



# ***Renton Technical College***

**Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities**

**Year One Report**

**September 2011**

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## INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Renton Technical College (RTC) was established in 1941 as a war production school, with classes commencing in 1942. During World War II, the college provided customized pre-employment training for electricians, welders, machinists and mechanics. After the war, the college became a state-funded vocational school with the mission of assisting local industry in converting from a war-time to a peace-time economy.

In 1965, the college moved to a central campus comprised of three new buildings. For the next five years, the basis of the specialized college was laid with its emphasis on open-entry, open-exit, and continuous progress instruction based on achievement of measurable competencies.

Since 1971, the college has grown to nearly 400,000 square feet and the student body has increased 500 percent. The original three buildings have been remodeled and expanded, 10 new structures have been built, and the college has acquired several off-campus facilities.

The second 50 years, beginning in 1991, were marked by conversion of the state's vocational-technical institutes to technical colleges. As part of this change, governance shifted to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and authorization was given to grant two year, sub-baccalaureate degrees and certificates of completion. Degrees are awarded in 36 preparatory programs, in apprenticeship, and through three general occupational degree programs. Certificates are currently provided in 80 programs. The college continues to provide customized training and services to Puget Sound-area businesses.

During the 2010-2011 school year, 11,675 students attended RTC. Of these students, 74% (based on Full Time Equivalents) enrolled in a professional technical career training program or to enhance their current job skills. During the 2010-2011 school year, RTC employed 223 full and part time faculty and 190 staff.

The college's student body is diverse. The median age is 32 years, 39% of students are female, 61% are male and, of those reporting their race, 54% are persons of color or interracial background:

### 2010-11 Ethnic Breakdown(of those reporting - based on headcount)

African/African American	15%
Asian/Pacific islander/Hawaiian	19%
Hispanic/Latino	15%
Native American	1%
Other Race	4%

Approximately 30% of students enrolling at RTC need Adult Basic Education or English as a Second Language instruction. Among students enrolled in RTC professional technical programs, 59% have income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Many are single heads of household struggling to work and care for children while they attend school.

The college is located in the city of Renton, Washington, which is part of the Seattle metropolitan area, and serves a population that resides primarily in south King County and north

Pierce County. It is governed by a five member Board of Trustees, each of whom is appointed by the governor to fill a five year term. In 2010, the Board adopted the “Carver Policy Governance Model.” At the same time, the Board also approved a new policy manual. Each of these actions clearly defines their role as a policy making body, with the responsibility for policy implementation delegated to the president.

## **PREFACE**

### **Update on Institutional Changes since the Institution’s Last Report**

Since the last comprehensive accreditation visit in 2003, a number of changes have taken place at the college.

The recession has affected state provided funding for RTC, as it has for all colleges in Washington State and across the nation. Over the past four years, the college has experienced a decrease in state support of \$5.1 million. In response to these challenges, college administration, with the approval of the Board of Trustees, reduced or eliminated several programs (Automotive ASSET, Bank Teller, Computer Science, Medical Laboratory Technician, Construction Trades Preparation, and Instructional Assistant/Paraeducator). Staffing in student services, registration, and the business office was reduced, and three administrative positions (one dean and two directors) were eliminated within the instruction division. The student success center, which provided assistance to students with résumé writing, job placement, and tutoring services, was also closed. To offset the loss of funding, the state legislature authorized tuition increases and the college instituted fees that together have increased the cost of obtaining an education that our students must bear.

Despite the reduction in programs and the increased cost of attending college, enrollment has increased over this period. In academic year 2006-07, the year prior to the first round of budget cuts, the college generated 3,881 state supported FTE. In academic year 2010-11, the college generated 4,054 state supported FTE. Professional-technical programs that are running at or very near their capacity, expansion of general education courses and sections, and additional offerings Basic Studies account for the increase, but sustaining these enrollments while absorbing additional reductions in funding will not be possible.

In 2006, RTC was selected as one of six Washington State colleges to participate in Achieving the Dream (AtD), a national initiative dedicated to helping more students succeed, particularly those of color and low income. A key component of the initiative is creating a culture of evidence on campus, a culture in which the decision making process includes the collection and analysis of relevant data. During the five years in which the college actively participated in the initiative, significant advances in the use of data to drive decision making have occurred. The hiring of a new institutional research director in October 2007 in conjunction with the direction provided by the initiative’s requirements has made information about students and their progress through the college readily available to administration, faculty and staff.

Two committees were formed as part of the AtD initiative:

1. The Core Team. This group had representation from across campus, including faculty, administration, and staff, and was charged with oversight of all activities related to AtD.
2. The Data Team. This group also had representation from a cross section of the campus community with members coming from faculty, staff and administration. Working with the Director of Institutional Research, they assisted in the collection and analysis of data as related to the various strategies undertaken as part of the overall initiative.

As AtD was nearing the end of its funding period the president made the decision to continue both the Core and Data Teams, and to expand the scope of their activities to include accreditation and strategic planning. The Core Team was renamed the Strategic Planning and Oversight Team (SPOT) and the Data Team was renamed the Institutional Effectiveness Team (IET). Additionally, membership on the teams was expanded to increase student services and administration representation. Institutional leadership recognized the linkage between the strategic planning process and the new accreditation standards and as a result, responsibility for accreditation related activities was assigned to the SPOT, with the IET playing a supporting role in the identification of measurable objectives for each of the college's core themes. Using the result of a campus wide focused meeting in which three core themes were identified, the SPOT refined them and their definitions, and added two additional themes that addressed the student services and financial and administrative aspects of the college's mission. The core themes are addressed in greater detail elsewhere in this report.

### **Response to Topics Previously Requested by the Commission**

A Comprehensive Evaluation of Renton Technical College was conducted on October 13-15, 2003. Accreditation was reaffirmed on the basis of the Comprehensive Evaluation. The evaluation team identified six recommendations in its report to the Commission. The Commission required a Progress Report to be submitted in fall 2004 addressing recommendations 3, 4, and 6. The report was accepted by the Commission in December 2004.

The Commission also requested a Focused Interim Report and Visit in fall 2006 to address recommendations 1, 2, and 5. The college hosted an evaluator on October 16, 2006. The evaluator forwarded one recommendation to the Commission, which reaffirmed the accreditation of the college in January 2007.

A Regular Interim Report was submitted in September 2008 and two evaluators visited the college on October 1-2, 2008. The recommendations from the 2003 Comprehensive Evaluation and from the 2006 Focused Interim Visit and the actions taken in response to them were evaluated. One recommendation resulted from the fall 2008 visit. Based on the evaluators' report, the Commission reaffirmed the accreditation of the college in January 2009 and requested that the college submit a Focused Interim Report addressing the recommendation and host a visit in fall 2010.

In February 2009, the college submitted a prospectus notifying the Commission of its intent to change the method it used to account for the student learning experience from a clock hour based system to one based on credit hours effective July 1, 2009. The Commission reviewed and approved this request as a major substantive change and requested that the college expand its fall 2010 Focused Interim Report to include a review of the college's transition experience.

A Focused Interim Visit was conducted on October 26, 2010, to evaluate the general recommendation from the Regular Interim Visit of 2008 and to review the transition from clock hours to credit hours. There were no recommendations from that visit and the college was commended for the thoughtful, well-planned process that moved it to the credit hour system. The college's accreditation was reaffirmed by the Commission in February 2011.

## **CHAPTER ONE: MISSION, CORE THEMES, AND EXPECTATIONS**

### **Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirement 2 – Authority**

The State of Washington authorizes Renton Technical College to grant certificates and degrees, with additional administrative oversight provided by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges. The authority is granted under the Washington Community College Act of 1967 as amended in 1991.

### **Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirement 3 – Mission and Core Themes**

Renton Technical College's mission and core themes are defined in detail in the current Year One Report on Standard One—Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations. The core themes as presented in this report were approved and the institution's mission reaffirmed by its governing board at its annual retreat in August 2011. The principal programs at the college lead to Associate of Applied Science degrees and/or certificates of completion.

#### **Standard 1.A: Mission and Goals**

**Mission Statement:** Renton Technical College prepares a diverse population for work, fulfilling the employment needs of individuals, students, and industry.

**Vision:** Renton Technical College will be the premier technical college in Washington State preparing students for certificates and associate and baccalaureate degrees.

**Values:** Renton Technical College is committed to the following values as we fulfill our mission and move towards our vision:

- Student focused.....their success is our success
- Quality.....without compromise
- Integrity.....to say and do what is right
- Teamwork.....together, we will accomplish more
- Respect....for the diversity of people and feelings, ideas and resources
- Service.....to our customers and our community

These values provide context and focus for the work of the college.

A strategic planning retreat led by the college president and facilitated by an outside consultant convened on September 1, 2004. The retreat was a daylong event whose participants included members of the Board of Trustees, college administration, and the four unions that represent hourly employees. A total of 39 people representing a cross section of the college staff took part in the retreat. A review and analysis of the mission, vision, and values of the institution was conducted and input from all in attendance was solicited. That work left the mission of the college unchanged and produced minor changes to the vision, values, and institutional goals that are reflected in the above listings. The mission was reaffirmed by the Board of Trustees in 2005.

Renton Technical College welcomed a new president in 2009, who is putting increased emphasis on strategic planning. In 2010 the Strategic Planning Oversight Team (SPOT) reviewed the mission statement, determining that it states very succinctly what the purpose of the college is and should therefore be left unchanged. In August 2011, the Board of Trustees affirmed the mission statement after review and discussion of its validity.

### **Interpretation of Mission Fulfillment**

RTC's work through its Achieving the Dream grant has provided the institution the opportunity to improve and advance its assessment effort and strengthen its efforts to develop an institutional culture of evidence based decision making. The research director has significantly improved access to and analysis of data which has improved confidence in data quality and usability.

RTC administrative leadership has worked closely with SPOT to identify five core themes most elemental to the fulfillment of the college mission. Each core theme has a corresponding set of objectives, whose specific outcomes are defined through establishment of key performance indicators for each core theme. These objectives and indicators, which were derived through campus-wide input and are continually being refined, articulate the criteria used to determine the extent of mission fulfillment. RTC defines mission fulfillment as achievement of an acceptable level of performance on the key performance indicators. The level of performance will be reviewed through each indicator as well as corporately across the spectrum of indicators.

### **Articulation of an Acceptable Threshold, Extent or Degree of Mission Fulfillment**

The core themes in their current form were established via subcommittee work that combined members of the Strategic Planning and Oversight Team (SPOT) and the Institutional Effectiveness Team (IET). Each subcommittee championed a core theme, as well as general review by both teams to approve the core themes, objectives, and their indicators of achievement crosswise with an institutional emphasis. This subcommittee work will continue by researching, discussing, and establishing aspirational benchmarks for each indicator of achievement, which will be based on comparative groups of colleges on a national and/or statewide basis, and normed where feasible. The subcommittees will also establish signal values for each indicator to indicate the degree each indicator of achievement is reached (e.g., below expectations, meets expectations, exceeds expectations).

This development will include a college dashboard and balanced scorecard, which will display the core themes, objectives, and indicators of achievement with their benchmarks, indicating the degree each objective has been met. RTC's Research and Development Department will develop this dashboard and balanced scorecard with regular reviews, critique, and input by the Board of

Directors, the executive administration — as well as the institutionally represented members of SPOT and IET. Research and Development will also develop similar interfaces and links from the dashboard/balanced scorecard as a tool to align more detailed areas of review. Examples of detailed areas include assessment; core, program, and college wide outcomes; and program review criteria — as well as more detailed review criteria in support areas of the college. Finally, the dashboard and balanced scorecard will serve as a holistic evaluation tool of the core theme indicators of achievement — thus, evaluating the acceptable threshold, extent, or degree of mission fulfillment.

**Standard 1.B: Core Themes**

Renton Technical College has identified five core themes that represent the fundamental aspects of the college mission:

1. Professional Technical Education
2. Basic Skills
3. General Education
4. Student Access and Diversity
5. College Stewardship

The core themes were presented to and approved by the Board of Trustees at their annual retreat in August 2011.

**Core Theme One: Professional Technical Education**

From its roots as a World War II training facility, and through decades of partnerships with leading employers and labor unions, Renton Technical College’s core mission has been to serve individuals and industries through high-quality professional/technical programs that constantly evolve to meet the changing employment needs of the community. Current programs reflect the range of demand industries in the Puget Sound region: RTC prepares students for occupations in Allied Health, Information Technology, Manufacturing, Product Service, Culinary Arts, Business and Education. Long recognized as a leader in apprenticeship training, RTC also houses the Washington State Construction Center of Excellence, which has responded to industry changes by adopting a focus on Green Building. 80 Certificate and 36 Associate Degree programs prepare students for immediate employment, as well as provide a foundation for higher learning and career advancement on the job, in formal apprenticeships, and in four-year institutions.

**Objective A: Students complete workforce programs**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>
1.A1	Percentage of RTC students who attain a professional technical certificate.	Increase in percentage of RTC workforce students who attain a certificate.
1.A2	Percentage of RTC students who attain an Associate of Applied Science degree.	Increase in percentage of RTC workforce students who attain an AAS degree.
1.A3	Student achievement points as defined by SBCTC, averaged over a three-year period.	Student achievement points per RTC student increase.

### **Rationale**

Completion of workforce programs can be directly and objectively measured by the rate of certificates and degrees earned by students. Student achievement points were designed by the SBCTC as an indicator of student progress toward completion, and are included as an indicator of future growth, stability or decline of completion rates. Completion and student achievement point data is readily available from the SBCTC student information management system. We will look at multi-year trends to avoid reaching conclusions based on unusual circumstances in a given year.

### **Objective B: Workforce programs are viable based on continued student enrollment**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>
1.B1	Program enrollment as a percentage of capacity	Increased RTC workforce program enrollment levels
1.B2	Quarterly cohort retention rates	Increased retention rates

### **Rationale**

Workforce program enrollment rates reflect both the responsiveness of the college to community demand, and the effectiveness of the institution's use of resources. Retention rates are an indicator of enrollment maintenance within each program. These indicators can be easily and objectively measured through data available in SBCTC student information management system.

### **Objective C: Workforce programs are viable based on industry demand and standards**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>
1.C1	Number of programs with accreditation by bodies recognized in their fields.	75% of programs in fields with recognized accreditation bodies are fully accredited.
1.C2	Percentage of RTC students passing standardized exams and certifications in their fields.	Student performance on standardized exams and certifications meets or exceeds that of regional or national averages.
1.C3	Advisory committee members' perception of how effectively RTC program competencies and equipment meet industry training needs.	Advisory committee members view RTC program competencies and equipment as fully meeting industry training needs.
1.C4	Employer perceptions of RTC graduates' job competencies.	Employers believe RTC graduates meet or exceed job expectations.

### **Rationale**

Accreditation of a professional technical program indicates that the program has been scrutinized by industry experts and has met objective standards of quality set by that industry for curriculum, instruction, and facilities. A rate of accredited bodies can be calculated by the college after determining how many programs have a recognized accrediting body in their field. Student performance on industry tests provides an additional objective, third-party assessment of program effectiveness; these test results are generally available to the programs and can be tracked over time to determine the success of the program in preparing the student for employment.

Perceptions of advisory committee members and employers also provide insights from industry on RTC program effectiveness, and can be assessed through surveys and focus groups. Program advisory committee members include industry representatives who routinely review curriculum and equipment to assure that the competencies needed by industry match program outcomes. Employers of RTC graduates can provide feedback on program effectiveness based on their first-hand experience in the workplace. These surveys and focus group will be coordinated with the college program review process.

**Objective D: Workforce completers obtain jobs in appropriate industries at a competitive salary**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>
1.D1	Employment rates and wages of RTC professional technical program completers.	Employment rates and median annual pay for RTC graduates are maintained or increase annually
1.D2	Ratio of RTC graduates' wages to local wages of all workers in their occupational field.	RTC graduates have earnings at or exceeding the entry level wage for their occupation.
1.D3	College employment placement data as compiled in the <i>SBCTC Annual Report</i> .	RTC consistently ranks in the top 10% of Washington State Community and Technical Colleges for job placement.
1.D4	Advisory committee members' perceptions of success of RTC program completers.	RTC completer wage and employment data are viewed positively.

**Rationale**

RTC's success in preparing individuals for work can be measured by the percentage of graduates who are employed and by their rate of pay. While external factors beyond the college's control have a strong impact on employment and wage rates at a given time, the ratio of our graduates' wages to those of others in their occupations indicates the effectiveness of RTC's workforce programs in comparison to other preparation for that occupation. The annual ranking of college performance in employment placement by the State Board indicates the success of RTC graduates in transitioning to the workplace as compared to other two-year institutions in the state. Program advisory committee members' feedback is more subjective, but provides the benefit of their understanding of factors impacting their local industry which may not be evident from the labor market data.

**Core Theme 2: Academic Education**

Academic Education at Renton Technical College is composed of four departments:, Communication, Mathematics, Social Science and Natural Science, each with responsibility for general education, developmental education and related instruction. General Education courses provide academic skills and knowledge to either enhance Professional/Technical programs or to provide courses for transfer or articulation. Developmental Education courses provide students with the fundamental skills to progress to general education or to acquire industry-determined skill sets for professional/technical programs. Related Instruction courses, usually embedded in programs, provide students with foundational skills in communication, computation and human relations as determined by industry through advisory committees' recommendations.

**Objective A: The College Learning Outcomes will be fully incorporated into academic education.**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>
2.A1	The percentage of developmental education courses that have incorporated the college-wide learning outcomes and the degree to which they are incorporated.	The college learning outcomes will be fully incorporated into developmental education courses.
2.A2	The percentage of general education courses that have incorporated the college-wide learning outcomes and the degree to which they are incorporated.	The college learning outcomes will be fully incorporated into general education courses.
2.A3	The percentage of related instruction courses that have incorporated the college-wide learning outcomes and the degree to which they are incorporated.	The learning outcomes will be fully incorporated into related instruction courses.

**Rationale**

Renton Technical College developed the College Learning Outcomes as a standard for certificate and degree programs. The explicit incorporation of these outcomes sets the criteria that all instruction should contribute to students' ability to reason, interact, perform, think and communicate. Requiring course outcomes to be categorized by the college learning outcomes in syllabi and course outline guides keeps a focus on higher order knowledge. All instructors are required to provide students with a course syllabus on the first day of class and to submit the syllabus to the dean's office each quarter a course is taught. The syllabus is viewed as a contract between the college and the students for the content of the course. Curriculum then must support the learning outlined in the syllabus.

**Objective B: Students are persistent and prepared to transition to career or academic paths.**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>
2.B1	Sequential enrollment rates based upon students' stated educational objective.	Students enroll in sequential courses toward career paths.
2.B2	Sequential enrollment rates based upon students' stated educational objective.	Students enroll in sequential courses toward academic paths.
2.B3	Sequential success rates.	Success in pre-requisite classes is a predictor of success in sequential courses.
2.B4	Percentage of students confident in their pre-requisite preparation and the degree of their confidence.	Students are confident in their pre-requisite preparation

**Rationale**

Enrollment from quarter to quarter in sequential academic classes measures persistence for those students for whom a sequence of courses is required for their educational goal. For some students this could be enrolling in degree courses after finishing certificate work. In others, the persistence might be completing a series of pre-requisites required for a career or academic path.

If students are properly prepared, the success they achieve in a pre-requisite class should generally enable them to be successful in the next class. While unrelated circumstances can occasionally interfere with performance, grades should be a predictor a student’s ability to satisfactorily complete the subsequent courses. Students can be apprehensive when they question their own ability to meet their goal or expectation in the classroom. The knowledge that they are well equipped to cope with requirements can reduce that anxiety. Student responses to surveys about preparation will facilitate any necessary adjustment to curriculum.

**Objective C: Establish course curriculum and educational pathway alignments that support successful academic transitions.**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>
2.C1	Percentage of related instruction courses that supports the degree-required general education courses and the extent to which they are supportive.	Related Instruction curriculum supports degree-required general education courses in programs that grant both certificates and degrees.
2.C2	Percentage of courses between basic studies and developmental or general education that are fully articulated and the degree of articulation	Transitional courses between basic studies and developmental or general education are fully articulated.
2.C3	Degree of curriculum alignment.	Curriculum in Developmental and General education sequential courses are aligned.
2.C4	Degree of curriculum commonality for common course numbered courses.	The curriculum of courses that are common course numbered will be reviewed to ensure maximum curriculum commonality with other regional colleges.

**Rationale**

Students suffer if curriculum gaps prevent them from smoothly articulating between courses developed by different divisions of the college. Carefully evaluating the sequencing of competencies for omissions and redundancy will assist students as they transition from Basic Skills to developmental or general education classes. A similar evaluation between related instruction and general education can ensure students are prepared for required courses.

Students in King County have many choices for their academic education. Many move from college to college depending on work and family responsibilities. While the state has created common course numbers for similar courses at all the community and technical colleges, common outcomes and curriculum have not been established. Therefore it is in the students’ best interest that the syllabi from the region’s colleges be reviewed to minimize the educational disruption that occurs when students take courses at more than one institution.

**Objective D: Students are taught by professional instructors who are mastering the art and science of teaching through immersion in diverse instructional strategies and student-centered teaching styles.**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>
2.D1	Professional development participation rates for academic instructors.	Increase the professional development of academic instructors.
2.D2	Student evaluations, peer evaluations, self evaluations and dean evaluations	Students are taught by instructors using diverse instructional strategies and student-centered teaching styles.

**Rationale**

Professional/Technical instructors in Washington State are required to do professional development to maintain vocational certification. Most of the faculty members at RTC fall into this category. Besides being exempt from vocational certification, most of the academic instructors are part-time. RTC will increase efforts to encourage academic instructors to utilize available professional development in pedagogical strategies. In addition, peer and dean evaluations will focus on the application of diverse learning strategies.

**Core Theme 3: Basic Skills**

Basic skills are essential to achieve success as students, workers, and community members. Providing instruction in basic skills addresses the diverse educational and workforce needs of students, in support of the RTC mission. The Basic Skills core theme encompasses the work of the Basic Skills department as well as efforts across campus to integrate basic skills instruction into RTC programs.

The Basic Skills division of RTC provides instruction for adults who seek to master or brush up on the basic skills of reading, writing, math, oral communications, English as a Second Language (ESL) and other skills recognized as important for employability and citizenship. Students without a high school credential may prepare for the General Educational Development (GED) examination. The department’s incorporation of the Washington Adult Learning Standards through Standards Based Education (SBE) templates develops the skills students need to move toward their goals and reach the tipping point, which is a certificate that enables the student to find a living wage job.

RTC also recognizes the importance of addressing basic skills education in academic and professional-technical programs. RTC has long prioritized blending basic skills education with content courses, such as in Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST). Additionally, two grant-funded initiatives have focused on enabling content instructors to more effectively address basic skills. The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) project aims to make all courses more accessible to all students, especially those with learning disabilities or other challenges. Reading Apprenticeship, an initiative under the Achieving the Dream grant, helps instructors incorporate reading and metacognitive skills instruction into their content areas.

**Objective A: Students make progress toward achieving their educational goals.**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcomes</b>
3.A1	The percentage of Basic Skills students who take the CASAS post-test.	Increase percentage of post-tests.
3.A2	The percentage of Basic Skills students who make CASAS test gains.	Increase percentage of test gains.
3.A3	The percentage of Basic Skills students who complete the GED goal.	Increase percentage of GED goal completions.
3.A4	The percentage of Basic Skills students who use college resources.	Increase percentage of students who use college resources

**Rationale**

The percentage of students who take the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) post-test is a measure of retention. Student must attend a minimum of 45 hours to be eligible to take a post-test; however, most students post-test at the end of each quarter. Only those students who take the post-test are able to make CASAS test gains. Thus, the percentage of students who post-test and make CASAS gains effectively measures progress toward educational goals. Earning a GED also represents progress toward educational goals. Basic Skills students who use college resources such as counseling services or the library are more likely to reduce barriers and access needed support services to make progress toward achieving their educational goals.

**Objective B: Students make progress toward achieving their employment and career goals.**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcomes</b>
3.B1	The percentage of Basic Skills students who take the CASAS post-test.	Increase percentage of post-tests.
3.B2	The percentage of Basic Skills students who make CASAS test gains.	Increase percentage of test gains.
3.B3	The percentage of Basic Skills students who complete the GED goal.	Increase percentage of GED goal completions.
3.B4	The percentage of Basic Skills students who complete the goal to gain or retain employment.	Increase percentage of students who complete goal to gain or retain employment.

**Rationale**

The percentage of students who take the CASAS post-test is a measure of retention. Students must attend a minimum of 45 hours to be eligible to take a post-test; however, most students post-test at the end of the quarter. Only those students who take the post-test are able to make CASAS test gains. The CASAS System assesses reading, listening, and math skills needed to function successfully in today's society and in the workplace ([www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org)). Thus, the percentage of students who post-test and make CASAS gains measures progress toward employment and career goals. Since many employers require a high school diploma or equivalent, earning a GED represents progress toward employment goals. Since many students

enroll in Basic Skills classes to increase their skills for employability, the percentage of students who complete the goal of gaining or retaining employment is recognized as a distinct but significant measure of program success.

**Objective C: Students transition into college classes and programs.**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcomes</b>
3.C1	The percentage of Basic Skills students who complete the goal to enroll in post-secondary education at a community or technical college in Washington State.	Increase percentage of students who complete the goal to enroll in post-secondary courses in Washington State.
3.C2	The percentage of Basic Skills students who enroll in college classes or workforce programs at RTC.	Increase percentage of students who enroll in college classes or workforce programs at RTC.
3.C3	The number of RTC students who receive basic skills instruction from imbedded Basic Skills instructors in college classes or workforce programs.	Increase the number of RTC students who receive basic skills instruction from imbedded Basic Skills instructors.

**Rationale**

The Washington Adult Basic Education Reporting System (WABERS) tracks the percentage of students who complete the goal to enroll in post-secondary courses at a community or technical college in Washington State. WABERS captures any student who enrolls in a course that does not contain a Basic Skills CIP code. The RTC Madrona data system will measure the percentage of Basic Skills students who enroll in college classes or workforce programs at RTC. This objective represents transition and movement along the career pathway toward family living wage jobs. Finally, Basic Skills instructors imbedded in college-level classes teach basic skills alongside college-level curriculum. This allows students to transition to college classes and programs sooner, and to improve their basic skills while learning college content.

**Core Theme 4: Student Access & Diversity**

As one of only six colleges in Washington State selected for the national Achieving the Dream initiative and a local partner in providing customized training and services to Puget Sound-area businesses, RTC’s mission of “preparing a diverse student population for work, fulfilling the employment needs of individuals, business and industry” is exemplified by its focus on providing open access to higher education and increasing student success by using data to inform the decision-making process. “Since community and technical colleges, with its open doors, are the major gateways to post secondary education for a wide variety of students” (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges Research Report No. 08-1), RTC’s open door policy makes postsecondary education possible for many students, particularly first-generation, low-income, students of color. For many individuals who have no prior experience with higher education, RTC is their first point of contact with a college. For still others, RTC may represent a return to training as a way to acquire new skills for a different trade or industry. Ultimately, RTC is committed to providing opportunities to meet the needs of all its students. As such, student

access and diversity is the cornerstone of the college’s role as an open door institution to higher education and beyond.

**Objective A: Maintain and increase a diverse student population, i.e. gender, age, race/ethnicity, age, income, gender, and other characteristics.**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcomes</b>
4.A1	Enrollment rates by race/ethnicity, age, income, gender, and other characteristics	Increase enrollment of under-represented groups
4.A2	Retention rates by race/ethnicity, age, income, gender, and other characteristics	Increase retention rates of under-performing groups
4.A3	Completion rates by race/ethnicity, age, income, gender, and other characteristics	Increase course completion and graduation rates of under-performing groups
4.A4	Ratio of percentage of students by race/ethnicity, age, income, gender, and other characteristics to percentage of service area	Increase enrollment percentage of under-represented groups to reflect the make-up of the service area

**Rationale**

Using a data-driven “culture of evidence” to inform the college’s decision-making processes further emphasizes our focus on increasing student success levels as outlined within two of our Achieving the Dream goals: 1) increase retention and academic success rates of students in the first quarter; and 2) decrease differential rates of success among ethnic/racial groups. As such, enrollment, retention, and completion data disaggregated by race/ethnicity, income, gender, and other characteristics are effective measurements of RTC’s diverse student population’s rate of success. Additionally, comparing the make-up of our student population to the larger, surrounding community allows for us to make determinations on targeted areas for recruitment and outreach towards a more diverse student enrollment.

**Objective B: Ensure a collegial professional environment to support increased diversity, i.e. staff demographics reflect service-area demographics.**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcomes</b>
4.B1	Marketing/outreach recruitment events attended	Increase active participation in diversity-related recruitment events
4.B2	Diversity & Equity Committee activities	Increase trainings/workshops geared towards an inclusive environment
4.B3	Ratio of percentage of employees by race/ethnicity, age, income, gender, etc. to percentage of service area and student body	Employee percentage reflects make-up of the service area and student body.

**Rationale**

Washington State continues to grow more racially and ethnically diverse. The growth represents strength in the global economy, and potentially brings a richness of talents, creativity, values, and languages to the state’s workforce. RTC is committed to creating a campus environment

that reflects this growth amongst its employees, as well as develop ways to sustain it. Measuring activity levels on campus in regards to diversity recruitment and training is effective in building and/or sustaining diverse college personnel. Additionally, comparing the percentage of employees by certain characteristics, such as race/ethnicity, age, income, and gender, to the service area and student body allows for the college to make determinations on targeted areas for recruitment and outreach.

**Core Theme 5: College Stewardship**

College Stewardship ensures the alignment of appropriate financial, human, technical and physical resources in order to fully support preparation of our diverse student population for work, which fulfills employment needs of individuals, business and industry. The College Stewardship theme also affirms that a strong resource base is essential to support our programs and students effectively.

The Administration and Finance Division, the Human Resource Development (HRD) department, the Information Technology (IT) department, and the College Foundation are the key components of the College Stewardship theme. These areas will be the voice of expertise and will function as trusted partners, providing administrative and business services integral to the success of Renton Technical College’s mission. Staff in these service departments further the college mission by planning, generating and managing resources, budgeting and delivering cost-effective, quality administrative and business services in compliance with statutory and policy guidelines.

The Administration and Finance Division encompasses the following departments: bookstore, business office, facilities, food service, and grants office. These areas along with HRD, IT, and the foundation serve the needs of faculty, staff and students through systematic implementation of core operating processes that support the college mission.

The goals for College Stewardship identify strategies to help Renton Technical College develop and enhance financial, human, technical and physical resources in order to fully support preparation of our diverse student body for work.

**Objective A: Renton Technical College provides resources to attract cultivate & develop a diverse & innovative faculty & staff suited to prepare a diverse population for work.**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>
5.A1	Renton Technical College’s staff turnover rate.	Decrease in staff turnover rate
5.A2	Staff & faculty professional development is provided.	Increase in staff and faculty participation in professional development
5.A3	Dedicated resources for professional development of faculty and staff	All department budgets fund professional development.
5.A4	Position openings are advertised to diverse communities and spread through ethnically diverse networks including underrepresented groups.	Increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse faculty and staff team

**Rationale**

These indicators reflect Renton Technical College’s commitment to giving quantitative and qualitative measures to the support systems for our programs and students. Tracking RTC’s faculty and staff turnover rate allows us to measure our success in offering a quality work place and stability for our programs and students. Offering professional development ensures that staff and faculty will continue to be professionally challenged and stay informed about the best practices in their fields. Supporting professional development through department budgets demonstrates an institutional commitment to staff and faculty professionalism. Renton Technical College has a notably diverse student population and it is important that we make every effort to have a faculty and staff that reflects that diversity. Ensuring that job postings are disseminated through non-traditional networks will help us work toward increasing our ethnic diversity.

**Objective B: Renton Technical College’s financial & physical resources are cultivated, managed, and prioritized to advance the mission of the college.**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>
5.B1	Students experience training on equipment that meets industry standards	Classroom equipment reflects industry standards. Summary of equipment audits report degree of compliance.
5.B2	Financial planning supports the college’s strategic priorities.	Financial planning is indicated by a budget aligned with strategic priorities.
5.B3	Enrollment is aligned with FTE projections and state allocations.-	Actual FTE vs. Projected FTE within tolerance range
5.B4	Financial support is diversified beyond state support and tuition revenue.	Increased percentage of non-state, non-tuition revenue as a percentage of total revenue
5.B5	Physical environment is well-maintained, safe and secure and meets instructional priorities and needs.	Positive results from dean & instructor surveys conducted to assess instructional priorities; approved audits of physical premises
5.B6	Assessments of financial & physical resource adherence to legislative directives with reports as warranted.	All financial and physical resources adhere to legislative directives

**Rationale**

As a technical college it is vital that our students have practical experience working with the same kind of tools, equipment, and computer programs that they will use in their careers. Conducting annual equipment audits in conjunction with program advisory committees will ensure that we are staying current and budgeting for improvements as technology advances. Budgets reflect institutional priorities and therefore it is vital that RTC’s budget supports our strategic goals. In order to produce a realistic, workable budget, it is important that the actual FTE is within a tolerable range of the projected FTE for planning purposes. As state budget revenues decrease, it is increasingly important that non-tuition revenue sources include a diverse combination of federal grants, contracts, private foundation grants, individual contributions, endowment growth and corporate donations sufficient to meet the college’s mission & goals. Conducting regular internal surveys to measure the ways the physical campus meets instructional

priorities will help RTC meet our mission of preparing a diverse student population for work. As a state funded two-year public technical school, we are bound by legislative directives from both the state and federal governments. Compiling those directives and checking our policies, procedures and performance against them will assure that we are in compliance and including a written report should we find that we are not meeting a directive will keep us on task.

**Objective C: Renton Technical College’s technological resources are leveraged to optimize the student learning environment.**

	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>	<b>Desired Outcomes</b>
5.C1	Faculty and staff satisfaction survey	Technology and internal processes are aligned to create efficiencies.
5.C2	Advisory Committees and faculty annually audit classroom and instructional laboratory equipment.	Classroom equipment reflects industry standards.
5.C3	Reports from internal and external constituents with respect to technology usage: usability, quality, and security. Standards are satisfactory or exceed expectations.	Technology is used to enhance and support communication internally and externally.

**Rationale**

The intended outcomes reflect the desire of the departments engaged in College Stewardship to support faculty & staff development & recruitment, excellence in physical and technological resources, and diversified financial support.

Technology is a key component of any modern organization. This is even more imperative at a technical college, where the instructional effort is focused on giving students the tools needed for successful careers in fields that use the newest equipment and tools. RTC will ensure that we are keeping pace with technological innovations and staffing levels by comparing our technology capabilities to other colleges in our cohort. Surveying our faculty and staff on an annual basis about the ways they use technology will give us information for planning and adjusting priorities. Our advisory committees and faculty are important resources for ensuring that the equipment and programs available to RTC students are current with industry practices. Measuring the ways technology is used on our campus will ensure that we are budgeting and assigning staff time appropriately. Establishing clearly articulated standards for usability, quality, security, and measurement of usage will ensure that the information received through those surveys is useful for planning purposes. Including both internal and external constituents in our evaluations keeps us focused on our simultaneous audiences, mindful that technology at RTC exists to serve several constituencies with different needs.

**CONCLUSION**

Renton Technical College has a well-defined and succinct mission statement that accurately reflects the focus of its endeavors. Five core themes that collectively encompass the activities that lead to fulfillment of the college mission have been identified through a collaborative and

inclusive process. Objectives for each core theme have been established that guide institutional efforts, and indicators of achievement have been determined to allow for their systematic and ongoing assessment. Through this assessment, achievement of the core themes will indicate the level of fulfillment of RTC's mission of preparing students for work and increasing their opportunities for career advancement.

This report outlines each core theme with respect to objectives for fulfilling each core theme, as well as indicators to assess whether each objective is met. The resulting structure will define top level data gathering and analysis strategy, as well as serve as an alignment tool for more detailed indicators. By benchmarking these indicators at each level of the college, RTC will have the systematic tools in place to further its mission via continuous improvement.

RTC's core themes are:

1. Professional Technical Education
2. Basic Skills
3. General Education
4. Student Access and Diversity
5. College Stewardship

Through thoughtful and judicious use of its resources, RTC provides access to a varied and diverse environment that allows students to gain career and professional - technical skills, basic language and computational skills, and general education skills that can improve their lives and the lives of their families. By continuously assessing and refining our college indicators, we will achieve our core themes and their objectives, and fulfill our mission. Our goal is to share these results with our students and our community to gather input and incorporate their perspectives in our strategic planning and continuous improvement processes.

This Year One Report describes an evaluation process that will provide the high level foundation needed to guide us systematically to improvement in quality, student success, and mission fulfillment. It is the first step in the new seven-year accreditation cycle and establishes a framework for continuous improvement.