



The Trusted Advisors, Vol. 11

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May is Internal Audit Awareness Month. As we observe Internal Audit Awareness Month, it presents an ideal time to reflect on the role Internal Audit plays in adding value across HCC.

What is Internal Auditing?

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operation.

Internal auditing involves identifying the risks that could keep the organization from achieving its goals, making sure the senior management knows about these risks, and proactively recommending improvements to help reduce the risks.

Our Vision and Mission

Our vision is to be recognized as the go to trusted advisors for risk and internal control management.

Our mission is to enhance and protect the value of HCC by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice, and insight. Simply stated we “enhance and protect HCC’s value by providing good risk management information and advice.”

The HCC Internal Auditors

The HCC Internal Audit staff consists of seven members with a variety of skills and expertise. We are employed by the College but independent of the HCC activities that we review. To ensure independence, the Director of Internal Audit reports to the Board of Trustees for functional direction, and to the Chancellor for administrative oversight. The director maintains objectivity by not assuming any operational responsibilities.

Internal Audit Responsibilities

Internal auditors have an important job to do at HCC! We provide value to HCC through firsthand knowledge of people and processes and risk associated with them. Our goal is to partner with management to ensure the success of the College. We support senior management and advise the board through various roles and responsibilities. We may perform some or all of the following tasks:

OFFER INSIGHT AND ADVICE – There are times when internal auditors’ expertise, knowledge of controls, and broad perspective of HCC make them ideal candidates for consulting on a project to ensure that risks are considered, and controls are built into a process on the front-end. We may offer insight regarding strategic risks and advice, though management must maintain ultimate responsibility for the processes in their area.

EVALUATE RISKS – Risks are everywhere (natural disasters, loss of key suppliers, reputation damage, inefficient operations, fraud, lawsuits, policy violations, regulatory compliance, theft, etc.). It is our job to assess the significance of HCC’s risks and the effectiveness of risk management efforts, communicate these to management and the board, and develop recommendations to improve risk management.



ASSESS CONTROLS – We evaluate control efficiency and effectiveness and provide senior management and the board with assurance that the controls in place are adequate to respond to the risks that threaten HCC.



IMPROVE OPERATIONS – With a solid understanding of the HCC’s objectives, we examine operations to determine whether they are efficient and effective.

PROMOTE ETHICS – As professional internal auditors, we agree to abide by a Code of Ethics that upholds the principles of integrity, objectivity, confidentiality, and competency. We raise red flags when we discover improper conduct.

REVIEW PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES – We review operations closely and assess whether existing processes are well designed to help HCC achieve its goals.



MONITOR COMPLIANCE – We assess HCC’s compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and contracts to ensure that management is addressing these requirements adequately. We also offer insight into the impact that noncompliance would have on HCC and inform senior management and the board of noncompliance.



ASSURE SAFEGUARDS – HCC’s tangible property, human resources, and intellectual property are valuable and must be guarded against potential damage. We evaluate the procedures used to safeguard assets from theft, fire, illegal activities, or other types of loss. We bring deficiencies to light and make recommendations for enhanced protection.

INVESTIGATE FRAUD – Because fraud can affect any level of HCC, it is important that the board of trustees grants the internal audit function access to all records and authority to conduct audits and investigate possible fraudulent behavior throughout HCC.

COMMUNICATE RESULTS – After auditing a particular area, we report their findings and recommend appropriate courses of action.



By communicating our findings and recommendations, we contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and accountability within HCC. Together, we strengthen the foundation of trust and confidence upon which the College operates, ensuring its sustained success and resilience in the face of evolving risks and opportunities.

With a clear mission to enhance and safeguard HCC's value by providing effective risk management information and internal control advice, our dedicated team of internal auditors stands prepared to fulfill our role as trusted advisors.



Please visit the Compliance and Ethics website to report suspected incidents of fraud through the Ethics Point hotline:

<https://www.hccs.edu/about-hcc/compliance--ethics/>

[For additional information you can watch our Fraud Awareness Lunch & Learn presentation by clicking here.](#)

Need help performing a risk assessment? Contact Terry Corrigan, Internal Audit Director

• 713-718-7278 • terrance.corrigan@hccs.edu • <https://www.hccs.edu/departments/internal-auditing/>



Houston Community College (HCC) is composed of 14 Centers of Excellence and numerous satellite centers that serve the diverse communities in the Greater Houston area by preparing individuals to live and work in an increasingly international and technological society. HCC is one of the country's largest singly-accredited, open-admission, community colleges offering associate degrees, certificates, workforce training, and lifelong learning opportunities. To learn more, visit www.hccs.edu.

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