

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

A Focused Interim Evaluation

Truckee Meadows Community College

Reno, Nevada

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A Confidential Report Prepared by the Evaluator for the Northwest Commission on
Colleges and Universities

Introduction

Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) hosted a Focused Interim Visit on April 25, 2007 in response to the recommendations made by the October 2005 Full-Scale Evaluation Committee. While the NWCCU reaffirmed accreditation for ten years, the comprehensive visit resulted in five recommendations including three (Recommendations 3, 4, and 5) that the committee determined to be out of compliance with Commission Standards.

In anticipation of the Focused Interim Visit, the college prepared a report that described the progress that has been made toward addressing the recommendations. (This report is attached to this document). The Evaluator was able to use this documentation as well as the results of interviews with a broad representation of faculty, staff, and administrators to validate the activities in which the college has engaged in its efforts to meet the standards.

The Focused Interim report provided by the college as well as the exhibits that were made available to the evaluator were of excellent quality and accurately reflected what has occurred at TMCC since October 2005. During the visit, the evaluator found a college community that was genuinely committed to the institution's mission and equally dedicated to meeting NWCCU expectations. Any requests for information or materials or access to college personnel were handled professionally and honestly and in a timely manner. All evidence indicated that the college had made significant progress on addressing the recommendations from the Full-Scale visit.

During the visit, the Evaluator met with the college President, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Dean of Workforce Development and Continuing Education, Faculty Senate Chair, NFA Chair, Vice-President of Student Services, the President's Cabinet, Institutional Research Director, Coordinator for Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment, Co-chairs of the TMCC Planning Council, Dean of Social Sciences and Business, Dean of Health Sciences and Safety, and other faculty and staff who commented in impromptu meetings on campus.

Each of the individuals listed above was able to candidly describe his/her role in the college's response to the recommendations and each displayed a commitment and ability to develop strategies and activities that address the areas in need of improvement. Thus, the Evaluator had access to all relevant and necessary data for his assessment and report.

Progress on Recommendations

NWCCU Recommendation 1. The Committee recommends the College continue its work in the evaluation of institutional effectiveness (Standard 1.8.2), in the use of the results of evaluation in ongoing planning processes (Standard 1.8.4), and in institutional research efforts, evaluation processes, and planning activities to document institutional effectiveness and communicate that effectiveness to its public (Standard 1.8.8, 1.8.9).

The October 2005 evaluation noted that the college had in fact developed activities in support of institutional effectiveness, but many of those processes had not yet reached a level of maturity or sophistication so that the data collected could be used in planning and resource allocation processes. In the period between the Full-Scale and Focused Interim Visits the college had gone to great lengths to further develop and nurture these efforts and work toward the institutionalization of a "culture of evidence."

The evaluator found among various constituencies a belief that the college is meeting its goals and objectives and that the procedures and programs that have been instituted recently have served the college well. Among the activities related to Recommendation 1 that TMCC has initiated or improved since the 2005 Full-Scale Evaluation include:

- A larger scale commitment has been embraced by the college community which is devoted to developing and nurturing a culture of evidence.
- The college Program and Discipline Review process is now in its fourth year. This data-driven process provides college decision makers with information that may be used to determine resource allocation.
- The college has developed Operational Goals that have allowed for greater participation in the planning processes by a broader contingent of the college community in the form of a planning council.
- TMCC's strategic plan includes a list of measurable outcomes for each strategic goal and the college has developed an administrative unit review process that includes self study activities and customer satisfaction surveys based on the goals for each unit. Academic and Facilities master plans have also matured into activities that are used by the college community to chart and guide progress toward institutional goals.

The evaluator found among the college community a sense that college goals are clearly defined and accurately measured. A growing confidence in the value of a maturing institutional effectiveness process exists among all college constituencies as does a belief that the process is inclusive and transparent and has become a permanent part of overall planning activities. These processes have created a clear link among planning, evaluation, and resource allocation that is well understood by the college community.

Even taking into account that TMCC has experienced significant turnover in its administrative ranks over the last several years, faculty and staff feel a genuine

connection to the commitments made by the college and are generally satisfied with their roles in college governance activities. They also view the emphasis on data-driven decision-making as positive and beneficial to the overall health of the institution. The President through a comprehensive state of the college address in which he outlines planning processes and reports on budgetary concerns as well as a monthly newsletter has made considerable efforts to promote better communication enabling a more consistent flow of information and data sharing. The Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services has established an ad-hoc budget committee in order to provide the college community with even more information. These efforts appear to be successful in that staff report a better understanding of these key issues.

NWCCU Recommendation 2. Educational program assessment remains at the preliminary stages. The institution's student learning outcomes are identified, but the committee did not find evidence that the processes for assessing those outcomes are clearly defined, encompass all of the program's offerings, are conducted on a regular basis, and are integrated in the overall planning and evaluation plan (Standard 2.8.1). Further, the committee found no evidence that, through regular and systematic assessment, the College demonstrates that students who complete its programs, no matter where or how they are offered, have achieved these outcomes (Standard 2.8.2); and the committee found no evidence that assessment activities lead to the improvement of teaching and learning (Standard 2.8.3). The Committee recommends that the College take immediate action to address these issues.

In response to Recommendation 2, the college has committed to providing meaningful assessment and learning outcomes by creating an infrastructure in the areas of staffing, knowledge, and policy. In order to facilitate these efforts, the college has engaged a faculty coordinator of Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment (SLOA) since 2005. The creation of this position has contributed to greater faculty buy-in to assessment processes. Faculty also shared that they have a more significant voice in the governance of TMCC. College-wide resources in these areas along with a Student Learning Outcomes website and increased support of faculty development activities have contributed to institutional growth in assessment processes. One indication that faculty are taking assessment requirements seriously is the fact that the Student Learning Outcomes website posted 270 hits over the last two months.

Other accomplishments since the Full-Scale Visit include a new requirement that all courses submitted to the Curriculum Committee contain learning outcome statements. This activity has improved the college's ability to measure student learning. Also programs submitted to the Academic Standards Committee must have statements of program outcomes. Each career program is reviewed on a three year assessment review cycle, and the college has strengthened the relationship among the offices of Academic Affairs, Institutional Effectiveness and the Center for Teaching and Learning, thereby providing resources for faculty use that are accessible and relevant.

In the Evaluator's conversations with faculty it was apparent that they have confidence in and comfort with the Institutional Research Office. This office provides valuable information that is used by the college to help guide the decision-making processes. Faculty also see that data-driven information has led to a more well-defined and effective plan for resource allocation in particular and a greater sense of direction in general. Faculty were able to point to specific curriculum that have resulted from more sophisticated analyses of various data sets that point to indicators of student learning and eventually to the effectiveness of the educational programs of the college.

NWCCU Recommendation 3. While many statements and representations about programs and course offerings are clear, factually accurate, and current, serious exceptions were found in the catalog and course program guides and listings, most notably programs and courses which are no longer offered and inaccurate statements regarding the length of time to degree (Policy 3.1; Standard 9.A.3). The Committee recommends that the College take action to comply with Policy 3.1 and Standard 9.A.3 by updating the catalog and course program guides to accurately depict basic information on programs and courses.

The 2005 Full-scale Evaluation Committee found TMCC out of compliance with Standard 9.A.3 and Policy 3.1 relating to providing accurate and truthful information to its community. In response to this recommendation, the college undertook a comprehensive review of all courses and related materials. This action has led to a more accurate catalog, class schedules, and other documents. In addition to clarifying and updating curricula, deans and department chairs conducted extensive reviews of the entire curriculum which included analyses of when and how both new and existing courses are offered.

The college has also embarked on a discipline review process that has improved the quality of offerings and better supported learning outcomes.

In the recommendation from 2005, the evaluation committee identified a list of courses that did not have sufficient or accurate documentation or other problems. The college has since corrected those errors and omissions and has provided all necessary information to support the assertion that progress has been made on this recommendation such that the college has satisfied and questions that had be noted in 2005.

NWCCU Recommendation 4. The College has contractual relationships with two privately owned schools of cosmetology and several apprenticeship training agreements. The Committee recommends that the College take immediate action to review these agreements to ensure that the College fulfills its responsibilities to maintain oversight of program course offerings and to appoint and validate the credentials of faculty teaching in these programs (Policy A-G).

The evaluator found all necessary and pertinent documentation to support TMCC's compliance with Policy A.6 as noted in Recommendation 4. The relationship between the college and other educational service providers is clearly defined in the Education Affiliation Agreement.

The college is responsible for ensuring that the faculty at the off-site programs meet all necessary requirements for teaching in the various disciplines. Student evaluations are shared with the college administrators using criteria established by the college and instruments that are the same as those employed on campus. Exceptions are approved by the Dean of Workforce Development and Continuing Education. When faculty do not meet performance expectations the dean works with the program coordinators to develop improvement plans. The college also provides these faculty with support for faculty development activities.

TMCC has attended to the concerns expressed in Recommendation 4. In addition to developing and maintaining contractual agreements with the International Academy of Style and its various apprenticeship training programs much work has been done to align curricula and other procedures with the main campus. Still work needs to continue in this area so that the college can maintain the relationships with outside educational providers and be in full compliance with Policy A.6.

Concern:

While great progress has been made in developing relationships with the International Academy of Style and the various apprenticeship programs, assessment activities remain at a critical stage of development. Only one apprenticeship program has completed the necessary student learning assessment activities. Other programs, including cosmetology have yet to participate in this initiative. The momentum now present should be harnessed to continue the development of assessment practices on a broader scale in order to maintain alignment with the curriculum standards established by the college and to comply with Policy A-6.

NWCCU Recommendation 5. The Committee recommends that the Student Bill of Rights and the Student Complaint Process be well publicized and readily available to students (Standard 3.8.3) and that a policy be developed and adopted that specifies requirements for continuation in and termination from its educational programs to include an appeals process and a clearly defined policy for re-admission (Standard 3.0.4).

The 2005 Evaluation Committee noted that several important documents including the Student Bill of Rights and the Student Complaint Process were not readily available to students. Further, the committee recommended that the college specify requirements for continuation and termination for its educational programs to include an appeals process and a clearly defined policy for re-admission.

As the Vice President for Student Services began her tenure at TMCC, she began working with the various constituencies on campus to collect and disseminate existing policies and procedures. She also created new and modified other policies and procedures for the Student Bill of Rights and a student complaint process. In addition she developed with others a satisfactory student progress policy which is widely disseminated to meet the standards addressed by this Recommendation (3.8.3 and 3.0.4). The documents cited by the evaluation team are readily available to students and are distributed widely including during orientations. In addition to providing this information in written form, the Vice President maintains a website on which the documents are posted as are many others which students can access easily. All of these activities indicate that the college is in full compliance with the relevant standards.

Conclusion:

The Evaluator is confident that TMCC has met and in some cases exceeded expectations in addressing the NWCCU standards. The college has dedicated significant resources and efforts to answer the concerns expressed in the 2005 Full-Scale report and has developed procedures and processes that will serve it well in the future.

Commendation:

TMCC is to be commended for the diligence it has exhibited in addressing the Recommendations from the 2005 Full Scale Evaluation Committee. The Evaluator found a helpful and committed staff dedicated to student success. The results of interviews with faculty and administrative staff as well as the supporting documentation clearly illustrate that the college is in compliance with Commission standards and on its way to creating a culture of evidence.

Documents Provided for Evaluator's Review:

- A. Dr. Sandra Elman's letters dated January 24, 2006 and October 10, 2006
- B. Self Study 2005
- C. Comprehensive Evaluation Report
 - 1.1 Program, Degree and Discipline Review Guidelines and Templates
 - 1.2 Program and Discipline Review Flowchart
 - 1.3 2005-2006 Program and Discipline Review Self Studies with Evaluation Reports
 - 1.4 2003-2004 Operational Goals
 - 1.5 2006-2007 Operational Goals
 - 1.6 Planning Council 2005-2006 Minutes
 - 1.7 Planning Council 2005-2006 Agendas
 - 1.8 Executive Summary: Operational Goals 2005-2006
 - 1.9 Membership Lists for 2005-2006 and 2006-2007
 - 1.10 Planning Council Charge

- 1.11 Strategic Plan 2002-2005
- 1.12 Strategic Plan 2006-2012
- 1.13 Strategic Plan 2006-2012: Executive Summary
- 1.14 Board of Regents Agenda and Minutes, October 2006
- 1.15 Facilities Master Plan
- 1.16 Academic Master Plan 2006-2013
- 1.17 Academic Master Plan 2006-2013: Executive Summary
- 1.18 Planning Council Agenda
- 1.19 Extended Cabinet Agenda
- 1.20 Faculty Senate Agenda
- 1.21 Board of Regents Agenda and Student and Academic Affairs Committee
- 1.22 Administrative Unit Review Guidelines and Templates
- 1.23 Administrative Unit Self Studies 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 with Evaluation Reports
- 1.24 President's Newsletters 2005-2007
- 1.25 Planning Council Talking Points
- 2.1 Coordinator for Learning Outcomes and Assessment Job Description
- 2.2 Professional Development Day Materials
- 2.3 5th Annual Northern Nevada Assessment Conference Announcement
- 2.4 Assessment Workshop Presentation and Attendance List
- 2.5 Assessment Plans and Reports 2001-2006
- 2.6 Program and Discipline Review Follow-up Reports to 2003-2004 Reviews
- 2.7 Guidelines for Learning Outcomes Statements and Measures for Curriculum Development
- 2.8 Faculty Senate Motion Tracking, Academic Year 2006
- 2.9 Guidelines for a TMCC Discipline Assessment Report
- 2.10 TMCC General Education Pilot Report-Fall 2006
- 2.11 SLOA Committee Meeting Notes
- 2.12 Graduate Survey
- 2.13 Master Course Outline
- 2.14 Program/Degree/Certificate Endorsement Tracking Form
- 2.15 Program Outcomes Assessment Reporting Calendar
- 2.16 General Education-Learning Outcomes and Assessment Handbook
- 3.1 Academic Deans Recommended Catalog Revisions Meeting 7/20/2006
- 3.2 Program /Degree/Certificate Endorsement Tracking Form-Accounting Technology
- 3.3 TMCC Curriculum Newsletters
- 3.4 Curriculum Final Reports, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007
- 3.5 Common Course Numbering Modification Reports, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007
- 3.6 New and Revised Program Reports, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007
- 3.7 Faculty Senate Motion Tracking, Academic Years 2006 and 2007
- 3.8 Guide to Curriculum and Program Development Procedures
- 3.9 Curriculum Process Chart
- 3.10 Master Course Outlines-NURS 090, NURS 275B, and NUTR 106
- 3.11 Program /Degree/Certificate Endorsement Tracking Form-AAS/Radiologic Technology
- 3.12 Radiologic Technology AAS-Program Outline
- 3.13 TMCC Course Catalog, General Education Requirements, pages B5 and B7
- 3.14 Dental Assisting Program Layout for AAS and Certificate

- 4.1 Contractual Agreements
- 4.2 Faculty Qualification Policy
- 5.1 Student Bill of Rights
- 5.2 Student Complaint Policy
- 5.3 Student Complaint Form
- 5.4 Grievance Form
- 5.5 Appendix M, *TMCC Course Catalog*
- 5.6 Sexual Harassment Complaint Form
- 5.7 Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy