



Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

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Dr. Sheila Ruhland
President
Moraine Park Technical College
235 N. National Ave.
Fond du Lac, WI 54936-1940

Dear President Ruhland:

This letter is accompanied by a copy of the Additional Location Confirmation Report completed following the **MPTC Jackson Regional Center** location visit to Moraine Park Technical College. As reported, the additional location conforms to the description provided by Moraine Park Technical College and no further monitoring is required.

Within the Additional Location Confirmation Report, you will find brief comments on degree offerings, human and physical resources, and instructional resources. I encourage you to consider these comments as advice and suggestions for continued improvement of the additional location.

Thank you again for your flexibility and hospitality in arranging the Additional Location Confirmation Visit, which fulfills federal regulations, related to institutional change. As indicated in the Commission policy, completion of the visit and fulfillment of the requirement will be noted in your institution's history record, and the completed report will be included in your institution's permanent file.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the Additional Location Confirmation Visit or its report, please feel free to contact Pat Newton-Curran. (800-621-7440 ext. 146 or pnewton@hlcommission.org)

Sincerely,

Higher Learning Commission

Enclosure

Additional Location Confirmation Visit Report Form

Name of Institution: Moraine Park Technical College

Name/Address of Additional Location:

MPTC Jackson Regional Center
N173 W21150-60 Northwest Passage Way, Jackson, WI 53037

Date of Visit: Tuesday, June 17, 2014

Visitor: Dr. Joyce Natzke

Compare the written description of the location (provided in the institution's change request, the Commission's response, and/or the team report) with the actual location and answer the following questions. Document findings for each item, and indicate the institution's strengths and/or opportunities for improvement in controlling and delivering degree programs off campus.

1. Is the location at the approved address and are the programs or courses offered as described in the original request? Yes

Comments:

The new location is at the address stipulated on the request forms with this minor correction: The lease agreement reflects the two block area of the building, but the institutional address should be corrected to be N 173 W21150 Northwest Passage Way. An email indicating that correction followed the next day after the location confirmation visit. (See the email to Christine Engel dated June 18, 2014).

Programs offered at this center include courses to contribute to the associates degree in fabrication technology, technical diplomas in welding and metal fabrication and short term certificate in welding as offered through the Department of Economic and Workforce Development. These offerings are documented in orientation materials, academic catalog listings, advising materials, and miscellaneous promotional materials; they are in keeping with the anticipated description offered prior to the visit.

An organized coordinated academic relationship provides availability of additional courses at other locations in Beaver Dam, West Bend, and Fond du Lac. Students are able to access those courses as needed to accommodate individual schedules and completion plans through on site offerings and access through Interactive Video Conference (IVC) located in the Jackson Center classroom/conference room. These efforts align with the overall programming plans for the entire institution at each of its locations.

MPTC Administration recognizes that the current economic and skilled worker demands of the extended community greatly influence the incentives for these programs. They are also keenly aware of the need to regularly assess the

potential changes in those skilled areas, being ready to respond as industry adjusts to those demands. Solid connections to the industrial areas are intentional through advisory boards and relationships with the Department of Economic and Workforce Development so that the programs remain current and up to date in desired skill development. This location and its programs clearly are linked to and support the strategic planning of the institution.

2. Are the instructional resources (e.g. registration, advising, career counseling and placement, library access) as described in the original request and what evidence demonstrates that they are appropriate for the programs offered?
Yes

Comments:

Multipurpose classrooms accommodate a variety of course offerings whether they are general education or specific to the programs offered at this site. Computers are readily available for general academic use or specific programmatic use due to the specialized software available for students. Planning for students to bring their own devices is also evident. The IVC room allows for students to experience the distance connection to other locations and courses plus develop their own skill in using such internet/video communication avenues. This type of course delivery format also allows the institution some efficiency as courses may be run in conjunction with the other sites that may otherwise have to be cancelled due to low enrollment at any one particular site.

Welding and fabrication classrooms are designed to maximize the space and yet to provide as much flexibility as possible in design and arrangement of the equipment. The instructors are pleased with the state of the art equipment they have to teach specific techniques for welding and fabrication because they also are able to simulate a variety of situations in which those skills may be needed. The virtual welder is one of the first ones of its type in the area. It is clear from the description/demonstration of the equipment and materials used to instruct that these programs are indeed training and exposing students to highly technological welding and metal fabrication skill expectations.

Library resources are available through online access; minimal travel distance allows for students to access the library holdings at the main campus or the location in West Bend. Even though the program is technical in nature, students conduct research for background in many of their courses. There is a deliberate research component in the program at several junctures where students must investigate the specific code requirements for different applications. This necessitates access to highly specific code and regulation handbooks. According to the students and instructor, their library access is more than adequate for their needs and for preparing them for the certification requirements in the trade.

Students also reported having good advising access through use of the resources at the center and access to their advisors through electronic means. There are clear plans for regularly scheduled advising sessions with the students, on site or through electronic communicative means. An early alert system is in place to provide focused advising as needed.

3. Are the financial resources for the location as described in the original request and what evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively plans for growth and maintenance of additional locations? Yes

Comments:

According to the administration interviewed, careful review of programmatic needs, location choice and expenditures for equipment, etc. was considered after extensive feedback and involvement with the Department of Economic and Workforce Development.

Per MPTC board minutes, dated January 16, 2013, approval was granted for the lease agreement for the Jackson location which also included not only use of the site, but maintenance costs associated with the general use of the common area. The VP of Finance/Administrative Services noted that at that time their Fund Balance Reserve indicated that financial resources were available and appropriate for use in expanding programs at this site and equipment expenditures. Additional borrowing was necessary, but all within the limitations of the Wisconsin Technical College System guidelines.

As reported to the Wisconsin Technical College System in February, 2013, analysis of program offerings indicated that this location would offer an increase in student capacity specifically addressing the needs of citizens in the southeast section of the MPTC district.

4. Does the evidence confirm that the institution effectively oversees instruction at the additional locations? Yes

Comments:

Appropriate allocation of instructional leadership as assigned to respective dean positions provides professional development, support, and supervision of instruction. Focus is on the dual instructional and learning needs for those students just out of high school and those that are adult students coming from other areas of work experience as described per discussion with the deans. They also noted the professional assistance that is derived from close connections to the "feeder" high schools, both in the preparation of the students and the dual credit options.

There is a high regard for the work of the advisory board to provide insight and advice on the content and instructional approach that is part of the welding and fabrication curriculum.

5. Does evidence confirm that the measures and techniques employed at a location equivalent to those for assessment and evaluation on the main campus? Yes

Comments:

Assessment involves a rotating cyclical committee review of curriculum and instruction of the specific programmatic or content areas and core abilities as adopted by the institution. There is intent to deliver programming consistent with the expectations of the professional manufacturing communities, local business

demands, and other advisory boards, specifically the Department of Economic and Workforce Development. This data is planned to be collected by examination of success/completion rates, graduate performance and employment acquisition, and other scanning reports.

Any of the grants that have been acquired for conducting the welding boot camps and internships require assessment documentation prior to and during those programs in the areas of student knowledge and skill development as well as performance assessment on the job.

6. Does evidence confirm that the institution has appropriately qualified and sufficient staff and faculty in place for the location and that the institution supports and evaluates personnel at the off-campus location? Yes

Comments:

Academic policies and handbooks delineate the expectations of staff and faculty of the institution that is applied at this location as well. Specific training programs allow for the ongoing training and certification of instructors. The instructor described a “cycle of instruction certification” which included the initial training for instruction and ongoing review through supervision, annual reviews, and professional development.

Many of the instructors in the technical field come from similar training programs as students themselves who were then identified as successful in the field and at staying current in the technological advancement for the skill areas. They are then recommended through various networking avenues and approached for consideration in the instructor certification. There is always an effort to have individuals with advanced degrees as instructors; however, the true nature of these programs requires credentials that value the expertise in the skill area and above average historical work performance in the field—and not just a “hobbyist in the field who also has an advanced degree.”

7. Does the evidence confirm that the institution delivers, supports, and manages necessary student services at the additional location? Yes

Comments:

Student services are well planned through replication of the structures currently in practice at the other locations: Professional advisors support students according to clusters of responsibilities and programs and defined posted schedules. Close proximity to the other locations in the institutional structure permits ease of access to the administrators of specific student service areas.

The Office Coordinator at the Jackson Center is well connected and knowledgeable about the appropriate contact for any issues that arise and materials that can provide guidance for the students. Deliberate efforts were made to connect this location with the others through the 4-digit phone communication to facilitate student services. Specific office space has been designed to permit on site advising sessions as needed.

A central welcoming space provides access to the Office Coordinator for the site and then opens into a small, but adequate commons area that has a small kitchen

area for instructor, staff, and student use. Students indicated that they feel the services and space provided for their advising, education, and general needs is more than adequate. According to the students, the Jackson Center is newly designed, clean, safe, and adequate for their educational and personal needs for the limited time that they spend there.

Recruitment and enrollment advising occur at local high schools, companies, and through marketing campaigns. There is a developed orientation at which students learn about the program and its expectations. The course delivery formats are clearly defined in advising materials and students are also coached on their appropriate choices according to their schedules and learning style preferences to the extent possible. Once a student is accepted from that point of application there are four touch points per year to check progress and performance in the program.

Financial aid is administered through the Fond du Lac campus. This team offers completion workshops with an additional one scheduled for the Jackson location this year. Students have access to their portal to review their financial aid packages 24/7. The institution works with students to maximize their employer reimbursement benefits.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Select one of the following statements. Include, as appropriate, summary statement of findings.

Overall, the pattern of this institution's operations at its extended additional locations appears to be adequate, and no further review or monitoring by the Higher Learning Commission is necessary.

It is evident based on this location visit, that MPTC has addressed the major areas of academic programming in order to provide a quality educational experience for the students in the areas of welding and metal fabrication. Variety of programming is offered through boot camps, internships, certificate, diploma, and degree offerings so the students have choices according to their needs, time and employer demands. There is a strong community and constituency connection that has provided the foundational incentive for this location and its programs. Assessment and evaluation of services, academic courses, program outcomes, instruction, and student performance are carefully outlined and planned for execution and decision making. While not all services are physically present full time at this location, access and availability are clearly planned to provide ease of student access--student needs clearly are at the center of any of the service area efforts—and the students have underscored that sentiment during the review.