

# INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING

EAP Form 1.10 (Rev. 11/18)



STATE OF WISCONSIN  
EDUCATIONAL APPROVAL PROGRAM  
P.O. Box 8366  
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(608) 266-1996

The Educational Approval Program (EAP) is a postsecondary education agency that employs a regulatory model focused not only on compliance, but also institutional effectiveness. To facilitate an environment in which schools seek to be effective organizations that improve over time, the EAP requires schools to submit evidence that appropriate planning has been conducted. Although similar to a strategic or business plan, this information will enable the EAP and school officials to engage in a dialogue over time about the effectiveness and future of the school.

Schools that already have some type of strategic or business plan (e.g., schools that have either a corporate or accreditation plan) must adapt these documents to the following requirements and focus on Wisconsin operations and students. The EAP does not expect any school to divulge any sensitive, proprietary business information. The information must address the five elements identified below and provide the information requested.

## I. SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of School:

Rockford Career College

## II. PLANNING ELEMENTS

**A. MISSION.** Describe your school's mission and vision, which identifies its purpose and its core values.

The mission of Rockford Career College (RCC) is to educate our students with a relevant, well-rounded occupational education, provide employers with well-prepared graduates, and serve our community partners.

**B. MARKET.** Discuss the nature of your school and the business in which it is engaged. Describe who your existing and/or potential customers are and what motivates them to enroll in your school. Explain how you let these customers know you are in business. Finally, identify who your competitors are and how you are different from them.

RCC customers generally come from a 60-mile radius of Rockford, Illinois though we draw students from local areas like Belvedere, Freeport, Loves Park, and Machesney Park. Our customers are motivated to enroll in our programs because they want to pursue a career in the medical assisting, business administration, paralegal, or veterinary technician fields.

We market RCC through all types of channels: news, television, radio, ads, and the Internet, but most times our biggest source is word of mouth from satisfied customers and employers.

RCC's competition exists from community colleges such as Rock Valley Community College and proprietary schools such as Rasmussen.

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**C. MANAGEMENT.** Describe your management team and how it functions to lead, administer and position the school. If your school has advisory boards, describe how the school uses them for program and school improvement.

RCC leadership council is comprised of the Campus President, Academic Dean, Director of Admissions, Director of Financial Aid, Director of Career Services, Director of Student Services, Registrar, and we have three Program Chairs that report to the Dean that oversee programs in Vet Tech, Trades, and Allied Health.

Management decisions are made by the leadership council that meets weekly. The leadership council monitors the school's attainment of business objectives and makes decisions that are executed within the departments. Each department runs a regular meeting to monitor its particular objectives and to communicate to/from the operations team. The leadership council also manages student outcomes, attendance, faculty development, staff development, and ensure that all students have an outstanding academic experience, while ensuring that we honor the mission of the college.

In addition, each program maintains a Program Advisory Committee that meets one to two times per year, and is composed of industry experts not employed by the school. They examine all aspects of our programs.

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**D. SWOT ANALYSIS.** Identify your school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Based on the results of this SWOT analysis, provide the following:

- 3 to 5 goals for strengths/weaknesses and how they will be addressed by your school.
- 3 to 5 goals for opportunities/threats and how they will be addressed by your school.

The goals should have specific objectives, defined results, a timeline for completion and metrics (some type of evaluation or measurement) by which the institution can evaluate/measure their success. In developing its goals, the school may wish to refer to the Elements of Effective Institutions graphic that is included on the back page of this form.

#### Strengths

RCC has strong graduation and retention rates. Comparing us to other similar schools in Illinois, the average graduation rate is 35%, and according to the National System for Education Statistics, our graduate rate is 35%, on par with other Illinois schools in the same category. Looking at Retention rates, RCC retention rate according to the National System for Education Statistics was 67% and the average among comparable Illinois institutions was 64%. The most recent national average retention rate for similar schools is 66%. What was once a weakness, retention and graduation rates, is now are of strength for the college.

Student Support Services has never been better than what is currently at the college. RCC supports its students many ways including individual success plans when students are failing, tutoring work-shops, weekly technology check-ins, online student support, survival job support, and much more.

#### Weaknesses:

1. Improve Placement Rates in all programs to 70% or better by program. With our improved graduates, we have doubled, even tripled graduate volume in some of our programs. We are currently tracking 3 programs (Medical Assisting Diploma, Medical Office Billing and Coding Diploma, and Paralegal Diploma that have current placement rates around 56%. We need to increase the number of employer relationships and work orders to account for the higher number of graduates we are seeing across these programs and all of our programs.

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#### **D. SWOT ANALYSIS** *(continued)*

##### **Opportunities:**

1. **New Program Development.** We successfully launched a Welding and Electrical Technician program in May 2016, then our Computer Numeric Control program in September 2016. We did this as we saw local demand for quality trades professionals. We also launched our AAS Construction Management program in 2016, and most recently, we have launched a new diploma HVAC program as we have seen local demand for this. Currently, we have additional programs approved and ready to rollout in 2018/2019 in Dental Assisting, Surgical Technology, and Sonography. We have visited with local employers and see that there are definitely demands for trained workers in these fields.

2. **Career College Sector:** Our sector of education continues to be under scrutiny and we are held to much higher standards than many non-profits, community colleges, and state universities. However, we don't look at this as a threat, we look at this as opportunity to continuously improve, and to continuously provide great experiences and great results.

##### **Threats**

1. **Gainful Employment:** RCC has forged ahead with our plans to be compliant with new gainful employment laws. The college reduced tuition, almost near 40% and changed program models to diploma/degree options so students have more choices. While we don't know for sure if gainful employment regulations will be completely rolled back, we need to stay prepared in case they are still in play.

2. **Community Colleges.** In Rockford, IL many times we go to head-to-head against the local Community College, and have been advised that our local community college is rolling out similar

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**E. FUTURE VISION.** Describe your school 5 years from now. What will it look like and how will it be positioned in the marketplace.

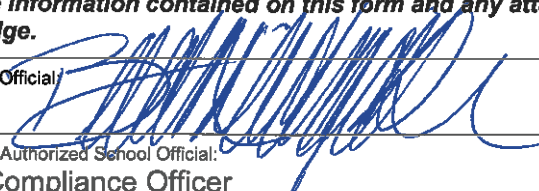
In 5 years, RCC will be a shining example of survival in the post-gainful employment era. RCC will offer a smorgasboard of career training opportunities for people in our community, we will be a dangerous and viable competitor to community colleges and career colleges in our vicinity. RCC will come full-circle, back to the roots of our existence by offering career programs that are viable, needed, and in-demand.

**2018 UPDATE:** The college now offers a number of in-demand training programs from healthcare to trades at reasonable and competitive tuition costs. The trades programs have been a particular point of pride, with state-of-the-art labs turning out graduates who are being sought out by employers.

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### **III. SUBMISSION**

***I hereby certify that the information contained on this form and any attachments to the form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.***

Signature of Authorized School Official: 

Print or Type Name and Title of Authorized School Official:  
Brian Niedzwiecki, Compliance Officer

Date:  
08/29/18

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## INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS

