Follow-Up Report Evaluation

March 27, 2012

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 April 20, 2012

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**Introduction and Overview**

The purpose of the April 20, 2012 visit to San Joaquin Delta College was to verify the contents of the Follow-Up Report submitted by the college on March 27, 2012, as required by the Commission. A two person team visited the college and was charged with the responsibility to evaluate the college’s resolution of the deficiencies noted in Recommendation #3 (long-standing since 2002); Recommendation #1 (since 2008); and Recommendation #2 (from 2008.) The team experienced a very cordial reception by the college staff and each request of the team was accommodated fully and hospitably. The team had the opportunity to meet with the president of the board of trustees, the president of the college and other administrative staff, with several faculty members and with classified staff. The team also casually engaged several students during the course of the visit. Universally, the employees of the district demonstrated a full and complete understanding of the significance of the college’s accreditation status and its importance.

To gain a clear understanding of the status of the college’s accreditation over time, the team developed this matrix:

**History of Accreditation Visits to San Joaquin Delta College since 2002**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Visit</th>
<th>Type of Visit</th>
<th>Result of Visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring, 2002</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Reaffirm Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring, 2008</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall, 2008</td>
<td>Follow Up Progress Report</td>
<td>Probation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 2009</td>
<td>Follow Up Progress Report</td>
<td>Reaffirm Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring, 2011</td>
<td>Focused Midterm Report</td>
<td>Warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring, 2012</td>
<td>Follow Up Progress Report</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the Follow-Up report did not state that the college has resolved the deficiencies and now meets the Standards, the team was able to ascertain the college’s successful resolution for two of the three recommendations as noted in the report that follows.

**Discussion of Responses to the Recommendations**

**Recommendation #3 (from 2009)**

*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 as Recommendation 3.1 in 2002.]

Observations and Analysis of the Evidence:

Interviews and conversations with a variety of college personnel and students indicate that the college has undertaken a serious and sustained effort to create a Strategic Plan that is integrated with the Educational Master Plan, the Facilities Plan, and with Program Review. The college identified and scheduled three “mandatory” flex days, all focused on the work of the strategic plan, including program review, integrated planning, and the assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). These days were supplemented by an additional three retreats and many college meetings. In addition, the college hired a planning consultant to assist and guide them in the process of developing a strategic plan. The college appears to have “turned a corner” in regard to Student Learning Outcomes with 100% of courses and programs reporting defined SLOs and approximately 30% of courses reporting assessment results via the CurricuNet software system which is used by the college to manage course curriculum. These SLO activities are integrated into the Program Review process and the Program Review process references the strategic goals and activities that are outlined in the Strategic Plan. The Program Review information is evaluated by one of three Program Review Committees (one each for Instruction, Administrative Services, and Student Services.)

Specific to this recommendation, the team met with a group of five college leaders who are among those who are designated as “Champions” of the five Strategic Plan goals. These individuals have a wide-range of responsibilities under the plan and are working with committees or task forces of interested college personnel to accomplish the various initiatives identified in the plan. They are to report back quarterly to the Budget Planning Committee on the progress of the various initiatives identified under each of the strategic goals. In this way resource allocation is connected to the Strategic Plan.

The Budget Planning Committee is a critical hub in the planning and resource allocation processes of the college. This committee, chaired by the Vice President of Administrative Services reviews information from the program reviews, including SLO information, as well as from the Strategic Plan Champions, before making recommendations to the Executive Cabinet, which consists of the President, three Vice Presidents, and the Director of Human Resources.

The college presented a number of tables and schematics in its Follow-Up report as a way of illustrating the planning process, the integration of the various plans, and the timelines and calendars. The team found these tools of little value in clearly identifying the college’s work at demonstrating its resolution of Recommendation #3. One document that was unearthed by the team at the time of the visit, and that the team found very illustrative, was the “Crosswalk Comparison of Mission Statement, Strategic Goals of 2008, and Values and Action Plans Identified in the 2010 Educational Master Plan.” It did an excellent job of tracking and connecting much of the good work the college has done in responding to Recommendation #3.
The college personnel with whom we spoke were aware of the Strategic Plan and many, if not most, had attended one or more of the recent retreats that served to develop the plan. The degree to which the plan is integrated with the Educational Master Plan is commendable. Still, the plan is relatively new and the documentation of the processes is not yet fully developed and only time will tell if the process becomes embedded in the campus culture. From the high level of participation and knowledge of the plan among the college leadership and those interviewed, the prospects for sustaining the plan over time seem good.

Conclusion:

While the college has made impressive recent progress on addressing this recommendation, the Strategic Plan that has been developed, along with its associated processes and integrations, is not a mature one and does not have a proven track record. Accreditation Standards 1A and 1B use the terminology “...ongoing and systematic...,” “...re-evaluation to verify and improve effectiveness...,” “...uses ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to refine its key process...,” and “...systematically reviewing and modifying, as appropriate, all parts of the cycle...” If the college continues along its present path in regard to actualizing the comprehensive strategic plan and continues with the new attitude and understanding exhibited by the employees of the district, by the time of the next comprehensive visit in 2014, it is likely to be able to demonstrate that strategic planning is woven tightly and thoroughly throughout the organization. The team suggests, in the interest of clarity and comprehension, that the college consider re-naming the document that is entitled “2011-2012 Educational Master Plan (EMP) Recommendations and Action Plans” and identify it as the college’s strategic plan. In addition, the team suggests the college consider evaluating and refining the components of the strategic plan, particularly in regard to the “short-term and long-term directions for the college,” and “timelines for implementation,” as noted in Recommendation #3. When evaluating its resolution of the deficiencies noted in Recommendation #3, the college would be well-served to address each point of its planning agenda from the March, 2011 Focused Midterm Report (page 40), and address each of its self-identified projects that are included on pages 5 and 6 of the March, 2012 Follow-Up Report, as well as the action plans there within. Doing so will support and build a continuity in the college’s approach to resolving Recommendation #3.

In summary, while the college’s work in support of Recommendation #3 has been significant and meets the Standards in many ways, the college has not met the recommendation because the strategic plan has only recently been put into place and does not meet the evaluative, cyclical, and ongoing tests as required by the Standards.


Commission Recommendation #1 (June 30, 2008)

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 has advanced remarkably in its work to resolve this recommendation. The addition of two new flex days and the apparent sea-change in the attitude of faculty have allowed the college to make important strides with SLOs. Notably, up until late 2010 and early 2011, the faculty had successfully resisted efforts by the administration to make progress toward meeting the Accreditation Standards surrounding SLOs. Negotiations between the faculty union and the district bargaining team ultimately resulted in the faculty’s acknowledgement of, acceptance of, and agreement of its role and responsibility for the development and assessment of SLOs for every course. Beyond the formality of an employee contract that defines the faculty role in the SLO process, the team spoke directly to several faculty members who expressed a “true believer” or an “I’ve seen the light” status in regard to SLOs. These faculty members spoke of verifiable improvement in student success rates as a direct result of the implementation of SLOs in the curriculum for their own courses. The change in attitude was seen by the team as profound. SLOs are now integrated into faculty evaluation, course and program SLOs have been written for all courses and programs and assessment/closing the loop has begun. The college has met the Developmental level on the ACCJC’s rubric and it is well on its way to demonstrating Proficiency.

Conclusion:

The college has met this recommendation.

Commission Recommendation # 2 (June 30, 2008)

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:

A part of the aforementioned successful negotiations between the faculty union and the district on the matter of SLOs, was the inclusion of an evaluative component for the faculty aimed at consideration of the effectiveness of the faculty members in producing learning outcomes. A peer evaluation in this regard was developed and agreed upon and has been successfully implemented into the faculty evaluation process. The satisfaction of both sides in this solution is marked, and both sides acknowledge improvement in student success attributable to SLOs.

Conclusion:
The college has met this recommendation.

Additional Comments

A part of the team’s assignment in this follow-up visit was to, if it wished, “to comment on other issues that come to its attention if they would significantly bear on accreditation matters.” The team would be remiss if it did not bring to the Commission’s attention its concern that the college no longer meets Recommendation #4 of the March, 2008 visit and report, also noted in the 2002 Recommendations 2.1, 7.1, 8.1, which states:

“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)”

Currently, the college is administered by:

An interim superintendent/president (since February, 2012, formerly the V.P of Instruction);

An interim assistant superintendent/vice president of instruction (since February, 2012, formerly the Dean of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness);

A vice president of student services (since July 1, 2011);

A vice president of administrative services (since March, 2012 after serving as interim since November 1, 2011 for one year); and

A Director of Human Resources (since July 15, 2011).

Through a series of unfortunate circumstances, the college has had 3 superintendent/presidents, both regular and interim, in the past 12 months. A long standing superintendent/president left the college in to assume a chancellorship in May of 2010, and was replaced by an interim for one year. The college hired a new superintendent/president who took office in May of 2011 and had left by February of 2012. A popular and long-standing vice president of instruction and the college’s ALO, was appointed interim superintendent/president and was back-filled by another long-standing SJDC administrator, the Dean of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness. The Dean of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness position remains vacant.

It was clear to the team that this turnover at the highest levels of administration has had a deleterious impact on the college’s progress toward regaining a sanction-less reaffirmation of accreditation, and clearly has negatively affected the college and its constituents. While the interim superintendent/president and the interim vice-president are well-regarded on campus and by the board of trustees, and are experienced California community college administrators, they are nonetheless interim. The board of trustees plans to launch a national college search immediately that will be managed by
the SJDC human resources department, with the goal of having a permanent superintendent/president in place by September 1, 2012. Depending on the outcome of that search, it could be another year before the college has a full complement of permanent, top-level administrators. Essentially, no top level administrator at the college has been in his or her role for more than 9 months.

The team feels that if it was evaluating Recommendation #4 from 2002 and 2008, it would not be able to describe the administration of the college as stable or as having longevity.