FOLLOW UP VISIT REPORT

COLLEGE OF ALAMEDA

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A Confidential Report Prepared for
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association for Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited
College of Alameda on April 12, 2011

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Introduction

A two member accreditation team visited College of Alameda on April 12, 2011 for the purpose of conducting a follow-up visit concerning Recommendation 1, cited in the Commission’s June 30, 2010 action letter. In that letter the Commission went on to explain that the team would also verify the continued positive progress noted by the April 2010 visit on Recommendations, 2,3,4 and specifically Recommendations 5, and 7 which were not partially addressed by COA.

In its action letter, the Commission required College of Alameda to submit a follow up report by October 15, 2010, demonstrating the college has completely addressed Recommendation 1 of the 2009 comprehensive evaluation team.

College Responses to the Commission’s Recommendation

Recommendation 1: In order to meet Standards and build upon the considerable progress made in developing a systematic, integrated district-wide planning process, the team recommends that the college move forward in implementing its own comprehensive and integrated strategic planning process that is tied to the college’s mission, values, goals and priorities and includes the evaluation and refinement of key processes to improve student learning and promote institutional effectiveness.

Observation and Analysis of the Evidence

The College of Alameda has taken steps to develop and implement an Integrated Planning and Budget model (IPB) which serves as an overarching blueprint for a planning and review process that will include all stakeholders in the budget planning, educational program planning, curriculum planning, and facilities planning. This planning will produce an integrated, coherent process that is understood by everyone, inclusive, and provides information to the college community about how the mission of College of Alameda is being realized. The college has produced an Integrated Planning Handbook, version 16, which outlines the planning and budgeting process. The process begins with communication about student learning and how it relates to the review of the college’s mission statement. All of the agendas and minutes of the committee meetings are posted on the website, on bulletin boards, and available in common meeting areas.

Since 2008, the IPB at College of Alameda has collected six assessment measures of effectiveness on student learning which include departmental assessments, SSPIRE, student and faculty evaluation of library services, instructional programs and services, and health surveys, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), the Equity Plan, the ARCC, and Unit (discipline) plans which include overall enrollments, productivity measures, and status on student learning outcomes (SLOs). This information is widely disseminated throughout the district and colleges.

College of Alameda and the other colleges of the Peralta Community College District work with the district Planning and Budget Council (PBC) for coordinating all strategic planning and implementation. The district PBC is supported by three district and college committees – the Education Committee, Technology Committee, and Facilities Committee – which support the four colleges in coordinating their effort and resolving issues. Recommendations from College
of Alameda’s IPB move through the college process on to one of the district committees noted above. All recommendations from the planning process from the college or district are tracked and either implemented without modifications or, if it was not recommended, the reasons are stated. The decisions are then communicated to all stakeholders in the planning process.

The commitment to comprehensive communication is impressive in that each of the committee meetings are staffed with a trained facilitator, recorder, and summary writer. The facilitator works with the chair and co-chair to design the meeting agenda and discuss decision tools. The IPB plan has been in full force since the beginning of the fall 2010 semester. There was ample evidence that they have used this process in making the necessary budget reductions for this current fiscal year and next year.

The college community is now actively involved in the planning and budget process. Faculty, administrators, and staff know where to present the budget, personnel, and IT proposals. The college community has gained ownership of the processes. Evaluations are current for all staff and faculty have assumed a great leadership role in all the planning processes.

With regard to the college planning and assessment process, all courses have completed Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). The student services program has started to implement SLOs in areas of counseling and EOPS. There is cooperation between the colleges and district when the needs and decisions might affect one or more of the other colleges. Faculty meet to discuss SLOs, prerequisites, and sharing of faculty resources to enhance their disciplines. This event occurs during the flex days of the district.

The Integrated Planning Handbook (Version 16) was reviewed but no changes were made. The Academic Senate President wanted changes, but none were made because of his illness. The changes were minor and would not have changed the processes.

Two flex days were held at College of Alameda in Fall 2010 which dealt with updating the college’s mission statement. District wide disciplinary meetings were held, along with those for computing needs and facilities.

The College Council has become a vibrant and important focus for the college. All matters dealing with student success, educational programming, governance, accreditation, and campus climate are dealt with at these meeting as the planning committees report to the council membership. In prior years, attendance at College Council meetings was poor. Today attendance is high, enthusiasm is evident, and the college is engaged by providing direction. It is important to note that the faculty, with the support of the President and administration, has taken on a major role in the leadership of the college committees.

**Conclusion**

Since the last accreditation visit, the college personnel see themselves as a force for change within the college. The relationship between students, faculty, staff, and administration is one in which they view each other as a family that helps each other in order to accomplish the mission of the college. They have embraced the college president’s three initiatives which are academic excellence, budgetary competency, and community collaboration. The relationship with the district is very productive for both the college and district. Information is accurate, timely, and
focused on total quality improvement. There was ample evidence that College of Alameda has made the appropriate changes recommended by the Commission in satisfying all aspects of Recommendation 1.

The college has fully met this recommendation.

**Recommendation 2:** *In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the systems to support internal campus communication, as a college-district communication, be improved to support the optimal functioning of the college in promoting student learning.*

**Overview**

The follow-up team that visited College of Alameda in April 2010 commended the college for exceeding the relevant standards of accreditation. It was evident that the practices put into place more than a year ago are still in place and are being reviewed and modified to make any improvements in the process. In particular, the planning agendas for SLOs, accreditation, planning, resource allocation, and campus newsletters and the college website are excellent. The distribution of agendas and minutes of the College Council are commendable.

**Evidence**

The team was able to review the documentation in the follow up report, speak with faculty and staff, and attend a College Council meeting during our visit.

**Conclusion**

The college fully meets this recommendation.

**Recommendation 3:** *In order to meet the Commission’s 2012 deadline, the college must accelerate its progress in developing and assessing course-level and program-level student learning outcomes and using assessment data for improvement. Further, in order to meet the standards, the college must also ensure compliance with its program review and unity planning processes and accelerate its progress toward creating a data driven environment in which continuous assessment is used as a vehicle for institutional improvement.*

**Overview**

The college continues to accelerate its plan to move all course work through the complete cycle of SLO implementation. They will be able to meet the Commission deadline for 2012. The SLO team which is lead by faculty is engaged and, when queried about their decision making process for course reviews stated, “we look at the evidence, our mission, and make the appropriate recommendations.”

**Evidence**

The team spoke with faculty leaders, examined their website, and observed the information provided on TaskStream which provided ample evidence about the progress on assessment of course level SLOs.
Conclusion

The college fully meets this recommendation.

**Recommendation 4:** In order to meet the standard and be consistent with the recommendation of the 2003 team it is recommended that the college devote the time and resources needed to complete regular systematic evaluations for classified professional, full-time contract faculty, and part-time faculty.

Overview

Since the 2003 visit, there has been outstanding improvement in the timely evaluations of all staff.

Evidence

College staff confirmed and it was verified by district records that evaluations are done in a timely manner for all staff according to the new evaluation recording process developed by human resources with the colleges. All evaluations are either current, in progress, or completed for all full time and adjunct staff. They have an annual plan for evaluations that they now follow with regular updates to the person responsible.

Conclusion

The college fully meets this recommendation.

**Recommendation 5:** In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college advance and refine the implementation of the district-wide computer information system.

Overview

The prior team visit in 2010 did not identify sufficient evidence showing progress on this recommendation. It was the type of recommendation that affected all the colleges and the district; therefore this recommendation was considered unmet by the prior team.

Evidence

Since the last team visit, significant progress has been made on this recommendation by the district and therefore benefiting the colleges greatly.

1. Established a PeopleSoft Analyst Team to ensure that multi-college operational issues can be adequately discussed in an open forum and subsequently presented to the PeopleSoft Resolution Team for action consideration.
2. An “Executive Projects report” is issued weekly to the Vice Chancellors to inform the executives of the current state of current and proposed PeopleSoft-related projects.
3. A new PeopleSoft Steering Committee, consisting of the Vice Chancellors and IT, meets every two weeks and relates any changed institutional priorities for PeopleSoft-related projects.
4. Degree Audit/Academic Advising Module implementation is in process and will be completed by the end of June.
5. The Wait List and permission numbers are fully activated.
6. Implemented student payment plan.
7. Establish a mechanism for providing an on-going PeopleSoft product training. Virtual training is available via online Portal and virtual, instructor-led training will be available to staff on-demand starting in June 2011.
8. Upgrade of District IT infrastructure in progress; improve system reliability, furthering the District’s disaster recovery protections, and performance.
9. Added several new application servers to the PeopleSoft cluster; Noticeable performance increase has been realized in Student Administration, HR, and Finance.
11. The termination of the consultant contract from Oracle
12. Establish a new position of Director of Enterprise Services responsible for the implementation of the PeopleSoft systems.

Conclusions

The evidence provided by the district and the colleges demonstrates an urgency to resolving this issue. The interviews with college staff affirm that the information provided by the Management System is reliable, timely, user friendly and accurate. The planning is coordinated with the users in mind. The information is understandable, easy to access, and therefore it is trusted by the colleges and district staff. The progress that has been made is significant according to staff and they have enhanced the student functions to provide greater access.

The college meets this recommendation.

Recommendation 7: The team recommends that the district take immediate corrective action to implement all necessary system modifications to achieve access to a fully integrated computer information management system, including modules for student, financial aid, human resources, and finance. All corrective action and system testing should be completed within two years and the governing board should receive regular implementation reports until project completion.

Overview

Significant progress has been made by the district which had a positive impact upon the information College of Alameda receives and requests from the district Management Information System.

Evidence

The following activities have taken place since the last visit significantly assisting College of Alameda and the other colleges within the district which directly addresses this recommendation:
A PeopleSoft Analyst Team was established to ensure that multi-college operational issues can be adequately discussed in an open forum and subsequently presented to the PeopleSoft Resolution Team for action.

An “Executive Projects report” is issued weekly to the Vice Chancellors and Presidents to inform the executives of the current state of current and proposed PeopleSoft-related projects.

A new PeopleSoft Steering Committee, consisting of the Vice Chancellors and IT, meets every two weeks and relates any changed institutional priorities for PeopleSoft-related projects.

Degree Audit/Academic Advising Module implementation is in process and will be completed by the end of June.

The Wait List and permission numbers are fully activated.

Implemented student payment plan.

Establish a mechanism for providing an on-going PeopleSoft product training. Virtual training is available via online Portal and virtual, instructor-led training will be available to staff on-demand starting in June 2011.

Upgrade of District IT infrastructure in progress; improve system reliability, furthering the District’s disaster recovery protections, and performance.

Added several new application servers to the PeopleSoft cluster; Noticeable performance increase has been realized in Student Administration, HR, and Finance.

Financial Aid and General Ledger interface development in progress. Testing of the new integration is currently planned for May.

Conclusion

The evidence reviewed by the team and through interviews with the College President and faculty leaders demonstrated that the changes at the district have resulted in positive outcomes for College of Alameda. These positive outcomes have greatly assisted the college’s integrated planning process, curriculum review and SLO process, student financial aid, and educational planning, as well as up to date financial information on college budgets.

The college meets this recommendation.