

**CATYC**



[WWW.CATYC](http://WWW.CATYC)  
FALL, 2024

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# Council to Advance Two Year Colleges (CATYC)

## Mission

To promote and support quality educational standards, practices, and policies for two-year colleges

## Purpose

- To work with accrediting agencies in the promotion of standards, practices, and policies for two-year colleges.
- To promote effective communication and articulation of the membership represented by this Council with the American Association of Community Colleges and other educational agencies.
- To support appropriate legislation to improve programs and services in two-year colleges.
- To sponsor workshops, seminars, and academies on appropriate topics of interest where differing views, methodologies, and interests that support the goals of accrediting agencies may be shared.
- To promote research and assist the member institutions in meeting change in two-year college education.
- To provide information and encourage community services among member institutions and communities interested in two-year college education.

*The Council to Advance Two Year Colleges (CATYC) is an higher education organization that serves community college members focused on two-year education, accreditation, standards, practices, and policies.*



## Council to Advance Two-Year Colleges (CATYC) Marks Historic Name Change at Annual Conference

**Livonia, Michigan, September 30, 2024**—In a significant move reflecting the growing diversity of challenges and opportunities within community and junior colleges, the Council on Accreditation of Two-Year Colleges (CATYC) officially voted to change its name to the Council to Advance Two-Year Colleges during its annual meeting, held at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, Michigan, from September 22-24. This change emphasizes the organization's expanding mission to address a wider range of issues facing two-year institutions across the United States.

Barbara Jones, Executive Director of CATYC, remarked on the name change, “The CATYC Executive Committee made the decision to develop a mission statement for the organization, which was approved by the membership at the recent CATYC conference. The CATYC Mission *is to promote and support quality educational standards, practices, and policies for two-year colleges*. As this mission is reflective of a much broader perspective in two-year colleges, the Executive Committee also recommended an organization name change to reflect the mission. It is a timely change, as the important role of two-year colleges in career preparation, transfer education, and workforce development continues to expand and grow.”

Attendees from ten states participated in the conference, which included engaging presentations and discussions on best practices in student learning and success, innovation in higher education, and accreditation processes. The new name was selected to better represent the Council’s evolving priorities and its commitment to supporting all aspects of two-year college education.

Outgoing CATYC President Paul Watson of Kellogg Community College expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to lead the organization, stating, “Leading this esteemed organization, which has long been a beacon of excellence and integrity in accreditation, has been an honor and a tremendous responsibility. Together, we have continued to uphold the highest standards of quality, ensuring that institutions remain at the forefront of innovation, integrity, and impact.”

The event also featured a presentation by Karen Solomon, Vice President and Chief Transformation Officer at the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), who provided an in-depth update on HLC accreditation criteria, current policy discussions, and trends affecting higher education nationally.

Incoming CATYC President Darci McFail of State Fair Community College shared her excitement for the future of the organization, adding, "Since its founding in the 1930's, CATYC has been dedicated to supporting two-year colleges in their accreditation journey. That remains unchanged. The new mission statement emphasizes our vision of supporting member institutions' efforts to cultivate a culture of excellence aligned with rigorous accreditation standards, not merely to navigate the accreditation process. By broadening our reach, we hope to foster more intercollegiate relationships and encourage more colleagues to benefit from and contribute to our valuable professional development and networking opportunities."

Next year's CATYC annual conference will be held in St. Louis, Missouri, from October 5-7, 2025, and promises to build on the momentum of this year's event with an expanded agenda focused on accreditation, student success, and institutional innovation.

Originally founded in 1937 as the Council of North Central Two-Year Colleges, the Council to Advance Two-Year Colleges (CATYC) is a national organization dedicated to promoting excellence in community and junior colleges through peer-to-peer collaboration, innovation, and accreditation support. CATYC is committed to promoting and supporting quality educational standards, practices, and policies for two-year colleges. For more information about the Council to Advance Two-Year Colleges, please visit [www.catyc.com](http://www.catyc.com).

**CATYC**



**Message from  
CATYC President**



**Darci McFail,  
Executive Director of  
Strategic Services  
and ALO, State Fair  
Community College,  
Sedalia, Missouri**

Dear friends and colleagues,

This is an exciting time for CATYC! With a new name, defined mission, and clarity of purpose, the organization is poised to continue its important work with an even brighter guiding light. To be clear, these changes do not alter our core purpose. For nearly 90 years, this organization has been dedicated to supporting two-year colleges in their continuous drive to meet the standards of excellence defined within criteria for accreditation. As the accreditation landscape has evolved in recent years, so must we. The improvements made in 2024 reflect our commitment to broaden CATYC's impact and effectiveness for our member institutions.

Although we maintain and value a relationship with the Higher Learning Commission, the professional development opportunities provided by CATYC extend beyond the processes associated with accreditation. At our recent convention, attendees gained tremendous insight of things to come from Dr. Jo Alice Blondin, president of Clark State College, who participated in Negotiated Rule-Making with the Department of Education. Sessions were offered on topics such as addressing high employee turn-over, co-curricular assessment, AI, program review, student success, strategic planning, and curriculum leadership. While there were no sessions that addressed how to write an assurance argument or prepare for a comprehensive review visit (though there is a time and place for that), each session touched on components of the criteria for accreditation, and all of them were delivered peer-to-peer. Finally, Dr. Karen Solomon, Vice President and Chief Transformation Officer at the Higher Learning Commission, shared developments taking shape at HLC as they directly affect two-year colleges.

The theme for our 2025 convention is *Advancing Together*. This theme mirrors the organization's new moniker, the Council *to Advance Two Year Colleges*, and emphasizes one of CATYC's great strengths: relationships. This conference, and your membership, will erase the borders between states and provide opportunities to network with colleagues, gather ideas, and develop solutions with other leaders throughout the country. We do not attempt to make legislative impact or act as a proxy for other agencies. We build connections. We share our experiences and our successes (and sometimes our failures) so we can all, well.... advance together.

Mark your calendars for the 2025 Annual CATYC conference, October 5-7, 2025. I look forward to building a connection with you!

Best Regards,

Darci

***Message from  
CATYC  
Past-President***



***Dr. Paul R. Watson II  
President, Kellogg  
Community College***

As my tenure as President of the CATYC comes to a close, I am both proud and deeply reflective. It has been an honor to work alongside dedicated educators and administrators who are committed to upholding the highest standards of excellence in two-year colleges. Together, we've tackled complex issues, adapted to changing needs, and, above all, remained steadfast in our commitment to providing transformative learning opportunities for students across the 19+ states that we serve.

Over the past few years, we have made tremendous strides. We've launched new initiatives and sessions to highlight best practices regarding student success, operational sustainability, reviewed the development of robust quality benchmarks, and strengthened support for innovative programs that serve a diverse student body. These achievements are not just benchmarks but foundations for the future, paving the way for the next generation of leaders to elevate our mission further.

Our dreams for the future of two-year colleges are indeed bold and ambitious—perhaps even a little daunting. Embracing big dreams means challenging ourselves to envision a future where every student, regardless of background, has the tools to succeed and the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to society. Looking ahead, I am confident that the Council will continue to push the boundaries of what's possible. I am grateful to each one of you for your unwavering commitment to this work. You are the backbone of our organization, and I know that with your dedication, the Council's impact will only grow. The organization's mission to enhance education quality gains a dedicated new leader in Ms. Darci McFail, the 2024-2025 CATYC President. Her vision and commitment will drive CATYC's ongoing impact in higher education, ensuring that our work continues to elevate standards and enrich learning opportunities for all.

**Message from  
CATYC  
Executive Director**



**Dr. Barbara Jones**

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Council to Advance Two Year Colleges (CATYC), we want to thank you for your continued membership and interest in CATYC. In 2024 CATYC provided various professional development opportunities such as webinars, our annual conference, a newsletter, and helpful information to our membership. We continue to investigate ways to expand our focus on higher education accreditation and future initiatives in two-year colleges. As a result, CATYC has adopted a Mission Statement and made a change to our name to reflect moving forward in higher education.

We were excited to convene our 2024 Annual CATYC Conference – Bridging Gaps in Higher Education – in Livonia, Michigan this past September. Schoolcraft College was the host conference site. We had some wonderful presentations related to accreditation, assessment, use of AI in higher education, faculty evaluation, and more. Dr. Glenn Cerny, Schoolcraft College President, gave a welcome address to start off the conference. He also provided a tour of some of their innovative campus facilities. Dr. Jo Alice Blondin, President of Clark State College, provided an informative keynote presentation. Dr. Karen Solomon, HLC Vice-President and Chief Transformation Officer, gave a presentation of trends and updates at HLC, as well as review HLC's revised criteria for accreditation. Dr. Mark Watkins, President of Labette Community College and campus host for the CATYC organization, was recognized for his years of service and support CATYC with the CATYC Legacy Award.

We want to acknowledge the great work of our new Executive Assistant, Heidi Flora. She began working for CATYC in January 2024, and she hit the ground running. She has been a quick study and a very intuitive learner. She had packets ready to go for the conference and was so flexible making last minute arrangements. Thanks Heidi!

The 2024 Conference in Michigan was outstanding. We are already making plans for 2025. **Please mark your calendars for our 2025 Annual Conference to be held on October 5-7 in St. Louis, Missouri.** State Fair Community College will be our host college. Working with members, accrediting agencies, and the CATYC Executive Committee, we hope to make CATYC stronger and more beneficial to you, our member institutions.

In closing, I want to say THANK YOU to our Executive Committee, Heidi, Megan, and to all our CATYC members. I will be stepping down as the CATYC Executive Director on December 31<sup>st</sup> to pursue a more “expanded” retirement. I have so enjoyed working with all of you these past 5 years. I am proud of the progress and advances we have made in the organization, as well as expanding offerings. CATYC is a great organization which works with you to advance the quality of higher education for our students, employees, colleges, and communities. I encourage you to continue the great work and mission of two-year colleges.

*Barbara*

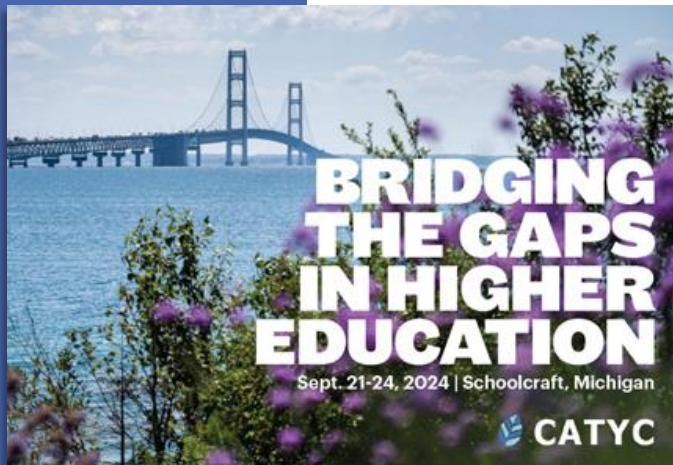
*The CATYC Executive Committee would like to express heartfelt thanks to Dr. Barbara Jones for her incredible work as CATYC's Executive Director for the past five years. Her guidance and commitment have been instrumental to CATYC's success. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors and look forward to maintaining our valued friendship.*



**Many thanks to our CATYC  
Development and  
Communication Committee**

**REGIONS:**

1. OH, WV: Vacant
2. IN, IL: Karen Weiss, Southeastern Illinois College,  
Harrisburg, IL
3. MI, WI: Dr. Paul Watson, Kellogg Community  
College, Kellogg, MI
4. MN, ND, SD: Tamara Dewes, Western Dakota  
Technical College,
5. IA, NB: Tad Pfeifer, Mid-Plains Community  
College, North Platte, NE
6. KS, MO: Sharon Kibbe, Highland Community  
College, Highland, KS
7. OK, AR: Al Massri, Northwest Arkansas  
Community College, Bentonville, AR
8. WY, CO: Dr. Darren Divine, Casper College,  
Casper, WY
9. NM, AZ: Wendy Weeks, Pima Community College,  
Tucson, AZ



## **CATYC Fall 2024 Conference Focuses on “Bridging the Gaps” in Higher Education**

Livonia, MI – The Council to Advance Two-Year Colleges held a three-day event, “Bridging the Gaps in Higher Education,” from September 21-24, 2024 at Schoolcraft College. The Vista Tech Conference Center was a beautiful venue and a great location for the event. Kellogg Community College President and outgoing CATYC President, Dr. Paul Watson, along with local Schoolcraft College President, Dr. Glenn Cerny, hosted the conference.

Dr. Paul Watson opened the 2024 CATYC Conference followed by a welcome from President Cerny. Additionally, President Cerny provided a tour of the campus, highlighting the college’s innovative workforce development programs and facilities. Dr. Jo Alice Blondin, President, Clark State College, opened the Monday sessions with a keynote address concerning issues impacted by the recent Department of Education rule-making session, at which she represented two-year colleges. Eleven excellent and informative sessions followed over the two days.

**Dr. Glenn Cerny,  
Schoolcraft College  
President,  
provides a welcome  
address to start off  
the 2024 CATYC  
Conference in  
Livonia, Michigan.**





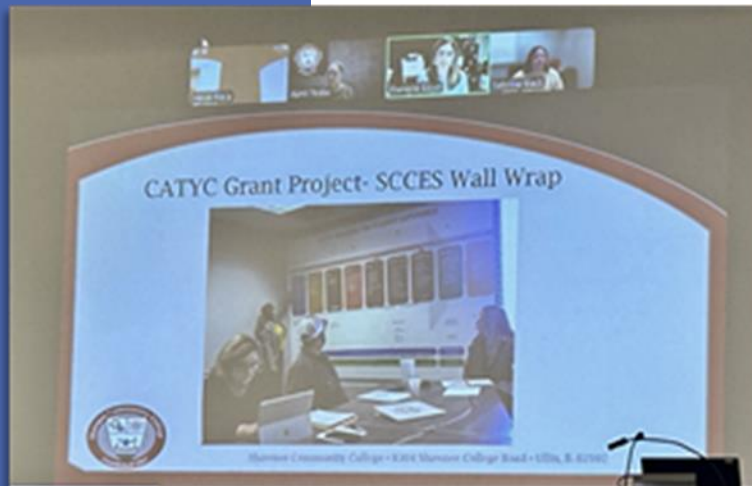
**Dr. Jo Alice Blondin,  
President, Clark State  
College, Keynote  
Speaker, “Lesson  
Learned and Impacts  
of the Recent DoE  
Negotiated Rule-  
Making Sessions.”**



**“Collaborating with  
Faculty on an  
Evaluation Process”  
Kellogg Community  
College, Tonya  
Forbes, VP of  
Instruction; Dawn  
Larsen, Dean of Arts  
& Sciences**

**“One Rural  
Community College’s  
Attempt to Address  
High Employee  
Turnover, Dr. Mark  
Watkins, President,  
Labette Community  
College**





## **GEORGE KNOX 2023-24 RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENT**

Dr. April Teske, VP of Academic Affairs at Shawnee Community College (SCC), Ullin, Illinois, was chosen by the Executive Committee of the Council to Advance Two-Year Colleges (CATYC) to receive the CATYC George Knox Research Grant for 2023-2024. The research grant was established to benefit the institution, recipient, the organization, and higher education by supporting institutional improvements and best practices related to accreditation. The grant funds up to \$1500 for a relevant project.

Dr. Teske and her team presented outcomes of the project at the 2024 CATYC Annual Conference. The CATYC Research Grant helped SCC to foster ownership and increase engagement of students and employees with the Student Success element of the SCCES institutional effectiveness framework. Key Performance Indicators identified by the Student Affairs staff were displayed to illustrate the status, stimulate problem-solving and goal setting, and facilitate open communication, transparency, and accountability.

Members interested in applying for the 2024-2025 George Knox Research Grant are encouraged to apply – proposal deadline is **April 15, 2025**.

**2024 CATYC  
Legacy Award –  
Dr. Mark Watkins,  
President,  
Labette  
Community  
College**



Dr. Mark Watkins, President at Labette Community College (LCC,) received the 2024 CATYC Legacy Award at the 2024 CATYC Conference. Dr. Watkins began his career as a businessman. Following a short stint at the corporate office of Globe Life and Accident Insurance Company in Oklahoma City, he worked in the family business in Erie, Kansas, Good Will Tours, Inc. for 15 years traveling around North American and abroad.

Following his election to the Board of Trustees at Neosho County Community College, he changed his career path to higher education and taught business and economics for seven years in the classroom. He then shifted to the administration side as Dean of Instruction at LCC prior to his selection as their President.

Dr. Watkins has participated in CATYC events for many years. He has served on the CATYC Executive Committee, as well as Vice-President, President, and Past President. As President of Labette Community College, he has continued to host the “office” of CATYC at the college. We are grateful for his service to and support of CATYC.



***Outgoing CATYC  
President,  
Dr. Paul Watson with  
incoming  
CATYC President,  
Darci McFail.***

## Thank you to our 2024 CATYC Conference Sponsors!



PLATINUM SPONSOR:  
Cengage,

**Steve Korb**, *Business  
Development Director –  
MI/IN/OH*

SILVER SPONSOR:  
Simple Syllabus,

**Matthew Compton-  
Clark**, Account  
Executive



BRONZE SPONSOR:  
Ellucian

# More from the CATYC Fall Conference



Touring the Schoolcraft  
Culinary School.

Kelly Kirkpatrick,  
Labette Community  
College.



Emily Davis,  
Hocking College



**The 2025 CATYC Annual Conference  
is scheduled for October 5-7, 2025 in  
St. Louis, Missouri at the  
Drury Plaza Hotel  
St. Louis at the Arch**



**2025 CATYC Conference Information:**

Date: October 5-7, 2025

Location: St. Louis, Missouri

Hotel: Drury Plaza Hotel, St. Louis Arch

2 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Louis MO 63102

Phone: 1-800-325-0720 (**refer to group # 10111306**)

Group sales reservation:

<https://www.druryhotels.com/bookandstay/newreservation/?groupno=10111306>

***Make your reservation by Tuesday, September 2, 2025 to receive the group rate.***

Take a look at the informative presentations from the 2024 conference here <https://www.catyc.com/presentations/index.html>

**FUTURE CATYC CONFERENCES**

2026 – Columbus, Ohio area

2027 – New Mexico

# Higher Learning Commission Updates

The 2025 HLC Annual Conference is  
April 5-8, 2025, Chicago, IL.



Information from CATYC 2024  
Conference presentation of  
Dr. Karen J. Solomon, Ed.D.,  
HLC Vice President and Chief  
Transformation Officer

## ***HLC Trends 2024***

- *Artificial Intelligence (AI) – Promises, Opportunities, and Threats*
- *Teaching, Learning and Enrollment Paradigm Shifts*
- *Outcomes and Accountability for Programs and Institutions*
- *Financial Challenges and Opportunities Across All Sectors*
- *New Business Models Emerging for Innovation and Sustainability*
- *Exponential Growth of Short-Term Credentials and New Providers Interventions*
- *Speaking Out: Conflicting Voices, Civility and Safety on Campuses*
- *Mental Health Challenges Continue – Impact and Oversight*
- *Talent Management and Succession Planning: Colleges Need to Be Ready for Turnover at All Levels*
- *The Important Role of Leadership: Challenges and Continuity*
- *Accreditation and the Influence of the Triad Student Success*
- *Revised Criteria expect benchmarks that reference peer institutions*
- *Multi-phase initiative*
  - *Phase I focused on three educational measures:*
    - *First-year retention rate*
    - *Graduation rate within 150% of normal time*
    - *Completion and transfer rate at 8 years after entry to college*

<https://download.hlcommission.org/Evaluating>

***OutcomesPhase1Update\_2024-05\_PRC.pdf***

**Table 3. Number of Institutions That Will Be Surveyed**

Peer Group	Number of Institutions		
	Total in Peer Group	With 1+ Measure Within Lowest 5th Percentile* (% of group)	With 1+ Measure More than 1SD Below Mean** (% of group)
Two-Year	321	42 (13.08%)	57 (17.76%)
Tribal Colleges	26	5 (19.23%)	4 (15.38%)
Four-Year, Selective	274	25 (9.12%)	39 (14.23%)
Four-Year, Inclusive	274	35 (12.77%)	45 (16.42%)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>895</b>	<b>107 (11.96%)</b>	<b>145 (16.20%)</b>

\* These institutions will be required to complete the survey on outcome measures

\*\* These institutions will be asked, but not required, to complete the survey on outcome measures.

## **Phase II**

*Move beyond educational outcomes to analyses of post-college labor market and other economic*

*outcomes such as:*

- *post-graduation employment rates,*
- *median earnings,*
- *federal loan repayment rates*
- *and median total debt after graduation, among others.*

### **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES**

- *Evolving Bachelor's Degrees*
  - *Reduced-Time Bachelor's Degree*
  - *Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree*
- *Distance Education Teach Out – guidance*

### **HLC CREDENTIALS LABS**

**\*FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE FULL PRESENTATION at:**

<https://www.catyc.com/presentations/index.html>

### **HLC CRITERION REVISIONS**

#### **Criterion 1. Mission**

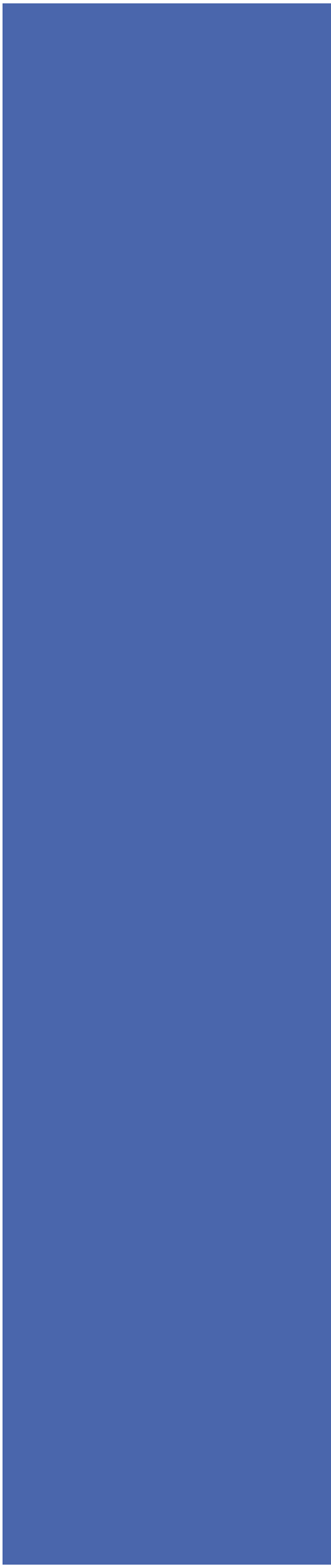
*The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.*

- 1.A. Mission Alignment*
- 1.B. Mission and Public Good*
- 1.C. Mission and Diversity of Society*

#### **Criterion 2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct**

*In fulfilling its mission, the institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.*



- 
- 2.A. Integrity
  - 2.B. Transparency
  - 2.C. Board Governance
  - 2.D. Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression
  - 2.E. Knowledge Acquisition, Discovery and Application

**Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning for Student Success**

*The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The rigor and quality of each educational program is consistent regardless of modality, location or other differentiating factors.*

*Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning for Student Success*

- 3.A. Educational Programs
- 3.B. Exercise of Intellectual Inquiry
- 3.C. Sufficiency of Faculty and Staff
- 3.D. Support for Student Learning and Resources for Teaching
- 3.E. Assessment of Student Learning
- 3.F. Program Review
- 3.G. Student Success Outcomes

**Criterion 4. Sustainability: Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning**

*The institution's resources, structures, policies, procedures and planning enable it to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational programs, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.*

- 4.A. Effective Administrative Structures
- 4.B. Resource Base and Sustainability
- 4.C. Planning for Quality Improvement

**Updated Resource**

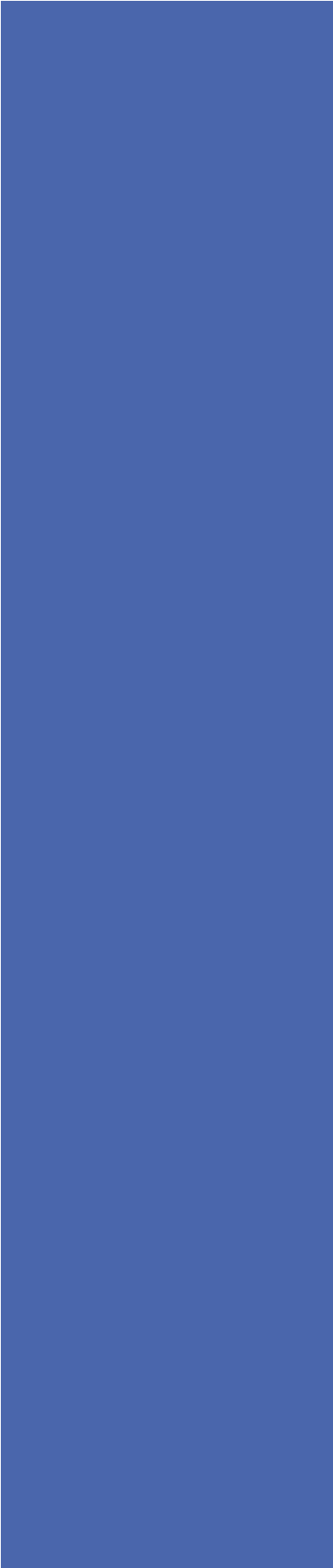
- Document to be utilized as a resource to consider possible sources of evidence
- Document is not exhaustive or to be used as a checklist
- Common Types of Evidence

[https://download.hlcommission.org/Providing Evidence-2025Criteria\\_INF.pdf](https://download.hlcommission.org/Providing Evidence-2025Criteria_INF.pdf)

**Access to new Assurance System in Canopy**

**Suggested Readings from HLC**  
– The Leaflet: September 2024

<https://www.hlcommission.org/News-Reports/leaflet.html>



## UPCOMING CATYC EVENTS/ACTIVITIES – MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **CATYC Executive Committee vacancy** – contact Dr. Barbara Jones, if interested.
- **Webinars: PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE UPCOMING CATYC ZOOM WEBINARS (MEMBERS ONLY) and SHARE information with your peers:**

**Wednesday, November 20, 2024: 1-2:30P Central time**

**Title: *Driving Success with NCCBP Data: Learn more about the data trends, reporting and insights from a long-time member - State Fair Community College.***

**Presenters: Judi Reine, Director of Institutional Research, State Fair Community College**

**Michelle Taylor, Senior Research Analyst | National Higher Education Benchmarking Institute**

**Wednesday, February 21, 2024: 1-2:30P Central Time**

**Title: TBD**

**Presenters: TBD**

- **Research Grant proposals: due April 15, 2025**
- **2024 CATYC Conference proposals: due April 15, 2025**
- **2024 Legacy Award nominations: due April 15, 2025**
- **2024 Innovation Award Nominations: due April 15, 2025**

### **CATYC Membership**

Thank you for being a member of CATYC. It has been a wonderful source of professional development, networking, and advocacy related to regional accreditation for many of our community colleges for over 80 years. If your institution has **renewed your membership** this year – Thank You! If not, please remember to send your renewal **to: Heidi Flora, CATYC, 200 South 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Parsons, KS 67357 or pay online at [www.catyc.org](http://www.catyc.org).**

Also, **please tell your peers about CATYC** and of the value of our organization. We continue to strive to keep our dues affordable because we understand the ongoing budget challenges our community colleges face every day.

# Members of the 2024-2025 Executive Committee

## **CATYC President**

**Darci McFail, Executive Director  
of Institutional Effectiveness**  
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Sedalia, MO 65301  
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## **CATYC President Elect**

**Dr. Jacqueline Hagerott, Vice-  
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## **CATYC Vice-President**

**Dr. Derek Moore, President**  
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## **CATYC Past President**

**Dr. Paul Watson II, President**  
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## **Executive Director**

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## **Executive Assistant**

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CATYC website:  
[www.catyc.com](http://www.catyc.com)