campus professional development activities through operational and grant funds, including industry conferences and training, and a number of BTC's state and Federally-funded grant projects and initiatives include a professional development focus.

Employees take advantage of training provided by the Community and Technical College Leadership Development Association (which promotes professional growth and development for Washington's community college administrators and exempt staff) and training through the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges' 'Staff Training for Community and Technical Colleges' (STTACC), which is provided for classified staff members. Other training is provided through the state community and technical college system via a variety of sources, including webinars or online platforms. All administrators and many directors belong to statewide college associations, councils, and commissions, which include face-to-face or web-based professional development, training, and networking opportunities.

Faculty belong to professional organizations and attend regional, state and national conferences and training opportunities. For example, the SBCTC offers regular 'Boot Camps' to



assist faculty transitioning from industry to educator roles. All annually contracted faculty at Bellingham Technical College must complete an extensive self-assessment as a basis for their Professional Development Plan ([PDP](#)) and have an approved three- to five-year PDP in their professional development file. In the PDP, faculty, in consultation with their dean, identify their priorities for professional growth based on their self-assessment, and document a series of planned professional development activities (including workshops, conferences, courses, special projects, or other opportunities), which will help them improve instructional skills and competencies and increase their knowledge of their particular content area. All professional development activities are linked to professional technical faculty skill standards. In addition, full- or 3/4-time faculty who teach in potentially hazardous lab environments are required to complete training in first aid. Because this PDP is created in an online system, and requires completion of a detailed schedule for these activities, both faculty and supervisors receive reminders regarding completion dates for these professional growth activities. This function is helpful in keeping the PDP both current and prioritized. Faculty must submit evidence of their completion of professional development activities at least annually, and create a report on the status of their Professional Development Plan as part of their evaluation processes. The original PDP and subsequent reports are reviewed and certified by both the faculty member's direct supervisor and the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Learning.

The [BTC Foundation](#) typically distributes approximately \$10,000 on an annual basis for employee professional development, and Federal, state, and private grants may also provide financial resources to augment employee professional development. Professional development resources are also included in the annual operating budget. Minimum levels of financial resources for professional development are defined in the faculty bargaining agreement, as well as sabbatical opportunities to return to industry or school. Eligible BTC employees can take advantage of tuition waivers at public higher education institutions. State agencies also require and provide employee trainings, such as Washington State Department of Enterprise Services purchasing training. This training includes an overview of Policy [188](#), which requires assessment of the accessibility of any technology acquired by BTC, and is required for any employee purchasing or using instructional technology on campus.

**2.F.3 Consistent with its mission, programs, and services, the institution employs faculty, staff, and administrators sufficient in role, number, and qualifications to achieve its organizational responsibilities, educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs.**

Bellingham Technical College employs a sufficient number of qualified personnel to maintain operations and support services. BTC currently has a total of 203 full-time employees, and hires approximately 75 adjunct faculty members per quarter. The composition of the 203 full-time employees includes eight [administrators](#), 60 [exempt](#) staff, 64 faculty and 71 classified staff members. The college also currently employs approximately 40 part-time hourly employees and 21 students. Over the last several years of decreasing enrollments, coupled with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, BTC's focus has been on efficiency and managed attrition. In order to address resource issues related to decreasing tuition revenue, many BTC positions have been

put on hold or eliminated. The college recently began addressing/resolving current position vacancies as it prepares to return to normal operations post-pandemic. Grounded in a recognition that full-time faculty strengthen the college through program management and advocacy, curricular continuity, and serving greater college needs through participation in governance and service committees, BTC has prioritized full-time tenured over part-time adjunct positions for programs where enrollment supports a full-time position.

All employee positions have job descriptions that include evaluation criteria and minimum qualifications. Position descriptions for existing and open positions are reviewed by the position's respective supervisor and vice president/administrator to ensure accurate reflection of duties, responsibilities, appropriate weight for each area of responsibility, and scope of authority of each position. Criteria and qualifications for personnel are outlined in position descriptions and/or position vacancy forms—the latter are reviewed by the appropriate director, dean, vice president or President.

In order to standardize procedures for vacancy assessment and recruitment, the Human Resources office provides [recruitment and hiring procedures](#). For any new, revised, or reorganized position, a position rationale form must be submitted by the appropriate vice president or executive director to the President's Leadership Team, which includes the proposed position, updated position description, salary analysis, and budget analysis. The Human Resources office provides guidelines for searches as well as recruitment expenditures, and worked with an ad-hoc stakeholder group beginning in 2016-17 to revise BTC hiring processes. In 2017-18, BTC, in collaboration with Whatcom Community College, launched a training process to create a pool of campus Search Advocates (EEO representatives): employees who are trained as advisors to the search and selection process to promote practices that advance inclusivity, diversity, and social justice, and minimize the impacts of cognitive and structural biases. These Search Advocates have been integrated into BTC hiring processes, and hiring policies have been revised to reflect Search Advocate information, including their role in the hiring process. In 2019-2020, BTC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee informed development of a Search Advocate procedure ([501](#)) which was approved in January 2020. Policy 508, which covers hiring for administrative, exempt and faculty positions, was updated in June 2019. Policy 505, which covers classified hiring, was updated in May 2020. Both policies were revised to include Search Advocate information. DEIC continues to discuss and provide recommendations regarding how to best and most efficiently use this model.

Employee qualifications are reviewed and verified during the selection and hiring process. Position criteria, applicant qualifications and hiring procedures are stated on position announcements, which are available in printed form and on the college website. All regular positions are reviewed by the President's Leadership Team prior to publicizing. For classified and faculty positions, standards and procedures for hiring are included in negotiated agreements as well as in college procedures [505.0](#), [507.0](#), [508.0](#), and [508.2](#).

As an institution whose mission is to provide student-centered, high-quality professional technical education, BTC requires professional technical faculty to possess education and

experience in the field relevant to their [teaching assignments](#). Every regular faculty hire goes through a screening and interview committee process with faculty and staff, and may also include community participation. Hires are approved by the President. The college follows state standards specified in WAC 131-16-080 and 131-16-091 for community and technical college faculty, including specializations, and follows BTC hiring procedures (Policy 508). Full- or part-time faculty in professional technical programs must hold or qualify for a vocational-educational teaching certificate and possess appropriate industry experiences and expertise or hold a bachelor's degree in the field. For faculty teaching general education courses, a master's degree with emphasis in the primary assigned teaching area is required. For those faculty with related degrees, Policy [509.1](#) (Faculty Qualifications) requires a minimum of 24 upper division/graduate credits in the field.

The college assures the integrity and continuity of its education programs in a variety of ways — the institution has a high level of professional technical program and general education faculty ownership and engagement, with a focus on establishing common curriculum for general education and professional technical coursework that ensures students are taught to the same outcomes, regardless of instructor. All professional technical degree programs have active [advisory boards](#) composed of business and industry representatives and include student representation. Faculty are encouraged to participate in a variety of professional development opportunities in the form of targeted training, participation in conferences and other events, and “back-to-industry” experiences in order to maintain a high level of technical skills and content knowledge in their field. Multiple professional technical programs are members of national industry organizations, maintain specialized accreditation through national industry organizations, and integrate either preparation for or completion of national industry certification exams into their curriculum. In late-Winter and Spring 2020, faculty quickly adapted to teaching online in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The college is currently assessing post-pandemic program and course modality options.

**2.F.4 Faculty, staff, and administrators are evaluated regularly and systematically in alignment with institutional mission and goals, educational objectives, and policies and procedures. Evaluations are based on written criteria that are published, easily accessible, and clearly communicated. Evaluations are applied equitably, fairly, and consistently in relation to responsibilities and duties. Personnel are assessed for effectiveness and are provided feedback and encouragement for improvement.**

Supervisors and administrators are charged with evaluating employees with regard to performance of work, work duties and responsibilities on a regular basis. New, probationary classified employees are evaluated within 90-180 days of hire. Performance evaluation processes and timelines are outlined for union employees in their respective collective bargaining agreements. Members of all employee groups (with the exception of faculty and administrators) are scheduled to be evaluated annually, and may be evaluated as needed for specific reasons such as promotions, poor work performance, or disciplinary issues.

[Administrators](#) are scheduled to have a 360-degree review process every other year. This review process includes input from supervisors, direct reports and other employees, and reviews performance in areas such as communication, leadership and team-building skills. Human Resources tracks supervisory progress on evaluation compliance and periodically sends reminders to supervisors of evaluation expectations. The President is evaluated by Board of Trustees annually.

All BTC faculty are evaluated on a regular basis. The Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Learning is responsible for implementing faculty evaluation procedures. These procedures are included in Policies [310](#), [311](#) and [312](#). When a pattern of poor performance is identified, an improvement plan is developed. Article 11 of the collective bargaining agreement addresses this issue. The Faculty Evaluation Oversight Committee, composed of faculty and administration, oversees the review and revision of all faculty evaluation forms and processes.

Faculty who are hired into tenure-track positions undergo a comprehensive performance evaluation by the tenure review evaluation committee twice annually through a nine-quarter probationary period. This process is guided by RCW 28B.50. The process includes multiple indices, including self, peer, and administrative evaluations, as well as student surveys. Data are summarized by the committee for the Board of Trustees twice annually. Prior to the end of the ninth quarter, the Board of Trustees determines whether or not to grant tenure.

Tenured faculty are evaluated through a formal “post-tenure” process once every five years. Student surveys are completed every quarter, and summaries are used for the five-year evaluation, which is conducted by a committee composed of tenured faculty and an administrative representative. The final post-tenure evaluation process includes student, administrator, and peer evaluation data. If concerns are identified during the five-year process, an improvement plan can be initiated.

Adjunct and part-time faculty are required to be evaluated by their supervisor within their first 20 credits of instruction, and once every five years thereafter, using the Adjunct Faculty Self-Assessment form and student surveys. The process and forms for probationary, post-tenure and part-time or adjunct faculty are posted to the college intranet. New faculty members are oriented to the process with their dean.

The college acknowledges that a gap exists between employee evaluation policy/procedure and actual practice in that [exempt employees](#) are not, in many cases, consistently evaluated on an annual basis, exacerbated by heavy manager workloads. BTC anticipates exploring improvements in this area, including enhanced supervisor training on performance evaluation tools and processes.

## STUDENT SUPPORT RESOURCES

**2.G.1 Consistent with the nature of its educational programs and methods of delivery, and with a particular focus on equity and closure of equity gaps in achievement, the institution creates and maintains effective learning environments with appropriate programs and services to support student learning and success.**

Creating high-quality classroom and lab experiences, a welcoming campus atmosphere, and effective student support programming for a variety of student populations within and beyond the classroom are key college strategies to help address equity gaps and provide effective learning environments. BTC has made substantial progress in this area over the past few years.

### High-Quality Classrooms and Labs:

BTC works to provide a variety of on-ground and online learning environments for students to increase instructional effectiveness and increase access and schedule flexibility. The college provides professional development to employees researching and implementing best instructional practices. One example is the college's Reading Apprenticeship program, which is led by faculty and involves establishing faculty and staff communities of practice to help peers develop new ways to equitably engage and support students as they read and interact with academic or technical, industry-specific materials. Another example is BTC's Team Math: BTC faculty, supported through grant resources, formed an inquiry group ('Team Math') in 2015-16 to begin addressing pervasive student success issues and achievement gaps in BTC's math courses. Team Math led a collaborative redesign of math programming at BTC, increasing alignment between pre-college and college-level math courses, creating shared supplemental and contextualized course materials, and incorporating a flipped-classroom design for math courses using the National Repository of Online Courses (NROC) modules. Although grant funding exhausted in June 2020, the Team is committed to ongoing improvement and continues to meet. Preliminary results from both the Reading Apprenticeship and Team Math programs show positive impacts on student persistence and success in English and math coursework. In 2019-20, the college began development of a Faculty Teaching and Learning Academy to help faculty adapt program content and delivery to remediate student equity gaps. In Fall 2020, the Teaching and Learning Academy piloted a peer mentoring program for new faculty.

BTC faculty employ different strategies in classrooms and labs to make the learning environment effective, including team-based learning techniques and developing skill practice scenarios utilizing simulation software and equipment. The majority of BTC programs emphasize practical application of professional technical skills through industry field trips and work-based learning experiences, including internships, job shadows and clinical placements.

In 2018-19, BTC instituted a BTC Mini-Grant process, which opened up college Perkins funds for employees to propose small improvement projects. Projects were required to directly benefit professional technical students and support the college's current Strategic Plan. This program has resulted in implementation of several improvement projects in professional technical

programs, from purchasing new glue-pulling technology used to repair body damage with minimal intrusion to the body's structure for Automotive Collision Repair, to creation of contextualized lesson plans for professional technical program math and chemistry courses, to updated x-ray sensors for more effective clinical operations and training in radiology for Dental.

Faculty are incorporating web-based applications into their classroom environments and have increased student access to their courses and programs by offering them in online or hybrid formats (this work has been greatly accelerated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic). BTC's eLearning department provides orientations, tutorials and troubleshooting for BTC's online learning platform (Canvas), Panopto, Big Blue Button and other educational technology, and uses the ALLY accessible digital content checker for online and hybrid teaching and learning. The department maintains a focus on helping employees develop inclusive design and pedagogy for instruction and student services programs that use the Canvas platform. BTC Reading Apprenticeship (RA) community of practice participants review and offer suggestions on each other's online assignments, commenting specifically on elements of clarity, inclusion and quality. Work groups such as the BTC Library, Accessibility Resources (AR), and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEIC) provide multiple resources for employees to access online and for faculty to use in their online classrooms. AR has collaborated with eLearning to develop drop-in accessibility workshops for faculty and other employees, which are typically offered every month.

Adapting quickly to stay-home orders, college employees instituted laptop and tool loan programs, shifted to simulation software and remote-accessible training equipment to enhance student skills development, strengthened the college's remote technology infrastructure with virtual servers and increased internet hot-spots, and expanded licenses for online video conferencing applications. Library staff, working in conjunction with BTC's Computer Information Support Services and ASBTC, helped address the digital divide during the COVID-19 pandemic by increasing technology available for check-out and filling technology reservation requests from students. BTC worked with multiple employer and local government partners, including the Whatcom County Health Department, to establish a COVID-19 vaccine clinic at BTC. In addition to serving a critical community health need, this project provided clinical experiences to Nursing students whose access to clinical opportunities at the local hospital and other care centers had been greatly disrupted by the advent of the pandemic.

#### Welcoming Campus Atmosphere:

Students and employees identified 'Campus Community and Culture' as one of BTC's four themes under the 2018-23 Strategic Plan, and set goals such as 'strengthen college commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusiveness' and 'maintain a welcoming, safe, and accessible environment.' Student and employee groups on campus work towards these goals through inclusive campus activities and infrastructural improvements.

The Associated Students of Bellingham Technical College ([ASBTC](#)) host campus events and socials throughout the year. In 2019-20, for example, ASBTC presented a *Let's Taco 'Bout Mental Health* event, which focused on providing mental health strategy and resource

information for students and employees to support friends, family, and themselves. Other campus-wide events such as *Share the Love*, *BTC Spirit Week*, *Winter Quarter Pancake Feed*, and multiple other activities were designed to help students create and foster community and decrease stress levels. BTC began hosting an annual Wellness Fair in 2018-19, which includes representatives from a variety of community resources for mental health, insurance enrollment, reproductive health and financial advice. The Fair also gives students and employees the opportunity to get flu shots administered by BTC Nursing students, and the ASBTC covers the cost for uninsured students to get their flu shot.

[Student clubs](#) such as Phi Theta Kappa, Veterans, Genders and Sexualities Alliance, Storytellers, and Gaming, along with professional technical program clubs such as the Machining club, and student chapters of professional organizations such as the Student Nursing Organization, also provide support activities for students. The college hosts events such as Career and Employment Fairs, Tour Day, and Try a Trade to encourage prospective students to engage in non-traditional careers and to explore a variety of programs at the college. For current program students, events such as Welding Fab Week (Welding and Fabricating Technology) and Linuxfest (Computer Networking) help develop student leadership skills and bring popular industry events to campus. Students can also develop work readiness and leadership skills through job opportunities at BTC as a Student Ambassador, peer mentor, tutor, or other positions.

Governance committees and other campus groups explicitly focus on improving college levels of diversity, equity, and inclusiveness—such as the cross-constituency Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEIC), Genders and Sexualities Alliance club, Accessibility Team, and Students Helping build an Inclusive Future for the Trades (SHIFT), which focuses on increasing enrollment and retention rates of students in non-traditional fields.

BTC's facilities and grounds are designed to provide spaces for students to gather, including group study rooms and gathering spaces within most buildings on campus. BTC has a Student Center in its newest building, designed with natural lighting, seating pods and movable tables for group or individual work, or social gatherings. BTC student support programs such as TRIO SSS and clubs use the space for meetings and events. The space also has musical instruments, workout machines, electronic charging and refreshment stations. ASB executives post office hours. BTC maintains adjustable-height tables in classrooms, a video phone in the College Services Building lobby for use by deaf students, and screen reader software on shared computers throughout campus for vision-impaired students. BTC has designated gender-neutral bathrooms and private spaces for nursing mothers on campus.

Student Life stocks and runs the BTC Food Pantry, which is located across from the Library on the same floor as the Student Center. Student employees staff the Food Pantry during its open hours, providing information on community resources and answering any questions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, BTC employees and students engaged in a variety of activities intended to support and assist students, including engaging in quarterly Care Call campaigns to check in with students and connect them to resources if needed. BTC upgraded its WiFi system

so that students could access the Internet in BTC parking lots, which was a welcome resource for students (and employees) during a time when libraries and coffee shops were closed. ASB members conducted Snack Patrols to provide students with food so they didn't need to leave campus and to recognize safe behavior, and helped add inventory to the Library to help with the demand for student technology.

#### Effective Student Support Programming:

Over the past few years, BTC employees have conducted focused studies to investigate student barriers and, in turn, inform practice. For example, in 2018-19, BTC Data and Research staff conducted analyses of early leavers (degree-seeking students who dropped out after their first quarter) and found that many of these students share three common characteristics: 1) math course failures, 2) general academic underperformance, and 3) part-time enrollment. The Student Access and Success (SAS) governance committee selected two focus areas for improvement based on these analyses: 1) college-wide use of and follow-up for BTC's Early Alert system to facilitate early intervention for students who are struggling academically, and 2) quality and timing of prospective and current student communications. In a follow-up activity, College Navigators/coaches were embedded in those BTC Biology courses in which students had the highest incidence of academic alerts.

In another study requested by SAS that was conducted in the same year, BTC's Data and Research staff examined whether student participation in multiple specialized support programs was more effective in retaining students than participation in only one program. Preliminary study results showed no evidence of increased retention on the part of students who received services from multiple support programs as compared to students who received services from a single program. This research helped strengthen the college's focus on creating touch-points and services that serve a broad range of students rather than concentrating multiple services on limited student populations, and ensuring that each student has a primary support contact. For example, the college integrated student support staff into all developmental classrooms to provide navigation information and services, and the college's new onboarding process for new students requires that nearly every new degree-seeking student receive navigation support.

Other BTC research showed that 63% of new full-time, degree-seeking students persisted from Fall 2018 to Fall 2019, but that only 52% of new part-time, degree-seeking students continued. Further analysis revealed that part-time students who receive coaching three times per quarter from one of BTC's coaching programs (TRIO Student Support Services and Title III completion) are retained at higher rates than are non-coached students and, furthermore, at rates similar to those of full-time students. These results suggest that BTC's coaching programs are effective in helping to retain this at-risk student population at higher rates.

The goal of the Guided Pathways model is to close equity gaps. BTC's Guided Pathways work will serve all students, but it is specifically intended to develop institutional structures to enhance access and continued engagement (retention and completion) among those students that BTC has identified as most at-risk: low-income, first-generation, academically under-



prepared, and/or part-time degree-seeking students. Through BTC's Guided Pathways initiative, and with funding support from the Federal Department of Education and Washington State, BTC has recently integrated its advising and coaching systems to provide every student with navigation services that combine transactional advising with best practices from the completion coaching model. BTC's Guided Pathways work also includes a data literacy element, which focuses on empowering employees (particularly faculty) to explore college data, identify and address student equity gaps, and make data-informed decisions.

Over the past several years, BTC has implemented a variety of programs and instituted improvements intended to help close student equity gaps. Some examples are below:

- The college started its [IMPACT!](#) youth reengagement program for at-risk high-school students in 2015. This successful and rapidly growing program is housed at BTC, and helps students complete their GEDs along with pre-college and college-level coursework.
- A BTC College Navigator dedicates 25% of effort to the [Transitional Studies](#) (basic skills) area, which allows students easy access to advising resources. All Transitional Studies students meet individually with this staff member to map out educational and career goals, with a strong emphasis on helping students transition to college-level work.
- In 2018-19, BTC leveraged funding resources to provide a position dedicated to student veteran and other special population student support. This position helps BTC students gain access to and navigate specialized Workforce funding programs such as Veterans Benefits, Worker Retraining or Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET).
- In collaboration with BTC Foundation Board members, Student Financial Resources, and Student Services, Institutional Planning and Advancement staff members revamped BTC [Foundation Scholarship](#) processes to enhance equitable practices, including changing and/or removing application questions to make the application more accessible and more inclusive of all demographics.

BTC recently hired a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). This position will be instrumental in assessing campus climate; working with the campus community to develop the college's first-ever DEI strategic plan; providing DEI-specific professional development opportunities; examining and improving the college's policies and procedures, as well as student and employee recruitment and retention practices from an equity perspective; and helping foster a culture of inclusion.

BTC supports students from traditionally underserved populations, including students of color, veterans, low-income students, students with disabilities, foster care students, academically underprepared students, and those returning after a lay-off through specialized BTC programs and employee positions dedicated to facilitating student success, including its Director of Accessibility Resources, the college counselor, special program coordinators, College Navigators, coaches, and other student support personnel.

Dedicated programs which assist specific student populations on campus include:

- Accessibility Resources - serves as a center for disability education, awareness, and resources for students, staff, and faculty
- WorkFirst - grant program serving recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) - grant program serving recipients of Basic Food benefits
- Opportunity Grant - grant program serving low-income students going into high demand occupations
- Worker Retraining - grant program serving dislocated workers
- Passport to Careers - state funding program serving youth in or formerly in foster care and unaccompanied homeless youth
- Integrated-Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) - program serving academically underprepared students with a professional technical certificate or degree intent
- Hospital Employee Education and Training (HEET) - grant program supporting hospital and hospital-clinic employees pursuing Nursing and allied health careers
- Veterans Benefits – dedicated Workforce and Veterans Funding Navigator providing case management for student veterans and triage services for other students eligible for workforce program funding
- TRIO/Title III completion coaching - provide completion coaching services for disadvantaged students at BTC

Several broad-based support strategies are also in place to help increase student success, persistence and transition rates in BTC's professional technical programs. During mandatory *GET Started* sessions with new students, a College Navigator meets with the student to provide services specific to the student's goals and needs. Part of the College Navigator's role is to help students understand how identifying goals and setting up small steps to achieve them is critical. This helps students—especially first-generation students—create effective educational and career plans. Since the implementation of the *GET Started* program, nearly all BTC students now have academic plans upon entry to the institution. College Navigators are assigned to particular areas of study at BTC.

BTC requires students placing into developmental-level courses to enroll in a College Success course, which includes information on improving study and planning skills. In 2021, BTC began embedding coaching/navigation services into courses such as College Success and entry-level general education courses. The majority of students who communicated with the embedded College Navigator/coach at least once felt more successful and supported in their course, and valued the services. The student support staff members communicate weekly with the course faculty member and are integrated into the Canvas environment for these courses. BTC faculty use BTC's Customer Relation Management (MyBTCBridge) system to create and send ad hoc alerts focused on student attendance or academic concerns to College Navigators and coaches,

who can then follow up directly with students or refer a student to a specific campus resource. Employees can also use MyBTCBridge to look up student activity records, view students' prior interactions with other employees, view class rosters, log outreach and interactions, identify student barriers and make referrals to support services, and communications with students. Student Services and BTC's CISS staff work together to hold regular sessions at Faculty In-service Days regarding early intervention resources and practices, which helps college employees align and improve practices related to early intervention.

At BTC, students may move from an academic alert to probation and then suspension. BTC employees used to focus on students in the suspension stage, but analysis of BTC data showed that students placed on academic alert do not move on to probation because few of them stay at the college. Focus has shifted to intervening with students before or as soon as they are placed on academic alert. Student Services staff have met with deans to discuss how to proactively identify students who may be at risk; for example, students who repeat courses or who show a delay in completing course prerequisites. Specialized support program staff also track participant progress and contact students who may enter academic and/or financial aid probation and require additional support.

[Tutoring services](#) are located in a central location on campus, and are offered across campus in programs, labs, and other common study spaces as needed, as well as online. BTC Tutoring Services were offered online for the first time at the end of Winter 2020. General services offer a wide variety of support for pre-college, general education and program courses, as well as tutoring for BTC's two BAS programs – students can now also request one-on-one appointments on-line as well as small study group support. These innovations, including both on-line and on-ground modalities, will continue when BTC returns to inclusion of on-ground services post-pandemic. BTC's tutoring services are responsive to and customized around student and faculty-identified student needs. Tutors are hired and scheduled to meet both general drop-in support needs and targeted demand on the part of professional technical programs: for example, Tutoring has hired tutors (including second-year program students) to assist first-year students in programs such as Process Technology, Radiologic Technology and Nursing.

The BTC library delivers research and library instruction along with student technology support in person, virtually and via phone, email and chat services. In addition to providing instructional materials, technology equipment, and study spaces, the library hosts and supports the campus open computer lab of approximately 60 networked computers. Library staff also hold quarterly Technology Camp workshops for new students, and provide technology guidance and assistance to all students throughout the academic year.

Students with disabilities are provided with targeted support through BTC's Accessibility Resources ([AR](#)) area, which provides assistance with accommodation plans and assistive equipment. AR implemented a new accommodation, appointment, and case management software (AIM) in Spring 2020 to help centralize tracking and communications for students with disabilities. The Director of Accessibility Resources also acts as the main counselor for Labor &

Industries, Department of Vocational Resources and Community Transitions (program which serves K-12 special education students through age 21) counselors and students, assisting these students to develop any needed accessibility support plans.

In order to better support students in financial need, the college has redesigned its financial aid services and processes to provide faster processing turnaround and online access to critical financial aid information. In 2019-20, the Financial Aid and Workforce Funding offices merged to form the [Student Financial Resources](#) office, providing students with a centralized location for all funding needs. A [Financial Aid portal](#) allows students to login and check the status of their applications. Students can also go online to complete paperwork, creating a number of efficiencies for students and the Student Financial Resources office. Electronic filing systems have been implemented, which has made awarding turnaround time shorter. Staff have established projected student budgets for professional technical programs that more accurately reflect the student resources required for high-cost BTC programs, and the office has developed a packaging model for student aid that includes increased funds for students who have high loan debt and/or who are single parents. The department also collaborates with areas such as Accessibility Resources to help counsel students who petition financial aid termination and who may need additional support.

The Student Financial Resources office supports scholarship access and preparation on the part of students, including providing outreach for available scholarships such as the Opportunity Scholarship program and supporting students through the application process as they pursue a variety of student scholarship opportunities. The office also coordinates State and Federal student work-study programs, ensuring that students can gain workforce skills as well as earn money while in college.

The college recently streamlined its funding application process for [emergency support services](#) to students and moved this process online. This funding includes assistance with childcare, uniforms, tools, or car repairs to all students in need. Moving the application online increased student access and efficiencies: for example, the online application assisted Student Financial Resources to quickly award CARES Act funding to students impacted by the pandemic. Student Financial Resources has also worked closely with BTC's Data and Research area to better target students in need. For example, Data and Research staff worked with Student Financial Resources in Spring 2020 to identify students who had to drop from full- to part-time due to on-ground classes being cancelled, so that those students could be prioritized for emergency CARES Act funding.

Other individuals or groups, including the Associated Students of BTC and the BTC Foundation, contribute to student scholarship or emergency funds. The [ASBTC](#) supports students in a variety of other ways: for example, the ASBTC Executive Team supported Class of 2020 Commencement participants during the COVID-19 pandemic by funding caps and tassels, providing diploma covers, and worked with the Campus Store to put packages together and support shipping costs. The ASBTC also helped the Library purchase additional technology items to check out to students. Over the past few years, the BTC Foundation has substantially

increased the number of student scholarship donors and scholarship fund disbursement amounts.

BTC data show that these supports may be effective: In a Fall 2020 survey, students indicated that of all support services provided to them, financial assistance was the most critical. Low-income students at BTC have higher retention rates than students who are not low-income. From Fall 2018 to Fall 2019, 65% of low-income students were retained, versus 54% of non-low-income students.

**2.G.2 The institution publishes in a catalog, or provides in a manner available to students and other stakeholders, current and accurate information that includes: institutional mission; admission requirements and procedures; grading policy; information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress and the frequency of course offerings; names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty; rules and regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities; tuition, fees, and other program costs; refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment; opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and the academic calendar.**

BTC meets accreditation information requirements through an annual catalog, which is published on BTC’s website through the [online](#) Acalog platform and is available in [hard copy](#) upon request. The below table verifies on which catalog page(s) the information is published. BTC’s Marketing and Communications department leads the creation of the BTC catalog using a collaborative process to ensure broad input and accuracy.

Required Content Locations in BTC Catalog

Required Content	Page
<a href="#">Institutional mission and core themes</a>	5
<a href="#">Admissions requirements and procedures</a>	10
<a href="#">Grading policy</a>	31
<a href="#">Information on academic programs</a> and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress and the frequency of course offerings	44
<a href="#">Names, titles, degrees held</a> , and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty	164
<a href="#">Rules and regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities</a>	170
<a href="#">Tuition, fees, and other program costs</a>	17
<a href="#">Refund policies and procedures</a> for students who withdraw from enrollment	18
<a href="#">Opportunities and requirements for financial aid</a>	19
<a href="#">Academic calendar</a>	6

**2.G.3 Publications and other written materials that describe educational programs include accurate information on national and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered. Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation or profession shall be included in such materials.**

National or state criteria for entry into a field or for eventual licensure are tracked closely by program faculty. Standing [industry entry](#) and [licensure requirements](#) are incorporated into admissions processes for particular programs. For example, a Driver's License and 3-year driving record are required for entry into BTC's Automotive Technology program, evidence of which is required for employment in the industry. Drug and other medical testing screens and criminal background checks (required by clinical partners) for entry into [Nursing](#) and allied health occupations are also required for entry into these certificate and degree programs. Industry standards that are rapidly changing (for example, increased use of criminal background checks and drug testing for Process Operator positions) may not be required as part of the admissions process, but information about the industry standards are posted on the "Jobs" portion of each program page on the website, discussed during navigation and career exploration sessions and activities, and covered in program information sessions. Certain programs also offer targeted orientation sessions, which contain information on specialized admissions requirements needed for entry into the program and the industry. Admissions information for programs with prerequisites and other additional admissions requirements are published in the catalog, and on the website, and are included in new student *GET Started* sessions. College Navigators also integrate these additional admissions requirements into student's individual academic plans.

Programs use national and professional skill standards, including industry licensure, certification, and accreditation standards, to guide their student learning outcomes. A few examples include the American [Culinary](#) Education Federation (ACEF), National [Automotive](#) Technician Education Foundation (NATEF), Accreditation Commission for Education in [Nursing](#) (ACEN), Accreditation Review Council on Education in [Surgical Technology](#) and Surgical Assisting (ARC-STSA), and Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Program (CAAHP). Programs associated with these national organizations note their affiliations in their published program descriptions. Industry standards which are recommended or required for entry, licensure and advancement in a particular field are fully integrated into program curriculum and outcomes.

**2.G.4 The institution provides an effective and accountable program of financial aid consistent with its mission, student needs, and institutional resources. Information regarding the categories of financial assistance (such as scholarships, grants, and loans) is published and made available to prospective and enrolled students.**

Connecting students to [financial aid resources](#) and supporting their progress through Federal, state, and private financial aid processes is critical to the college's mission and strategic goals around student access, success and retention. Nearly half of BTC's certificate- and/or degree-seeking students receive need-based financial support. The Financial Aid and Workforce

Funding areas were combined in 2019-20 to form the [Student Financial Resources](#) office, which benefits students by creating a one-stop area for their funding needs. This change also improved collaboration between the college's financial assistance programs and staff, resulting in more efficient and effective operations. In response to rapidly increasing demand for Federal Student Aid, Student Financial Resources has also developed new strategies for timely communications with its students, utilizing BTC's CRM system as well as developing an on-line Financial Aid Portal and streamlining internal office procedures for increased efficiency and decreased student wait time.

In Spring 2020, employees drew upon BTC institutional, Foundation and Federal resources to provide student emergency funds related to the COVID-19 pandemic. BTC responded quickly to student need in the beginning of the pandemic through use of institutional and Foundation funds. BTC's Data and Research staff pulled data to identify over 200 students who had either dipped below full-time or dropped entirely, due to courses being cancelled or moved in response to COVID-19 restrictions. Student Financial Resources proactively reached out to these students about emergency fund availability. Students were able to apply online for institutional funds to recoup expenses from loss of income, additional expenses related to online coursework, and reductions to financial aid due to Spring 2020 course adjustments. The college was also awarded Federal CARES Act funding in late Spring 2020 to help support students in need due to impacts of the pandemic. Student Financial Resources and BTC Foundation staff worked together to create an efficient awarding process for these funds. Since March 2020, the college spent \$1,757,887 to provide direct aid to these students.

Federal Student Aid information specific to BTC is available on the BTC website and in the Student Financial Resources office as well as through various information sessions, outreach events and activities on and off campus. Staff support students receiving loans with multiple services, including sending students [loan information](#) through Loan Request Forms and [tracking letters](#), and annually review packaging guidelines and expenditure of funds.

Campus departments that provide funding for students work closely together to coordinate processes and awards. For example, BTC's cross-departmental Emergency Funding team worked with Student Financial Resources in 2019-20 to centralize and digitize the application process. These resources are now advertised to all students through Student Financial Resources. These efforts help make BTC's student emergency assistance program more equitable, consistent and effective. BTC programs and departments that provide student financial support also foster partnerships with external funding agencies such as WorkSource, Employment Security Department, Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and the Opportunity Council. Specialized BTC programs that offer financial aid to students typically have dedicated coordinators or advisors that assist members of the targeted population navigate paperwork and processes needed for their financial aid awards. For example, the number of Trade Act-qualified students and other unemployed students has risen due to the pandemic, and workforce funding programs (such as Worker Retraining) are providing financial and other support services. BTC has also developed additional supports for low-income high school students who are participating in BTC's Running Start program. Students who qualify for free or

reduced lunch in the K-12 system can receive support for bus passes, textbooks and course supplies, and can apply for a BTC scholarship to help pay for tuition over 15 credits and program fees.

A link to the BTC Foundation website can be accessed from the Student Financial Resources page as well as through other support program pages, and links to private and college grant scholarships soliciting applicants are made available for students to research. The BTC Library also has a variety of books and database information about scholarships available for current and prospective students.

**2.G.5 Students receiving financial assistance are informed of any repayment obligations. The institution regularly monitors its student loan programs and publicizes the institution's loan default rate on its website.**

Entrance and exit loan counseling services for the Federal Direct Student Loan program are available online through the Department of Education. BTC communicates at the time the loan is awarded via a tracking letter, and verifies student completion of entrance counseling before releasing loan funds. Students are reminded of their responsibility to repay loans when loans are awarded, and are referred to exit counseling when they cease enrollment or drop below half-time. If a student enrolls less than half-time, BTC notifies them of their entrance into the grace period. BTC also subscribes to the i3 online counseling system. i3 reaches out to students who have borrowed from the Federal Direct Loan program, and provides online loan repayment and [default prevention](#) and resolution services. The college regularly monitors its student loan programs through the National Student Loan Data System and the institution's [loan default rate](#). BTC's latest Three-Year Cohort Default draft rate for 2018 is at 8.9%. This percentage will be finalized by the Department of Education in September 2021.

**2.G.6 The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates a systematic and effective program of academic advisement to support student development and success. Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program and graduation requirements, and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities of advisors are defined, published, and made available to students.**

BTC employs a shared caseload navigation program model (among College Navigators and faculty) that includes mandatory, [individualized entry advising](#) and planning for nearly all new degree-seeking students. This model was created to ensure equitable access to advising services on the part of all BTC students. The required *GET Started* sessions for new students help them assess the 'fit' of their particular educational and career goals and to identify what resources they may need to help them achieve their goals.

Over the past several years, the campus has expanded the quantity and quality of [online](#) services available to students, including moving enrollment services and processes online, developing online tutoring and coaching options, and creating Virtual Lobbies to provide



additional online support tools for students.

In 2019-20, BTC piloted the process of combining general advising and coaching functions within individual positions. As part of the college's Guided Pathways implementation, BTC has created a cadre of College Navigators that integrate advising and coaching practices, with one [College Navigator](#) dedicated to each of the college's meta-majors. This new structure will help institutionalize coaching practice at BTC, and serving a targeted population of students will help these staff members deepen their understanding of the training programs and careers for which their students are preparing. Additionally, BTC has identified student educational/career plans and career services as two priority areas, with five-year KPI targets of establishing and implementing a strategy for more accessible, equitable and effective student educational/career planning and establishing and implementing a strategy for more accessible equitable and effective career services information and support. The college has established two workgroups to lead planning for the college in these areas.

Employees of special programs, such as Accessibility Resources, Opportunity Grant, Worker Retraining, Work First, and Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) also provide special populations with wrap-around support services that include general advising. The majority of BTC College Navigators and those employees who provide advising services to students are located in the College Services Building, which allows students to access a variety of student support services in one location, and also facilitates cross-collaboration and peer mentoring among employees. However, as BTC has increased its grant resources and expanded student support services, other College Navigators and staff who provide advising and case management services to special populations (e.g., TRIO Student Support Services) have been housed in a variety of locations on-campus, including in H building and Campus Center. BTC's student support services plan to maintain a mix of on-ground and online services.

New College Navigators and staff serving special populations are trained by supervisors and peers, and work closely with experienced admissions and advising employees, as well as faculty members. In 2015, BTC researched evidence-based post-secondary strategies for increased non-traditional student retention and selected replication of the *InsideTrack* student coaching model as a strategy to help redress student equity issues, piloting a TRIO SSS completion coaching program on campus with grant assistance from the US Department of Education in 2016. BTC's TRIO SSS and Title III completion coaching programs were based on this model, which has a record of proven success. Over the past few years, BTC's completion coaching staff members have held regular *InsideTrack* coaching model training to train new coaches and enrich the practice of BTC employees who provide non-academic and academic support services as well as faculty members. BTC internal research indicates that the services provided by the coaching model are associated with increased quarter-to-quarter retention rates, particularly among part-time students.

In 2018-19, staff formed a workgroup focused on coordinating academic and career advising support services among staff who directly advise students (including Completion Coaches, Admissions/Outreach Specialists, College Navigators, and Student Services program

coordinators). The goal of this group is to ensure that BTC employees use a centralized communication and support process for students. Regular, bi-weekly meetings are open to all Student Services employees and are venues for College Navigators, coaches, and coordinators of special student support programs to share information, review and communicate consistent practices, and have opportunities for trainings. In addition to these group meetings, all campus coaches and College Navigators meet bi-weekly with the Executive Director of Admissions and Advising. All College Navigators and other staff delivering advising services also meet with the rest of the Student Services departments in monthly All Student Services staff meetings.

In addition, a representative from the college's general advising team attends program advisory committee meetings and participates in Instruction Council as a voting member. The highlights from each meeting are compiled and shared with all advising staff. Those advising support staff connected with particular instructional programs are integrated into departmental meetings and communications, increasing their ability to effectively advise students.

BTC's Student Services area works closely with faculty to build awareness of shared caseload assignments and to train faculty in proactive advising practices and tools, including early alert processes. For example, Student Services employees host training and information sessions during Faculty In-service Days, and College Navigators and coaches are integrated into program and general education Canvas pages. College Navigators and Registration and Enrollment staff work together to attend program classes upon request to help students register for the next quarter. Once students enter their professional technical program, faculty become their primary advisor(s) and these faculty continue to receive support from Student Services employees. Faculty guide students through their course selection processes and provide career preparation support as well as offering general support and referrals as needed.

Advising requirements and responsibilities of BTC's College Navigators are defined, published, and made available to students through BTC's catalog.

**2.G.7 The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in such a course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures that the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.**

Students are assigned a Student Identification Number (SID) at the time of admission to the college. Information that is unique to the student is linked to the SID and stored in the Student Management System (SMS). Students are enrolled in individual courses through the SMS only, and all programs and courses offered through the online learning management systems require that students log in using their Student Identification Number (SID) and a personalized password. BTC anticipates being able to implement multi-factor authentication for all online students and employees once PeopleSoft has been implemented in October 2021. The online

course management system used for hosting online classes is a closed and secure system that requires [student authentication](#) upon logging in. There are no charges associated with the student verification process at the time of admission or at the time of enrollment in any online course.

## LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

### **2.H.1 Consistent with its mission, the institution employs qualified personnel and provides access to library and information resources with a level of currency, depth, and breadth sufficient to support and sustain the institution’s mission, programs, and services.**

The BTC Library has been providing technical and professional information to support the programs, courses, and research at Bellingham Technical College since 1995. The Library's mission is consistent with the institution’s mission and strategic themes.

*Bellingham Technical College Library and eLearning support the evolving information, education and technology needs for teaching and learning by offering the BTC community responsive, inclusive service to promote academic and career success.*

#### Library Facilities

BTC’s Library is located on the top floor of the Campus Center building. This location, with 14,500 square feet, includes eight study rooms, a faculty resource room, and a 50+ open access computer lab (the Information Commons), as well as study tables and seating areas for individual and group work. The Library was designed and furnished to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, and purchases ADA accessible materials whenever possible. The Library includes an Information and Digital Literacy computer lab classroom. The eLearning Department also has space in the Library, which includes an eLearning lab (600 square feet) for small group faculty instruction, and a small instructional media studio.

#### Library Services

The librarians and paraprofessional staff offer reference and research support, directional assistance, circulation assistance, interlibrary loans, and student technology support. Library services are flexible and support the college’s programs and services, with specialized assistance and instruction available by request. For example, formal Library orientations and information literacy sessions are requested and taught regularly for general education, Transitional Studies, and other courses. Professional technical programs, such as Culinary Arts and Nursing, also ask for specific orientations for program students. In addition to orientations and information literacy sessions, librarians offer training on reference tools such as EBSCO eBooks, ProQuest and Credo Reference. The Executive Director of Library, eLearning and Academic Support, who also oversees the BTC Tutoring Center, acts as the copyright officer for the college and provides information to employees and students on topics such as copyright laws and plagiarism. The Library maintains a robust collection of [online resources](#). The online catalog, eBooks, full-text journal databases, digital reference and streaming videos, and

research aids are available for use on- or off-campus. The Library provides over 50 software programs on its computers that assist employees and students who are studying or working independently. Applications include the full Microsoft Office Suite, MasterCook, AutoCAD, QuickBooks, and many others.

The BTC Library recently acquired several career/workplace readiness resources to support students, including the Peterson's Test Prep/Testing and Education Reference Center database, where students can prepare for the future by creating resumes and taking practice career and college placement exams. The Library has created bibliographies of materials that raise awareness of marginalized populations, including LGBTQ and people with disabilities. The Library provides bibliographies of new materials and a Library information and resources brochure, and offers clear signage to direct users. LibGuides provides online access (including video tutorials) to bibliographies, Library-focused instructional content such as evidence resources and how-to guides, subject guides, citation guides, and other information. Library assistance is available via Canvas (the college's learning management system), and staff maintain a social media presence through Facebook and other platforms.

### Student Technology Support

Throughout the academic year, Library staff members provide student computer technology support. Demand for this service has increased in recent years, with technology support questions comprising at least half of the total questions asked. In conjunction with Student Life and eLearning, the Library offers BTC Technology Camps at the beginning of each quarter. A recorded version of this Camp is posted on the web. The Library also checks out laptops, iPads, graphing calculators and other technology to students. As BTC transitioned to fully remote instruction in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Library staff stepped up their efforts to provide technology and technology support for student learning, filling over 400 quarterly technology reservation requests from students for curbside pickup of items such as laptops, monitors, internet hot spots, circuit boards, data ports, and lab kits. In Fall 2020, the number of technology reservation requests increased to over 1600. Spring 2020 Technology Camps were translated into an online instructional video guide. These activities, in collaboration with academic support areas such as the Tutoring Center also moving services online, helped the Library and eLearning build a stronger remote learning and teaching support infrastructure for continued use.

### Library Access

Students and employees can access Library services in a variety of ways. The Library is open 54.5 hours per week (including evening hours Monday through Thursday), and the Library's Information Desk is staffed during open hours. 24/7 access to Library information and research support services is available through the [Library website](#), and includes access to the online catalog, research guides, and general electronic databases such as ProQuest, Credo Reference, and Films on Demand, as well as program-specific databases such as CINAHL Plus with Full Text. The Library also subscribes to EBSCO eBooks Academic Collection (with over 208,000 eBook titles). To support in-depth reference and research questions from students, the Library offers 'Book-a-Librarian' services: students can schedule a 30-60 minutes appointment with a librarian

to assist them with their research. The Library uses Ex Libris' Primo Discovery Service to manage and provide one-stop access to BTC's print and digital collections and pathways to many open-access resources, and is part of the nationwide consortium of academic and public libraries that supports the LibAnswers 24/7 chat reference service.

### Library Collections

The depth and breadth of the college's collection is guided by its [Collections Development Policy](#), available online. The Library acquires, catalogues and processes an average of 642 titles and 1,275 volumes per year. The Library withdraws volumes each year in order to keep its collection current and support the unique needs of the college's professional technical curriculum. In addition to its general collection, the Library maintains several specialized collections, including a Faculty Teaching and Learning collection and an English Language Acquisition collection. The Library also manages reserve materials. Media and reference materials are interfiled with the other collections and grouped by subject. The Library's collection includes over 13,000 physical titles, 212,000 eBooks, 76 print journals, and over 1,130 DVDs and videos, as well as streaming media. Employee and student feedback guide Library and information resource development. Approximately half of the materials purchased are the result of instructor, student, or staff recommendations or requests.

### Stakeholder Feedback

The Library gathers data and receives feedback in a variety of ways. Library staff look at [data](#) sources such as circulation counts, front door and group study room statistics, and database usage statistics. Comment cards and "Suggestion for Purchase" forms are available at the front desk, and the Library regularly accepts suggestions via online form, email and in-person. In BTC's Fall 2020 student survey, nearly 80% of students using the Library reported that their needs were met. The Library regularly contributes its data to national surveys such as the annual Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey and the U. S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, Academic Libraries Survey.

More recently, Library staff have been looking at additional ways to authentically assess Library services. The Library records reference and student technology help-desk questions. To enhance communications with different campus constituencies, Library staff serve on several governance and other committees across campus, including the Accreditation Steering Committee, College Assembly, Opening Day Planning Committee, Instruction Council, Technology Committee, Planning and Resource Allocation Committee, and Student Access and Success Committee. General input and suggestions for improvement received from campus employees and students through venues such as daily interactions or committee or workgroup meetings are discussed in weekly staff meetings: feedback is shared and included whenever appropriate in resource planning.

In the Library's planning cycle, a [Library Strategic Plan](#)—based on the college's current mission, vision and goals—is developed every three years. Each year, the staff revisit the Plan to revise the action plans for the upcoming year.

### Library Collaborations

The Library provides global, web-based [interlibrary lending](#) and borrowing services through OCLC's WorldShare and WorldCat. In addition, reciprocal borrowing agreements exist between Bellingham Technical College and Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, the Whatcom County Library System, Bellingham Public Library, and Northwest Indian College, as well as with all community and technical college libraries in Washington State. Agreements between these organizations increase access to informational resources for students and employees. The Whatcom County library directors' group, called Whatcom Libraries Collaborate, meets quarterly to discuss more ways to work together to expand library access for better stewardship of resources and greater community impact. They also collaborate on the *Whatcom READS! One Book Together* program and on joint staff training. The One Card program provides access to all Whatcom County libraries with the patron's home library card. Whatcom County public libraries also support the BTC Connection, in which students, employees, and neighborhood residents can come to BTC's Library to pick up public library holds.

The BTC Library participates in several collaborative statewide arrangements, including the Washington Community and Technical College Library Consortium (WACTCLC), whose members consist of all community and technical college libraries in Washington State. The WACTCLC strives to work cooperatively to achieve common goals and greater efficiency, and to enhance access to evolving content, services, and technology. The Library also participates in the Statewide Database Licensing Program, the Orbis-Cascade Digital Services Program, and the ORCA Consortium (a consortium of 16 community and technical college libraries in Washington State). ORCA coordinates services and activities related to shared use of a processor and the Ex-Libris Alma integrated library management system. The Executive Director of Library, eLearning and Academic Support participates in the statewide Library Leadership Council (LLC) and represents two-year colleges on the state library's Library Council of Washington.

Over the past several years, the Library has participated in grant projects that involved curriculum development work with faculty. For example, in 2019-20, Library staff gave a presentation on their original research called "Information Literacy: Student Self-Confidence and Course Success" at the Assessment in Action Fall Research Symposium at Highline College. This project was part of a Retention, Classroom Success, Engagement, and Equity, a Library Leadership Council (LLC) grant project funded by the Washington State Library. Library staff and faculty worked with English course students on this research project. Many of these activities and initiatives are supported with Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Information Literacy grants through the Washington State Library.

### Patron Confidentiality and Collection Maintenance

Library staff protect user contact and check-out information, and temporary workers are trained to maintain patron confidentiality. The Library uses CheckPoint to ensure the security of BTC's collection with the use of radio frequency tags. Library materials are barcoded, labeled and stamped with property information. Staff conduct ongoing collection inventories, which help identify any missing or misplaced materials. The Library has a fine and fee policy that is

available online and helps deter theft. Databases accessed off-campus require authentication through EZProxy, an authentication software that validates BTC affiliation credentials.

### Library Safety

Library staff plan and discuss procedures to use during different types of emergencies and have made modifications, such as having bookcases secured to walls and to the ceiling in case of earthquakes, to create a safer environment. The Library has a supply of emergency food and first aid kits, and staff are trained to use the automated external defibrillator. The Safety Committee regularly performs a safety check of the Library. Staff have ongoing conversations about new security and emergency procedures.

## PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

**2.1.1 Consistent with its mission, the institution creates and maintains physical facilities that are accessible, safe, secure, and sufficient in quantity and quality to ensure healthful learning and working environments that support and sustain the institution’s mission, academic programs, and services.**

### Facilities Layout

BTC’s learning and working environments support the college’s mission, programs, and services. The college is situated on 32 acres of land, and the main campus is comprised of 17 buildings. BTC also has two primary off-site instructional locations, including the Perry Center for Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences and the Technology Development Center on the Bellingham waterfront, which currently houses BTC’s Engineering Technology: Composites program as well as a BTC local labor organization partner: the Association of General Contractors. The college provides related instruction courses at the Technology Development Center for the AGC apprenticeship program. The college also has one off-site storage building, the Marine Drive Annex. The college develops community and private partnerships to use 1) off-site facilities for BTC classes or other activities and 2) BTC facilities to host community education and training classes or events. Facilities on the main campus include classrooms, labs, administrative offices, Library, bookstore, cafeteria, Café Culinaire restaurant, Dental Clinic, and parking, while the Perry Center facility includes a working hatchery, operated by BTC in collaboration with the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

### Accessibility

The college is required to provide unrestricted access for all constituencies, including Americans with Disabilities, and accommodations are part of the college’s capital project planning. All new and renovated construction projects meet applicable Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards. The college engages in periodic Office of Civil Rights (OCR) surveys through the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, which includes checks of facilities to ensure that these standards are met. The college works to meet the guidelines set forth by the ADA in older, existing buildings by expanding access in the form of parking, specialized building doors, restroom design, and signage. New construction meets all current regulations and codes.

### Facilities Oversight

Management, maintenance and operation of institutional facilities are adequate to ensure their continuing quality, security and safety. The Vice President of Administrative Services oversees college facilities and infrastructure, with the Director of Facilities providing oversight of the Maintenance, Grounds and Utilities, and Custodial Services functions and staff. The Vice President and Director work together to review all campus projects for feasibility and contribute their input to other administrators as well as the Board of Trustees. The biannual SBCTC Facility Condition Survey and various local, state and federal agency regulations guide the college in continuing high levels of facility functionality, accessibility, and campus safety. Campus maintenance is conducted on a regular annual schedule and as needed. BTC uses a campus-wide Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS)—DirectLine—which is available to all campus sectors.

### Facilities Conditions

The college's physical facilities are generally sufficient in quantity and quality to ensure healthful learning and working environments. The biannual SBCTC Facility Condition Survey, conducted by a professional architect employed by the SBCTC, provides information regarding the structural integrity and state of repair of BTC facilities. Overall, survey results show that college buildings are in conditions ranging from "Renovate" to "Superior," taking into consideration their use and age. Most recently, the 2019 Facility Condition Survey identified a total of 11 capital repair deficiencies, with an estimated repair cost of \$880,000 for the college. These needed repairs are typically funded through the legislative capital allocation process each biennium. BTC is one of the smallest colleges in the Washington State Community and Technical College system, and space on the campus is at a premium. The college currently has approximately 335,000 square feet of floor space, and that space is used as efficiently as possible; the college staggers program hours whenever possible, recently implementing updated space scheduling software (*25 Live*) and centralizing scheduling services to help maximize space use and efficiency. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many employees have been working remotely since Spring 2020; the college anticipates reassessing and possibly restructuring space needs and use as employees transition back to working on campus.

### Facilities Planning

The 2020 BTC [Facilities Master Plan](#) (FMP) has been updated to provide guidance related to future campus development and facilities improvements for both building- and grounds-related projects. The FMP is driven by and serves a critical role in supporting BTC's Strategic Plan and the college's capital expenditure feedback and evaluation processes.

The college developed its first 20-year Campus Master Plan in 1993. Periodic updates to the Master Plan prioritize campus build-out based on the needs of the community and priorities identified in the college's Strategic Plan. For the most recent round of revisions, the Facilities Planning Committee (which is one of BTC's nine governance committees) reviewed BTC's existing Institutional Master Plan (IMP), completed in 2014 by Schreiber Starling and Lane, and compared it to the Master Plans of other higher education institutions within and outside of Washington State. Based on this review, the Facilities Planning Committee decided to develop a



new FMP, with the goal of creating an internally-driven, simplified, and more condensed version of past Master Plans. The 2020 FMP, and subsequent future updates, supplies current and updated facilities-related information in a more condensed format that is more cost-effective and efficient. The FMP will serve a critical role in both BTC's Strategic Plan process and creation of the college's Major Project Request Reports (PRR). The college's Facilities Master Plan: 2020-2023 was approved by the College Assembly, administration, and Board of Trustees in Spring 2020.

Major Project Request Reports (PRR) are based on the Master Plan and have historically been submitted to the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) each capital budget biennium. The 34 community and technical colleges compete for capital funds by submitting PRR's for system-wide review in four different categories: growth, replacement, renovation and match. In December 2017, the college submitted a PRR for a 42,000 sq. ft. renovation of the building housing its Engineering Technology programs, which was placed on the list of State projects.

### Campus Safety

Safety and personal security for everyone on campus is a primary goal for the college. [Emergency procedure handbooks](#) are regularly updated and posted throughout campus. Key members of BTC's Emergency Response Team, composed primarily of administrators, are trained in federally-recognized National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) certifications, per national expectations. The campus regularly conducts fire and emergency situation drills. Facility quality and safety are reviewed by the campus-wide Safety Committee, which is one of BTC's nine governance committees. This cross-representational group meets regularly throughout each year to review accident and incident reports, monitor any safety-related concerns, and plan educational safety workshops and other activities for campus. BTC's campus safety manager sends out a link to the SBCTC safety survey each year. The Safety Committee reviews the results specific to BTC to identify trends and any campus safety processes that may need improvement.

BTC posts [safety resources](#) on the BTC [Safety Information](#) page, including BTC's online Incident and Behavior Report Form, which is used to submit information regarding an individual's behaviors of concern to the Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation (CARE) Team. This team is composed of select employees from across campus who are trained in confidentiality and pool resources and experience to investigate situations and respond appropriately. Members of BTC's CARE Team led the update of the CARE Team's charge and related policy ([460.A](#)) in Fall 2020, to assist the college in better responding to behaviors of concern. The CARE Team has shifted from engaging in reactive response to a proactive, solutions-based approach. Safety videos and slideshows are also posted on the site, along with BTC's Emergency Flowchart and Handbook.

BTC students are required to complete an online course through the Foundry platform called *Sexual Assault Prevention for Undergraduates*. This course provides an opportunity for students to learn important information about the prevention of sexual violence and substance abuse.

The Bellingham Police and Fire Departments conduct periodic assessments to review campus safety conditions and infrastructure, and their recommendations are included in priority assignments for Facilities. Program-specific safety training is part of multiple professional technical programs, particularly those with labs that contain industrial equipment.

BTC established a COVID response team with a cross-section of employees to plan and implement the college's [response to the pandemic](#). This Team ensures BTC compliance with safety requirements from the State and County Departments of Health.

#### Disposal of Hazardous Materials

The college is committed to the safe use, storage and disposal of hazardous materials. The college developed and implemented [Policy 260](#) (Hazardous Waste Material Disposal) in 2000, [Policy 215](#) (Hazardous and Suspicious Mail) in 2001, and [Policy 260.1](#) (Prohibit Illicit Discharges, Activities, and Connections to Separate Storm Sewer System) in 2008. All policies are published and available to employees via the Human Resources department's SharePoint page. BTC's Emergency Procedures Handbook also addresses hazardous materials handling and disposal and other safety-related procedures. The Global Harmonized System (GHS) of labelling chemicals was updated and revised in 2014. A related system for maintaining appropriate Material Safety Data Sheets ([224](#)) for all programs on campus is in place. The college works to refine and update this system as new standards are developed. Instructional areas and other departments can individualize their Safety Data Sheets and store them electronically and in hard copy as needed.

Areas of the college that use potentially hazardous materials are outfitted with appropriate equipment and supplies to properly handle and dispose of those materials. Instructors are responsible for meeting the applicable labeling and storage requirements in their departments, and non-hazardous materials are used whenever possible in the instructional spaces. The college's Custodial department strives to use sustainable cleaning products in order to reduce the amount of hazardous materials on campus. Used hazardous materials are removed from the campus and disposed of in compliance with applicable laws by a variety of approved contractors. Facilities collaborates with the campus' Emergency Preparedness and Safety Manager to manage and facilitate the removal of hazardous materials from the campus. This team also monitors the hazardous waste and communicates with the handler as appropriate. As a Phase 2 Secondary Storm Water permit holder, the college submits an annual report to the Washington State Department of Ecology regarding its Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP). Good Faith surveys (which help identify potential hazardous materials that may be encountered during construction) are updated when construction takes place on campus. In addition, Hazardous Communications Training is a required part of every new employee's orientation through Human Resources.

#### Instructional Equipment

One of the college's top priorities is obtaining and maintaining training equipment similar to the equipment that students will encounter in their fields after graduation. Each program's advisory

committee conducts an annual program review that includes a review of program training equipment and facilities. Based on committee input, instructors compile a list of needed tools, equipment or equipment repairs, replacements or updates. Working with their area administrator, faculty prioritize and incorporate minor requests into the program's annual operating budget request.

Each department can also make material and equipment upgrade, replacement and addition requests through BTC's annual, campus-wide [Resource Request process](#). These requests are generated by any employee; are submitted by area deans, directors or coordinators; and are reviewed and assessed by the representative Planning and Resource Allocation (PARA) governance committee. One key criterion for fulfilling these requests is that requestors show a clear connection between their request and the college's strategic goals. Final review and prioritization is completed by the President's Leadership Team to ensure that amounts spent are within the annual budget approved by the Board of Trustees. Program equipment is an ongoing need for the college, and the PARA Resource Request process helps meet this gap; the college is committed to developing an equipment replacement fund, continuing to fine-tune the resource request process, and locating additional funding sources to fulfill these requests.

Community and industry partners also help support program equipment needs through Program Advisory Committee work and by providing equipment resource referrals and donations. State, Federal and private grant awards and additional funding requests through state programs such as Worker Retraining have also resulted in additional funds to support equipment purchases.

Policies and procedures for [purchasing equipment](#) are clearly outlined in BTC Purchasing Policy (204), and a biannual fixed-asset inventory is conducted by the Business Office. The Business Office inventories all equipment and maintains up-to-date and accurate records of all items based on State and BTC guidelines. The college's official inventory is maintained by the Business Office and is audited by the state. All items are held in one database that resides with the financial management system of the college. When inventorial items are purchased, an RFID tag is attached with the equipment's specific number, and its location is entered into the database. When an item is removed, Facilities sends that information to Business Services to update the inventory. In 2019-20, Business Office staff improved BTC's Fixed Asset and Equipment (FAE) list, merging the FAE list with the college's Computerized Maintenance Management System (DirectLine). This change allows BTC to more easily locate and track the campus location of equipment items. The Business Office has also eliminated no-longer existing items and has tagged all inventory items with new RFID tags. This clean-up process required intense collaboration and three years to complete. When equipment is no longer useful, beyond repair, or is too costly to repair, it is sent to surplus. The college formally removes the surplus items from its inventory when items are sold or eliminated. The college's Director of Enterprise Services leads this effort, and BTC's Facilities area coordinates and supports this process.

### Technology Infrastructure

BTC has developed technology systems and infrastructure to support its management and operational systems. BTC's network infrastructure is made up of servers (including virtual servers), network appliances (including firewalls, print servers), switches, and both cabled and wireless endpoints. The college maintains an employee and student network and a campus-wide student and employee email system and other local and web services. The Computer and Information Support Services (CISS) department supports computer labs, employee offices, and classroom and lab computers, including program-specific computer technology, software and equipment, and network systems. The department also maintains the college's website and intranet site for all employees. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the department responded promptly to student and employee needs by strengthening the college's remote technology infrastructure with virtual servers and additional internet hot-spots, as well as facilitating the purchase and use of virtual training software and acquiring laptops and other technology that the Library catalogued, processed and circulated to students.

The CISS department maintains an online SharePoint system for employees. The college utilizes a Mitel VoIP communications system, which has phone, fax and unified messaging capabilities. BTC's CISS department (which includes Media Services staff) work closely with the Library to provide enhanced media, printing and copying equipment and services to students and employees. Campus departments use specialized state data systems to support operational functions such as student support services, human resources, data and research, accounting, and other business services.

### Cybersecurity

BTC maintains an [IT Security Plan](#) and has recently hired an IT Security Specialist who is reviewing all BTC policies and security plans. This employee will audit and test college IT security processes to find gaps and weak points within the college's IT security and data systems.

### Teaching Technology

Technology support for BTC's instructional program teaching stations in every classroom includes computers, video players, projectors, document cameras, and capabilities for podcasting and lecture capture. BTC strives to update classroom lectern technology every five years in accordance with the college's [Technology Plan](#). The college maintains a media studio and eLearning Lab within the eLearning area in the Library, as well as a digital classroom which can be used for employee professional development. The Library also offers a Faculty Resource Room, which includes computers, printer, and a teaching and learning materials collection. BTC's eLearning department provides faculty and students with orientations, tutorials and troubleshooting for Canvas, Panopto, Big Blue Button and other educational technology. Students in every degree program have an associated computer lab loaded with a general software suite and any field-specific software as requested by faculty. Laptop carts and tablets are available for use in any classroom. Computers and media equipment such as portable cart technology, large screen monitors, laptops, document cameras, video capability (including iPads), Apple TV, and wireless microphones are also used in lab settings, along with simulation

software and equipment. Wi-Fi is available in all buildings on campus. Students can access their email and other student resources and applications while using the study/work space provided for students in several buildings on campus, including the Library and cafeteria.

CISS also works with the AR department to ensure that all technology used for teaching and for any other employee operations meets accessibility requirements and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 standards, which are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant. The department also works with AR to help meet student accessibility needs and with HR to help meet employee accessibility needs. The Director of CISS is a member of BTC's Accessibility Team and conducts testing of new software and hardware to ensure that products meet accessibility standards.

### Student Technology Support

Through the BTC Library, students have access to group meeting spaces with large monitors upon request, and a computer lab. Library staff members offer research and technology assistance, and consistently increase the technologies and equipment available to students. Students may check out technology items through the Library, and access kiosk computer stations in College Services (which are restricted to Registration, Student Financial Resources and other Student Services functions). Students may also access computer study stations in the Desmond McArdle, Morse and Haskell buildings. BTC's Assessment and Tutoring Centers have computer labs available for student testing and other functions.

BTC technology support services for students include BTC Technology Camps (offered by Library and eLearning staff) at the beginning of each quarter, which both new and continuing students are invited to attend. These Camps include information on BTC email, network, and online instructional systems. Online tutorials and videos on how to use the Learning Management System and how to be a successful online learner are also available on the BTC website and through the online Canvas system. All BTC Library staff members provide assistance to students with general computer, network, and software support questions throughout the year. eLearning support for students is also available via dedicated email and phone lines throughout the academic year.

### Employee Systems and Training

BTC student support services use state systems such as the Student Management System (SMS) and Financial Management System (FMS) to provide centralized support to students. The statewide SMS system is currently transitioning from the current system to a new PeopleSoft Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. The college is scheduled to make this transition in Fall 2021.

The college has implemented an online Microsoft Dynamics Communications Relationship Management (CRM) system, which tracks student/college communications and activities, and includes an Academic Early Warning function. This system helps all employees who work with and advise students to communicate more effectively. The college has adopted state systems such as Degree Audit to help students and staff track student progress towards degree

completion, developed a web tool to identify students who have completed all the requirements for a credential but didn't apply for it, and utilized independent systems such as BankMobile to help streamline financial aid disbursement.

CISS offers regular workshops to all employees on commonly-used computer software, new software applications or data systems, and software upgrades. The department operates a Help Desk to help address employee questions on computers, communications systems, AV, media, and software use. When problems cannot be resolved over the phone or email, a technician will provide individualized, in-person assistance. CISS provides a mandatory orientation of BTC's phone and computer systems for all new employees, and new faculty members also get an overview of their classroom and program technology. Library staff also offer support to employees through periodic presentations to employees in areas such as copyright laws and regulations. Employees are also trained through the services of the media/copy service technician and other CISS and Library staff in the use of copiers and media equipment and systems.

BTC has increased its support for employees using hybrid and online learning environments through the addition of an Executive Director of Library, eLearning and Academic Support position. This employee represents BTC at the State eLearning Council, and supervises a dedicated eLearning Instructional Technician II. The eLearning department provides orientation and support for the college's learning management system and associated and integrated technologies. eLearning facilitates employee-led workshops and drop-in sessions focusing on online and hybrid instructional design, educational technology, and open and inclusive instructional strategies.

The college has developed a Teaching and Learning Academy, where faculty mentors are assigned to mentees as part of the onboarding process, to help them explore instructional practices and technology and develop teaching and learning strategies for their classrooms. New faculty orientations include information on technology resources, and BTC's newly-developed faculty peer mentoring program also assists new faculty navigate the teaching environment online.

#### Technology Planning and Maintenance

Representatives from the CISS and eLearning departments are consulted when new technology models for instructional delivery are investigated in order to help the college determine if the new systems are feasible and compliant with Washington State's [Policy 188](#) and BTC's security and accessibility standards. CISS works collaboratively with all other employees to help select, purchase, install and maintain software and hardware upgrades as well as other types of multimedia equipment. All IT hardware and software purchases must be signed off by the Director of CISS, and all technology project requests for computer or classroom media equipment go through the annual Resource Request process.

The Technology Committee is a cross-representational governance committee that advises BTC's CISS department (including helping to prioritize CISS projects and providing feedback on

planned hardware and software changes), develops and updates for the BTC Technology Plan, and provides feedback to and gathers input from stakeholder groups on BTC's technology systems. The Technology Plan provides a technology guide for the college and is meant to be a practical outline for identifying and developing initiatives that should be implemented to best support the college's mission and vision. The Plan is designed to work in tandem with the college's Strategic Plan. The committee's most recent update of the college's Technology Plan was approved in 2021.

The college conducts yearly computer lab updates. Labs that use software requiring more robust hardware get replaced on a four-year cycle, with the older computers cascading down to less frequently used labs. This cycle is staggered so that a few labs are completely replaced each year. Campus-wide computer standards are guided by the Technology Plan and are posted (along with the Plan) on the employee intranet.

### Media Services

Media Services staff meet with instructors to determine their classroom and/or laboratory media needs, and help design, purchase, and install classroom and laboratory media equipment. Staff train faculty to operate their classroom lecterns and other classroom AV equipment. Under the supervision of the Director of CISS, Media and Copy Services staff design, engineer, and install media in classrooms and labs, troubleshoot media problems, provide media support at large events, facilitate large copying and printing jobs with offsite vendors, and provide media and copier training for employees. In addition, Media and Copy Services supports and manages the campus-wide student printing software and the campus photocopiers. Media Services work is aligned with the priorities established through the BTC Technology Plan.

### Stakeholder Feedback

CISS sends evaluation forms regarding its services to employees and uses the results for customer service improvements. The department also gathers information on employee technology issues and uses the information to create a database that is used to track issues and establish training needs. CISS department members also get feedback from users at group and one-on-one meetings and activities. Additionally, a Spring 2021 survey of employees asked respondents to indicate interest in receiving training across a wide variety of technology content areas (e.g., Microsoft Office, Microsoft Teams, data security) and training modality preference.

## Moving Forward

BTC has been working to increase its use of evidence-based decision-making and implementation processes. In order to support continuous improvement, and as BTC begins preparation for its Year 7 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness report and peer evaluator visit in Spring 2022, the college will:

- Continue implementing a BTC Guided Pathways model, including:
  - Helping BTC faculty create common exploratory cores within meta-majors offered at times and in modalities that can help students meet work and family care obligations.
  - Supporting faculty as they develop plans to de-sequence coursework and add entry points to their programs where possible to increase stop-in/stop-out options, and create hybrid instructional delivery models to increase program schedule flexibility.
  - Developing a College Navigator model which integrates coaching and advising functions, strengthens relationships between faculty and College Navigators, and includes career exploration tools.
  - Establishing a Faculty Teaching and Learning Academy (TLA), which began piloting a peer mentoring program for new faculty in 2020-21. This centralized faculty onboarding process will infuse equity curriculum, and inform onboarding processes for other employee groups.
  - Planning a strong technology training program that can help employees effectively research, plan and implement system improvements for teaching, learning and student support.
  - Developing and enhancing data dashboards and other tools to enable employees to analyze non-traditional student outcomes in order to identify and respond to barriers and service gaps for student populations.
  - Developing an employee data literacy program with focus on understanding equity data to inform practice.
- Explore meaningful external benchmarking strategies in alignment with BTC's mission.
- Develop institution-level SLOs.
- Transition to a new student management system (ctcLink), including:
  - Stabilizing and adapting the new technology to meet college needs.
  - Beginning to rebuild student data dashboards.