

Year One Peer-Evaluation Report

Central Oregon Community College

Bend, OR

March 1 – May 20, 2011

A confidential report of findings prepared for the
Northwest Commission on College and Universities

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Introduction

Central Oregon Community College was founded in 1949 and is the longest-standing community college in Oregon. COCC District covers a 10,000-square-mile area including all of Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties, and parts of Wasco, Klamath and Lake Counties. The district is governed by a seven-member board of directors, elected from geographic zones. COCC's 200-plus acre main campus is located in Bend and is supplemented by the campus in Redmond. A recent \$41 million construction bond will fund several new construction projects, including two small branch campuses. A variety of degrees and certificates are available for purposes of transfer and career-technical education along with a many non-credit community education offerings. The College is projecting more than 108% enrollment growth between 2006-07 and 2010-2011.

Assessment of the Self-Evaluation Report

During March, April, and May, 2011, a three-person peer-evaluation team from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (hereafter referred to as the Commission) conducted a Year One Comprehensive Peer-Evaluation of Central Oregon Community College. In accordance with Commission procedures, the review was carried out using the off-site virtual environment. The evaluation consisted of a virtual organizational meeting followed by virtual evaluation meetings using audio conferencing as authorized by the Commission. Further, the evaluation was conducted based upon the *2010 Accreditation Standards and Eligibility Requirements* published by the Commission.

COCC submitted and the Evaluation Committee received a hard copy of the College's *Year One Self-Evaluation Report* in a timely manner. The Report was accompanied by a copy of the COCC 2010-2011 Catalog, but no other supporting documentation/addenda. Such documentation would have been helpful, for example had there been more exhibits in terms of items mentioned in the narrative (e.g. p. 7 "Illustrations of rubrics and assessment results are collected in a databank for review") it may have contributed to determining that the proposed indicators were indeed "meaningful, assessable, and verifiable."

The Evaluation Committee understood that the Commission's request to provide an executive summary of eligibility requirements (ER) 2 and 3 with this report was a late addition to the guidelines for writing the *Year One Self-Evaluation Report*. Therefore, the Committee encourages COCC to follow the guidelines released March 2, 2011 to ensure that its next report addresses the eligibility requirements as noted in the guidelines. No mention was made of eligibility requirements in the Report.

The *Year One Self-Evaluation Report* submitted by COCC was properly organized and logically sequenced according to Standard 1: Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations. The Report provided background using the

Introduction, Institutional Context, and Preface that described the organizational activity and preparation for the new Commission standards. Information regarding past, current, and planned activities relating to the self-evaluation process was clearly stated and described.

Section One

Introduction

The mission of the College of Central Oregon presented in the *Year One Self-Evaluation Report* reads as follows:

Central Oregon Community College will be a leader in regionally and globally responsive adult, lifelong, postsecondary education for Central Oregon.

The mission was augmented by a four-bullet *Vision Statement* that is descriptive of how the constituency of the district would benefit from COCC activities. Other elements (e.g. “Board Priorities,” “Board Goals,” and *Vision Concept Paper*) are intended to work in concert to provide a conceptual framework for the operation of COCC.

Report on Eligibility Requirements

As stated in the Assessment of the Self-Evaluation Report, the Committee encourages COCC to follow the guidelines released March 2, 2011 to ensure that its next report addresses the eligibility requirements as noted in the guidelines. No mention was made of eligibility requirements in the Report.

Report on Standard 1.A Mission

Standard 1.A.1.

The COCC mission statement is regularly reviewed and approved by the governing board (2010) and is appropriate for an institution of higher learning, in particular that of a community college. The mission statement is published in the catalog and the college website. Because the general intent of the mission as presented is to be “a leader...in postsecondary education for Central Oregon,” it provides a framework for the Core Themes, but is not particularly descriptive of the Core Themes. For example, it mentions only “adult” and “lifelong” as descriptors of the postsecondary education experience.

The mission statement is augmented by a Vision Statement that further clarifies the direction for its efforts. There is some inherent confusion in all the documents and processes. It is difficult to understand all the vagaries and intent of Board Priorities, Board goals, Mission, Vision Statement, definition of mission fulfillment,

Vision Concept Paper, Institutional Effectiveness Reports, community responses, future Institutional Scorecard, Strategic Priorities, Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, and Instructional Plan.

Standard 1.A.2.

The definition of mission fulfillment as described are also those listed on the COCC website as being the “Board Goals” that are constructed to align with the *Vision Statement*. It was clear that these were kept in mind as the objectives for the Core Themes were presented. Because the mission fulfillment description is identical to the goals, and the goals are taken from the Vision Statement, and the Vision Statement supports and clarifies the mission there is great alignment amongst these elements.

The desired outcomes are well defined, but they may be difficult to measure, e.g. “works collaboratively,” “has wide-ranging opportunities,” and “interacts effectively.”

Concern 1: The various documents and processes relating to mission, goals, vision, fulfillment of mission, effectiveness, priorities, plans, and the future Institutional Scorecard are complex and confusing.

Concern 2: While the desired outcomes are well defined and described, they must be measureable.

Report on Standard 1.B Core Themes

Central Oregon Community College identifies four Core Themes:

1. Transfer and Articulation
2. Workforce Development
3. Basic Skills
4. Lifelong Learning

While the Evaluation Committee noted that the themes were apparently developed by a newly formed College group (Accreditation Coordinating Team or ACT) that was comprised of a wide spectrum of campus representatives, the actual process applied to identify the Core Themes was unclear. They were vetted and approved by the Board of Directors in December 2009.

Standard 1.B.1.

The Core Themes presented were descriptive of and inclusive of the community college mission. While the COCC mission statement is broad and focuses on being a leader regionally and globally in “postsecondary education,” the Core Themes are actually refinements and specific, strategic elements of the mission. In this sense they do “manifest essential elements of [its] mission.” To say that they “collectively encompass its mission” is not specifically accurate in that the Core Themes are very practical segments or elements of college activity. How they may or may not relate to COCC being a “leader” lies in how the Core Themes are implemented, not in what they are or how they are described. When the Vision Statement that accompanies the Mission Statement is considered, the Core Themes appear to be more encompassing.

The COCC mission specifically mentions leadership in global responsiveness, but it was difficult to determine through the Core Themes how this would be accomplished. The only statement the Committee noted to support this important element of the mission was a comment made in Objective 3 of the Lifelong Learning Core Theme that states that “COCC is committed to providing Central Oregonians with the means to attain both locally strong and globally responsible perspectives.” However, that is not entirely congruent with the mission as stated. It is suggested that the objectives and consequent measures be evaluated to further support this element of the mission statement.

Standard 1.B.2.

Each of the Core Themes were more fully described in the report and objectives for each presented. These objectives included indicators of achievement. The objectives were well-aligned with the COCC Board Goals (Definition of Mission Fulfillment).

The indicators were not found to be strong in terms of being “meaningful, assessable, and verifiable.” To clarify, the indicators included such terms as “evaluative opinion,” “ongoing analysis,” “rigorously linked to effectiveness,” “assessment of library space,” “systematic evaluation,” “encouraged,” “supported,” “apparent and significant,” “indirect indicators,” and “regular review of success rates.” While these measures are somewhat descriptive, they are not what would normally be considered quantitative, measurable, assessment of performance.

The Committee suggests that Objective 1 of Lifelong Learning be considered for possible inclusion in the Transfer and Articulation Core Theme as it speaks to dual credit/concurrent enrollment.

Concern 3: While the desired outcomes are well defined and described, they must be meaningful, measurable, and provide a clear connection between the indicators of achievement and objectives.

Summary

The mission statement for Central Oregon Community College is appropriate for a comprehensive community college. It is complemented by an array of documents and descriptors that guide the organizational activities of the College. From this mission, COCC has identified four core themes. These core themes are further described by objectives, indicators of achievement, and rationale. The Evaluation Committee was able to respond to each element of Commission Standard One based on the *Year One Self-Evaluation Report* provided. There was insufficient information to determine adherence to Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3.

Recommendations

1. Though the College has identified objectives, indicators of success, and rationale for each of its three core themes, the Evaluation Committee recommends that the College provide indicators that are meaningful and measurable, and that provide a clear connection between the indicators of achievement and objectives. (Standards 1.B.1 and 1.B.2)