Riverside City College
Follow-Up Report

Submitted
by
Riverside City College
4800 Magnolia Avenue
Riverside, California 92506

Submitted
to
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

October 15, 2015

Certification Page

To: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
               Western Association of Schools and Colleges

From: Wolde-Ab Isaac, PhD.
               President
               Riverside City College
               4800 Magnolia Avenue
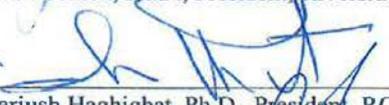   Riverside, California 92506

I certify there was broad participation by the campus community and believe this Report accurately reflects the nature and substance of the institution.

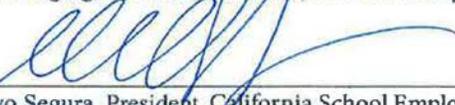Michael Burke, Ph.D., Chancellor, Riverside Community College District   9-22-15
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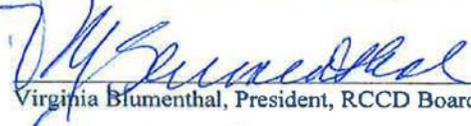
Virginia Blumenthal, President, RCCD Board of Trustees   9/22/15
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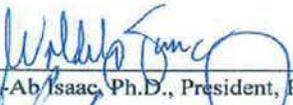
Wolde-Ab Isaac, Ph.D., President, Riverside City College   9/22/15
                                                           Date

Mark Sellick, Ph.D., President, Riverside City College Academic Senate   9/22/15
                                                           Date

Dariush Haghighat, Ph.D., President, RCCD Faculty Association   9/22/15
                                                           Date

Gustavo Segura, President, California School Employees Association   9/28/15
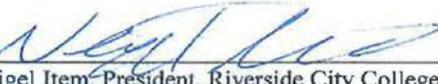   Date

Nigel Item, President, Riverside City College Associated Students   09/22/15
                                                           Date

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Introduction

Riverside City College has engaged in a collective effort to integrate the Actionable Improvement Plans, identified in the 2014 Institutional Self Evaluation Report, as well as the recommendations suggested by the 2014 Visiting Team into the strategic planning process. In addition to the Actionable Improvement Plans and the specific measures to address the recommendations, the Fall 2014 college assessment of the Strategic Plan indicated that the rubrics used to guide decision making were not properly designed and did not align with the college goals and thus had minimal contribution to furthering student success and completion. Moreover, as a result of its ongoing assessment activities, the college has also implemented comprehensive measures to refresh its Educational Master Plan, its Technology Plan, its Program Review Process, its Equity Plan, and its Strategic Plan. The college has also created a Student Success Plan, a Human Resources Plan, and a college Finance Plan that reflect the collective efforts to make the planning processes more efficient and more integrated. (Some of these plans have not yet completed the approval process.) The college's Strategic Planning Leadership Councils, which have representation from all constituency groups, have divided these tasks and have created workgroups of faculty, staff, students, and administrators to complete the work needed for this more efficient and effective planning process. Although this Follow-Up Report addresses the specific concerns that the visiting team noted, this report does not reflect the magnitude of the collective efforts made during the 2014-15 academic year, and continue to be made, to improve student success and completion.

Report Preparation

Dr. Wolde-Ab Isaac asked Tom Allen, Associate Professor of English, to draft the initial report using the collective work of the various strategic planning leadership councils and their workgroups. The strategic planning councils and workgroups conceptualized and completed the necessary tasks to address the recommendations. They also provided all of the evidence and strategies to ensure that the college meets and sustains the accreditation standards. After Professor Allen drafted the responses, each council or workgroup reviewed the responses for accuracy and suggested changes to the draft.

After the Accreditation Steering Committee reviewed the draft, it was distributed to the college community for review. The Riverside City College Strategic Planning Executive Council, the Riverside City College Academic Senate, the Riverside City College Associated Students, the leadership of CSEA, the President's Leadership Council, and the Riverside City College Faculty Association reviewed and had an opportunity to comment on the draft. The draft report was also posted on the accreditation website. Once each of the college constituency groups had reviewed the draft, the final draft was approved by the Riverside City College Accreditation Steering Committee on April 1, 2015.

The final draft was distributed to the District Strategic Planning Committee as well as to the Chancellor's cabinet before it was accepted by the Riverside Community College Board of Trustees at its June 16, 2015, meeting.

Responses to Commission Action Letter

College Recommendation #1
Evaluate processes including evaluation processes regularly.
In order to meet the standards the College should systematically assess and use assessment results for improvement in the following areas:

    a. Assessing its evaluation mechanisms; (I.B.6, I.B.7)
    b. All resource areas including human, physical, technology, and financial; (III.A.6, III.B.2.b, III.C.2, III.D.3.h)
    c. Role delineation, decision-making structures and resources. (IV.A.5, IV.B.3.g)

Response
At the Riverside City College strategic planning retreat on October 17, 2014, the Strategic Planning Executive Committee invited members from all strategic planning leadership councils, the Riverside City College Academic Senate, the Riverside City College Associated Students, department chairs, and any interested faculty and staff to review the most recent Environmental Scan, which focuses on Riverside City College, and to assess the strategic planning flowchart and the decision-making rubrics used to allocate resources.[1] The college used the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis template for each assessment. The participants divided into four groups. Each group assessed the strategic planning flowchart and then each group assessed a particular rubric used to make resource decisions. After assessing the rubrics and the strategic planning flow chart, the results indicated that the college's strategic planning process needs to be more efficient and more effective. Also, the assessment clearly indicates that the decision-making rubrics need to be more closely linked to the college goals and have a direct connection to student success and completion.[2] This assessment also served as a catalyst to revise the Program Review template so that it aligns more closely with the college goals and student success initiatives.

These assessments provided concrete data to guide the college in its efforts to refresh its 2009-2014 Strategic Plan. As a result of these assessments, the college has embarked on a comprehensive and integrated planning process that provides a framework for and advances a culture of planning across all units, departments, and divisions of the college. The strategic plan includes five major goals: (1) Student Access, (2) Student Success, (3) Institutional Effectiveness, (4) Resource and Learning Environment Development, and (5) Community Engagement. These goals have clear, reasonable, and measurable targets. These assessments, in addition to the analysis of the institution from the 2014 Institutional Self Evaluation Report, have also resulted in the development of a number of integrated implementation plans, each of which have at their core an emphasis on student success and completion. These plans include the Enrollment Management Plan, the Student Equity Plan, the Student Success Pathways Initiative, the Student Success Plan, the Human Resources Staffing Plan, and the Finance Plan.[3] The strategic plan has also propelled the refreshing of the Education, Facilities, and Technology long-range master plans. Also, the Strategic Planning Constitution and Bylaws have been revised, and are undergoing the approval process, to empower the councils to monitor the progress of the implementation timelines, to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the plans, and to assess the process of the integration and alignment of the plans. These labors have resulted in the

development of more systematic and structured blueprints for monitoring, evaluation, and assessment processes.

In an effort to integrate the various college committees into the strategic planning process and to better delineate the decision-making roles and structure to allocate resources, the Riverside City College Academic Senate convened a Strategic Planning Taskforce to revise the college's Strategic Plan. One of the principal efforts of this group involved eliminating many committees and placing all college committees, including the Academic Senate committees, under one of the Strategic Planning Leadership Councils to ensure that all planning and budget allocations are coordinated by one or more of the leadership councils.[4] This structure will allow the Academic Senate committees to collaborate with and to be integrated into the strategic planning process. (The revision of the strategic plan and the Academic Senate Constitution and Bylaws are going through the vetting and approval processes.)

Program review is the principal planning and evaluation mechanism that the college uses to assess the effectiveness of and to improve instructional programs, student services, and library and other learning support services.

In fall 2014, the college performed a SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of its strategic planning process, including comprehensive program review and unit planning. Four major weaknesses were identified for program review and unit planning:

1) The comprehensive instructional program review process, as its title implies, is performed by instructional units only and is a reporting rather than a planning document;
2) Unit plans for instruction, student services, and administrative services use different templates, rubrics, and timelines−which limits their usefulness in college planning;
3) Program review and unit plans need to be better aligned to college goals and strategies; and
4) Measurable targets in alignment with overall institutional targets need to be established by units for strategies/activities in program reviews.

To address these weaknesses, a program review workgroup of the Institutional Effectiveness Leadership Council met over winter 2015 to revise the program review and unit planning processes. A comprehensive program review and plan template was developed that all units—instructional, student services, or administrative services—will complete.[5] The timelines for all units were aligned so that program reviews will be written and submitted in fall semesters to better link program review, planning, and resource allocation.

The unit planning process was revised to be an annual implementation plan of the comprehensive program reviews and also to serve as an assessment mechanism for the previous year and as a tool to refine and to update of the activities and targets for the upcoming year. The revised program review template clearly links unit strategies, activities, and targets to those of the college. Training for the new process began in August 2015 during Flex activities and will continue until each unit of the college has completed its new comprehensive program review.[6]

College Recommendation #2
Evaluate all SLOs in a timely manner.
In order to meet the standard, the College should evaluate all courses and programs in a manner
that ensures a comprehensive and timely assessment of course and program SLOs is completed
in all disciplines, so that the assessment of all SLOs can be included in curriculum review for
maintaining relevant, current and responsive courses and programs, especially those that
experience rapid changes in workforce competencies. (II.A.2.e)

Response

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the Riverside Assessment Committee, and Institutional
Effectiveness Leadership Council have developed a new means to track the assessment of
student learning outcomes (SLOs) for all courses and programs.[7] Although the 2014 visiting
team acknowledged that the college assesses the SLOs of its courses on a four-year cycle, the
team noted that "not all SLOs are assessed on the four-year cycle; and therefore, it is possible for
the same SLO to be assessed repeatedly every four years while other SLOs for a course or
program might not be assessed." The visiting team suggested that the college "needs to increase
assessments to include all SLOs at appropriate intervals to ensure complete assessment results
are used when courses are reviewed systematically for relevance, appropriateness of learning
outcomes currency and future needs and plans. Because not all SLOs are reviewed in the
standard program review cycle, the College does not meet the requirements of Standard
II.A.2.e."

To address the suggestions by the 2014 visiting team, the Riverside Assessment Committee,
working with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the Institutional Effectiveness
Leadership Council, has elected to use TracDat to monitor and to plan the assessment of course
and program SLOs.[8] In order to sustain the five-year assessment cycle (changed from four to five
years in order to align with the program review and strategic planning cycle) and, at the same
time, ensure that all SLOs of a course or program have undergone assessment in the cycle, each
academic discipline has listed the specific SLOs that were assessed in the previous four-year
cycle (the last three years and the current year), has identified the SLOs that were not assessed,
and has scheduled assessment of SLOs to ensure that all course and program SLOs will be
assessed in the next five-year cycle (current year and three years into the future). Most CTE
programs, however, assess SLOs every two years, sometimes more frequently, and have
developed a regular schedule to meet with CTE Advisory Groups to ensure that the CTE SLOs
reflect work force needs.[9] TracDat also allows the academic disciplines and the college to
develop reports to assist the assessment of program and general education SLOs. Each of the
course SLOs is linked to both program and general education SLOs in the system. The TracDat
system offers a means to generate program and general education assessment reports based on
this linkage.[10] This system should greatly enhance the ability of the college to assess student
learning outcomes at all levels of assessment and provides a more systematic means to evaluate
the effectiveness of the college's instructional efforts.[11]

To assist academic disciplines, the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and the faculty co-chairs
of the Riverside Assessment Committee have provided one-on-one TracDat training to discipline
faculty responsible for inputting the schedule of assessment into the system. The revised

Comprehensive Program Review and Plan template requires disciplines to evaluate the course and program assessment results as part of the program-review cycle and to ensure that suggested changes and requests for additional resources reflect current and relevant curriculum that enhances student success and completion.

College Recommendation #3
Total Cost of Ownership
In order to meet standards, the College should develop and implement a total cost of ownership methodology that can be included in the long-range capital plans. (III.B.2.a)

Response

In its 2014 Self Evaluation Report, Riverside City College identified a need to refresh its Facilities Master Plan and its Five-Year Capital Construction Plan. Also, the college indicated that the template for calculating the total cost of ownership, which was part of the 2008-2024 Educational Master Plan, needed to be revised. In fact, the college developed an Actionable Improvement Plan in the 2014 Self Evaluation Report and included the revision of the total cost of ownership template in its Strategic Planning Integrated Action Plans prior to the 2014 team visit.

The 2014 visiting team noted that, "although total cost of ownership is a factor in the District Five-Year Capital Construction Plan, a complete life cycle cost analysis was not part of the planning process either at the district or at the college and accordingly does not meet the requirements of Standard III.B.2.a" In addition, the visiting team noted that "the college has performed various facility related studies but some have not been completely analyzed for proper implementation or design [sic] a plan to perform them in a timely manner. The facilities department should use its program review assessments of facilities to develop improvement plans and develop funding requests. The college does not meet the requirement of Standard III.B.2.b."

The need to upgrade the total cost of ownership template (TCO) was already identified in the 2014 Self-Evaluation Report. The Resource Development and Administrative Services Leadership Council and its Physical Resources Advisory Group, under the leadership of the Vice President of Business Services and in collaboration with District Facilities Planning and Development working group, has successfully upgraded the TCO template,.[12] The college and the district tested the accuracy and usefulness of the template by applying it to the Math/Science and Nursing buildings.[13] After the Resource Development and Administrative Services Leadership Council evaluated the effectiveness of the new template to determine the initial cost and life cycle analysis of the previously constructed buildings, the college applied the revised template to the three new buildings under construction (the Student Services/Administration building, the Coil School of the Arts building, and the Culinary Academy and District Administration building).[14]

As part of the assessment conducted to develop the TCO template and to apply the template to the buildings currently being constructed, the Vice President of Business Services and the Resource Development and Administrative Services Leadership , through its Physical Resources Advisory Group, have begun the process of revising the Comprehensive Program Review and

Plan template (for instruction, student services, and administration) to include a facilities request component that better integrates facilities planning with resource allocation.[15] Also, in spring 2015 Physical Resources Advisory Group has begun to refresh and assess the Facilities Master Plan and the college's Five-Year Capital Construction Plan to provide more up-to-date capacity/load ratios and to plan scheduled maintenance for existing facilities.[16]

District Recommendation #1
Technology Planning
In order to meet standards, compile the various completed elements of technology planning into an integrated, comprehensive district technology plan that is accessible and transparent, including a disaster recovery plan and a plan to refresh aging and outdated technologies. Insure that the district technology plan is based on input from the colleges and is in alignment with college planning processes. (Standards I.B.6 and III.C.2)

Response

The 2014 district visiting team acknowledged, in its External Evaluation Report, that the district "has undergone a substantial amount of planning to address the technology needs of the District and the prioritization of technology resources." The team also acknowledged that the district "has conducted a technology audit and prioritized Information Services for the District in addition to completing a detailed District Administrative Unit Program Review and Assessment of Information Technology and Learning Services." However, the team also "noted that the various elements of technology planning have not yet been incorporated into a district-wide technology planning document to provide an overarching framework for the evolving college technology plans. The visiting team also stated that the district "lacks a comprehensive disaster recovery plan, and could benefit from a plan that addresses the need to refresh aging and outdated technologies."

To address the recommendations from the 2014 visiting team, the Information Technology Strategic Council (ITSC), which consists of the co-chairs of the college technology advisory groups and district Information Technology Services personnel, began a series of meetings to implement components of the District Technology Audit[17] and to develop a District Technology Plan.[18] The co-chairs of the college technology groups worked to ensure that the new district plan aligns with and supports each college's technology plan. In addition, the ITSC updated and created an IT Audit Recommendation Project Status Summary that outlines the progress the district has made to address the concerns identified in the IT Audit.[19] The new District Technology Plan assesses the district's technology environment, provides the basic principles and purpose of the plan, and aligns the district's technology goals with each college's technology plan and with the strategic themes in the RCCD Strategic Plan.[20] Moreover, the new District Technology Plan includes a Disaster Recovery Plan and a Technology Refresh Plan.[21]

The District Technology Plan has been reviewed and approved by the college technology advisory groups and has gone through the shared governance approval process. The ITSC has begun the process of working with each college's vice president of business and the Vice Chancellor of Business Services to determine the financial sustainability of the plans as the district and colleges implement their technology plans.

District Recommendation #2
OPEB Obligation
In order to meet the standard, implement a plan to fund contributions to the District's other post-employment benefits (OPEB) obligation. (Standard III.D.3.c)

Response

The district's medical plan, a single-employer defined benefit healthcare plan, is administered by the district. The plan provides medical and dental insurance benefits to eligible retired academic, classified, confidential, and management employees and one dependent until age 65 (BP/AP 7380). Eligibility is available to all retirees who have a minimum of 10 years of service with the district and who have reached the age of 55.[22]

On July 1, 2014, an actuarial valuation was performed to determine the District's liability for its post-employment benefits. Currently, the district utilizes the pay-as-you-go method to finance its OPEB contributions.[23]

The net OPEB obligations for each of the fiscal years 2010 through 2014, ending June 30, are as follows:

Year	Annual OPEB Cost	Actual Contributions	Percentage Contributed	Net OPEB Obligation
2010	$1,462,715	$ 766,350	52%	$1,653,090
2011	$2,262,462	$ 577,224	26%	$3,338,328
2012	$2,242,316	$1,199,115	53%	$4,381,529
2013	$2,872,832	$1,209,729	42%	$6,044,632
2014	$2,960,168	$1,159,902	39%	$7,844,898

To date, the district has partially allocated resources to support future liabilities related to post-employment benefits, leave time, and other related obligations. Leave balances are paid when used through existing resources, and the District finances its current post-employment benefit obligations annually. The district's annual required contribution is $3,041,672, and the annual OPEB cost is $2,960,168 based on the FY 2013-14 Annual Audit. (III.D.3.c, III.D.3)[24]

All audits of the institution have been unqualified. The district plans for and, to date, has used a "pay-as-you-go" methodology to allocate appropriate resources for the payment of liabilities and future obligations, including other post-employment benefits (OPEB), compensated absences, and other employee related obligations as disclosed in all annual audits**.** However, the District has not funded the future cost of the Annual Required Contribution (ARC).

In addressing the Commission's district recommendation, the district considered a number of options to address the OPEB liability. These included the formation of an irrevocable trust, the establishment of a restricted fund, the issuance of OPEB bonds, or the initiation of a self-assessment. The District has historically maintained a "pay-as-you-go" methodology and, since the inception of Government Accounting Standards Board Statement (GASB) 45, has not funded

the future cost of the ARC. Annual "pay-as-you-go" costs of the ARC approximate $1.2 million. The most recent actuarial valuation puts the annual funding of the future cost of the ARC at approximately $1.2 million. Therefore, to fund the GASB 45 liability completely, additional annual contributions of between $.80 million and $1.0 million (the remaining portion would presumably be from investment earnings) would be necessary. To address the recommendation, a funding plan proposal has been developed to respond to the accreditation recommendation. The plan consists of the following:

1. Effective July 1, 2015, establish a new irrevocable trust to pay current retiree health costs and to accumulate funds for future costs to offset the OPEB liability;

2. Develop a rate to apply to every dollar of payroll, in all Resources that have payroll, to cover the annual current cost ("pay-as-you-go") plus a minimum of $250,000 annually to begin providing for future retiree health costs, including application of the rate to grant and categorical programs in accordance with OMB Circular A-21 and the State Chancellor's Accounting Advisory—GASB 45 Accounting for Other Post-Employment Benefits;

3. Investment earnings over time will contribute to the reduction of the outstanding OPEB liability, so the total amount of funds set-aside by the District and accumulated to pay for future retiree health costs will be limited to a maximum of 50% of the outstanding OPEB liability;

4. At least annually, transfer all funds provided by the retiree healthcare rate to the irrevocable trust;

5. Pay all retiree healthcare costs out of the irrevocable trust.

This proposal, discussed with the District Budget Advisory Council (DBAC) on January 23, 2015,[25] was also vetted through each of the college's shared governance processes and has been reviewed by both the District Strategic Planning Committee (January 30, 2015, and March 12, 2015) and the Chancellor's cabinet (March 30, 2015).[26] The final proposal was presented and discussed at the April 7, 2015 Resource Committee meeting. The Board approved the proposal at its April 21, 2015 meeting.[27]

Afterward

During the 2014-15 academic year and after a number of formal and informal assessment activities, the college completed a tremendous amount of work to improve and to implement the structure and processes used in institutional planning and to address the recommendations from the visiting team. The revised Educational Master Plan, with its focus on student success and completion, provides the framework for the new Strategic Plan and the various implementation plans (the Pathways Initiative, the Staffing Plan, the Enrollment Management Plan, the Technology Plan, etc.), all of which have measurable targets and a clear emphasis on student success and completion. Many of these plans and initiatives take time to implement simply because, as part of the shared governance process, much of the work completed requires vetting and approval processes. Also, the college has embarked on a major cultural change that completely alters the manner in which the college had done its planning. For example, the Riverside City College Academic Senate, the principal force in the cultural shift, has to revise and to align its committee structures with the new strategic planning process. Even as ambitious as the college is to integrate all its planning activities, the shared governance processes take more time than the college anticipated. The new strategic planning website includes approved and pending documents that are in the various stages of vetting and approval. In addition, even though the college has developed infrastructures, such as data bases and TracDat, it takes time for the various groups to use these structures effectively. The college has a clear direction and a clear focus on what it needs to do to improve student success and completion.

Evidence

1 Review the minutes and the results of the SWOT analysis conducted at the retreat.
2 See the SWOT Summary from the October 17, 2014 retreat.
3 Review the revised and refreshed long-term planning documents.
4 Review the refreshed Riverside City College Strategic Planning Committee Structure, Constitution and Bylaws, and the Riverside City College Strategic Plan 2015-2020.
5 See revised program-review and plan template and timelines.
6 See Flex day agenda for August 2015.
7 See minutes for the Riverside Assessment Committee.
8 Review TracDat schedule of assessment activities.
9 See schedule of CTE Advisory Group meetings.
10 Review the TracDat system and the correlation of course and program SLOs.
11 See the Riverside City College Assessment Plan.
12 See minutes of the Facilities Planning and Develop on the TCO and TCO template
13 See application of template to the Math/Science and Nursing buildings.
14 See the TCO analysis for the three new buildings.
15 See revised Comprehensive Program Review and Plan template.
16 Review new Fusion data used to assess current facilities.
17 See District IT Audit Report
18 See minutes of the ITSC meetings dealing with the District Technology Plan
19 Review the IT Audit Recommendation Project Status Summary
20 Review the District Technology Plan
21 See appendices to the District Technology Plan.
22 BP/AP 7380, Retiree Health Benefits.
23 Review district 2013-2014 Actuarial Study.
24 See Audit Reports 2010-2014.
25 See minutes for January 23, 2015.
26 See DSPC minutes for January 30, 2015
27 See Board of Trustee committee and regular meeting minutes for April 2015.