

First Follow-up Report
in
Support of the Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Response to the Recommendations
of the
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

Submitted
by
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Submitted
to
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October 15, 2008

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Introduction

Under the leadership of Dr. Linda Lacy, Interim President, Riverside City College has made significant progress in correcting all the deficiencies noted by the evaluation team during its October 2007 visitation. Most notable of its efforts to address the recommendations, the college has implemented its new strategic planning process and has, for the first time, used this process to allocate financial and personnel resources for the 2008-2009 academic year. Also, the college has approved a revised mission statement and developed strategic planning goals, which will guide both the program review and strategic planning processes for the 2008-2009 academic year. In addition, the college has approved a process for the periodic review of its mission. Most important, in Spring 2008, the college developed and implemented an initial assessment of the recently completed strategic planning process, which the college's Strategic Planning Committee will use to improve both the program review and strategic planning processes for the 2008-2009 academic year. The development of a more complete assessment procedure—which uses a scorecard that identifies effectiveness indicators, outcome measures, and specific benchmarks and which tracks the progress over time—has begun and should be implemented during the 2008-2009 academic year.

Although not specifically addressed in this follow-up Report, the college continues to correct the weaknesses noted in College Recommendation 2, Student Learning Outcomes, and District Recommendation 2, Resource Allocation Model. Faculty efforts in various disciplines at the college to assess student learning outcomes have expanded. Equally important, a special ad hoc committee, composed of representatives from all three colleges in the District, has developed a new Budget Allocation Model, which has been incorporated into the 2008-2009 approved District budget. The Riverside City College members of this ad hoc committee collaborated with the college's Strategic Planning Sub-Committee for Financial Resources and widely disseminated information to various college constituencies, particularly the Board of Trustees and the Academic Senate, about both the process used to develop the Budget Allocation Model and about the Model itself.

The commitment on the part of the staff, students, faculty, and administration to participate in and to implement both the strategic planning and program review processes has begun to change the culture of the college. The processes are open, transparent, and inclusive. They are also malleable—i.e., subject to improvement as the college assesses its initial efforts to implement the newly integrated processes. These factors swayed one senior faculty member to observe: “For the first time I feel that my participation on this committee makes a difference. I’m really part of the decision-making process.”

Statement of Report Preparation

Dr. Linda Lacy, Interim President, charged Tom Allen, Associate Professor of English, to work with the co-chairs of the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee for Institutional Effectiveness, the president of the Riverside City College Academic Senate, various staff, and appropriate administration to gather the relevant information and evidence of the work done by the numerous college committees and constituencies to address the recommendations from the Accrediting Commission. Professor Allen wrote the initial draft of the Follow-up Report, which was reviewed and revised by the Accreditation Executive Committee.¹ A revised draft of the Follow-up Report was then sent to the Riverside City College Academic Senate, the Riverside City College Student Senate, the Strategic Planning Committee, and the President's Executive Cabinet for additional review and approval. The final draft, approved by the Riverside City College Accreditation Executive Committee, was sent to the Board of Trustees for final approval before it was submitted to the Accrediting Commission.

Response to College Recommendation 1, *Institutional Commitments and Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement.*

“The team recommends that the college reframe its mission to be comprehensive, including the educational goals that may be fulfilled at the college and a description of the primary student population for which the college is designing programs (Standard IA).

- The team further recommends that the college clarify the ways in which the strategic plan aligns with the college mission statement, links to strategic goals, drives budget allocation, and ensures the distribution of technology and human resources (Standard IIID.1).
- The team also recommends that the college develop a process for integrating program review with institutional goals, complete the implementation of the planning process, assess that process, and communicate the results of that assessment to all constituents in order to promote institutional effectiveness and identify areas for improvement (Standards IB.2, IB.3, IIB.4, and IIID.3”

Description

Beginning in September 2007, at its first meeting of the academic year, the Riverside Strategic Planning Sub-Committee for Institutional Effectiveness began conceptualizing a process to review the mission statement. The sub-committee submitted the final Mission Statement Review Process Template to the Riverside City College Strategic Planning Committee on April 3, 2008. The final draft of the review process was approved by the Riverside Strategic Planning Committee on June 5, 2008. The process outlines the constituencies to which the sub-committee disseminates the mission statement and the timelines for review. Although a number of college constituencies receive the mission statement each year for review, only the Riverside Academic Senate, the Riverside Student Senate, the Riverside Strategic Planning Committee, and the District Strategic Planning Committee approve the mission statement before it is sent to the Board of Trustees for final approval. This review begins in October of each new academic year and concludes in March of each year.²

After receiving the recommendations from the Accrediting Commission on January 31, 2008, the Riverside Strategic Planning Committee charged the Riverside Strategic Planning Sub-Committee for Institutional Effectiveness to revise the college’s mission statement. The sub-committee began its work in late March 2008 and disseminated a draft of the new mission statement to various college constituencies in April 2008. The Riverside Strategic Planning Committee, the Riverside Academic Senate, the Riverside Student Senate, and the District Strategic Planning Committee approved the revised mission statement, which received final approval from the Board of Trustees on June 17, 2008, at its regular meeting.^{3 4}

In March 2007, each of the Strategic Planning sub-committees established goals. These goals guided the activities of the sub-committees and helped the sub-committees fulfill their charges as established by the Riverside City College Strategic Planning Committee Constitution and Bylaws.⁵ During the Spring 2008 semester, the Strategic Planning sub-committees, where appropriate, developed a “Program Review Rubric” to use as the sub-committees prioritized the

instructional and non-instructional resources requested by various departments as part of their annual program reviews. Using the 2007 annual program review documents, each sub-committee then ranked the requests appropriate to its charge. These prioritized lists were given to the Riverside City College Financial Resources Sub-Committee for budget allocation. The Financial Resources Sub-Committee used the prioritized lists from the other sub-committees to make its budget allocation recommendations to the Riverside City College Strategic Planning Committee.⁶ These recommendations were approved by the Strategic Planning Committee at its March 6, 2008, meeting. At the end of the process, the sub-committees assessed how well it had achieved their goals, and the RCC Strategic Planning Committee also conducted a self-evaluation. In September 2008, the Riverside Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the assessment instruments and made appropriate changes, one of which involves the expansion of the assessment process to develop a scorecard to track strategic goals over time and to use key performance indicators, specific outcome measures, and clearly identified benchmarks as measures of effectiveness.

Using the newly revised mission statement as the cornerstone, each of the Riverside Strategic Planning sub-committees developed a specific goal to support and advance the mission of the college.⁷ These general goals function as “focus points” for each of the sub-committees—i.e., as reminders of the specific role each sub-committee assumes to ensure that the mission of the college is central to the decision-making processes. In addition, the Riverside City College Strategic Planning Committee developed “Strategic Goals” for the 2008-2009 academic year at its annual retreat on June 13, 2008. The list of goals includes strategies for realizing the goals and also assigns responsibility to the appropriate strategic planning sub-committee.⁸

Evaluation

Prompted by the recommendations of the Accreditation Commission, the college has reframed its mission statement to be more focused. The comprehensive statement includes the educational goals that may be completed at the college and also describes the primary student population the college serves. The reframed mission statement asserts the college’s autonomy, while also complementing the mission statement of the district, which provides the broad educational purposes of the institution. The new mission statement more clearly defines the purpose of the college and provides the scaffolding necessary to guide both program review and the strategic planning processes. The specific goals of each strategic planning sub-committee augment the mission statement and offer a means by which each sub-committee can use the mission statement to guide its decision-making process.

The college has also developed a process by which it can routinely review the effectiveness of the mission statement in guiding both program review and strategic planning. The key measure of the statement’s effectiveness will emerge at the end of the 2008-2009 academic year when the new mission statement actually, for the first time, guides program review and the strategic planning process. Because the college developed its Strategic Planning Goals for 2008-2009 using the new statement, it will be able to assess the effectiveness of the new mission statement as a guide for planning, for the allocation of resources, and for continued institutional improvement.

Making operational the planning process in place at the time of the visitation, the strategic planning sub-committees used the 2007 annual program reviews to prioritize requests for resources during the spring 2008 semester. The Financial Resources Strategic Planning Sub-Committee received the prioritized requests from each sub-committee and recommended which requests to fund and at what levels to fund them. All of the available funds were allocated by the Financial Resources Sub-Committee, which made its recommendations to the Riverside City College Strategic Planning Committee. The recommendations were approved on March 6, 2008. Because this is the first time the college has used the process to allocate funds, the sub-committees had to find a means by which to use the annual program reviews to prioritize the requests. Going through each department's review and categorizing the various requests—such as for human resources, instructional equipment, remodeling, non-instructional equipment, etc.—took time because of the volume of documents. Although the District has modified the program-review template for the 2008 annual program review and has also improved the databases used for program review, the Riverside Strategic Planning Committee has recommended that the college continue to modify the program review documents to more closely align with the types of funding requests received. This revision would allow each of the sub-committees to locate the requests more easily, perhaps even in a prioritized list format. Also, each sub-committee had to develop a rubric to evaluate objectively the requests from its various constituencies. Again, this took time because the sub-committees had to read and evaluate the rationale for each of the requests. Now that the rubrics have been developed, the work of the sub-committees for the 2008-2009 academic year will be easier.

Beginning with the 2008-2009 academic year, the District implemented the new Budget Allocation Model to distribute the District's resources. As part of this process, Riverside City College received its separate base revenue. Any money exceeding the 2007-2008 base allocation will be distributed using the strategic planning process. The college can then allocate funds for human resources and distribute money for both instructional and non-instructional equipment. In fact, the Riverside Strategic Planning Sub-Committee for Technology has begun to inventory all the technological resources being used at the college and to set an obsolescent date for each piece of equipment in order to determine the true cost of replacing both instructional and non-instructional equipment. Also, the college has developed a rubric for prioritizing faculty positions.⁹ This will allow the college to use the strategic planning process to allocate its own money for human resources. At the present time the new Budget Allocation Model has a line item at the District level for new faculty positions. This money has not yet been allocated to the base revenues of the colleges due to the state's fiscal uncertainties; nevertheless, a structure is in place at the college level to proceed with hiring once funding is available. Any new money included in the college's base revenue, however, can be allocated using the college's strategic planning process.

The Financial Resources Sub-Committee initially had some difficulty allocating the resources because it did not have a clear principle to guide its decision-making process. It relied primarily on the prioritized lists from the other sub-committees, but it based its decisions on requests that more directly impacted classroom teaching. Now that the college has reframed its mission statement that identifies the essential purpose of the college, including the specific goals of each sub-committee, the sub-committee can use that statement to guide the allocation of resources. In addition, the Financial Resources Sub-Committee has asked that the Instructional Programs Sub-

Committee and the Student Services Sub-Committee prioritize the educational and student services initiatives identified in the annual program reviews.

The assessment component of the strategic planning process is taking place. The Riverside Strategic Planning Committee and each of the sub-committees have or will have completed an assessment of the process used during the 2007-2008 academic year. A survey of the sub-committee members asking each how well each sub-committee fulfilled its goals and comments from participating members about ways to improve the process are being compiled, and the Riverside Strategic Planning Committee will evaluate the results of the assessment instruments and comments at its meeting in September 2008. The Strategic Planning Committee will then make any needed changes to the process. One of those changes involves expanding the assessment process to include specific performance indicators and identified outcome measures for each of the strategic planning goals. The Riverside Strategic Planning Committee has drafted a Strategic Planning Report Card that will track the planning initiatives over time and assess how well the college has met its benchmark goals. The development of this report card, led by the Vice President of Business Services, will allow the college to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the planning process and make adjustments for improvement.

Response to College Recommendation 3, Organization

“To meet the standards related to ethical, effective, and empowered leadership, the team recommends that the college (Standards IVA, IVA.1, IVA.2, IVA.2a, IVA.2b, and IVA.3)

- Identify and document the roles, scope of authority, and responsibilities of students, faculty, staff and administrators in the decision-making process;
- Identify and document the charge, the scope of authority, and responsibilities of each college committee;
- Identify and document the specific procedures for moving items or issues through the decision-making processes at the college and between the college and district, including mechanism for providing feedback.”

Description:

During the 2007-2008 academic year, the Riverside Academic Senate and the Riverside City College administration modified the college’s committee structure to fold all of the shared governance committees (committees with mixed membership of administration, staff, faculty, and students) operating at the college into the nine Riverside City College Strategic Planning sub-committees, which are aligned with the accreditation standards.¹⁰ For example, the Parking Committee is now part of the Physical Resources Sub-Committee; the Developmental Education Committee is now part of the Instructional Programs Sub-Committee; and the Matriculation Committee is now part of the Student Services Sub-Committee. As a result, the college’s shared governance committees now function under the Riverside Strategic Planning Committee Constitution and Bylaws, which include the charge of each sub-committee. Moreover, the Constitution clearly delineates the roles, scope of authority, and responsibilities of all college constituencies, including faculty, staff, college administration, and students.¹¹ The composition of the Riverside Strategic Planning Committee and the Strategic Planning sub-committees includes members from the various constituencies as mandated by the Constitution. These sub-committees meet each month or as necessary to complete their business.

Also, during the 2007-2008 academic year, in an effort to address the Accrediting Commission’s recommendations, the Riverside Academic Senate approved the “charges” of each of the senate’s standing committees.¹² The Riverside Strategic Planning Committee Constitution and Bylaws, as was stated above, includes the “charges” of each strategic planning sub-committee. The college will implement the new committee structure during the 2008-2009 academic year. Also, the Riverside Student Senate makes recommendations on all policies that have a significant impact on students. At the end of the Spring 2008 semester, the president of the Riverside Academic Senate invited all faculty to sustain their previous committee assignment or to request new assignments for the next year. The administration, the classified staff, and the students also have processes in place to appoint members to the various strategic planning sub-committees.

During the 2007-2008 academic year, the college inaugurated the revised strategic planning process using the 2007 program reviews. A detailed discussion of the process used by the college occurs in the response to College Recommendation #1. The new Budget Allocation Model, which has been implemented for the 2008-2009 academic year, will give the college its

base funding levels. Any new funds, once they are allocated to the college, will be distributed using the strategic planning process. Any items or issues that surface during the academic year, which are not specifically identified in the program reviews, are directed to the appropriate strategic planning sub-committee for discussion and recommendation. The item or issues, with the appropriate sub-committee's recommendation, are then forwarded to the Riverside City College Strategic Planning Committee for approval. Once Riverside City College has received its base revenue for the year, including any new money, the college's Strategic Planning Committee has full authority to allocate its resources.

Each campus has representatives to the District's Strategic Planning Committee, including co-chairs of the Riverside Strategic Planning Committee. The Riverside Community College District Strategic Planning Committee Operational Guidelines delineate the membership and the decision-making processes between the college Strategic Planning Committee and the District Strategic Planning Committee. Although the District will respond to District Recommendation 1 dealing with the District's Strategic Plan in its second Follow-up Report, due 15 October 2009, a draft of the District's Strategic Plan serves as the basis for the decision-making processes between the college and the District.¹³ The strategic planning initiatives of the California Community Colleges, of the District Strategic Planning Committee Plan (2008-2012), and of the Riverside City College Strategic Planning Committee, although not identical, parallel and complement one another.¹⁴ These goals serve as the basis for the decision-making procedures.

The specific process for moving items or issues through the decision-making processes involving program review and strategic planning at the college and between the college and the district begins with the new Budget Allocation Model. The co-chairs of the Riverside City College Strategic Planning Committee—Dr. Lacy, Interim President, and Tim Brown, Associate Professor, Reading—serve on the District Strategic Planning Committee and function as the “feedback mechanism” between the two committees. At each Riverside Strategic Planning Committee meeting, a standing report exists on the Riverside Strategic Planning Committee agenda that outlines items before the District's Strategic Planning. Any budget line items not specifically allocated to the colleges fall under the purview of the District Strategic Planning Committee. Also, any new programs that might affect all three campuses, the allocation of state or local bond money, or any requests not anticipated in the original plans fall within the authority of the District Strategic Planning Committee. Essentially, the District Strategic Planning Committee makes recommendations to the Chancellor and ultimately to the Board on any item or issue that affects all three campuses.¹⁵

The faculty and classified staff have separate unions that negotiate the salary and working conditions of the groups under the collective bargaining laws. Decisions involving collective bargaining have their own legal requirements. The Associate Students of Riverside City College have their own governance processes and have representatives on the various shared governance committees.

The District Academic Senate and the Riverside City College Academic Senate make decisions involving academic and professional matters. Various college and District committees, such as the Curriculum Committee and Professional Growth and Sabbatical Leave Committee, make recommendations directly to the Board of Trustees. The Academic Senate and the District

consult collegially on decisions regarding Board policies and other academic and professional matters. In the past the Academic Senate voiced concerns about the role of the Chancellor when the Senate wanted to place an item on the Board agenda. Newly revised Board Policies and Procedures have added language guaranteeing final recommendations to the Chancellor will be presented to the Board of Trustees in a timely manner with or without his/her endorsements or comments.¹⁶

Evaluation

Riverside City College has completed its goal of identifying the charges of each college committee, the scope of authority of each committee, and the role of each college constituency serving on the college committees. The Riverside City College Academic Senate has completed its work by approving the charges of each of its standing committees, and the Riverside Strategic Planning Committee Constitution and Bylaws document identifies the charge, the membership, and the scope of authority of each of the strategic planning sub-committees.¹⁷ Completing these tasks has allowed the college to define more clearly how the committee structure should function.

Moreover, the Riverside Strategic Planning Committee and its sub-committees, composed of individuals from the various constituencies of the college, functioned very well during the 2007-2008 academic year. Each of the sub-committees prioritized the instructional and non-instructional requests included in the annual program review documents and the Financial Resources Sub-Committee recommended the allocation of the available resources to the Riverside City College Strategic Planning Committee. The District Strategic Planning Committee reached consensus in support and moved the college's recommendations, without a vote, forward to the Board of Trustees for approval. These processes were completed in an open and transparent manner. Each of the sub-committees was informed of the final allocation decisions and, in one case, a constituent appealed the decision of the Finance Sub-Committee and met with the sub-committee to clarify its request. Although the college inaugurated this process during the 2007-2008 academic year and the sub-committees struggled initially to define their work with the scope of their authority, the decision-making process has worked.

Also, how well the integration of the college committee into the nine strategic planning sub-committees will function has not yet been determined. The college will have to assess this new committee structure and make the necessary adjustments for institutional effectiveness during the 2008-2009 academic year.

The Riverside City College Strategic Planning Committee has full authority to make recommendations to the college president regarding the resources included in the college's base revenue and decisions effecting the Riverside City College operations. In respect to the items that fall under the District purview, the District flow charts clearly show that the Chancellor's Executive Cabinet has a role in the decision-making processes, but in practice this role varies. At present the cabinet does not approve items, but it does review them and makes recommendations to the Chancellor on items or funds outside the base allocation for each college and on matters of planning that affect the District as a whole, including new programs, contract negotiations, and bond money expenditures.

Although the Chancellor in consultation with the Board President develops the Board agenda according to specific policy, the Board of Trustees has adopted a new policy that allows the public to place items on the Board agenda.¹⁸ These policies, as well as Board Policy 4005, guarantees that all college constituencies and the public have an opportunity to address issues affecting the college and the district before the Board of Trustees makes its final decision.

Concluding Remarks

The accreditation process, especially the self-study, has allowed the college to examine, evaluate, and improve the way in which it makes the decisions that impact the education of students. Moreover, the accreditation peer review process has provided a more “objective” and “impartial” perspective on the way the college operates. Equally important, the recommendations of the Accrediting Commission to Riverside City College have created an opportunity to improve the way the college serves its students. These recommendations have also helped the college focus more directly on and address issues that have surfaced during previous accreditations. The college has used many of the principles of good practice, delineated in the accreditation standards, to develop a strategic planning process that has great potential and will guide the decision-making processes for years to come. Clearly, the accreditation process works.

List of Supporting Documents and References

- ¹ Members are Linda Lacy, Interim President; Tim Brown, Associate Professor, Reading; Tom Allen, Associate Professor, English; Richard Mahon, Riverside Academic Senate President; Susan Mills, Associate Professor, Mathematics; Sylvia Thomas, Associate Vice Chancellor, Instruction; CSEA Rep.; and Student Rep.
- ² Mission Statement Review process document.
- ³ Revised Mission Statement.
- ⁴ Minutes from the various constituencies that approved the new mission statement.
- ⁵ Article I, the Bylaws for the Riverside Strategic Planning Committee, for a list of the goals for each of the standing committees.
- ⁶ Financial Resources Sub-Committee Recommendations to the Riverside Strategic Planning Committee, March 2008
- ⁷ List of goals for each of the sub-committees, May 29, 2008.
- ⁸ List of Strategic Planning Goals for the 2008-2009 academic year.
- ⁹ Rubric for prioritizing faculty positions
- ¹⁰ Riverside Academic Senate website for a complete list of college committees and their charges.
- ¹¹ Riverside Strategic Planning Committee Constitution and Bylaws, adopted March 1, 2007
- ¹² Minutes for the Riverside Academic Senate, May 19, 2008.
- ¹³ Draft of the District's Strategic Plan, 2008-2012
- ¹⁴ CCC Strategic Goals, the RCCD Strategic Planning goals, and the RCC Strategic Planning goals.
- ¹⁵ Riverside Community College District Strategic Planning Committee Operational Guidelines.
- ¹⁶ Board Policy 4005.
- ¹⁷ Riverside City College Academic Senate website and the SPC Constitution and Bylaws.
- ¹⁸ Board Policy 2340, which gives the Chancellor the authority to prepare the Board agendas, and Board Policy 2345, which delineates how the public can place items on the Board agenda.