

EVALUATION TEAM REPORT

**HARTNELL COLLEGE
411 Central Avenue
Salinas, California 93901**

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

**This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited Hartnell
College from April 21-22, 2009**

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April 21-22, 2009**

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Introduction

In a letter to the president of Hartnell College from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges dated June 30, 2008, the college was formally notified that it had been removed from Warning status and accreditation had been reaffirmed. The Commission informed the college that a report would be due by March 1, 2009, to be followed by a visit of Commission representatives, that should demonstrate resolution the following three recommendations and one Commission Concern:

Recommendation 2. *The team recommends that college constituencies agree upon and implement an ongoing, systematic, integrated process for program review, planning, budgeting and hiring, and that a means be developed to communicate decisions made in those arenas back to the campus at large. (Standards I.B.3; I.B.5; III.A.6; III.B.2.b; III.C.2; III.D.1.a; III.D.2; III.D.2.b)*

Recommendation 3. *The team recommends that a planning process be completed that will address the needs for staffing and maintenance in new buildings and for technology support in both new and existing buildings. (Standards I.B.3; I.B.4; I.B.6; III.A.2; III.A.6; III.B.1.a; III.B.1.b; III.B.2; III.2.a; III.B.2.b; III.C.1.c; III.C.2)*

Recommendation 4. *The team recommends that the college engage in a broad-based dialogue that leads to:*

- *The identification of Student Learning Outcomes at the course and program levels; and*
- *Regular assessment of student progress toward achievement of these outcomes. (Standards II.A.1.c; II.A.2.a; II.A.2.b; II.A.2.e; II.A.2.f; II.A.2.g; II.A.2.h; II.A.2.i; II.A.3)*

Commission Concern 2: *The Commission asks Hartnell College to demonstrate that it meets Eligibility Requirement 10 which requires the institution “defines and publishes for each program the program’s expected student learning and achievement outcomes. Through regular and systematic assessment, it demonstrates that students who complete programs, no matter where or how they are offered, achieve these outcomes.*

It should be noted that a spring, 2007 comprehensive evaluation team had issued seven recommendations and the Accreditation Commission had added two Commission Concerns. The college had been given the sanction of Probation following the 2007 comprehensive evaluation visit. A subsequent report and visit in the fall of 2007 resulted in removal of Probation and placement of the college on Warning status. A report and visit in spring, 2008 resulted in the lifting of the Warning sanction and the reaffirmation of accreditation. The 2009 report and visit were to evaluate whether those three recommendations and one Commission concern that been only partially addressed in past visits had now been fully resolved.

Hartnell College submitted a Progress report to the Commission on March 1, 2009, detailing their work to resolve the recommendations listed above. After reviewing the report, a two-person team visited the college on April 21 and 22, 2009 to conduct the progress visit. Thirty two employees of the college were interviewed during the visit, as well as the college superintendent/president. Relevant materials and documents were analyzed on-site. This report contains the results of that visit.

As the following indicates, extensive changes in governance, staffing, budgeting, curriculum and other key areas of campus life have been underway at Hartnell College since the 2007 comprehensive visit. These changes are directly tied to the recommendations and concerns of the Accrediting Commission. The college appears sincerely involved and invested in sustaining the changes that have resulted, and the team found a sense of shared purpose and optimism, a feeling of camaraderie and collegiality, and a commitment to renewal and stability at Hartnell College.

Evaluation of Progress

Recommendation 2: *The team recommends that college constituencies agree upon and implement an ongoing, systematic, integrated process for program review, planning, budgeting and hiring, and that a means be developed to communicate decisions made in those arenas back to the campus at large. (Standards I.B.3; I.B.5; III.A.6; III.B.2.b; III.C.2; III.D.1.a; III.D.2; III.D.2.b)*

Observations

During the April 2008 follow up visit, the college was engaged in designing a significant revision of their governance process, their program review procedures, their planning efforts, their financial approaches, and their staffing plan. Those revisions are now in place and all college constituencies are actively and collaboratively engaged in supporting them.

The college has put in place a three-tiered assessment system to support program review and planning as an ongoing, systematic, and integrated process. The first tier or district-wide process included the completion of the *Salinas Valley 20/20 Vision* study that identified community educational needs. This, in concert with a financial analysis, led to the development of the Educational Master Plan and the 2016 Financial Plan. The college provided evidence that it used the information from the *20/20* study to increase student access through additional evening, weekend, and online class sections, which in turn assisted in increasing enrollments to improve college finances. The *20/20* study also led to an increased emphasis on course offerings and strategies to improve student success in basic skills and ESL courses. Finally, study results have led to ongoing work to redesign student services, as the study showed the community was not completely satisfied with recent student services delivery methods.

The second tier of the program review process focuses on providing college-wide and department unit data to support evaluation and planning. In the academic areas, the electronic screening model provides regular information on enrollments, course completions, revenue/cost ratios, efficiency and WSCH, and the number of degrees and certificates earned. This information has been used to alter class schedules to ensure offerings maximize efficiency while still meeting student needs in basic skills, transfer programs, and degree and certificate completion. Competing interests in scheduling for efficiency needs initially created tension between administration and faculty, but this was resolved by continuing the dialogue until agreement was reached. This new ability to move from potential conflict to constructive dialogue centered on data, student needs, institutional needs, and respect for the professional opinions of faculty is evidence that the new processes are working and can be adjusted collegially as needed.

The third tier of the process addresses in-depth program review and assessment in the following areas: academic departments, student services, support operations, technology and facilities planning, and resource allocations. Again, the Progress Report and evidence observed during the visit demonstrate the college is not only performing program assessment activities but is actively working to implement needed improvements in a manner that includes all constituencies. To support academic program reviews, the college has purchased the program review module for CurricUNET, the online application used for curriculum management and SLO collection. The program review module is not yet fully implemented but will provide electronic storage of information, easy electronic access for those engaged in the reviews and/or using the results of the reviews for planning improvements.

Budgeting and hiring processes are being significantly impacted by the state budget process. However, the college has worked hard to make budgeting and new position prioritization processes much clearer and better communicated. The Resource Allocation Committee, which has recommending responsibilities on the allocation of new resources, is made up of representatives of all constituent groups, including senate and union leaders. Communication regarding issues and decisions occurs in regularly scheduled shared governance meetings, college blogs, and regular town hall meetings. Constituent leaders agreed that many more employees and students are informed about and involved in these critical processes, and there are multiple opportunities for those not yet involved to join in the college's efforts.

Conclusions

The college has successfully resolved Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 3: *The team recommends that a planning process be completed that will address the needs for staffing and maintenance in new buildings and for technology support in both new and existing buildings (Standard I.B.3; I.B.4; I.B.6; III.A.2; III.A.6; III.B.1.a; III.B.1.b; III.B.2; III.2.a; III.B.2.b; III.C.1.c; III.C.2)*

Observations

In 2007, college reviewed its technology staffing needs and identified areas where additional staffing was needed. The California State Chancellor's Office Technology II Strategic Plan was used as the basis of the analysis.

The college also brought in a consultant who has analyzed college finances and developed strategies for improving stability. Included in these strategies was the need for identification of consistent funding streams for technology.

In 2008, the college added two custodians and a maintenance mechanic. They made plans to add two new computer technicians and a network administrator. They used facilities consultants to update the Five Year Construction Plan and drafted a template for a new Facilities Master Plan. The Facilities Master Plan includes two new buildings – one on the main campus in 2009-2010 and one on the Alisal Campus (formerly known as the East Campus) in 2011-2012. The college has developed a benchmark study that identifies the need for maintenance staffing increases that are tied to the number of square feet added. However, the college demonstrated that the major new facilities do not add square footage to the college, but simply replace existing facilities.

The college savings and new revenue have resulted from the reorganization and other elements of the new financial plan. In 2008, the bulk of that savings was redirected to cover needs addressed in this recommendation, with \$500,000 set aside for the network, \$800,000 for technology, \$200,000 for facilities and \$200,000 for instruction. The college plans to replace computers in student labs every three years.

The college has created a 2016 Financial Plan that anticipates an increase in maintenance costs of \$100,000 annually beginning in 2009-2010, and identifies a set-aside of almost \$800,000 annually to support the technology infrastructure. The 2009 visiting team found that \$100,000 had been set aside for maintenance in the current year.

Conclusions

The college has addressed needs in the technology and maintenance areas, they have updated their Construction and Facilities Plans, they have established a model that ties custodial staffing to campus square footage, and they have developed a process for analyzing future needs.

The college has successfully resolved Recommendation 3.

Recommendation 4: *The team recommends that the college engages in a broad-based dialogue that leads to:*

- *The identification of Student Learning Outcomes at the course and program levels; and*
- *Regular assessment of student progress toward achievement of these outcomes. (Standards II.A.1.c; II.A.2.a; II.A.2.b; II.A.2.e; II.A.2.f; II.A.2.g; II.A.2.h; II.A.2.i; II.A.3)*

Observations

The college has continued its extensive efforts, started in fall 2007, to develop Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for courses, general education, and degree and certificate programs. Faculty have attended regional and national conferences and consulted with SLO experts to assist in this endeavor. In 2007-2008, faculty received stipends totaling \$150,000 to work on SLOs and course revisions. This one-time expense resulted in numerous course updates that allowed the college to fully address its backlog of needed curriculum review and revision and to put in place a systematic process to perform curriculum updates on an annual basis. SLOs are now in place at both the course and program levels. In addition, program SLOs will be published in the 2009-2010 Catalog.

SLO assessment is underway for individual courses, general education, and degrees and certificates. The college appears to be on track to reach the sustainable, continuous quality improvement level of the Commission's *Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness – Part III: Student Learning Outcomes* by 2012.

Conclusions

The college has successfully resolved Recommendation 4.

Commission Concern 2: *The Commission asks Hartnell College to demonstrate that it meets Eligibility Requirement 10 which requires the institution “defines and publishes for each program and the program’s expected student learning and achievement outcomes. Through regular and systematic assessment, it demonstrates that students who complete programs, no matter where or how they are offered, achieve these outcomes.*

Observations

The college's discipline faculty have developed student learning outcomes for courses, general education (core competencies), and for degree and certificate programs. The SLOs for degree and certificate programs and core competencies will be published in the 2009-2010 Catalog and on the web version of the catalog. Course SLOs are included in course outlines. The college has in place a variety of methods to assess SLOs at every level and has completed assessments for two core competencies, communications and information competency, as well as for a number of individual courses. The infrastructure is in place to assess SLOs on a regular basis.

Conclusions

The college has successfully resolved Commission Concern 2.