

San Joaquin Delta College
December 15, 2008

Follow-Up Visit and Report

San Joaquin Delta College
5150 Pacific Avenue
Stockton, CA 95207

A Confidential Report Prepared for the Accrediting Commission
for Community and Junior Colleges
This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited
San Joaquin Delta College on
November 17, 2008

Brian King, Team Chair

President

Cabrillo College

Ken Meehan, Team Member

Dir. of Research/ Planning

Fullerton College

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of the follow-up visit to San Joaquin Delta College (“the College”) on Monday, November 17, 2008, was to review evidence and evaluate the mid-term report submitted by the College on October 15, 2008. The mid-term report was required by the Commission in a letter dated June 30, 2008, in which the Commission notified the College that it had “issued[d] a Warning and request[ed] that San Joaquin Delta College correct the deficiencies noted.”

The October 15, 2008 Follow-Up Report addressed a total of eleven (11) recommendations: Four (4) from the 2008 Visiting Team; Two (2) from the Commission; and Five (5) from a 2002 Evaluation Team. The daunting task for the two-person team on November 17, 2008 (“the Team”) was to evaluate progress toward responding to the eleven recommendations.

It was clear during the follow-up visit that the College has worked hard to address the various recommendations. The administrators, faculty and staff we met are committed to addressing the recommendations and demonstrated a spirit of cooperation and openness.

Just before the Team arrived, a Board election resulted in four new members elected to the College Governing Board. In recent weeks, a fifth member of the Board has resigned, so five of the seven members of the Board are now new. While this large turnover of board members poses obvious challenges, it also presents tremendous opportunities for the College to move forward in a positive direction in the coming months.

Discussion of Responses to the Recommendations

Recommendations from March 24-27, 2008, Visit and Report

Recommendation 1: *March 24-27, 2008 Visit and Report.* The team recommends that the Board of Trustees develops a systematic process to review and revise existing Board policies, and establishes and adheres to an acceptable code of ethics. (Standard IVB.1; IVB.1.a; IVB. 1.b-h, ER 3).

Observations and analysis of the evidence: The College has made significant progress towards developing a systematic process to review and revise Board policies. The Team met with the College committee entrusted with reviewing Board policies. A Board code of ethics policy is nearing final review and should return to the Board soon. Given the substantial turnover on the Board, it may take some time to inform the new Board of the background of the new policy and the need for a continuing commitment to policy review and revision. The committee process was not particularly nimble, but did demonstrate substantial involvement and interest on the part of the committee members.

Conclusion: The College has responded to Recommendation 1, and made substantial progress toward implementation of the recommendation. The leadership and emphasis of a Board that includes five new members will be essential to the College completing implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 2: *March 24-27, 2008 Visit and Report.* The visiting team recommends that the Board of Trustees establishes itself as a policy-making body, reaffirms delegation of operational authority to the Superintendent/President, and actively supports the authority of management for the administration of the College. (Standard IVB; IVB.1.e).

Observations and analysis of the evidence: As noted previously, the College Governing Board currently has five new members on the seven-person Board. The Team met with three members of the Board (the two remaining members of the Board in place at the time of the 2008 site visit and one of the four newly elected Board member). The Board members conveyed a commitment to implementing the second recommendations.

Conclusion: The College has a unique opportunity to transform the culture of its Governing Board in a positive way. Since four new members joined the Board in November and another new member will join the Board shortly, the next few months will be crucial. The College should place a very high priority on orientation and training for its new Board members.

Recommendation 3: *March 24-27, 2008 Visit and Report Report.* The visiting team recommends that the College decisively address the development and implementation of a comprehensive Strategic Plan closely focused on assessing Institutional effectiveness. A systematic, continuous cycle of feedback and evaluative improvement must be critically and deliberately developed and put into effect. This Strategic Plan must incorporate student learning outcomes within all institutional efforts, resource allocations, and be supported by program and service reviews and research data. Educational, fiscal, technological, physical, and human resources should be considered and integrated. As a whole, the planning document should also identify short- and long-term directions for the College, timelines for implementation, the individuals responsible for each area, monitoring and follow-up strategies, and expected outcomes (Standard IA; IB). This was noted in the 2002 recommendation item 3.1 and which has yet to be resolved to meet Commission Standards.

Observations and analysis of the evidence: The College has worked very hard to address the noted deficiencies in its strategic planning processes. Over the summer, the college added two additional goals to its Strategic Plan and made a concerted effort to communicate the revised plan to the college community. Specifically, the College has made progress in linking the Appreciate Inquiry (“AI”) process more directly to the Strategic Planning Process. The planning processes are still not completely integrated with the budgeting process, but the College acknowledges the importance of addressing that challenge.

Conclusion: The College has responded to Recommendation 3, and made significant progress towards addressing the recommendation. Continued effort and focus will be necessary to fully respond to Recommendation 3.

Recommendation 4: *March 24-27, 2008 Visit and Report.* The visiting team recommends that the College meet the urgent need to establish a stable management team. Longevity of the team, particularly at the vice-presidential level, will help resolve the perceived deficiencies in effective communication, comprehensive planning, and collaborative dialogue (Standard IIIA.1; IIIA.2). This was noted in the 2002 recommendations 7.1, 8.1 and 2.1 and which has yet to be resolved to meet Commission Standards.

Observations and analysis of the evidence: At the time of the November 17th follow-up visit, the College had filled four open or interim Vice President positions with permanent replacements. The new senior management group appeared to be making efforts to work together and become a cohesive team. The senior management group had just returned from an all-day retreat, and indicated support and respect for the college president.

Conclusion: The College has responded to Recommendation 4, and has filled the vacant or interim positions noted both in the 2002 and 2008 reports from the visiting teams. Since so many of the senior leaders are new to the College, it will take time to confirm the stability and cohesiveness of the developing team. The initial indications are that the evolving group of leaders has the potential to effectively address concerns about communication, planning and dialog.

Recommendations Accompanying June 30, 2008 Commission Action

Commission Recommendation #1: The College should demonstrate that it has completed the identification of SLOs and begun the implementation of assessments that would bring the College to the Development level on the Rubric for Evaluating Institutions Part III.

Observations and analysis of the evidence: The College concedes in the October 15th Report that by the fall of 2008, “just 57% of courses in the [College] curriculum contained SLOs and assessments, and few, if any, faculty had completed the cycle by reviewing their assessment results and revising their curricula or SLOs in light of the assessment results.” The College states “the goal of having 100% of courses having SLOs specifically identified and integrated into course outline and teaching objectives by June 30, 2009.

Conclusion: The College acknowledges in the October 15th Report that it has not made adequate progress in responding to this recommendation. The College is closer to developing a process and timeline to respond to the Commission’s Recommendation #1, but remains substantially behind where it should be at this point in time.

Commission Recommendation #2: The College should provide evidence that faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated student learning outcomes have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes (III.A.1.c).

Observations and analysis of the evidence: As have many colleges, the College challenges the premise that including achievement of student learning outcomes as a component of faculty evaluation is effective, citing guest key-note speaker Vincent Tinto. The College did note development of a new Faculty Academy that will include Student Learning Outcome and Assessment (“SLOA”) as an important component. The College has incorporated a Student Learning Outcome Assessment Cycle in collaboration with its Faculty Senate, and has “committed to the faculty that as long as the development of the SLOA Cycle remains on target, SLOA development or data from the process will not be used in faculty evaluations.” The College’s SLOA schedule calls for recommendations to be made to its Institutional Assessment Committee in early 2009 with respect to the faculty evaluation process.

Conclusion: The College has discussed how to improve the faculty evaluation process with its Faculty Senate as suggested by the Commission’s Recommendation #2, but challenges the Commission’s premise that the most effective way to achieve implementation and assessment of SLOs is by including them as a component in performance evaluations. Whether or not the College includes the suggested criteria in performance evaluations at this point seems less significant than a more timely response to the Commission’s Recommendation #1.

Recommendations Made by 2002 Evaluation Team

2002 Recommendation 2.1: The College should develop and implement plans to increase College-wide sensitivity to the needs of its diverse population, evaluate the perception of bias by some employees on the campus, and review implementation of workplace opportunities to ensure they are equitable for all employees.

Observations and analysis of the evidence: The College has vigorously addressed the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly diverse population since the 2002 evaluation visit, especially with respect to students. The College completed a Student Equity Plan in 2006 and has developed several diversity initiatives after participating in the Equity for All collaboration between several California Community Colleges and the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California. The College acknowledges more work is necessary to complete and implement its Faculty and Staff Diversity Plan. The College anticipates its new Vice President of Human Resources will complete and implement the plan in early 2009.

Conclusion: The College has substantially addressed 2002 Recommendation 2.1, with work remaining to implement the staff portion of the planning process.

2002 Recommendation 3.1: The College needs to proceed under the guidance of the Mission Statement and with the leadership of its new President, to focus on College-wide

strategic goals supported by department, division, and administrative plans. These College-wide goals with measurable objectives and action plans need to be clearly articulated as the basis for priorities in budgeting and other decisions. The process for planning and budgeting needs explicit communication and coordination, clearer charges for the related committees, and expected timelines to meet both long-range objectives and annual implementation processes. Furthermore, the College should implement the assessment of Institutional Outcome Measures as benchmarks for progress in achieving College-wide goals. (Currently Standard I)

Observations and analysis of the evidence and Conclusion: See observation and analysis of *Recommendation 2 from March 24-27, 2008 Visit and Report above.*

2002 Recommendation 5.1: It is recommended that the College enact a plan to resolve the issue of the counseling department schedules to ensure that the counseling needs of students are being met. (Currently Standard II)

Observations and analysis of the evidence: The evidence reviewed by the Team concerning the resolution of counseling schedules was mixed. The College has taken action since the 2008 visit to utilize technology and planning to improve the availability of counseling services, but no comprehensive document or plan emerged to outline in detail the steps taken and the effectiveness of those steps.

Conclusion: The College has made progress towards implementing 2002 Recommendation 5.1, but a comprehensive plan with measurable outcomes to demonstrate responsiveness to student needs has not yet emerged.

2002 Recommendation 7.1: As called for in the 1996 Accreditation Evaluation Report recommendation 4.1, the College should ensure that evaluations of staff are conducted at agreed-upon intervals and provide training on evaluation procedures to managers, faculty, and classified staff. (Standards 7.B1 and 7.B2)

Observations and analysis of the evidence: The College is still encountering substantial challenges in completing employee performance evaluations in a timely manner. Estimates of evaluations still not completed varied from fifty (50) to eighty (80), with both the volume of the estimates and the significant range of the estimates indicating a continuing structural problem.

Conclusion: The College recently hired a new Vice President of Human Resources. One indication of effectiveness will be the elimination of the continuing substantial backlog of performance appraisals.

2002 Recommendation 8.1: A comprehensive Strategic Plan should be developed with input from all key constituencies, which integrates educational programs and facilities needs for the entire San Joaquin Delta College District including the main campus in Stockton, the Tracy Learning Center, the proposed Mountain House Center, and other centers and sites. The plan should build in contingencies for short and long-term demographic trends and shifts, anticipate and balance needs at the main campus with

needs at regional centers and outlying sites, maximize the use of distance education strategies, project expansion and investment in centers and sites as needed, and consider development of collaborative agreements with neighboring college districts to help address educational needs in outlying areas.

Observations and analysis of the evidence: With respect to services provide at present and proposed satellite locations, the College remains in significant turmoil in determining how to proceed in the development of centers away from the main campus. The Board—with four new elected members and a fifth to be appointed—will have to demonstrate leadership and certainly in moving forward with the development of satellite locations. A major issue in the November 2008 Board election appears to have been how the College should move forward on this issue.

Conclusion: The College's response to 2002 Recommendation 8.1 remains in flux. The decision of how to move forward will be an early test of leadership for the Board.