

Team Follow-up Visit Report

Golden West College
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A confidential follow-up report prepared for the
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited
Golden West College on April 16, 2009

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting of June 6-8, 2007, reviewed the institutional self-study report of Golden West College and the report of the evaluation team. The Commission reaffirmed Golden West College's accreditation with a requirement that the College complete a progress report. That Progress Report was timely submitted and followed up with a Progress Visit by William Andrews and Pam Eddinger on April 14-15, 2008.

As a result of the 2008 Progress Visit several recommendations in the original self-study were deemed satisfied. However, issues remained with recommendations, 5, 7, 16 and the Commission Recommendation I. At its meeting of June 4-6, 2008 the Commission reviewed and accepted the Progress Report and the report of the 2008 Evaluation Team. This acceptance included the requirement that the College complete an additional Follow-up Report by March 1, 2009 which was to be followed by a visit of Commission representatives. Golden West College was advised that the U.S. Department of Education regulations required institutions out of compliance with standards or on sanction were expected to make corrections within a two-year period or the Commission must take action including possible termination of accreditation. Golden West is expected to correct the deficiencies noted by June 2009.

2009 Team members, Dr. Robert Carlson (Chair) and Dr. Pam Eddinger visited Golden West College on behalf of the Commission on April 16, 2009. The purpose of the visit was to verify the contents of the College's Follow-up Report.

COLLEGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 5

The Team recommends that the College evaluate its current progress in defining and establishing student learning outcomes, and through broad-based and inclusive dialog renew its efforts to develop a common understanding of student outcomes. The College must establish student learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates, and degrees (Standards II.A.1.c, II.A.2, and II.A.3).

The College has evaluated its current progress through two methods: (1) Program review includes a report on the status of SLO development for each course and the program; and (2) The College's Institutional Effectiveness Committee, College Planning and Budget Committee, and Student Services Planning Team complete a survey using the California Assessment Institute's (CAI) framework rubric. This survey primarily assesses the level of dialog and perceptions concerning the progress on the development, assessment, and implementation of SLO's. Because the initial use of this tool was

undertaken 18 months previously and the next use is still being calendared, the 2009 Team did not sense that this was yet a regular and institutionalized process and, additionally, it was unclear how the results were disseminated and used.

In addition it was not clear if the program review was effectively producing curriculum change through requirements regarding SLOs. The College should examine the Commission Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness – Part I: Program Review, as well as Part III: Student Learning Outcomes for guidance as it moves forward with its program review process.

The development of a broad and common understanding of SLOs is still in progress although notable efforts are being made including an IEC website that serves as an entry point for SLO information and repository of resources to form a basic understanding of SLOs. The CAI SLO framework has been used as the basis of dialog in various campus committees and a regular time is to be set aside for this discussion at each of the core planning team meetings.

The actual development of Instructional, program, course, degree and certificate SLOs is far along and nearing completion. All 962 active courses have SLOs as does all student services programs, all 38 of the College's majors, and all the GE area. Some work remains in the Certificate area as well as mapping course-level SLOs to program and GE SLOs.

Student Services has operated with an interim Vice President over the past year. SLO assessment, which experienced its second full cycle at the last Progress Visit, has not progressed to its third due to the interruption of leadership. The college has chosen to address the issue of basic skills, a pressing problem within student services, while awaiting a permanent Vice President of Student Services.

2009 Team Conclusion

The IEC activities and the use of the CAI rubric, about to begin its second cycle, are part of the meta-level activities the college uses to ascertain the level of engagement in ongoing SLO activities. The surveys and their results are meant to be part of the dialogue for educating the college about SLOs. This is being accomplished.

The concern of the 2009 Visiting Team is not only with the process, but also the products. The College has completed the writing of SLOs for courses, programs (AA and Certificates) and General Education areas, with the exception of ten Certificates. This is encouraging progress. However, there is evidence that in only a limited number of disciplines and areas are at the next stage activities, i.e., assessment instruments, assessment results, and program improvement, is being addressed. Further, there is no documented information as to where the products (course SLOs, course assessments, program SLOs, program assessments, GE SLOs, GE assessments) are housed, and how they are connected.

The College has a stated goal of better documenting its efforts to define and establish SLOs through eLumen, the software designed to manage a college's attention to student achievement, SLOs, and education results. A review of eLumen and its content finds evidence of testing and exploratory use only.

So the 2009 Team found substantial progress in the completion of the writing of SLOs, but did not see evidence of the accomplishment of College's projected goal in the last Progress Report – movement to Column five of the GWC adopted SLO model – which involves using assessment results for program improvement. The targeted level correlates to the Commission's SLO rubric level four, Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement. The work description of last year's accomplishments reads very similar to what the 2009 Team has found a year later. Assessment models still do not generally exist in the instructional and administrative areas of the College. Instruction still needs to enter the first full cycle of assessment and the Student Services area has not moved beyond its second cycle. The College also suspended the assessment of Student Services SLOs for the current year. The College appears to have made little new progress on this recommendation since the 2008 visit.

It is important that the College recognize that while they may use a variety of tools and rubrics for organizing their work around SLO Development and implementation, the College will be evaluated by the Commission using the Commission's Rubric. The 2009 Team applied the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior College rubric and the 2009 Team's assessment is that the College is just entering the "Development" level and needs to proceed through Development, Proficiency, and Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement.

The College has taken the initiative to appoint a full time Instructional SLO Coordinator. Part of the Coordinator's responsibility includes professional development for faculty in SLO creation and assessment, and hands on assistance for faculty to complete the assessment work.

The 2008 Team's recommendation included developing a plan for getting the work done at all levels. This was sound advice but the plan was not in evidence.

The College did not fully resolve the deficiencies addressed by this recommendation within the timeline established in the 2008 Action Letter from the Commission.

2009 Team Recommendation

The 2009 Visiting Team strongly recommends that following be done immediately:

- 1) Using the guidance provided by the Commission rubric and timetable, the College must develop a SLO implementation plan. This plan must include goals and activities, timeline (which allows

for a completed assessment and implementation cycle during the 2011-12 school year for all courses and programs), needed resources, and persons responsible for the complete integration of SLO's (the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level, as measured by the Commission's rubric). This plan must clarify each step of the SLO process, including where the products are housed, who is responsible, integration of SLO work with program review, and how the process and the product will move to Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement, the top level of the Commission's rubric. The plan must also define the training processes for faculty and staff and address the future use of eLumen as a structural component. The College must then aggressively implement that plan.

- 2) The 2009 Visiting Team further recommends that Student Services assessment continue and complete its third cycle of assessment and student services program improvement.

Recommendation 7

The Team recommends that the College commit to student equity and diversity through implementing the goals of the Equity Task Force, in order to assure equitable access and learning support for all its students (standards II.B.3.a and II.B.3.d).

The College has a College Student Success Committee which was established in 2008. This Committee is responsible for College's equity plan. Prior to this Committee the College formed five goals within their plan all of which were accomplished by 2008. The College produced a Student Equity Progress Report 2008 which detailed the work on these goals.

The College operates significant number of on-going programs and services to assist with basic skills development, including 12 new projects for 2007-08.

The major planning documents of the College are supportive of student and staff equity and diversity. Several statements in the College Mission and goals emphasize this commitment.

Program review includes the collection of data regarding disproportionate impact. Among the training for faculty and staff is a presentation emphasizing the College's commitment to diversity among the faculty and staff. Additional workshops includes topics like Strategies to Increase Student Success with diverse learning styles, Improving student success through technology, and Effective strategies to help students succeed.

2009 Team Conclusion

The 2008 Team report indicated that the College had satisfied this recommendation. The continued emphasis and progress is commendable and the 2009 Visiting Team agrees with that conclusion.

Recommendation 16

The 2008 Team found that the District failed to adhere to the Commission policy for the evaluation of institutions in a multi-college district. At the time, the District and colleges had only recently begun to address the delineation of district and college roles, authorities, and responsibilities.

The 2009 Team confirmed that a District Office/College Map(ping) and a new Board Policy 010-2-6.1: Delineation of Authority to District Chancellor had been finalized. The 2009 Team also noted that Organizational Delineation of Responsibility and Process for Decision Making and Summary of Functions documents had been prepared prior to the team visit. The Coast Community College District has delineated specific system functions as distinct from those of the colleges and communicated these different roles, responsibilities, and authorities to organizational employees and constituencies.

The 2009 team also reviewed printed material and interviewed district representatives regarding a January 7, 2009 Board action placing the system Chancellor on leave. Evidence indicates that the District Human Resources Officer acted as Acting Chancellor from January 8 through January 21, 2009. By Board action, the President of Coastline Community College began serving as both acting district chancellor and college president on January 22, 2009. This dual employment was in effect during the 2009 Team visit on April 16, 2009.

The combined responsibilities for the District's acting chancellor and Coastline College President are inconsistent with the Board's recently developed District/College Functioning Map(ping), Summary of Functions, and District Organizational Chart (Standard IV.b). The blending of roles, responsibilities, and authority clouds the delineation of specific district and college functions called for in the 2007 site visit team's recommendations. The intertwined acting Chancellor/President roles serve as both an actual and perceived conflict of interest, inconsistent with the Commission's delegation of authority standard. [Standard. IV.3e]

On May 6, 2009, the Commission President and 2009 Team Chair received official Coast Community College District correspondence memorializing the immediate appointment of an acting president for Coastline College. Evidence indicates that the chancellor/president roles at the District are currently separated consistent with Commission policy and Standard IV.

2009 Team Conclusion

The 2009 Team found that the District has addressed the Commission policy for the evaluation of institutions in a multi-college district by clearly defining the respective organizational roles, authorities, and responsibilities for the District and its colleges.

Commission Concern I

The College must demonstrate that it is in compliance with Eligibility Requirement ten which requires the College to (“ . . . define and publish 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 and how they are offered, achieve these outcomes.”

Much of the background for this Recommendation can be reviewed under Recommendation Five in this document. The College has written SLOs completed for all ten degree programs, all 38 of their approved majors, and their student services programs. They have completed 11 of 32 certificate programs. All 962 active courses have identified SLOs.

It is clear, however, that these SLO’s were written without a consistent format or syntax and, as a result, there is a wide variation in their usefulness for assessment purposes. A major part of this year’s work by the College was to re-write a number of program and course SLO’s so they could then proceed to assessment.

The College set a goal last year to complete SLOs for twenty majors and certificates of achievement. They exceed that goal. They have set the goal to complete all remaining certificate SLOs by the end of spring 2009.

2009 Team Conclusion

It is true that a small number of certificate programs remain in need of written SLOs but they have a very short calendar for completion. The College has demonstrated the ability to complete these certificate SLOs by the end of spring 2009.

Of greater concern is the assessment of their SLOs, which is generally lacking (with the exception of Student Services). The College is just entering the Development level of the Commission’s rubric for evaluating progress on Student Learning Outcomes. The College still needs to complete this level and proceed through the Proficiency and Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement levels. See additional information in the 2009 Team recommendation for Recommendation Five.

The College did not fully resolve the deficiencies addressed by this recommendation within the timeline established in the 2008 Action Letter from the Commission.