

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
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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Statement of Report Preparation.....	2
Response to College Recommendation 1, Institutional Commitments and Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement.....	3
Response to College Recommendation 3, Organization.....	7
Concluding Remarks.....	11
List of Referenced Documents.....	12

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

Statement of Report Preparation

Dr. Linda Lacy, Interim President, charged Tom Allen, Associate Professor of English, to wn3gk

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

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

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)

- x Identify and document the roles, scope of authority, and responsibilities of students, faculty, staff and administrators in the decision-making process;
- x Identify and document the charge, the scope of authority, and responsibilities of each college committee;
- x 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,

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

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.