

Follow-Up Visit Report

Riverside City College

4800 Magnolia Avenue
Riverside, California 92506

A Confidential Report Prepared for the Accrediting Commission
For Community and Junior Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited

Riverside City College
on
November 22, 2010

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DATE: November 24, 2010

TO: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

FROM: William V. Karns, Ed.D., Team Chair

SUBJECT: Report of Follow-Up Visit Team to Riverside City College, November 22, 2010

Introduction:

At its meeting January 6-8, 2010, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior College, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, reviewed the Follow-Up Report submitted by Riverside City College and the report of the evaluation team which visited Monday, October 19-Tuesday, October 20, 2009. The Commission took action to accept the report, but also acted to issue a Warning and to ask that Riverside City College correct the deficiency noted in the follow-up report. Further, the college was required to complete a Follow-Up Report by October, 15, 2010, to be followed by a visit by Commission representatives. Accordingly, the visiting team, Dr. William Karns and Mr. Mohamed Eisa, conducted the visit to Riverside City College on November 22, 2010. The purpose of the team visit was to verify the accuracy of the Follow-Up Report prepared by the college through examination of evidence, to determine if sustained, continuous, and positive improvements had been made at the institution, and to determine that the institution had resolved the recommendations made by the comprehensive evaluation team and now meets the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies.

The team found that the college had prepared very well for the visit by providing excellent electronic access to the support documents cited in the October 15 report to the Commission and to additional documents as requested by team members quickly before the visit; by providing hard copies of the support documents in the team room at the time of the visit; and by arranging meetings with the individuals and groups agreed upon earlier with the team chair. In the course of the visit, the team met with the president of the college; the Accreditation Liaison Officer; the Academic Senate president; CSEA and student leaders; thirteen members of the Strategic Planning Executive Council; five members of the college and district institutional research staff; the three college vice presidents; three program review lead faculty; nine members of the Institutional Effectiveness Council; the Curriculum Committee chair and three department chairs; and eight members of the Resource Development and Administrative Services Leadership Council. The team reviewed a wide variety of documents pertaining to the college's planning and accountability processes, including the Riverside City College Strategic Plan, 2009-2014; the Riverside City College Strategic Plan 2009-2014 Annual Assessment Report Card, 2009-2010; the RCC Long-Range Educational Master Plan; the RCC Long-Range Facilities Master Plan; the RCC Strategic Plan Constitution and Bylaws; the RCC Planning Calendar; various Action Plans; the Mid-Range Financial Plan; the RCC Technology; the Survey of the Strategic Planning Process; and minutes

from the board of trustees, various planning-related committees, and announcements of forums and other college-wide communications related to the planning array, among other pertinent documents.

The Follow-Up Report and visit were expected to document **complete resolution** of the following recommendation as specified in the January 29, 2010 Commission Action Letter:

College Recommendation 1: Institutional Commitments and Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement. The team recommends that the college reframe its mission to be comprehensive, including educational goals that may be fulfilled at the college and a description of the primary student population for which the college is designing programs (Standard 1A).

- The team further recommends that the college clarify the ways in which the strategic plan aligns with the college mission statement, links to the strategic goals, drives budget allocation, and ensures the distribution of technology and human resources (Standard 111D.1).

- The team also recommends that the college develop a process of integrating program review with institutional goals, complete the implementation of the planning process, assess that process, and communicate the results of that assessment to all constituents in order to promote institutional effectiveness and identify areas for improvement (Standards 1B.2, 1B.3, 11B.4, and 111D.3).

College Responses to the Team Recommendations:

In specific terms, the October 2009 Follow-Up Team concluded in its November, 2009 report that while other elements of the recommendation had been successfully addressed and while significant progress had been made in the area of strategic planning, the college did not at the time of the visit have a completed strategic plan that tied “all the pieces together” or that “provided overarching strategic directions” and thus the recommendation had not been completely addressed, naming five areas of concern:

Despite the extensive efforts of SPC and its subcommittees during the past two years, the college does not have a cohesive, organized strategic plan that delineates the college’s strategic directions. Absent also are the college’s action plans (outside of annual or comprehensive program reviews) that spell out the action steps, responsible parties, timelines for implementation, expected outcomes, and projected resources needed to implement the strategic plan. Furthermore, the college does not have a planning calendar, nor does it have a set of performance indicators and benchmarks (other than provided by the district in the District’s Report Card) to guide its journey toward reaching its goals. In addition, the college does not have a technology master plan... The college has only partially implemented the recommendation. (Amador and Eisa, 2009, pp 5-6).

College Recommendation 1: *Institutional Commitments and Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement* The team recommends that the college reframe its mission to be comprehensive, including educational goals that may be fulfilled at the college and a description of the primary student population for which the college is designing programs (Standard 1A).

- The team further recommends that the college clarify the ways in which the strategic plan aligns with the college mission statement, links to the strategic goals, drives budget allocation, and ensures the distribution of technology and human resources (Standard 111D.1).

- The team also recommends that the college develop a process of integrating program review with institutional goals, complete the implementation of the planning process, assess that process, and communicate the results of that assessment to all constituents in order to promote institutional effectiveness and identify areas for improvement (Standards 1B.2, 1B.3, 11B.4, and 111D.3).

Findings and Evidence: The team based its findings on the many documents made available to the visiting team both electronically and physically in the team-room, and through the statements of the college community members interviewed by the team. It was clear to the team through the documents reviewed in advance of the visit—and verified and supported by the interviews on November 22—that by the time of the current visit, the college had completed a cohesive college strategic plan, developed comprehensive action plans for achieving college goals, created and implemented a comprehensive planning calendar, created a comprehensive set of Key Performance Indicators that marked progress by the college in achieving its goals, and developed a technology plan that linked to district and college goals, listed assessment and outcome measures and codified technology standards and recommendations. The team found that the college does in fact have a coherent, cohesive strategic plan, well-defined strategies for achieving its goals, an array of appropriate disaggregated data to evaluate the effectiveness of its strategic goals, and strong lines of communication with the college community related to the planning processes.

The college strategic plan and strategic planning constitution and bylaws that guide its use and review now distinguish strategic functions from operational functions and clearly lay out agreed-upon long-term institutional goals that focus on the overarching purposes and directions of the institution. The college's strategic plan uses the college mission statement to derive goals which are in turn used to develop the strategies leading to well-developed action plans, which have appropriate benchmarks with which to measure institutional progress. In addition, the recently developed planning calendar describes the timeline for the various planning activities and provides assurance that continued review of the planning processes will occur iteratively in the future. While a change of nomenclature in respect to the annual review / unit planning process (to help distinguish it from discipline-level programs reviews) may be at times a bit confusing, it was clear from the documents and interviews that college community members understood the differences in the processes and understood their place in the overall planning array and

their importance in enacting the larger goals of the institution. The Unit Plan Review Committee, its members appointed as specified in the Strategic Planning Bylaws, reviews and prioritizes the requests submitted by each unit of the college (academic departments, administrative offices, student services, facilities, etc.). The prioritized requests from the Unit Plans and from the Comprehensive Program Reviews serve as strategic inputs to the Strategic Planning Leadership Councils, whose charges also include the development and revision of the various long-term planning documents—including the Educational Master Plan; the Facilities Master Plan; the Mid-Range Financial Plan; and the Technology Master Plan.

Conclusion: The previous follow-up report team noted five significant areas related to planning that the college needed to address:

1. The lack of a cohesive, organized strategic plan that delineates the college's strategic directions.
2. The lack of college action plans (outside of annual or comprehensive program reviews) that spell out the action steps, responsible parties, timelines for implementation, expected outcomes, and projected resources needed to implement the strategic plan.
3. The lack of a college planning calendar,
4. The lack of a set of performance indicators and benchmarks (other than provided by the district in the District's Report Card) to guide its journey toward reaching its goals.
5. The lack of a technology master plan.

The current team found that all five areas have been completely addressed. The college's new action plans are models of good practice in linking strategic plan goals to activities, performance indicators and expected outcomes, and need for resources. While complex, the college's now-completed strategic planning process is clearly embraced by the college community. It appears to be a source of pride for the college, and its steps and components are transparent, well-publicized and the product of a great deal of institutional dialogue that appears to have strengthened both the strategic plan itself and, as stated by some of the interviewees, ultimately the capacity of the institution to approach the fiscal challenges facing the college and its system of higher education. Moreover, there is evidence in both the planning calendar and other documents related to the planning process—and in the assertions of the wide variety of college community members staff interviewed by the visiting team—that the strategic planning processes will continue past the period of recent intense development to be the subject of robust dialogue and a concomitant cycle of ongoing review and adaptation based on evidence to achieve improvement in student success. Thus the team believes that the college has achieved the “sustainable continuous quality improvement” level and believes that the college has fully met the expectations of the recommendation and is in compliance with Commission standards, eligibility requirements and policies.