

MAY 11 2010

Follow-up Report

Merritt College
12500 Campus Drive
Oakland, CA 94619

A Confidential Report Prepared for the Accrediting Commission
for Community and Junior Colleges
This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited

Merritt College

on

April 15, 2010

Mr. Michael Claire	President	College of San Mateo
Name of Team Chair	Title	Institution
Dr. Monte Perez	President	Moreno Valley College
Name of Team Member	Title	Institution
Dr. L. Troy Sheffield	Dean, Research, Planning and Development	San Bernardino College
Name of Team Member	Title	Institution

[Type text]

DATE: April 28, 2010

TO: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

FROM: Michael Claire, Team Chair

SUBJECT: Report of Follow-Up Visit Team to Merritt College, April 16 2010

Introduction:

A comprehensive visit was conducted to Merritt College in March 2009. At its meeting June 9-11, 2009, the Commission acted to place Merritt College on Warning and to require Merritt College to submit a Follow-Up Report followed by a visit. The visiting team, Mr. Michael Claire, Dr. Monte Perez, and Dr. L. Troy Sheffield, conducted the site visit to Merritt College on April 15, 2010. The purpose of the team visit was to verify that the Follow-Up Report prepared by the college was accurate through examination of evidence, to determine if sustained, continuous, and positive improvements had been made at the institution, and that the institution has resolved the recommendations made by the comprehensive evaluation team and now meets the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The visiting team limited its review to college recommendations 2 and 4. A separate team made a visit to the Peralta District Office on April 19, 2010 to review district recommendations 6,7, and 8.

In general, the team found that the college had prepared well for the visit by arranging for meetings with the individual and groups agreed upon earlier with the team chair and by assembling appropriate documents in the meeting room used by the team. Over the course of the day, the team met with the following individuals: the President of the college, the Accreditation Liaison Officer, the Vice President of Student Services, the Director of Business and Administrative Services, the Faculty SLO Coordinator, the Academic Senate President, the Classified Senate President, 2 deans, and various department chairs.

The Follow-Up Report and visit were expected to document resolution of the following recommendations:

Recommendation 2: Program Review

The team recommends that the college further refine its program review, planning, and resource allocation processes so that they are more clearly based on an analysis of quality, effectiveness, and student learning. Furthermore, the college must develop a systematic means to evaluate those processes and assess whether its plans actually lead to improvements in programs and services (I.B.3, I.B.6, I.B.7).

Recommendation 4: Performance Evaluations

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the college develop a plan to complete all outstanding performance evaluations expeditiously. This was also a recommendation of the 2003 visiting team (III.A.1b).

College Responses to the Team Recommendations:

Recommendation 2: The team recommends that the college further refine its program review, planning, and resource allocation processes so that they are more clearly based on an analysis of quality, effectiveness, and student learning. Furthermore, the college must develop a systematic means to evaluate those processes and assess whether its plans actually lead to improvements in programs and services (I.B.3, I.B.6, I.B.7).

Findings and Evidence:

The *Follow-Up Report* provided information to help the team understand what stage in program review development the college had attained, however much of this was further clarified at the visit. The evidence in the *Follow-Up Report* provided the templates for program review and expanded unit planning but it was unclear until the visit how the information derived from these templates were going to be used for resource allocation.

At the time of the visit, the college was undergoing its first revised program review cycle. From 2006 the college was allowed to continue with its well established unit planning efforts which supported educational master planning. During the same period, the other three colleges in the Peralta District launched their instructional program review process. The intent of the district program review process, including Merritt's unit planning process, was to integrate program review into district-wide planning processes.

The team was able to confirm activities in a productive program review process by reviewing notebooks, documents and interviewing faculty and administrators regarding program review. During the interviews, Merritt College faculty and both instructional and student services' administrators indicated positive outcomes leading to overall improvement with its programs. Some of the benefits of program review, as opposed to unit planning, involved a more collegial process among faculty, submitting reports to managers and rewriting reports to better capture information as well as a deepening dialogue on results.

The progress report over-emphasized the background with unit plans, use of TracDat for inputting unit action plans and the decision leading to their continuation with overall planning as opposed to beginning the program review process. The recommendation by ACCJC to "further refine its program review . . ." redirected Merritt College toward engagement in this process. The Committee for Strategic Educational Planning (CSEP), an outgrowth of the initial Strategic Curriculum Review committee (SCRC), is currently charged with implementing program review. The district CSEP and SCRC committees have merged to form a district Education Committee. At Merritt, the College Educational Master Planning Committee oversees educational planning and reports to College Council. The revised process is meant to "ensure that the college uses a continuous program improvement effort to support all programs."

Merritt College integrates the data from unit plans into its program review documents. The final product or forms are sent to their respective supervisor or dean and on to the appropriate vice president. The collegial process occurs at two levels—during the department/dean exchange and again at various shared governance committees along with College Council. The college had completed the program review process up to the point where the "Vice President of Instruction will compile a summary of

recommendations and priorities from all the Instructional Program Review Narrative Reports and submit the summary to the College President, the College's planning and budget committees (if applicable) and the Vice Chancellor of Educational Services."

The program review cycle had not been completed during the visit. However, a list of college priorities was compiled from Unit Plans and Program Reviews, and these priorities were approved by College Council in March 2010. The approved priorities have been forwarded to the district Technology Committee, Education Committee, and Planning and Budgeting Committee. Given that the recommendations were submitted in June of 2009 and that the process to establish the program review process, align it with unit planning, and implement the program review process in the spring of 2010, it is understandable that the full program review cycle had not been completed.

Conclusion: Master planning has been occurring at the college for a number of years. Constituents were well versed on how they integrate data from unit plans into program review. While the development of a collegial, in-depth process for program review deserves merit and has begun at the college, there needs to be greater analysis of quality, effectiveness and student learning. Since this visit coincided with the first cycle of program review, it is difficult for a team to acknowledge that a three-year, systematic and publicized cycle of review and results has occurred. In addition, the Commission recommendation demonstrates the need to also develop a means to evaluate the process for its own efficacy and how the results of the evaluation lead to changes in program review and the degree to which program review led to improvements. The College Education Master Plan Committee has been charged with evaluating the program review process. The college has made good faith efforts to engage in a process of improvement in planning, program review, and student learning outcomes.

Recommendation 4: In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the college develop a plan to complete all outstanding performance evaluations expeditiously. This was also a recommendation of the 2003 visiting team (III.A.1b).

Findings and Evidence:

In fall 2009 the college developed and executed a plan to ensure that all employee evaluations were up-to-date and that a regular cycle of performance evaluation be maintained. The team reviewed a table for each employee group and was able to verify the following: all classified evaluations were current; all administrative evaluations were current, all tenured and tenure track faculty evaluations were current, substantially all adjunct faculty evaluations were current. Furthermore, there was a definitive schedule to complete all remaining adjunct faculty evaluations.

Conclusion:

Merritt College has met this recommendation in full. The college should be commended for expediting the evaluation process on all employees and for developing a clear schedule for future employee evaluations.