



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ASSURANCE ARGUMENT

2026 Reaffirmation of Accreditation

SEPTEMBER 2026

REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), an institutional accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, is the primary external means of ensuring quality of higher education. Accreditation is voluntary, peer-based, and focused on quality assurance and continuous improvement. Accreditation by a recognized agency is also necessary for institutions to participate in federal student aid programs and is required for regular membership in the American Indian Higher Education Consortium.

KBOCC has been accredited by HLC since 2013 and follows HLC's Standard Pathway for reaffirmation of accreditation. This pathway generally follows a ten-year cycle and includes ongoing institutional monitoring, evidence of continuous improvement, and periodic comprehensive evaluations.

To reaffirm its accreditation, KBOCC must demonstrate that it meets HLC's four Criteria for Accreditation and applicable federal requirements. The current comprehensive evaluation includes the following components.

ASSURANCE ARGUMENT

The Assurance Argument is KBOCC's evidence-based narrative explaining how the College meets HLC's four Criteria for Accreditation and their Core Components. It describes institutional practices, progress, strengths, and areas of continuing work and connects those claims to supporting evidence.

The submitted Assurance Argument is available at: <https://www.kbocc.edu/accreditation/>

EVIDENCE FILE

The Evidence File contains documentation supporting the claims made in the Assurance Argument. Examples include policies, handbooks, plans, reports, meeting records, assessment findings, program reviews, institutional data, surveys, and other records of institutional practice.

FEDERAL COMPLIANCE FILING

The Federal Compliance Filing demonstrates how KBOCC meets federal requirements reviewed by HLC. It includes policies, procedures, disclosures, and supporting documentation related to areas such as student complaints, credit hours, distance education, consumer information, recruitment, transfer of credit, and Title IV responsibilities.

COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

A five-member peer-review team will visit KBOCC on October 19–20, 2026. During the visit, reviewers will meet with students, employees, administrators, Regents, and community representatives to validate the submitted materials and learn how institutional policies, processes, and commitments operate in practice.

Reviewers are not looking for memorized or identical answers. They are looking for candid, accurate, first-hand examples that demonstrate whether the written Assurance Argument reflects the experiences and practices of the College.

PREPARATION PROCESS

Preparation for the comprehensive evaluation has been an institution-wide process informed by the previous HLC review, institutional change since 2020, strategic planning, assessment, academic program review, student success work, and ongoing governance and operational activity.

Key parts of the process included:

- Criterion teams and a writing team that helped develop and review the narrative.
- An accreditation steering team that supported coordination and preparation.
- Data and evidence support from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.
- Review and input from the Executive Team, Faculty Council, Assessment Committee, Student Success Council, Board of Regents, and other campus groups.
- External review by experienced accreditation professionals.
- Review of policies, committee records, program reviews, assessment findings, surveys, plans, reports, and public information.
- A September 18 mock visit that tested how clearly participants could explain institutional processes, examples, recent changes, strengths, and continuing work.
- Submission and lock of the Assurance Argument, evidence, and Federal Compliance Filing on September 21, 2026.
- Continued campus education and preparation leading to the October 19–20 site visit.

KBOCC'S STORY

Planting Seeds for Seven Generations is the organizing idea of KBOCC's Assurance Argument. It reflects the College's responsibility to make decisions today that sustain educational opportunity, cultural continuity, community well-being, and institutional capacity for those who follow.

Five connected themes appear throughout the assurance argument:

- **Mission is operational.** Anishinaabe culture, language, lifeways, holistic education, and Tribal land grant responsibility shape academic programs, student support, engagement, governance, and planning.
- **Relationships are an institutional resource.** KBOCC's small size, relational support, community partnership, cultural guidance, and cross-functional work allow the College to respond closely to learners and community needs.
- **Academic quality has become more systematic.** Faculty Council authority, assessment, Course Readiness Review, externally informed program review, and investments in teaching and learning strengthen rigor and continuous improvement.
- **Student success is broader than a single federal measure.** KBOCC monitors retention, completion, transfer, and employment while also centering belonging, Mino-Bimaadiziwin, cultural vitality, return after stop-out, and contribution to community.
- **Institutional capacity has grown.** Expanded Land Grant operations, dedicated institutional research, the Student Success Council, the College's new strategic plan (RISE), SEM, stronger financial results, administrative restructuring, and facilities and technology investments create a stronger base for the next cycle.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE THE 2020 REVIEW

- Refreshed the College's mission, vision, and values through a Board-led and stakeholder-informed process, and adopted the College's new strategic plan, *RISE*, establishing a shared framework for future priorities, planning, and improvement.
- Expanded and formalized the College's Land Grant Department, strengthening community education, food sovereignty, environmental stewardship, cultural programming, and Tribal land grant responsibilities in service of the College mission.
- Restored and strengthened academic program review processes.
- Launched the Associate Degree Nursing program and the College's first fully online degree program in Psychology.
- Enrollment more than doubled between AY2020-21 and AY2024-25 through expanded dual enrollment, adult learner outreach, and Native student success initiatives.
- Expanded student success supports while deepening Anishinaabe cultural integration across the institution.
- Strengthened institutional effectiveness, assessment, and student success capacity through the creation of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, dedicated institutional research functions, the Student Success Council, institution-wide assessment processes, and adoption of KBOCC's first Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.
- Improved financial sustainability, increasing the Composite Financial Index from 3.04 to 6.79.

The following sections summarize this story under each of HLC's four Criteria, looking back at KBOCC's progress and established strengths and looking forward to opportunities and continuing work.

CRITERION 1. MISSION

THE INSTITUTION'S MISSION IS CLEAR AND ARTICULATED PUBLICLY; IT GUIDES THE INSTITUTION'S OPERATIONS.

CRITERION SUMMARY

Criterion 1 examines whether KBOCC's mission is clear, public, and operational. KBOCC demonstrates how its Tribal land grant mission guides culturally grounded educational programs, enrollment, holistic learner support, community partnerships, engagement with diverse learners and perspectives, and service to the public good.

KBOCC's mission is not treated only as a published statement. It is reflected in what the College teaches, whom it serves, how it supports students, how it engages the community, and how it plans for future generations. Anishinaabe culture, language, lifeways, sovereignty, and community responsibility provide a foundation for both academic and institutional decision-making.

The College's programs respond to Tribal and regional priorities in areas such as Nursing, Early Childhood Education, Environmental Science, Business, Psychology, Tribal Management, Anishinaabe Studies, and workforce education. Its Tribal land grant work extends this mission through agriculture, food sovereignty, environmental stewardship, community education, and experiential learning.

KBOCC also advances the public good by reducing barriers to education. Open admissions, affordable tuition, dual enrollment, flexible delivery, advising, emergency aid, food access, transportation, technology, counseling, cultural support, and other services help learners participate and persist.

Related Core Components: See 1.A–1.C in Part II for the specific claims and examples supporting Criterion 1.

LOOKING BACK: PROGRESS & STRENGTHS

- Refreshed the College's mission, vision, and values through a Board-led and stakeholder-informed process that explicitly grounded in KBOCC's identity as a Tribal land grant institution and its responsibility to support learners and promote Anishinaabe culture, language, and lifeways, and informed development of the College's new strategic plan, *RISE*.
- Clear evidence that mission is embedded in curriculum, student support, land grant activity, planning, community partnerships, and institutional operations.
- Strong constituent engagement and documented public benefit through cultural revitalization, workforce preparation, community education, and holistic student support.
- A mission-aligned enrollment profile serving Native, first-generation, adult, dual-enrolled, place-bound, and regional learners.

LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES & CONTINUING WORK

- Sustain a regular mission-review practice connected to future strategic planning cycles and continue documenting how mission shapes difficult resource and program decisions.
- Improve measurement of longer-term public good outcomes, including cultural vitality, workforce contribution, community benefit, and post-KBOCC pathways.
- Maintain mission alignment while enrollment, programs, partnerships, and community expectations grow.

CRITERION 2. INTEGRITY: ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

IN FULFILLING ITS MISSION, THE INSTITUTION ACTS WITH INTEGRITY; ITS CONDUCT IS ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE.

CRITERION SUMMARY

Criterion 2 examines institutional integrity, transparency, autonomous governance, academic freedom, and responsible knowledge practices. KBOCC's assurance argument demonstrates these through policies, defined Board, presidential, administrative, and faculty responsibilities, accurate public communication, fair review and appeal processes, research protections, and accountability grounded in Anishinaabe values.

KBOCC understands integrity as more than regulatory compliance. Integrity also includes truth, honesty, respect, relational accountability, cultural responsibility, and stewardship of knowledge. These expectations are expressed in policies, handbooks, codes of conduct, academic processes, governance practices, training, and institutional relationships.

The Board of Regents operates within authority established by the Tribal Charter, Board Bylaws, Board Manual, and Tribal Code. The Board provides policy and fiduciary oversight while delegating daily administration to the President and recognizing faculty authority over academic matters.

KBOCC also supports academic freedom, responsible expression, ethical scholarship, information literacy, research protections, and respect for Indigenous knowledge. The College uses public information, institutional publications, policies, student communications, Board records, and review processes to promote transparency and accountability.

Related Core Components: See 2.A–2.E in Part II for the specific claims and examples supporting Criterion 2.

LOOKING BACK: PROGRESS & STRENGTHS

- Written expectations for students, employees, faculty, administrators, and Regents, reinforced through orientation, training, syllabi, handbooks, and review processes.
- A governance framework that distinguishes Tribal authority, Board authority, presidential responsibility, faculty academic authority, and administrative implementation.
- Anishinaabe values, especially truth and honesty, provide a cultural basis for ethical conduct, transparency, scholarship, and community accountability.
- Faculty and students are supported in responsible inquiry through academic freedom, information literacy, research oversight, appeal processes, and respect for Indigenous knowledge.
- Strengthened governance through updated Board governance documents, Board self-evaluation processes, and ongoing Board development.

LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES & CONTINUING WORK

- Continue consolidating policies, procedures, committee records, and governance documents so employees and the public can locate current information consistently.
- Demonstrate implementation of recently strengthened processes, especially centralized complaint tracking and related communication and training.
- Continue improving the accessibility and consistency of Board records, public information, research guidance, and institutional documentation.
- Strengthen internal guidance related to research, artificial intelligence, information use, and Indigenous knowledge.
- Provide ongoing communication and training when policies or institutional responsibilities change.

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 SUMMARY

Criterion 3 examines program quality, intellectual inquiry, faculty and staff capacity, student support, assessment, program review, and student-success outcomes. KBOCC's assurance argument documents faculty-led curriculum, aligned learning outcomes, oversight across instructional modalities, holistic support, recurring program review, and data-informed work to improve learning, retention, completion, and graduate outcomes.

Faculty Council provides academic oversight for curriculum, credit, learning outcomes, prerequisites, program requirements, and academic standards. KBOCC's educational programs use sequenced curricula, research, laboratories, clinical experiences, internships, projects, capstones, presentations, creative work, and community-engaged learning to develop and assess student knowledge.

The College has strengthened systems for evaluating student learning. Course, program, general education, College Learning, and cocurricular outcomes provide an increasingly connected framework. Assessment Committee and Faculty Council processes support review of findings and decisions about improvement.

Academic program review operates on a recurring four-year cycle that includes departmental self-study, external reviewers, Faculty Council action, Board acceptance, and documented improvement planning. Course Readiness Review provides an additional mechanism for strengthening quality across face-to-face, hybrid, online, and dual-enrollment instruction.

Student support reflects KBOCC's holistic and relational approach. Advising, tutoring, financial aid, library services, disability services, technology, food access, transportation, counseling, cultural advising, emergency aid, and early alert processes help students address academic and nonacademic barriers.

KBOCC monitors retention, credit completion, graduation, transfer, employment, and other outcomes. At the same time, the College recognizes that conventional measures do not fully capture its student-affirmed definition of success, which centers belonging and achieving personal goals for the betterment of self, community, and future generations.

Related Core Components: See 3.A–3.G in Part II for the specific claims and examples supporting Criterion 3.

LOOKING BACK: PROGRESS & STRENGTHS

- Faculty-led curriculum and academic oversight.
- A learning outcomes framework connecting course, program, general education, College Learning, and cocurricular outcomes.
- Academic programs that combine disciplinary rigor with Anishinaabe knowledge and community engagement.
- A recurring program review cycle that includes external reviewers, Faculty Council action, Board acceptance, and improvement plans.
- Restoration and institutionalization of academic program review, including completion of multiple reviews and closure of prior HLC monitoring concerns.
- Course Readiness Review and common expectations across instructional modalities.
- Qualified faculty and staff supported through evaluation and professional development.
- Expanded holistic support and improved learning infrastructure.
- Launch of the Associate Degree Nursing program to address regional workforce needs and expand educational opportunity.
- Establishment of the Student Success Council and Data Team.
- Retention, graduation, and completion indicators have improved in recent years, although KBOCC continues to monitor trends carefully given its small student population and evolving student success initiatives.
- Adoption of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan and Key Enrollment Indicators.
- Stronger coordination among faculty, Student Services, Academic Affairs, OIE, and other student-support areas.

LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES & CONTINUING WORK

- Strengthen direct assessment of College Learning Goals and general education.
- Improve certificate-level assessment participation, reporting, and use of findings.
- Document more consistently how assessment findings result in changes to teaching, curriculum, support, or resources.
- Consistent oversight of adjunct, online, and dual enrollment instruction.
- Improve graduate, transfer, employment, earnings, and community-contribution tracking.
- Use the new Strategic Enrollment Management Plan and Key Enrollment Indicators to demonstrate sustained improvement over time.
- Distinguish outcomes that predate the SEM Plan from results that can reasonably be attributed to its implementation.
- Preserve KBOCC's broader, culturally grounded definition of student success while improving conventional outcome reporting.
- Continue evaluating the effectiveness and coordination of student support services.

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.

CRITERION SUMMARY

Criterion 4 examines institutional structures, resources, sustainability, and planning. KBOCC’s assurance argument documents stronger governance, organization, finances, institutional research, facilities, technology, and integrated planning since 2020, while acknowledging that newer plans and systems require sustained implementation and evidence of results.

KBOCC has strengthened its administrative structure through organizational change, establishment of the Executive Team, clarification of divisional responsibilities, and expanded cross-divisional coordination. Faculty Council, the Assessment Committee, Student Success Council, Finance Committee, Anishinaabe Advisory Committee, and other groups contribute to institutional decision-making and shared governance.

The establishment of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness in 2024 and the addition of dedicated institutional research capacity have strengthened assessment, accreditation, planning, reporting, and data use. KBOCC increasingly uses institutional data, surveys, assessment, program review, student success findings, financial information, and external sources to inform decisions.

The College’s financial position has improved, supported by balanced budgeting, stronger reserves and net position, annual audits, Board oversight, Finance Committee review, and diversified funding. Investments in personnel, facilities, technology, Nursing, STEM, Arts, Agriculture, and student support reflect mission and institutional priorities.

Planning has become more integrated through close-out of the 2020–2025 Strategic Plan, adoption of the College’s new strategic plan, RISE, adoption of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, Facilities Master Plan work, technology planning, and development of the Institutional Effectiveness Framework.

Related Core Components: See 4.A–4.C in Part II for the specific claims and examples supporting Criterion 4.

LOOKING BACK: PROGRESS & STRENGTHS

- A clearer administrative structure and stronger cross-divisional coordination.
- Establishment of the Executive Team and clarified divisional leadership.
- Establishment of OIE with dedicated assessment and institutional research capacity.
- Faculty Council authority over curriculum and academic standards.

- Cross-functional structures such as the Student Success Council, Assessment Committee, and Finance Committee.
- Strong financial stewardship demonstrated through six consecutive years of improvement in the Composite Financial Index (CFI), stronger reserves, clean audits, and balanced budgeting.
- Diversified institutional revenues and grant support.
- Board-approved strategic plan (RISE) and institution-level plans that provide shared direction.
- Increased use of institutional and external data.
- Investments in faculty, staff, learning spaces, technology, student services, Nursing, STEM, Arts, and Agriculture.
- Growing integration of assessment, enrollment, finances, facilities, technology, operations, and stakeholder evidence.

LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES & CONTINUING WORK

- Move recently approved plans from development and approval into sustained implementation.
- Demonstrate annual review, documented action, and evidence of results.
- Strengthen shared governance through committee charges, minutes, communication, records, and role clarity.
- Complete alignment among the College's new strategic plan (RISE), SEM Plan, facilities, technology, budgeting, division planning, and unit planning.
- Establish an institutional effectiveness framework as an enduring institutional practice rather than an accreditation-specific activity.
- Manage capacity pressures created by enrollment growth, staffing needs, space constraints, technology, and reliance on time-limited grants.
- Continue work on reserve targets, grant transitions, and long-term sustainability.
- Strengthen documentation of how institutional evidence influences resource-allocation decisions.
- Ensure that recently established administrative and shared-governance structures remain effective through leadership and staffing transitions.

CORE CLAIMS AND EXAMPLES BY CORE COMPONENT

The Core Components below identify the principal claims and examples included in KBOCC's submitted Assurance Argument. Review the components most closely connected to your role or experience. You do not need to prepare an example for every Core Component.

Before the site visit, identify two or three examples you know firsthand. For each example, consider:

What do we have? *Name the policy, process, program, service, committee, resource, or practice.*

How do we use or follow it? *Describe what happens in practice.*

How do we know? *Identify relevant data, assessment findings, feedback, review results, observations, or documented changes.*

Why does it matter? *Connect the example to students, learning, KBOCC's mission, Anishinaabe values, community needs, quality, or stewardship.*

What comes next? *If the work is new or developing, explain its current status and next step.*

Use examples from your own experience. Additional examples do not need to appear in the Assurance Argument, but they should be accurate, current, and within your direct knowledge.

Example: What is KBOCC doing to reduce barriers and meet learner needs? (Core Component 3.D)

What do we have?	KBOCC provides a variety of student supports, including transportation assistance, emergency aid, advising, tutoring, counseling, and childcare initiatives designed to reduce barriers to participation and success.
How do we use or follow it?	When students identify barriers that make it difficult to attend classes or remain enrolled, Student Services works to connect them with available resources and support. For example, the College developed a shared transportation program to assist students who have difficulty getting to campus and pursued additional funding to expand childcare options for student parents.
How do we know?	Student surveys, community needs assessments, and student feedback have consistently identified transportation and childcare as barriers for some learners. The College uses that information to guide decisions and develop support services that respond to student needs.
Why does it matter?	These supports help students overcome challenges that might otherwise prevent them from attending classes, persisting from semester to semester, or completing their educational goals. They also reflect KBOCC's commitment to holistic education and student success.
What comes next?	The College continues to evaluate student needs and seek opportunities to strengthen support services, including childcare, transportation, and other resources that help students succeed.

CRITERION 1. MISSION

1.A MISSION ALIGNMENT

Core claim: KBOCC's educational programs, enrollment profile, and operations align with its public mission.

Key examples:

- The mission identifies KBOCC as a Tribal land grant institution committed to supporting all learners and promoting Anishinaabe culture, language, and lifeways.
- The mission and vision were reviewed through strategic planning and adopted by the Board of Regents in 2024.
- The new strategic plan, *RISE*, carries the mission forward through relationships, innovation, stewardship, and empowered learners.
- Anishinaabe Awareness requirements, College Learning Goals, cultural integration expectations, and dedicated Anishinaabe Studies, Anishinaabe Art, and Tribal Management programs embed the mission in learning.
- Nursing, Environmental Science, Early Childhood Education, Psychology, Business, and workforce programs respond to Tribal and regional needs.
- KBOCC serves Native, first-generation, adult, dual enrolled, rural, and place-bound learners.
- Surveys and community input affirm belonging, holistic development, cultural identity, and community responsiveness as institutional priorities.

1.B MISSION AND PUBLIC GOOD

Core claim: KBOCC advances the public good through Tribal responsibility, education, culture, workforce development, land grant activity, and community well-being.

Key examples:

- The Tribal Charter and Board structure connect education with sovereignty and self-determination.
- Academic and workforce programs respond to documented community and employment needs.
- Cultural education, Ojibwe language access, and community programming support cultural continuity.
- The Arts and Agriculture Center, community gardens, food sovereignty education, manoomin restoration, and plant distribution advance land-grant responsibilities.
- Partnerships with KBIC departments, schools, employers, universities, and community organizations extend public impact.
- Emergency aid, food, transportation, counseling, cultural advising, and academic support reduce barriers.
- Surveys, stakeholder forums, and planning activities help KBOCC identify and respond to community priorities.

1.C MISSION AND DIVERSITY OF SOCIETY

Core claim: KBOCC prepares learners for civic and cultural responsibility and engages diverse people, perspectives, and knowledge systems.

Key examples:

- College Learning Goals address Anishinaabe ways of knowing, communication, ethical responsibility, and community-minded action.

- General education and program curricula engage cultural, intellectual, scientific, and disciplinary perspectives.
- Courses connect Western academic disciplines with Anishinaabe relational, ecological, oral, and community-based knowledge.
- Service, internships, community projects, cultural activities, and AIHEC participation support civic and cocurricular learning.
- Open admissions, affordability, dual enrollment, flexible delivery, disability support, transportation, technology, and emergency assistance expand access.
- Conduct, nondiscrimination, academic freedom, and relationship practices support respectful engagement.

CRITERION 2. INTEGRITY: ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

2.A INTEGRITY

Core claim: Regents, administrators, faculty, staff, and students follow established policies and ethical expectations.

Key examples:

- The Student Code of Conduct, academic integrity provisions, Employee Handbook, Faculty Guidebook, Board ethics requirements, and institutional policies.
- Orientation, onboarding, syllabi, FERPA training, Title IX training, and professional development.
- Board minutes documenting discussion, amendments, motions, votes, and policy action.
- Financial approvals, reconciliations, audits, internal controls, and separation of duties.
- Faculty Council, academic appeals, satisfactory academic progress appeals, curriculum review, grading, and degree-completion processes.
- The Seven Grandfather Teachings, particularly Debwewin and Gwayakwaadiziwin, connect truth and honesty with scholarship and community accountability.

2.B TRANSPARENCY

Core claim: KBOCC presents its programs, requirements, services, and educational experience accurately and completely.

Key examples:

- The College website, catalog, program pages, tuition and fee information, consumer-information pages, handbooks, and forms.
- Program and degree requirements grounded in approved curriculum.
- Communication with students through recruitment, admission, financial aid, advising, registration, Canvas, degree progress, graduation, and transfer.
- Public accreditation, campus safety, Title IX, FERPA, financial aid, and student-rights information.
- Marketing and Communications capacity, institutional reports, periodic reviews, and correction processes.
- Board notices, agendas, minutes, and significant actions.

2.C BOARD GOVERNANCE

Core claim: The Board of Regents is appropriately constituted, autonomous, and focused on KBOCC's best interests.

Key examples:

- KBIC Tribal Code, Tribal Charter, Board Bylaws, and Board Manual define Board authority.

- Board oversight of budgets, audits, investments, contracts, policies, staffing structures, academic programs, and major expenditures.
- Delegation of daily administration to the President.
- Recognition of Faculty Council authority over academic matters.
- Conflict-of-interest and ethics expectations.
- The mission-grounded 2025 presidential search.
- The 2026 Board self-evaluation and governance-development priorities.

2.D ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Core claim: KBOCC protects academic freedom and responsible expression as essential to teaching, learning, and inquiry.

Key examples:

- Academic freedom expectations in the catalog, Faculty Guidebook, Student Handbook, Employee Handbook, and academic processes.
- Faculty selection of instructional materials, assignments, teaching methods, and discussion approaches within approved curriculum.
- Student research, writing, discussion, presentations, experiential learning, and examination of community issues.
- Engagement with Anishinaabe and Western knowledge systems and differing interpretations.
- Grievance, review, and appeal procedures that protect fairness while maintaining educational and conduct expectations.

2.E KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION DISCOVERY AND APPLICATION

Core claim: KBOCC establishes policies, instructional expectations, and oversight processes to ensure that knowledge is acquired, created, shared, and applied responsibly, with respect for academic integrity, research participants, and Indigenous knowledge.

Key examples:

- Academic integrity policies addressing plagiarism, accurate attribution, and responsible representation of sources and findings.
- Generative artificial intelligence guidance supporting responsible information use.
- General Education outcomes for information literacy and ethical responsibility, reinforced through coursework and assessment.
- Library services, tutoring, academic coaching, and faculty mentoring that help students evaluate, synthesize, and cite information.
- Institutional Review Board review of research involving human participants.
- Indigenous knowledge stewardship emphasizing cultural context, community relationships, appropriate attribution, and cultural protocols.
- Gwayakwaadiziwin (honesty) as a foundation for ethical scholarship and relational accountability.

CRITERION 3. TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

3.A EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Core claim: KBOCC's educational programs demonstrate appropriate content, rigor, learning goals, credit expectations, and curricular structure.

Key examples:

- Published associate-degree and certificate requirements, transfer pathways, and workforce standards.
- Alignment among course, program, general education, College Learning, and cocurricular outcomes.
- Faculty Council review of courses, programs, prerequisites, credits, outcomes, and academic standards.
- Sequenced curricula, gateway courses, internships, clinical experiences, laboratories, and capstones.
- Credit-hour and instructional-modality expectations.
- Course Readiness Review and common learning outcomes across modalities.
- Cultural-integration expectations and faculty resources.

3.B EXERCISE OF INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY

Core claim: Students collect, analyze, communicate, create, and apply knowledge across disciplines and learning environments.

Key examples:

- Research, writing, presentations, quantitative work, laboratories, simulations, field studies, creative work, internships, and capstones.
- General education in communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, scientific inquiry, information literacy, and ethical responsibility.
- Environmental Science research, Nursing simulations and clinical experiences, Business projects, Anishinaabe Studies community work, and land-grant learning.
- Integration of disciplinary methods with Anishinaabe relational, ecological, oral, cultural, and community-based knowledge.
- Community-engaged inquiry connected to Tribal and regional priorities.

3.C SUFFICIENCY OF FACULTY AND STAFF

Core claim: KBOCC maintains qualified personnel and uses staffing, evaluation, and professional development to support educational quality.

Key examples:

- Review of staffing levels in relation to enrollment, program growth, modality, and specialized requirements.
- Verification of faculty qualifications through credentials or tested and proven experience.
- Appropriate verification of cultural knowledge and expertise.
- Faculty evaluation using student feedback, self-review, peer review, and supervisory review, as applicable.
- Staffing investments in Nursing, Health Science, student success, assessment, and institutional research.
- Professional development planning, conferences, tuition support, institutional training, and OLC participation.
- Qualification review and academic oversight of dual enrollment instructors.

3.D SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING AND RESOURCES FOR TEACHING

Core claim: KBOCC provides coordinated academic and student support designed to meet learner needs and reduce barriers.

Key examples:

- Academic advising, tutoring, coaching, disability services, financial aid, library services, career support, and the Student Success Center.
- Emergency aid, meals, food access, transportation, counseling, cultural advising, wellness support, and early learning resources.
- Support for dual-enrolled, adult, first-generation, Native, online, rural, and returning learners.
- Early alert, Jenzabar Retention, faculty referrals, and cross-functional coordination.
- Canvas, laboratories, classrooms, library resources, and course design support: Dean of Academic Affairs, Teaching & Learning Specialist, Assessment & Curriculum Coordinator
- Faculty development activities
- Student surveys and success data used to improve communication, services, scheduling, and access.

3.E ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Core claim: KBOCC evaluates student learning at multiple levels and uses assessment findings for improvement.

Key examples:

- Course, program, general education, College Learning, and cocurricular outcomes.
- Assessment Committee and Faculty Council responsibilities.
- Course-level assessment and annual program-assessment reporting.
- Redesigned general education assessment.
- Direct assessment of College Learning Goals through an institutional rotation.
- A Cocurricular Assessment Framework connected to College Learning Goals.
- Use of findings to revise curriculum, assignments, sequencing, support, and assessment processes.
- Departmental and institutional reports documenting findings and planned actions.

3.F PROGRAM REVIEW

Core claim: KBOCC uses systematic academic program review to evaluate quality, relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability.

Key examples:

- A recurring four-year review cycle.
- Departmental self-study supported by institutional and program evidence.
- External reviewers with disciplinary or professional expertise.
- Faculty Council review and action.
- Board acceptance of completed reviews.
- Documented recommendations, improvement plans, and follow-up.
- Use of findings to inform curriculum, staffing, equipment, facilities, scheduling, recruitment, and program direction.
- Departmental and institutional reports documenting findings and planned actions.

3.G STUDENT SUCCESS OUTCOMES

Core claim: KBOCC defines, monitors, and improves student success in ways that reflect both institutional expectations and its Tribal mission.

Key examples:

- A student-affirmed definition centered on belonging and achieving personal goals for the betterment of self, community, and future generations.
- Recognition that conventional measures do not fully capture Mino-Bimaadiziwin, cultural vitality, belonging, and contribution to community.
- Monitoring of retention, credit completion, graduation, transfer, employment, and other outcomes.
- Fall-to-fall retention of 70% for the Fall 2024 cohort.
- A 150% graduation rate of 38% for the Fall 2022 cohort.
- Twenty-nine credentials awarded to 26 students during 2024–25.
- The Student Success Council and Data Team.
- The Strategic Enrollment Management Plan and Key Enrollment Indicators.
- Early alert, advising, emergency support, technology, meals, transportation, cultural support, and wellness investments.
- Alumni surveys and graduate outcomes work.

CRITERION 4. SUSTAINABILITY: INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, RESOURCES, AND PLANNING

4.A EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

Core claim: KBOCC's administrative and governance structures support collaboration, shared governance, data use, and institutional engagement for decision-making.

Key examples:

- Defined responsibilities for the Board, President, Executive Team, divisions, Faculty Council, committees, and administrative offices.
- The January 2026 reorganization into distinct divisions: Academic Affairs, Student Services, Campus Operations, and Community Programs.
- Faculty Council authority over curriculum and academic standards.
- The Assessment Committee, Student Success Council, Finance Committee, Anishinaabe Advisory Committee, and other institutional groups.
- OIE support for assessment, accreditation, institutional research, planning, and reporting.
- Use of IPEDS, AIHEC data, StudentTracker, Lightcast, surveys, dashboards, assessment, and program review.
- Engagement of students, employees, alumni, community representatives, Tribal citizens, and partners.
- Shared-governance documentation and continuing work on committee charges, records, communication, and responsibilities.

4.B RESOURCE BASE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Core claim: KBOCC's financial, human, physical, and technological resources support current operations and long-term mission fulfillment.

Key examples:

- Balanced budgeting, annual audits, financial controls, Board oversight, and Finance Committee review.
- Improvement in the Composite Financial Index from 3.04 in 2019–20 to 6.79 in 2024–25.
- Growth in reserves and net position.

- Support from tuition, Tribal funding, federal appropriations, land grant funds, grants, and partnerships.
- Investments in Nursing, student success, assessment, institutional research, Marketing and Communications, and other priorities.
- STEM, Nursing, Arts, Agriculture, and student support facilities.
- Canvas, student laptops, classroom technology, identity management, cybersecurity, and regional technology support.
- Facilities Master Plan work.
- Risk management through audits, insurance, internal controls, grant oversight, and planning for time-limited funding.

4.C PLANNING FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Core claim: KBOCC's planning increasingly integrates mission, evidence, finances, learning, operations, and continuous improvement.

Key examples:

- “Planting Seeds for Seven Generations” as a planning and stewardship principle.
- Close-out and reflection on the 2020–2025 Strategic Plan.
- Development and Board approval of the College’s new strategic plan, *RISE*.
- Development and Board approval of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.
- Engagement of employees, students, Regents, Tribal and community representatives, alumni, and partners.
- Use of surveys, SOAR analysis, environmental scanning, institutional data, assessment, program review, and student-success evidence.
- Connections among the new strategic plan (*RISE*), SEM, facilities, technology, budgeting, division plans, unit plans, and operational work plans.
- Development of an institutional effectiveness framework connecting goals, outcomes, indicators, responsibilities, budgets, review, and action.
- Finance Committee processes connecting institutional priorities with budget requests and available resources.
- Annual reporting and review intended to support accountability and continuous improvement.