Sierra Community College District
Accreditation Midterm Report

Kevin M. Ramirez
President/District Superintendent
Sierra College
5000 Rocklin Road
Rocklin, CA  95677

Submitted on: October 16, 2003
Prepared by: Accreditation Steering Committee Co-chairs
Michelle Kalina, Research Coordinator
Barry Abrams, English Professor
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Recommmendations of Previous Team

General Institutional Recommendations:

The Team feels that the following general institutional recommendations are highly significant:

1. **To ensure that the institution’s commitment to use supporting evidence and good data in integrated planning, budgeting, and program review and operations is met, the team recommends that the College focus its efforts on defining, coordinating and consolidating its research processes, priorities and existing resources.** (2.9, 3A.1, 3A.2, 3A.3, 3A.4, 3B2, 3C3, 4D.1, 5.3, 8.5, 9B1, 10B.1)

The college has recently reorganized the research function under the auspices of the Educational Programs and Services office (spring, 2003) and has expanded the staff to include not only the Research Analyst but a full-time faculty researcher, a full-time faculty coordinator of research and two additional full-time analysts. The office has a new name and an expanded function as the Research and Resource Development office. With the expansion of the research office, the college has been able to collect and provide data to the college community, enhancing the integrated planning, budgeting and program review processes that have been instituted at the college since the last Accreditation visit.

The Research and Resource Development office has created a College Atlas in hard copy (distribution in fall, 2003) and hopes to have a web format by spring, 2003. The web version of the Atlas will be tied to the Crystal Enterprise software system and will be updated on a continuous basis, giving all college personnel and the public an accurate and up-to-date look at the performance of the college. The Crystal Enterprise system allows research office and other college staff to retrieve and analyze data from the new data warehouse without specialized programming knowledge.

Research staff serves on committees and work with all staff to identify and provide needed data. Research is actively involved in the new yearly, comprehensive Program Assessment Review which replaces the previous six year review cycle (PAR Process, fall 2001, See Appendix A). The research office assembles the data for the review process and distributes it in early August. Departments and programs review and update PARs throughout the year and submit revisions during fall semester.

The data elements include:

- By Department and District total
  - FTES
  - WSCH
  - FTEF
  - Efficiency WSCH/FTEF
  - Total Course Retention
  - Total Course Success
  - Certificates awarded
  - Associate Degrees awarded
• By Department and Course
  o Average class size
  o Enrollment “End of Course”
  o Number of Sections
  o Retention
  o Success

All college planning processes and documents are systematically reviewed and updated.

PAR reports collectively form the planning documents for the college. The Educational Master Plan and the Facilities Master Plan have just been revised using this data (spring, 2003).

The PAR process is tied to the college’s institutional goals and all planning is tied to the mission and strategic goals of the college. Institutional Goals are identified by the college and reviewed annually by the staff, Superintendent, and Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees recently completed a revised vision statement for the college titled Vision 2015 (Board Policy 2900) and approved the final draft of this document in fall, 2003. Planning is currently underway to develop institutional goals and outcomes which directly flow from the vision statement.

The PAR process is reviewed and updated on an annual basis and has widespread participation from all segments of the college. Student Services has undertaken a Program Review of the counseling area (fall, 2002) to assess the effectiveness of their services.

Institutional outcomes have not yet been identified, but departments will identify and assess program outcomes in future PARs and address student learning outcomes in curricula review. Curriculum review has been reinstated (fall, 2002) and all curricula are reviewed on a six year cycle. The college is currently using WebCMS, an online curriculum software package which makes accessing, creating and revising curricula more efficient for all participants.

The new PAR process has yet to be formally evaluated. An informal evaluation occurred in spring, 2002. Anecdotal evidence suggests that faculty and staff have been pleased with the outcomes of the first year’s effort as criteria for new hires, capital outlay dollars, facility needs, and new processes were all derived from data in the PARs. The few reservations expressed concerned the transparency and clarity of the sequence of planning and resource allocation. A recent review in spring 2003 confirmed these results, although the number of responses limited the utility of the review (Strategic Council Recollections, February and March, 2003). The research office and accreditation committee will develop a more thorough survey for fall, 2003 administration.

Forecast:
  • Institutional Goals and Outcomes will be created for the college and an initial planning retreat is tentatively scheduled for January, 2004. Planning for that retreat has been started.
  • The PAR process will be formally evaluated and a survey is currently being created to do so.
2. The Team strongly recommends that a major deficiency be corrected by implementing program review immediately and integrating it with the current planning processes. The Team also recommends a sharper mission statement be implemented through the program review process which would increase confidence in all staff that the College is not just doing things right, but it is doing the right things. (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.9, 3A.1, 3B.2, 3B.3, 4A.4, 4D.1, 4D.6, 5.3, 5.6, 5.10, 6.7)

In June, 2001 a management retreat identified the need to restructure the college’s planning processes. Subsequently, a task force was developed to undertake the revision of program review process as the first step.

The task force worked throughout the summer of 2001 developing the process, designing the forms, determining training needs, developing a timeline for completion of the process and championing it through the governance process. By fall of 2001, the college implemented the major recommendations of the task force.

By the end of October of 2001, almost all departments had submitted a PAR report and resource allocations were made based on the process. The College Council completed their review and validation of the PAR reports.

During the following year, shared governance was restructured. On January 13-15, 2002, a group of staff reviewed the existing governance process and developed a new body—Strategic Council and with this, the decision making process changed. The new structure utilizes the PARs as the basis for developing priorities and making decisions.

Forecast:

The PAR Process is ongoing and changes will continue to be made to process to ensure that the process accurately reflects the needs of the college and that these needs are addressed in all planning documents.
Response to Accreditation Team Specific Recommendations

Standard 1:

Revises 1990 Mission Statement (General Institutional Recommendation # 1; Standard Ten, Recommendation #8)

The Mission Statement was revised by a subcommittee consisting of two members from each of the Senates, the Vice President of Educational Programs and Services and a board member. The process began in February, 2001 and the new Sierra College Mission Statement was approved by the Board of Trustees on January 8, 2002. The process included input from the college community by means of a survey conducted at the fall, 2001 convocation. The new mission statement is aligned closely with the institutional goals and objectives.

Standard 2:

The team recommends that the planning structure, decision-making process, information flow and all policies and procedures, be clearly communicated, published and widely disseminated to students and staff (2.9).

In addition to institutionalizing the Program Assessment and Review (PAR) process, the District made significant modification to its shared governance structure effective Spring, 2002 (“Santa Rosa Three” Report). The changes were designed to improve the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of shared and informed decision-making. A recent review and assessment of the changes by the college community (April, 2003) reflected that the objectives had been achieved.

Standard 3:

Many of the observations and conclusions made about Standard 3 were combined in an overarching recommendation (No. 1). In addition to this recommendation, the Accreditation team made the following observations concerning the college’s progress in research and assessment.

Develop & prioritize a research agenda with input from college community

The college has just recently reorganized the research area (see Recommendation 1 response above) and a research agenda is slowly emerging with input from the college community. Additional input needs to be gathered from all constituents to assure that interests are being met.

Assess effectiveness of programs & services at NCC

Nevada County Campus completed a site Program Assessment Review in fall, 2001 and this assessment is reviewed and updated annually to assure effectiveness of programs and services.
**Need to make data more user friendly**

As detailed in the overarching Recommendation 1, data are more available (Data warehouse) and are published in the College Atlas in a user-friendly format.

**Need to develop institutional effectiveness measures**

The college has not yet developed institutional effectiveness measures; however that discussion and process is slated to begin in fall, 2003. However, there has been preliminary work done through Flex workshops on assessing student learning outcomes (spring, 2003, fall, 2003)

**Develop a systematic & integrated support system that provides effective data, analysis & information to programs & services as to measurable outcomes that lead to improvements**

The Research and Resource Development office is currently (spring, 2003) providing data, analysis and information to programs and services and is working to identify measurable student learning outcomes and appropriate assessment measures. Research and Resource Development is working with vocational areas to provide data needed for various reporting agencies on student outcomes.

Prior to spring, 2003, the research office was a one person office and the ability to respond to all research needs was limited. With an expanded research office, the college is more readily able to respond to the many needs in an efficient manner.

**Standard 5:**

*The Team recommends that the college clarify and update its policies on student conduct standards, including the protocol on academic dishonesty and the student complaint and grievance procedures. The dissemination of these policies is also an issue and the Team also recommends they be publicized and communicated widely to ensure student awareness and ready student access.* [5.2, 2.5]

All college policies on student standards of conduct, including protocols on academic dishonesty, student rights, and grievance procedures were rewritten and board-approved in December, 2001. A new handbook titled "Student Rights and Responsibilities" was written and published in July 2002 for the 2002/2003 academic year. Minor modifications are currently being made and will be included in the updated publication for the 2003/04 academic year. Additionally, the policy information has been posted on the District website, in the college catalog, and in the new student handbook/day planner that is provided to all new students during orientation.
Standard 6:

_The Team recommends that the College provide stable and ongoing resources to enable the Learning Resource Centers to achieve the objectives outlined in the Sierra College Technology Master Plan, with special attention to staffing._ [6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5]

Since the March 2001 Accreditation Visit, the Rocklin LRC has been able to ensure the continuation of a permanent, full-time Instructional Computing Technician position. At the time of the accrediting visit, this position was new and there was no certainty that it would be continued. The Instructional Computing Technician reports to the Dean of the LRC rather than the Technical Services Support Supervisor, maintaining focus on the specific needs of the LRC computing environment.

Using a substantial portion (approximately $10,000 to $15,000) of the Library TTIP (Technology and Telecommunication Infrastructure Project) dollars, the Rocklin LRC has been able to purchase new hardware and software, upgrade existing equipment and software and expand assistive technology.
Planning Agenda Responses

Standard One: Institutional Mission

Review, rewrite and adopt a single Mission Statement, making it readily accessible to students and staff through publications, posting, and electronic means.

See response to Standard 1 above, p.4.

Review the Mission Statement annually as the Board of Trustees updates institutional goals.

The Board of Trustees reviews the Mission Statement as part of the work to update institutional goals. Institutional goals are updated with input from the entire staff through the shared governance process.

Revise 1990 Mission Statement

This process was completed in January of 2002 (see response to Standard 1 above).

Standard Two: Institutional Integrity

Extend email access to all staff and faculty regardless of classification.

Although e-mail access was available to all faculty and staff regardless of classification, all part-time employees had to request access each semester. In fall, 2001 continuous access was granted to all part-time employees as long as employment was maintained. This was a shift from having to certify employment at the beginning of each semester.

Bring the revised policies on academic honesty and student complaints to the Board for approval.

The Academic Honesty and Student Complaint policies were revised with input from the appropriate bodies on campus and approved by the Board of Trustees in December, 2001.

Focus recruitment efforts on increasing staff diversity.

2.6: Increase efforts to reflect more diversity among faculty, administration, staff and students

The college’s faculty intern program has had a positive effect on increasing the numbers of diverse faculty in the part-time faculty pool. The full-time hires have increased the gender diversity for faculty and staff in non traditional roles. For instance, in July, 2002, the college hired a female as the Agriculture Professor/Department Chair, a position previously held by men. In the Administration of Justice program, another program traditionally male dominated, the college hired a female to coordinate the program in January, 2002. In the Admissions and Records office, traditionally a female dominated environment has enhanced gender diversity, by hiring three males. The management and faculty groups have hired ethnically diverse individuals during the past three years.

The college has actively recruited international students. Over 150 international students currently are enrolled with many more interested in attending the college. The English as a
Second Language Program (ESL) has expanded dramatically in the past three years, now serving over 500 students.

2.7: Develop an all-encompassing set of guidelines specific to Sierra College coaches and athletes re: implementation of COA regulations implementation

The Health and Physical Education Division, under the direction of the Dean, developed an all-encompassing set of guidelines specific to Sierra College coaches and athletes regarding implementation of COA regulations. This work was completed in the spring of 2003 after the Dean and faculty met with the Athletic Commissioner who assisted with the work. The Dean has developed a Coach’s Manual with a department protocol for all members of the athletic department.

Standard Three: Institutional Effectiveness

Perform a needs assessment to determine the type and timing of research that should be conducted to support the needs of the college.

The college has not completed a formal needs assessment but through a variety of governance processes has determined the types and timing of research that needs to be conducted. The new Research and Resource Development office is setting up the protocols and timelines for doing this work.

Institute a six year research study and associated survey cycle.

See comments above and response to the overarching recommendations.

Provide sufficient research support to perform effective evaluations of programs and services.

See comments above and response to the overarching recommendations.

Define, identify, evaluate, and disseminate appropriate & measurable institutional outcomes.

The new Research and Resource Development office has worked with individuals and programs to help identify student learning outcomes and is working with the college community, through the shared governance process, to establish measurable institutional outcomes. Members of the RRD have attended local workshops run by the Research and Planning group (a professional research organization) to stay abreast of the newest thinking, engage in the dialogue and work with colleagues at the college.

Standard Four: Educational Programs

Explore the possibility of adding an information technology competency to AA requirements.

Through the appropriate Academic Senate committees, the college reviewed the possibility of adding an information technology competency requirement to the AA degree pattern but decided against such a requirement in spring, 2002.

Make the provision of sufficient human, financial, and physical resources for educational programs a central goal of the Budget, Staffing and Technology Committees.
See comments above and response to the overarching recommendations.

*Update processes for Program and Curriculum Review.*

See comments above and response to the overarching recommendations.

*Develop processes for insuring consistency of learning outcomes regardless of location, teaching faculty and mode of instruction.*

The Curriculum Committee has developed a Curriculum Review Process to insure consistency of learning outcomes regardless of location, teaching faculty and mode of instruction. All courses are carefully reviewed by the committee and a separate review is conducted for distance learning.

Differences in consistency emerge in the academic departments. Some departments maintain control over the instructional process by agreeing as a group on some or all of the following: common texts and course syllabi, an agreed order of concepts being taught, some common assignments, department exams, department finals, frequent department meetings, or other measures as appropriate. For other departments, grades serve as an indirect measure of consistency of student outcomes. Some departments are instituting regular evaluations of part-time faculty and formal or informal mentoring as other means to support consistency in quality and outcomes. Past practice has been to evaluate new part-time faculty during the first semester of employment. Subsequent evaluations are called for every three years but that practice is not universal.

**Standard Five: Student Support and Development**

*Review & revise all matriculation materials distributed to students.*

The California State University General Education List is updated annually to more accurately reflect the changes in course offerings, as are the IGETC course offerings. A student handbook and day planner was created in 2002, revised in 2003 and reordered as student demand far exceeded the printing. Student orientation materials were updated in 2002 and then again in 2003. The orientation video was updated to more accurately reflect the changes in the institution.

*Develop new distribution plans to increase the numbers of students receiving matriculation materials.*

Matriculation materials have been made available at the Roseville Gateway Center for the 02-03 school years. The new Tahoe/Truckee site (fall, 02) provides materials on site for students. The college class schedule is mailed to all homes in the district. Course offerings are posted on the web and it is possible to register and drop classes online. Matriculation information is updated on the Admissions/Records and Counseling web sites. A feature found on the website is Frequently Asked Questions (02, 03). The Admissions and Records office is investigating a “phone tips” process for recorded information.

*Print college materials in languages other than English.*

The college application is currently produced in Spanish and the EOPS application is produced in Russian. Materials for international students are provided in both Japanese and
Mandarin. Recruitment material for the ESL: program appears in both Spanish and Russian while the registration process and financial aid process are published in Spanish.

*Develop policies & procedures for communicating the results of program review self-studies as each program/department completes them.*

Currently all PAR information is posted in Public folders for the entire college community’s perusal (01).

**Standard Six: Information and Learning Resources**

*Increase voluntary faculty involvement in the selection and removal of library materials*

Faculty is solicited regarding purchases of new books, media, and electronic resources. Faculty input is also sought for de-selection of outdated materials. Faculty members from Nursing, Mathematics, Psychology, and the Sciences have helped weed the collection. New selection forms and procedures have been developed and librarians have been assigned to different divisions of the college to increase faculty involvement in selecting new materials. At the NCC LRC the selection process continues to have active faculty participation. De-selection of dated materials is not yet an issue since almost all of the collection was purchased after 1996.

*Develop a stable, reliable, annual book budget for the libraries of both campuses and stable high-level technical support for the Rocklin LRC building*

The libraries of both campuses have received a substantial portion of the Instructional Materials Lottery dollars. The stability in funding allows the libraries to count on an annual book and materials budget.

**Standard Seven: Faculty and Staff**

*Review and revise the current hiring process as needed.*

The college reviewed existing hiring processes and explored new options in the fall, 2000. The college reviewed and adopted a Performance Based hiring process in the spring of 2001 and faculty, staff and managers received initial training in that time period. The process was beta tested in summer, 2001 and was formally adopted in fall, 2001. There has been ongoing training for all staff in this process.

*Develop criteria for staffing at NCC, R/G, T/T and any future sites.*

The college has universal criteria for staffing at all its sites. The PAR process identifies staffing needs and these needs are prioritized by Department Chairs at the division level and then by Deans’ Council. Final decisions are made by Executive Council, sent to Strategic Council as information and forwarded to the Board of Trustees for approval.

*Review evaluation processes and train all evaluators in evaluation techniques.*

Legal counsel conducted sessions on evaluation during management retreats in February and March 2001 and concluded with an all day retreat on evaluation, in May, 2001.
The Department Chairs Seminar (DCS) was trained in evaluation techniques by the manager of Human Resources/EEO in January, 2003. The DCS will need follow-up work in the fall semester, 2003. A DCS seminar will be scheduled on this topic in fall, 2003.

**Standard Eight: Physical Resources**

*Develop a comprehensive facilities master plan for the Rocklin campus.*

A comprehensive facilities master plan for the college was developed and during the spring, 2003 semester with input from all staff through the shared governance process. Further planning and refinement have occurred during the summer and fall, 2003. A draft plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval during the fall, 2003 semester.

*Pursue the development with local school districts of joint use facilities on land donated to the college.*

The college has entered into agreements with Western Placer Unified School District (WPUSD) and the City of Lincoln to develop a joint-use library, and has developed a master plan for construction of a joint campus to be shared with the high school. The library will be an integral part of the joint campus and will also serve the general public. The college accepted a 43-acre donation of land, valued at $8,070,000, for the campus site in January, 2003. This donation was essential to make the entire project feasible.

*Conduct a site search for possible permanent facilities at the Tahoe-Truckee off-site location.*

A site search for a possible permanent facility in the Tahoe-Truckee area of the district has been ongoing since the summer of 2002. In the meantime, the college has leased new space and has hired a Dean for the Sierra College --Truckee Center. The new facility was dedicated in October, 2002 and classes were offered at the new site with the start of the spring semester, 2003.

*Analyze operation and maintenance staffing levels and carry out systematized planning for staff growth as needed.*

The Program Assessment and Review (PAR) process has been used to analyze operation and maintenance staffing levels.

*Improve accessibility through additional architectural barrier removal projects.*

The college is currently in compliance with applicable codes regarding access for handicapped individuals. The State has not funded the college’s proposal, submitted annually, for additional improvements to remove access barriers, and it is not likely that State funding will be forthcoming soon. Improvements will be made as resources permit.

The college is planning to go to voters with a bond proposal in March, 2004. A significant portion of the bond dollars will be used to modernize buildings, infrastructure and technology. Removing all remaining architectural barriers to comply with the most current requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act will be an essential part of modernizing buildings owned by the college. If feasible, the college will improve access to a building with powered doors, flattening thresholds, and the like, in advance of other renovation work.
Standard 9: Financial Resources

Assess the impact of programs and services on budgetary decisions.

The PAR documents have been used to allocate new resources to the system during the 2002 – 2003. PARs were utilized to make program reductions in response to the economic situation.

Establish a formal approach to provide for long-range planning of capital equipment needs and purchases.

PARs are used to plan for long-range capital equipment needs and purchases. Instructional equipment requests are culled from the PAR documents and presented to the appropriate governance bodies for decision making.

Establish clear guidelines to be used by departments & divisions to assist in developing budgets.

Budget requests are a part of the PAR process. Initial requests are brought forward by the Deans to the appropriate decision-making bodies, then to Strategic and Executive Councils for final decision.

Standard Ten: Governance and Administration

Increase the visibility of Board activities electronically by posting agendas, minutes, and other public materials on the Web.

Board Agendas and Minutes are now posted to the College's web page. The page includes a list of trustees, the areas they represent and a group photograph. The quarterly President's Letter is posted to the web page.

Employ new census data (per Education Code) to verify that the present distribution of Trustees enables them to adequately represent the College’s growing population.

In April 2001 the Board was given an analysis of the impact of 2000 Census data on representation from trustee areas. Trustees must reside within the area they represent, but are elected at-large. Therefore, no legal requirement exists to amend boundaries as a result of the Census data.
At its March 12, 2002 meeting, the Board reviewed the 2000 Census data and its policy on "trustee areas." The Board voted to take no action at that time, but recommended that "the Sierra Joint Community College District Board of Trustees review the census data in 2010."

Develop a Schedule for Board Policy Review.

The District is currently undergoing a wall-to-wall policy review via the use of a subscription to the Community College League of California (CCLC) Policy and Procedure Service. As this process is completed, a review plan for the future will be determined. The updates from CCLC will be institutionalized on a continual basis as they are received.
Sierra Community College District
Accreditation Midterm Report

Appendix A
Program Assessment Review Process (PAR)