

THE HIGHER LEARNING CONNECTION

FEBRUARY 2020



***“The best view
comes after the
hardest climb.”***

– Author Unknown

BlueRidge
COMMUNITY AND
TECHNICAL COLLEGE



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



December 2019 Student Awards Ceremony

We are headed down the home stretch. I have been reading, writing, and editing our Assurance Argument, and it is looking very good. Even though it has been a scant five years since our last visit, we have done so much and have so much to be proud of; the documenting of all the progress is a large task! My overall impressions after having been through our Argument many times are:

- We are in a good financial position
- Our faculty are well credentialed and instruction is a definite strength
- The assessment of student learning is well done
- Our mission, vision, and core values are right on the mark
- Our physical facilities and learning environment are excellent
- Our planning process and budgeting process are linked and quite positive
- We are a major force in the economic development of our region
- Our Foundation is doing fantastic work in helping students to afford college
- We have superior support from our local legislative delegation

All these things take time and effort to develop. They do not occur overnight. I think what you will see when reading our assurance argument is that we have worked hard over many years to drive our institution in a good direction. We can all be proud that we provide first rate education that allows individuals to succeed in a chosen career field or to engage in further education. In this newsletter there are articles that speak directly to that success.

You should be hearing soon, if you have not already heard, about the planning for the next few years. Our strategic plan will cover 2020/21-2023 and we are gathering feedback now on the implementation strategies to achieve success of that plan. Just as there are learning goals and teaching strategies in every classroom, there are goals and strategies to move our college forward and to continue to be our best.

Those of you who follow my writings know that I often talk about food. I like to eat. Who doesn't? And there is a new development with our Culinary Academy that you should be seeing this spring: A new food truck! We have received the truck and we are now going through the final stages of getting ready to begin creating and serving delicious meals. I have a feeling, call it intuition, that we might be having a celebration after a successful accreditation visit and it could involve the food truck. Anyway, stay tuned for more on that.

Thank you for all you do in order to make our college a great success.

Until next time,
Dr. C.

ACCELERATED STUDY IN ASSOCIATE PROGRAMS (ASAP)

The College recently received a grant from the Arnold Foundation to support the College's replication of the CUNY ASAP Model (<http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/asap/>). The grant was written in collaboration with the Chancellor's office and WVUP. BRCTC and WVUP (West Virginia University Parkersburg) will fully replicate the ASAP model as designed and studied.

Critical program components will include:

- **Student recruitment strategy**
- **Early engagement that connects students to the campus community**
summer activities like advising, orientation workshops, seminars and academic support in math and English for students who are assessed below college-ready in both
- **Financial resources to address unmet need beyond financial aid**
tuition waivers, textbook assistance, food and transportation stipends
- **Structural pathways that enable students to fully enroll in academic programs more quickly and shorten time and credits to a degree**
full-time enrollment, semester by semester degree plans, block scheduled first-year courses, immediate enrollment in college-level math and English with co-requisite remedial education, winter and summer course-taking
- **Individualized support services**
comprehensive and personalized advising, tutoring, career preparation activities with local employers.

Eligible Programs Include:

- AAS Software Development
- AAS Cyber Security
- AAS Mechatronics/ Advanced Manufacturing
- AAS Applied Lab Tech
- CAS Welding
- AAS Plastics Technology
- AAS Electric Distribution Engineering Technology
- ASN Nursing
- AAS Healthcare Professions
- AAS Culinary Arts



HAVE YOU READ ALL OF THE HLC NEWSLETTERS?

The newsletter will help you understand the accreditation process and how BRCTC addresses each criterion in the Assurance Argument.

Find all publications on:

TUNA at Accreditation 2020 or
www.blueridgectc.edu/hlc2020

HLC INTERNAL COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The HLC Internal Communications Committee serves as ambassadors to the college. If you have any questions you can reach out to members of this committee for assistance!

Amber Butcher

Alexis Dixon

Apryl McDonough

Christopher Cobian

Diana Crouse

Elizabeth Brautigam

Janet Branch

Jennifer Barrett Smith

Jessica Leake

Kathryn Moore

Lisha Burks

Sara Gordon

Kevin Cappello

Vickie Wiles

Committee Advisors

Laura Busey

Dr. Ann Shipway

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HLC PROCESS?

For more information,
please email:
accreditation@blueridgectc.edu

STRATEGIC PLANNING FAQ

What is a strategic plan?

A strategic plan is a communication tool used by leadership to outline organizational goals and the strategies used to achieve said goals. Use of a strategic plan ensures all employees and stakeholders are working to achieve common objectives. A strategic plan typically includes mission, vision, core values, objectives and strategies, a SWOT analysis, and assessment tools. An effective strategic plan is a data driven document that provides a clear pathway for the future of an organization. Based on the goals outlined in a strategic plan, this document is then used to inform the budget.

How frequently are strategic plans developed?

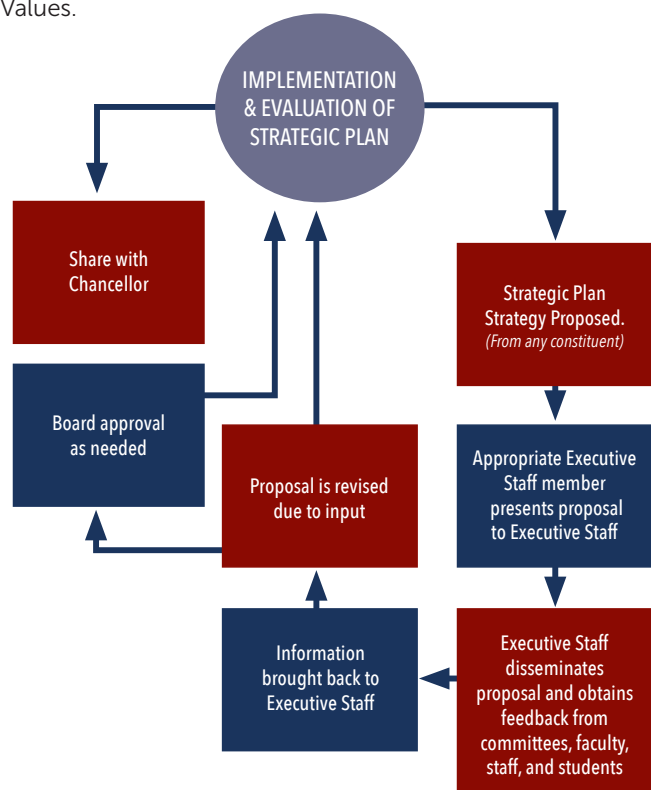
Strategic plans can span anywhere from 1-10 years, depending on the organization. Certain things may impact the lifespan of a strategic plan, such as the age of an organization, the type of goals it intends to achieve, and the industry served. Successful use of a strategic plan requires an organization to regularly gauge successes, failures, and unanticipated changes that may have impacted an outlined strategy. The implementation of a strategic plan is not a “set it and forget it” but instead, includes regularly benchmarks for assessment.

Who develops the BRCTC strategic plan and who does it serve?

The College strategic plan is created by the President and Executive staff with department input provided through the budget process. The current strategic plan, which expires in 2020, includes 5 initiatives: Student Success, Workforce, Access, Resources and Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness. Within each initiative, specific action priorities are defined to ensure the College is meeting the outline goals. Regardless of the length of the strategic plan, the College includes annual assessment activities as benchmarks and opportunities for realignment of goals due to a changing market.

Where can I find the BRCTC Strategic Plan?

The BRCTC Strategic Plan is publicly available on the College website and can be found by clicking on About Blue Ridge, then clicking Mission, Vision & Core Values.



PREPARING FOR A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

The College is operating under the current strategic plan which can be found on the website at <https://www.blueridgectc.edu/search-results/?search=strategi c+plan>.

A new plan is being created, which will go into effect on July 1, 2020. The College is in the developmental stage of the new strategic plan. Each department is collecting information from SWOT analysis, the budget, group discussions, meetings, and other activities to aid in the development of the new plan. Please note the graphic to the left which shows how the Plan is implemented and evaluated.

What does a strategic planning meeting look like?

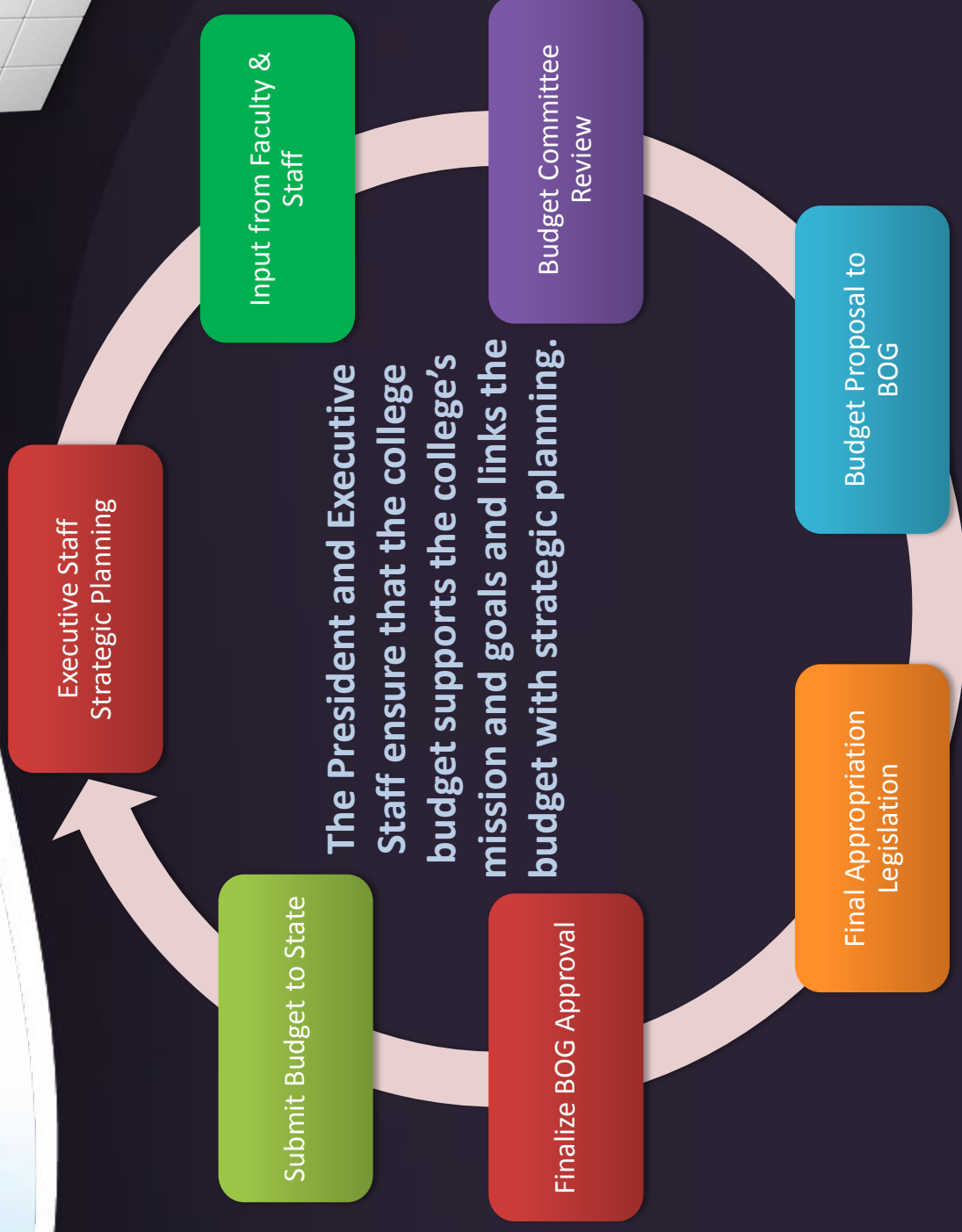
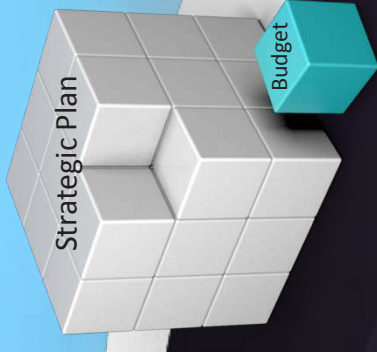
In December, the School of Workforce Development and Engineering Technologies participated in a strategic planning meeting. After a mixer to help employees relax and get to know others at their table, the strategic planning process was explained. Next, attendees worked in groups to discuss the five strategic initiatives:

- 1. Student Success:** Promote student persistence and educational goal completion
- 2. Workforce:** Meeting the workforce needs of regional employers and enhance economic development efforts in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and surrounding communities.
- 3. Access:** Provide inclusive access to affordable community and technical college education in our service region and surrounding communities.
- 4. Resources:** Employ innovative practices to maximize the efficient and effective use of College resources.
- 5. Assessment/ Institutional Effectiveness:** Enhance the framework for institutional effectiveness to assess student learning and co-curricular activities and to evaluate institutional operations to ensure continuous improvement.

For each initiative, goals were identified for years 2020, 2021, and 2022. The group considered goals, ways to reach the goals, and challenges in reaching the goals. While some discussions focused on large goals, others discussed needs that may seem insignificant, but essential.

A simple example of how strategic planning leads to action is that one group discussed the frustration of not having working dry erase markers in the classrooms. Markers are a critical tool for an instructor needing to write a math problem! The need was identified; a solution was suggested. Boxes of markers were ordered and placed in the classrooms. The result is that instructors now have dry erase markers in the classrooms, enabling them to have the tools needed to teach. The end result is an improvement in student learning.

Fulfilling the Mission



HISTORIC TIMELINE

1974	<i>Shepherd Community College Began</i>	
		1989
		<i>Dr. Peter Checkovich chosen as Dean/Provost</i>
2001	<i>CTC Shepherd in Gardiner Hall on the Shepherd University Campus</i>	2001
		<i>CTC Shepherd relocated to the Berkeley Business Building in Martinsburg, WV</i>
		2002
		<i>CTC Shepherd relocated to the Dunn Building on Stephen Street in Martinsburg, WV</i>
2004	<i>Dr. Peter Checkovich named President of CTC Shepherd</i>	
		2005
		<i>CTC Shepherd earned independent accreditation from The Higher Learning Commission</i>
2006	<i>CTC Shepherd officially became Blue Ridge Community and Technical College</i>	
		2008
		<i>Blue Ridge CTC opens approved additional locations at:</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technology Center 5550 Winchester Ave., Martinsburg, WV• Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races 750 Holly Drive, Charles Town, WV• Quad Graphics 855 Caperton Blvd, Martinsburg, WV
2010	<i>Blue Ridge CTC earned 10 year reaffirmation of accreditation</i>	
	<i>Purchase of 46 acres of land on Route 45; Construction of new campus begins</i>	
2012	<i>Blue Ridge CTC opens approved additional location at Pines Opportunity Center 109 War Memorial Dr., Berkeley Springs, WV</i>	2012
		<i>Blue Ridge CTC relocated to new main campus: 13650 Apple Harvest Dr., Martinsburg, WV</i>
2013	<i>Blue Ridge CTC student enrollment/headcount exceeded 5000 students.</i>	
		2015
		<i>Blue Ridge CTC earned reaffirmation of accreditation from The Higher Learning Commission.</i>
2018	<i>Blue Ridge CTC student enrollment/headcount exceeded 6000 students.</i>	

ACTIVE SHOOTER TRAINING



In the summer of 2019, Blue Ridge CTC's (BRCTC) Public Safety Director, along with the coordinator of the Criminal Justice program, met with Bill Scott Raceway's (BSR) Training Director Nathan Harmon to discuss expanding the college's professional relationship with that entity. During that meeting, Harmon agreed that BSR would present its BECON (Barricade, Egress, Control, Oppose, Notify) active shooter program to college employees. BECON is a highly effective, dynamic method that serves as a catalyst to the traditional "run, hide, fight," technique dealing with an armed assailant on campus. In summary, BECON does not mandate victims implement a rigid approach requiring the following of sequential actions, but provides a more flexible response to active shooter events. For example, should an attacker prevent barricade or egress by moving rapidly on a specific office, the first action taken could be to oppose.

From the aforementioned initial meeting with BSR, Security coordinated with BRCTC Finance and Human Resources to contract with that organization to bring BECON to the college, and to devise a workable schedule in an effort to maximize staff participation. On January 13, 14, 15, and 16, 2020, Nate Harmon, accompanied by two other BSR personnel, provided the BECON active shooter training to 137 BRCTC staff members at the Main Campus.

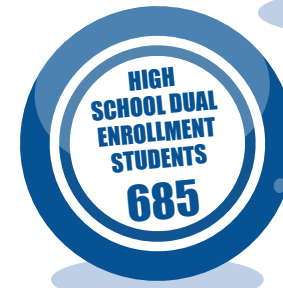
BRCTC PARTNERS WITH THE WV RECOVERY COACH ACADEMY (GRACE)

Three times a year, BRCTC offers Recovery Coach and Advanced Medical Recovery Coach Trainings on campus for community members, students, and employees. Individuals who complete these courses state-wide receive Third Party College Credits from BRCTC.

This program is impacting the community by helping individuals who are in recovery learn that they can give back and help others and by providing training to those who want to be a resource to their families and communities. To date, over 1000 people have been trained to be recovery coaches. This summer BRCTC is hosting a WV Recovery Coach Academy (GRaCE) to train high school students as recovery coaches.

The college is helping in other ways, also. The Recovery Group meets on Monday's from 11-12:30pm in room 2103 at BRCTC and is open to students and employees seeking resources or someone to talk to. The group is led by Sara Gordon, Alexis Dixon, and Lisha Burks. Speakers are being scheduled to discuss a variety of topics concerning recovery. BRCTC employees interested in participating in recovery coach training may speak to their supervisor about Professional Development to cover the costs of the class.

BRCTC POWER N#MBERS!



BRCTC has one campus, known as the main campus at 13650 Apple Harvest Drive in Martinsburg.

*BRCTC has an additional four HLC approved locations:
Technical Center in Martinsburg
Quad Graphics in Martinsburg
Pines Opportunity Center in Berkeley Springs
Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races in Charles Town*

THE BRUIN EXPRESS

The BRCTC culinary program is taking the classroom on the road...

Students will have the opportunity to learn and work on the new Bruin Express food truck, offering real-world experience. Students will work in an “uncontrolled” environment, learn to manage time, work on cleanliness, prepare food in a small area, serve customers, plan for breakfast and lunch rushes, and analyze results of sales to manage menu. Students will learn about mobile challenges – planning the right amount of food is essential and being able to handle challenges without on-site IT help. Essentially– students will learn how to own and operate a business.



The Bruin Express is 32 feet, with over 180 square footage of workspace. It features an oven, stove top, flat top grill, two fryers, sandwich prep, warmer proofing box, steam table, freezer and refrigerator.



The enthusiasm in the community is outstanding and will provide many opportunities. For example, the truck may provide food service for our business partners, local fairs, sporting events, BRCTC campus, and approved additional locations.



Brandon Michael has been planning and testing the menu in preparation for an April opening. Menu ideas include popular foods and comfort foods relatable to locals. Smoked meats will be the focus. In addition, creative sandwiches, including vegetarian and gluten-free, may be on the menu. Sides include homemade coleslaw, mac and cheese, baked beans, fries and tater tots. Brandon has created his own BBQ sauces: a Kansas city style sauce using molasses and apple cider vinegar and a Carolina style, mustard-based sauce with brown sugar.

Brandon graduated from BRCTC with both a Culinary and Board of Governors degree. After graduation, he spent three years in Colorado cooking and managing restaurants. He learned management styles and systems from two corporate companies that had specific standards, rules, dress codes, and professional protocols. Brandon learned from two great chefs. He cooked New Orleans foods like gumbo and shrimp and grits. He also learned mountain cuisine -- how to cook wild meats such as elk, bison, and bass. Movie stars and presidents have tasted Brandon's cuisine at the Telluride Film Festival. Employees are looking forward to enjoying his creations on the Bruin Express!

ALUMNI SURVEY RESPONSES INCREASE

Exciting changes are happening in the Office of Career Services, specifically the way we are connecting with graduates. During the summer of 2019, the process for obtaining post-graduation information from alumni was evaluated and revamped. New methods include a rigorous communication plan for reaching out to graduate cohorts, a stronger online job board to display employment opportunities and direct employer connections for placement. The most essential change was to the Graduate Survey.

Distributed to graduates each term, the three to five minute graduate survey evaluates alumni employment and continuing education data. This improved method is yielding more student-reported data than ever before. For the August 2019 graduate cohort, 84% of graduates responded - providing an important picture of our students post-graduation. The Office of Career Services uses this data to prepare a summary report each term. The first report will be published with full details Spring 2020.



Siona Escoto
Outreach & Placement Specialist
Office of Career Services



PREPARING FOR THE HLC CAMPUS VISIT

A team of reviewers from the Higher Learning Commission will visit Blue Ridge CTC March 30 and 31, 2020. While at Blue Ridge, the team will hold focus groups and may also talk with members of the campus community as they move around campus. You can contribute to a positive accreditation outcome in many ways:

- Review Blue Ridge CTC's mission and vision statements.
<http://www.blueridgectc.edu/about-blue-ridge/mission-vision-statements/>
- Read Blue Ridge CTC's Assurance Argument, which will be available Feb. 28.
- Become familiar with Blue Ridge CTC's strategic planning priorities and processes.
- Participate in the mock forums in March. (Schedule is posted in this newsletter and will be emailed.) These forums will prepare you for the visit.
- Be available on March 30 and 31 to participate in forums and answer questions.

Possible Questions the Team May Ask

The following lists provide examples of the types of questions review teams are likely to ask. These lists are not exhaustive, and you should expect the team to ask additional general and Blue Ridge-specific questions. Please answer all questions candidly and thoughtfully. Blue Ridge CTC's Assurance Argument identifies and discusses the institution's strengths and challenges, and the evaluation team will be aware of these. Your interactions with the evaluation team will reinforce our Assurance Argument findings and provide strong evidence that we meet the Criteria for Accreditation.

Questions for Everyone

- What do you know about accreditation?
- What do you know about the Higher Learning Commission?
- Have you seen or read BRCTC's Assurance Argument?
- How would you describe BRCTC's mission? Do you know where you would find the official statement?
- How does your department contribute to BRCTC's mission?
- How do you contribute to the institution's mission?
- What are the institution's current strategic planning priorities?
- What are BRCTC's greatest strengths?
- What are the biggest challenges facing BRCTC? How about challenges specific to your department?
- What makes BRCTC unique in your state and among higher education institutions in general?
- How would you describe the campus climate for diversity?
- What is it like to work at BRCTC? How is morale on campus?
- Do you think that academics are the top priority at BRCTC? Why or why not?

- Describe any campus processes that could be improved or made more efficient.
- What kind of changes are taking place at BRCTC? Do you see these as positive or not?

Questions for Faculty

- What are the characteristics of a BRCTC education?
- What is your department's vision for the future? How does this relate to the institution's vision?
- Can you describe the tenure and promotion process? What is your impression of the process?
- Talk about shared governance and how faculty participate in decision-making at different levels of the institution (department, college, institution).
- How would you describe the relationship between faculty and administration? What works and what needs improvement?
- Describe the relationship between BRCTC's colleges. What collaborations currently exist?
- What resources are available to support faculty (e.g., library, internal grants, external grant support, faculty development, travel, etc.)? Are these sufficient in meeting faculty needs?
- Is your department actively involved in assessing student learning? How has your department used its assessment findings? What evidence do you have that students achieve your program's intended learning outcomes?

- How are your students doing once they graduate?
- Are you involved in research? How does the institution's focus on research further BRCTC's mission?
- What opportunities do students in your program have to gain experience with research? Community or civic engagement? Diversity or multiculturalism?
- What is the purpose of BRCTC's general education program (Liberal Arts Core)? In what ways does the program achieve its goals for students? How could it be improved?
- For some common faculty issues (workload, salary, sabbatical leaves, etc.), what works well and what needs to be improved?
- What is the role of faculty in ensuring academic quality?
- Does your department offer courses or programs via distance education? If so, how does the department ensure the quality of the curriculum regardless of how or where it is delivered?

Questions for Staff

- How does your department support the academic mission of the institution?
- What is it like to be a staff member at BRCTC?
- What opportunities do you have for professional development? Are staff members treated equitably in their access to these opportunities?
- How are staff evaluated at BRCTC? What is your impression of the evaluation process?
- How are staff involved in campus decision-making processes? Do you think that staff have sufficient input into decisions that affect them?
- How would you describe the relationship between staff and administration? What works and what could be improved?
- What are some important benefits about working at BRCTC? What do you like best about your job? What would you change if you could?
- How do units across campus work collaboratively? What works well and what could be improved?
- Do you feel that the work you do is valued by administration? Faculty? Other staff members? Students?
- How does your department contribute to student learning and development? How does your department assess or evaluate effectiveness?

Questions for Students

- Why did you choose to enroll at BRCTC? Have your expectations been met?
- What do you think is special about a BRCTC education?
- Would you recommend BRCTC to other students?
- What do you like best about BRCTC? What would you change if you could?
- Have you experienced any problems getting the courses you need in a timely manner?
- Describe your experiences with academic advising.
- Do you know where to go for help with the following? (a) academic support; (b) career planning; (c) personal counseling; (e) making a complaint; (f) technology support.
- Do you use any of the following: library, tutoring services, dining services, the health center, recreational facilities? If yes, what has been your experience?
- How is the relationship between students and faculty?
- What opportunities do you have to conduct research? Participate in community or service learning experiences? Interact with people and cultures different from your own? Gain real world experience related to your educational and career goals?
- If you have transferred in credits, what was the experience like for you?
- Do you think the institution is clear in its communication with students about topics such as financial aid, student conduct, costs, and graduation requirements? What improvements would you recommend?

**BE SURE TO WATCH ALL THE
"HOW I MEET THE MISSION"
VIDEOS ON THE BLUE RIDGE CTC
YOUTUBE CHANNEL**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vhSHCZOKbY>

MARCH MADNESS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

BlueRidge

COMMUNITY AND
TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Mark your calendar for these HLC preparedness meetings!
Learn everything you need to know for the upcoming HLC Accreditation Visit.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6 March Madness Jump Ball Criterion 2 and 5 11am-1pm HQ, Room 1101	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 Home Court Eggvantage Criteria 3&4 11:00-12:30 12:30 Lunch and Open House & Lab Tours TC, Room T04	14
15	16	17	18	19	20 Balls in your Court Criterion 1 11am-1pm HQ, Room 1101	21
22	23 Overtime 1 Main Campus Review 1:30pm-3:30pm President's Board Room CRAZY SOCKS DAY	24 Overtime 2 Tech Center Review 3:30pm-5:30pm TC, Room T04 TWIN DAY	25 RED & BLUE DAY	26 SPORTS DAY	27 Holy Crepes! Game Day: HLC is Coming All Assembly 11am-1pm HQ, Room 1101 BLUE RIDGE DAY	28
29	30 GAME DAY!! HLC IS HERE!		31 SPIRIT WEEK! Each day take a selfie and email to: HR@blueridgectc.edu or come to HR for a picture. HR will share photos college-wide and hold a vote for best dressed! Crazy Socks Day: Wear your craziest socks Twin Day: Pair with an employee to dress the same Red and Blue Day: Rock your Red and Blue to represent BRCTC Sports Day: Proudly wear your favorite team paraphernalia Blue Ridge Day: BRCTC Core Value Shirts or BRCTC attire			