

Accreditation & Certification Monitoring Report Summary

Alignment with Board Policy: The report supports Board Policy B1011 (*Professional Programming Strategic Outcomes*) and the College's stated purpose (B1000) by demonstrating ongoing commitment to high-quality, accredited, and industry-aligned academic and workforce programs. Accreditation and certification efforts ensure academic rigor, improve student access to financial aid, promote credential portability, and validate institutional quality.

Institutional Accreditation & Recognition

Higher Learning Commission (HLC): The College successfully completed its 10-year comprehensive reaffirmation visit on January 27–28, 2025. Shared Governance Teams led preparation of the Assurance Argument, and the HLC Review Team accepted SCC's clarifying suggestions. The final report is scheduled for review by the HLC Institutional Actions Council (IAC) on May 12–13, 2025.

Once reaffirmation is officially received, **SCC intends to formally request a transition from the Standard Pathway to the Open Pathway model.** The Open Pathway emphasizes long-term quality improvement, strategic innovation, and institutional flexibility—making it a better fit for the College's forward-looking planning and governance approach.

Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Recognition:

The College completed its five-year self-evaluation and hosted the ICCB Recognition Visit in October 2024. Final results are pending.

Program-Level Progress (FY24–25 Highlights)

- Transitioned the Occupational Therapy Assistant program from SICCM to SCC, with facilities renovated and the first SCC cohort launched in Fall 2024.
- Maintained ACEN accreditation for Practical Nursing (PN) and Associate Degree Nursing (ADN).
- Launched a non-credit Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) course and began planning a full EMT/Paramedicine pathway.
- Implemented Competency-Based Education (CBE) in Welding and began development in Business.
- Initiated planning for a Respiratory Therapy program (CoARC accreditation timeline).
- Re-scoped RHIT program planning to align with CAHIIM's 2026 CBE mandate.

Career & Technical Education (CTE) Program Updates

- Truck Driving and Cosmetology continue to meet state and federal credentialing requirements; non-credit expansion is underway.
- Automotive Technology has completed facility upgrades and instructor credentialing; ASE accreditation application to begin Summer 2025.
- Welding Program continues to align with American Welding Society standards and has been significantly strengthened through federal and state grant funding.

Challenges Noted

- Difficulty filling the PATH-funded Simulation Coordinator role; strategic reallocation under consideration.
- National CBE expectations require expanded internal capacity for instructional design and cross-functional collaboration.
- Employer and alumni engagement in program review cycles needs to be more structured and consistent.

Recommendations & Next Steps

Strategic Accreditation Actions:

- Request a transition from the HLC Standard Pathway to the Open Pathway following receipt of the final reaffirmation report.
- Implement a multi-year accreditation calendar to monitor milestones, reporting deadlines, and associated costs.

Program Development:

- Hire EMS Coordinator by Spring 2025 and build EMT/Paramedicine program. (G1O2SU)
- Submit Letter of Intent to CoARC for Respiratory Therapy accreditation by Fall 2025. (G1O2SU)
- Launch CBE instruction in Welding in Fall 2025. (G1O2SP)
- Begin ASE accreditation process for Automotive in Summer 2025. (G1O2SC)
- Submit PCT and Clinical Health Specialist certificates to ICCB by Spring 2025. (G1O2SF)
- Engage a consultant or hire a director to lead RHIT curriculum development aligned to CAHIIM CBE standards. (G1O2SL)

Resource Optimization & Institutional Capacity Building:

- Finalize hiring of the Simulation Coordinator or reallocate PATH funds to high-impact academic tutoring. (G1O2SB)
- Expand structured employer and alumni participation in program review cycles.
- Strengthen internal CBE curriculum development support aligned with national and HLC standards.
- Integrate KPI dashboard into the Board portal for quarterly institutional performance tracking.



Board Monitoring Report

Accreditation & Certification

May 2025

Executive Summary

As identified in the College purpose statement (B1000), Shawnee Community College's purpose is to provide high quality and affordable higher education services to the citizens of Alexander, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski, Union, and parts of Jackson Counties in Illinois, which advance individual economic mobility, personal growth, and the local economy, at a cost commensurate with the value of services provided. As part of providing high quality higher education services, the College is committed to ensuring programs are accredited and aligned with industry standards and certified, as appropriate.

According to the Board's Professional Programming Strategic Outcomes policy (B1011), the College is committed to continuously improving the quality of its programs and services identified in Board's [purpose statement](#). The College is further committed to demonstrating that its programs and services meet assurance standards set forth by professional organizations, the Illinois Community College Board and the Higher Learning Commission, the College's regional accrediting body.

Students benefit from professionally recognized and peer-reviewed education programs and services; students benefit from regional accreditation that allows them to access government financial aid and grants; students benefit when their courses transfer to other regionally accredited institutions; students benefit when their courses and programs are aligned with professional standards that allow them to obtain industry-recognized credentials.

The College benefits when its programs and services are validated through benchmarking, audits, and other means of inspecting the quality by professional organizations. The College benefits from a systematic [assessment](#) framework that allows for thoughtful evaluation and improvement of programs and services. The College receives value when programs and services are recognized for professional excellence by peer organizations.

The community benefits by the assurance that tax dollars are spent wisely.

To achieve these benefits, the Board directs the President to ensure sufficient resources, planning, and accountability are in place for achievement and ongoing maintenance of required institutional and desired supplemental program accreditations and certifications. Further, the Board directs the President to adhere to the accreditation guidelines set forth by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) under the Open Pathways accreditation model. In addition, the Board directs the President to periodically provide information regarding alternative accreditation models provided by the HLC, if available, so the Board may review its accreditation options.

Some areas of focus for 2024-25 included the following:

- Completed transfer of OTA program and ACOTE accreditation from SICCM to SCC. (G1O2ST)
- Completed the ICCB Recognition Visit. (G4O1SJ)
- Complete and submitted the HLC Assurance Argument and completed the comprehensive visit. (G4O1SJ)
- Completed the competency-based education (CBE) program for Welding. (G1O2SP)
- Began planning for a Respiratory Therapy program and COARC accreditation. (G1O2SU)
- Began planning for a Paramedicine Program (related the EMR/EMT pathway) in a manner that can eventually lead to accreditation. (G1O2SV)
- Began working on ways to improve the relevance of the Health Information Technology program. (G1O2SL)
- Began the competency-based education (CBE) program for Business. (G1O2SS)

Institutional Accreditation & Recognition

HLC Accreditation

Shawnee Community College is on a 10-year cycle of accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission, with the most recent reaffirmation of accreditation in 2014-2015. Since the College is on the Standard Pathway of Accreditation, a comprehensive evaluation and visit must occur in years 4 and 10, with year 10 serving as the comprehensive evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation.

10-year Comprehensive Evaluation (Reaffirmation of Accreditation)

The College's 10-year comprehensive evaluation visit took place on January 27-28, 2025. The Shared Governance Teams took an active role in writing the response for the HLC Criteria. The SCC Steering Team reviewed the HLC Review Team's report for factual errors and provided only minor language suggestions for contradictory statements found in the team's report. The HLC Review Team accepted those suggestions and updated the document. The HLC Review Team's final report will be examined at the May 12-13 HLC Institutional Actions Council (IAC) meeting.

ICCB Recognition

The College completed the mandatory 5-year Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) recognition self-evaluation in December 2023. The self-evaluation includes all of the standards found in four categories: 1) Academic, 2) Student Services/Academic Support, 3) Finance/Facilities, and 4) Institutional Research/Reporting. In October 2024, ICCB conducted the ICCB Recognition visit. The College is awaiting the results of the self-evaluation and visit.

Program Accreditation & Certification

Table 1. Program Accreditations and Certifications

Program	Certification or Licensure Examination	Credentials obtained upon completion of examination	Credentialing or Accrediting Body/bodies	Currently Accredited/ Seeking Accreditation
All Nursing, Allied Health, and Career and Technology programs			Higher Learning Commission	
			Illinois Community College Board	
Practical Nursing, Associate Degree Nursing	Practical Nursing - National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-PN)	Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	Illinois State Board of Nursing/ Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation	PN -Accredited
	Associate Degree Nursing- National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN)	Registered Nurse (RN)	Accreditation Commission on Education in Nursing	ADN - Accredited
Certified Nursing Assistant	State of Illinois Nurse Aide Competency Examination	Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	Illinois Department of Public Health	N/A
Medical Assistant	National Certified Medical Assistant Examination	National Certified Medical Assistant (NCMA)	National Center for Competency Testing	Seeking
Medical Coding Specialist	Certified Coding and Billing Specialist examination (CBCS)	Certified Coding and Billing Specialist (CBCS)	National Healthcare Association	Seeking
Phlebotomy	National Certified Phlebotomy Technician examination	National Certified Phlebotomy Technician (NCPT)	National Center for Competency Testing	N/A
Occupational Therapy Assistant	National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) examination	Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA)	Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation	Accredited
			Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education of the American Occupational Therapy Association	
			National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT)	
Emergency Medical Technician (coursework; no program)	National Registry Emergency Medical Technician cognitive examination and state approved psychomotor examination	Emergency Medical Technician - Basic (EMT-B)	Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)	N/A
			National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT)	
Cosmetology Nail Technician	Pre-Graduation Licensed Cosmetology Exam	Illinois Licensed Cosmetologist	Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR)	N/A
Truck Driving	Commercial Driver's License written and skills exam	Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)	N/A
Automotive Technology	(Not required in Illinois) but the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence	ASE certification	National Institute for Automotive Excellence	Seeking
Welding	American Welding Society certification	AWS certifications	American Welding Society	N/A

Allied Health Programs

Both the Practical Nursing (PN) and Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) programs at Shawnee Community College (SCC) remain accredited through the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). Both programs achieved accreditation on October 7, 2022 and is scheduled for the next review in 2027. SCC's PN program remains the only ACEN-accredited PN program in Southernmost Illinois. Annual accreditation fees are projected at \$6200 per year over the next five years, barring to fee structure changes (updated in FY25).

Staffing remains a challenge, as the department continues to recruit a Simulation Coordinator/ Student Support position (G1O2SB). The PATH grant-funded position has yet to be filled. This position will be reviewed and other options may benefit the program more, such as an additional full-time tutor, as the program only has a part-time tutor as of Fall 2024.

Following the dissolution of the Southern Illinois Collegiate Common Market (SICCM), SCC successfully assumed full responsibility for the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program. Accreditation was successfully transferred and all necessary facility renovations were completed in July 2024. The first OTA cohort under SCC officially began in August 2024 (G1O2ST).

In 2024, SCC began laying the groundwork for a full Emergency Medical Services (EMS) pathway leading to Paramedicine. Shawnee Community College successfully implemented a non-credit Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) course as part of a targeted Workforce Training initiative, funded through a Non-credit Workforce Training grant. This course was designed as a bridge to the credit-bearing EMT program, with intentional outreach to students aged 16 and older who had not yet earned a high school diploma, including those enrolled in Adult Education programs. This initiative supported Strategic Objectives G1O2SV and G2O3SB by increasing early entry points into healthcare careers and providing stackable, skill-based training to underserved populations. Planning also included initiating the hiring process for a dedicated EMS Coordinator, to begin in Spring 2025. This role will oversee the transition of the current EMT-Basic course into a formally recognized EMT program through ICCB, and lead the development of a full Paramedicine curriculum. The EMS Coordinator will also design continuing education and workforce development courses such as Emergency Vehicle Operation (EVOC), Advanced Life Support, and Pediatric Advanced Life Support. To support this initiative, the Allied Health department applied for and received a \$300,000 grant in late 2024 (G1O2SF).

Plans for a Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT) AAS program have been temporarily paused, as the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management (CAHIIM) transitions to Competency-Based Education (CBE) requirements by 2026. SCC intends to work with the internal curriculum developer and explore engaging a consultant to design a CAHIIM-aligned curriculum that meets evolving national standards.

Development of a Respiratory Therapy (RT) program is also underway. The Dean of Allied Health and Department Chair initiated contact with the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) in late 2024 and plan to submit a formal Letter of Intent in Fall 2025. Program planning is progressing in alignment with the CoARC accreditation timeline and requirements.

Several new short-term health science programs were developed in late 2024 to respond to regional workforce needs:

- The Electrocardiography (EKG) program was developed and approved in Fall 2024.
- Patient Care Technician (PCT) and Clinical Health Specialist certificates are in development and will be submitted to ICCB in Spring 2025. These programs are designed to complement existing CNA, Phlebotomy, and EKG offerings and provide stackable credentials that support direct-to-work entry and further academic progression.

While the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Phlebotomy, and Emergency Medical Technician-Basic (EMT-B) programs are not accredited by a national accrediting body, they are fully aligned with state and industry standards. CNA and EMT-B are regulated by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and while phlebotomy certification is not required, it is encouraged to meet IDPH competency standards and enhance employability.

CTE Programs

The Cosmetology Program provides a one-year certificate credentialed through the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR). The 50-hour semester program gives students the skills needed upon completion to successfully pass the IDFPR Cosmetology Examination. Passage of the exam is required for licensure by the State of Illinois. The Cosmetology Instructor Training program is designed to provide experienced licensed cosmetologists with the required hours (24 minimum), skills and knowledge needed to become a licensed instructor. Upon completion of the program, the student must pass the IDFPR Cosmetology Instructor exam.

The Truck Driving Program is designed to familiarize the student with all aspects of safe tractor trailer operation and with completion of the internship, provides supervised over the road driving experience. Upon completion of the 16-credit hour/450 contact hour course, students will be prepared to take the state of Illinois Commercial Driver's License (CDL) exam. The exam encompasses a pretest that identifies components of the equipment. The driving exam tests the students on operating the truck (Manual or automatic transmission) on the roadways. The CDL exam and test is administered by the State of Illinois and the Program adheres to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). Plans for this program include offering a non-credit hour course to businesses for employee training in a condensed period of time this summer through the ICCB Non-Credit Workforce Training Initiative Grant (G1O2SA). If successful, we will discuss ways to continue to offer this through our Workforce Development office. A non-credit hour "fast track" course is also available on a limited basis to employers and HCCTP students that includes the pretest curriculum and 160 hours of training that prepares the student for the CDL exam. The fast-track course was originally offered with grant proceeds but will continue with incumbent worker funding.

The Automotive Technology Program offers less than one-year certificates in auto body and automotive maintenance. The Automotive Technician Assistant one year certificate and Automotive Technology AAS degree provide the student with the knowledge and skills for employment as an automotive technician assistant, line technician, diagnostic technician factory representative or factory technician. No formal accreditation is required in Illinois but programs can align to standards set forth by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). Such alignment with ASE standards and recognition by the ASE is beneficial to the Program and students as it is widely recognized within the industry. SCC is working toward ASE accreditation and recognition. Our instructor is in the process of becoming a has passed the required tests to become a credentialed instructor through the ASE. The Equipment and

program standards were upgraded in 2023 and 2024 to align with the ASE accreditation (G1O2SC) The entire automotive lab was upgraded in summer 2023 for new paint and flooring. Individual student tool kits were purchased to mirror approved tool lists set forth by the ASE. In Fall 24 and continuing in SP25, the AUT Advisory Board made the necessary approvals of the AUT TECH course task lists. The ASE application process will begin in SU25.

Approval of the Welding as a Program of Study by the ICCB in June 2023, allowed Perkins Funds to use for equipment upgrades and purchases. Welding programs do not have to be approved by an accrediting body but SCC is striving to meet American Welding Society standards. This includes significant equipment purchases made in 2023 and spring of 2024. Several state and federal grants have been used for equipment purchases. (G1O2SP)

Actions and Recommendations

- Work with ED of PI&M and ED of HR on a recruitment strategy for the open nursing faculty position and simulation coordinator position. (G1O2SB)
- Implement the first non-credit hour offering to businesses for employee training in a condensed period of time for Truck Driving. (G1O2SA)
- Begin the ASE application process and submission process in Summer 2025. (G1O2SC)
- Begin implementing CBE instruction in WEL for FA25. (G1O2SP)
- Submit a Letter of Intent to CoARC by Fall 2025 to initiate accreditation for the Respiratory Therapy program. (G1O2SU)
- Continue internal planning and timeline alignment for Respiratory Therapy program development per CoARC provisional accreditation requirements. (G1O2SU)
- Hire an EMS Coordinator by Spring 2025 to lead development of the Paramedicine program and oversee EMS curriculum expansion. (G1O2SU)
- Transition the EMT-B course to a full ICCB-recognized EMS program, and initiate curriculum development for Paramedicine. (G1O2SU)
- Develop and implement EMS workforce development courses such as ACLS, PALS, and EVOC to meet regional training needs. (G1O2SU)
- Engage a consultant or hire a HIT Director to lead the development of the RHIT AAS degree program in alignment with CAHIIM standards. (G1O2SL)
- Align RHIT curriculum development with CAHIIM's Competency-Based Education (CBE) model ahead of the 2026 implementation requirement. (G1O2SL)
- Use advisory committee and employer feedback to develop and submit new short-term healthcare certificates aligned with regional needs. (G1O2SF)
- Finalize program proposals for Patient Care Technician and Clinical Health Specialist certificates, with submission to ICCB by Spring 2025. (G1O2SF)