



Focused Interim Report

March 14, 2005

(Response to 2003 Self-Study)

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INTRODUCTION

Green River Community College's most recent full-scale evaluation study and site visit occurred in April 2003. While the self-study and visit were viewed favorably by the evaluation team, the team did have several findings which resulted in five recommendations from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). In correspondence sent to Green River in June 2003, NWCCU reaffirmed Green River's accreditation on the basis of the comprehensive evaluation. The Commission did request, however, that the College submit a focused interim report to document progress on the recommendations and prepare for a focused interim evaluation in April 2005.

Green River has taken the five recommendations

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The GRCC P&PM is published in electronic format, and may be accessed on the Green River Community College Web site. Employees are to become familiar with the GRCC P&PM, and with their assigned responsibilities for evolving new and revised policies and procedures.

Definitions

***Policies** are written expressions of the college philosophy, established to provide direction to employees and other members of the Green River community in the conduct of College affairs.*

***Alternate Policy Definition:** Policies, as referred to in this manual, are pre-decisions made by appropriate leadership for the purpose of giving information and direction. Policies establish basic philosophies and climate and determine the major values upon which the College functions must operate.*

***Procedures** are the prescribed means of accomplishing policy. Their intent is to provide the college community with the guidelines and, where appropriate, the specific action sequences to ensure uniformity, compliance and control of all policy related activities.*

***Alternate Procedures Definition:** Procedures are statements that describe specific actions to be taken to conform with established general policies, and allow for the orderly implementation of these policies.*

GENERAL COMMITTEE PROCESS

The general committee had three major tasks to accomplish once the definitions were complete. The first task was to adopt a template for policies and procedures to ensure continuity in both content and style. The second was to develop a process for how policies and procedures would be adopted. Finally, the committee began to put existing policies or practices into the new template and write policies where needed.

Between meetings, committee members shared drafts of the process, the template, and policies with other employees in their respective departments. Feedback was brought back to subsequent meetings. Jeff McCauley, the Instructional Council (IC) representative, regularly updated the IC about the process. Policies and procedures was a standing item on the President's Staff meeting agendas and either Anne Baunach or another committee member gave updates on the policies & procedures process. The *CommuniGator* served as the main college-wide communication tool with articles on policies and procedures appearing regularly.

THE POLICY TEMPLATE

The committee reviewed various templates used by other colleges across the United States. After much discussion, members developed their own 'hybrid' model, selecting the most appropriate elements from those they

Important elements of the policy template include the following:

Category or type:

- 3) The policy may be of such urgency that it is sent straight to the President for approval. Criteria for this decision include potential of harm to people or facilities, or potential

The committee selected three community college

Post policies and procedures (under consideration, approved and not approved) on the College's Intranet system. Notify college community of new policies.
Set up system for soliciting and gathering feedback.
Assist sponsor with summarizing received comments on policies and procedures and with presenting findings to the President and/or his staff, as appropriate.
Document process to ensure all steps are followed.
Assign policy numbers and effective dates.
Maintain database of policies and procedures.
Work with the Office of the Code Reviser and legal counsel to update and/or make changes to the Washington State Administrative Code (WAC).

Qualifications:

Superior organizational skills and attention to detail
Excellent communication skills (both oral and written)
Strong understanding of Green River operations and committee structure.
Experience managing a database.
Ability to acquire Web skills necessary to post policies on the Intranet.
Ability to employ diplomacy and tact to keep processes moving.
Ability to anticipate obstacles and opportunities.
Ability to identify college-wide impacts.

The committee will continue to meet and anticipates batches of 20 to 25 policies to be put through the process monthly for the remainder of the 2004-05 academic year. The committee will also prepare a report for the President to consider during the 2005-06 budget process for how the policy process should continue to work. While the policy and procedure coordinator position is not a new position, the person assuming these duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their regular salary.

Beginning April, 2005, all adopted policies will be posted on Green River's Intranet site. The site, which is currently under

RECOMMENDATION TWO

The Evaluation Team recommends that Green River Community College identify and publish the expected learning outcomes for each of its degree and certificate programs where such outcomes do not currently exist, that it regularly and systematically assess student learning in all degree and certificate programs where such assessment does not currently exist, and that it provide evidence that its assessment activities lead to the improvement of teaching. (2.B, Policy 2.2, and Eligibility Requirement 12)

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two years, Green River Community College has taken aggressive measures to strengthen its ability to assess student learning outcomes and improve teaching and learning. Immediately following the 2003 visit, the Executive Vice President (EVP) discussed with the President the idea of hiring a faculty member with experience in this area to work full-time for at

associated competencies are provided at the end of this recommendation response on pages 12-14.

Recognizing that individual programs within degrees have program-level learning outcomes, faculty took on the ambitious task of identifying and publishing measurable competencies for each of the following programs identified in Table 2.1. (Since the AA and AD degrees do not have separate programs identified, these degrees do not have separa

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ACHIEVEMENT

In July 2004, the Learning Outcomes Committee and Executive Vice President's Office sponsored the first annual Summer Assessment Institute. The institute brought together 12 full and part-time faculty from across the disciplines. The primary objective of the institute was to assess student achievement of the campus-wide learning outcomes and to use the assessment results to improve teaching and learning. During the first four days of the seven-day institute, the participants collaborated to develop eight different scoring rubrics for the campus-wide learning outcomes of Written Communication, Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning, Critical Thinking, and Responsibility. The rubrics varied in both design and application. Some rubrics were written with a specific assignment in mind while other rubrics were designed to be used for a variety of different assignments across the academic disciplines. During the final three days of the institute, institute participants evaluated more than 200 pieces of actual student work using the rubrics that had been developed. The rubrics are provided in Appendices 2.1-2.8. The assessment of student work can be viewed in the on-campus exhibits. In response to the assessment results, faculty identified changes they would implement to improve teaching and learning within their program.

The Summer Assessment Institute is a key component of Green River Community College's Assessment Plan. Notably the results of the institute assessment projects may be used by programs which are scheduled to complete their Program Assessment and Improvement (PA&I) report in the coming year.

Although the Summer Assessment Institute is a good first attempt to create a comprehensive program of student outcomes assessment, additional assessment measures are needed. The Learning Outcomes Committee is in the process of investigating campus-wide assessment strategies such as the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) exam and electronic portfolios. We anticipate that the College will continue to assess student achievement of the learning outcomes through a multi-pronged approach to assessment. Current results of the College's assessment efforts, including the Community Rubrics project, may be found on the Learning Outcomes Committee Webpage. These rubrics are provided in Appendices 2.9-2.12.

LEARNING OUTCOME TRACKING SYSTEM

The Learning Outcome Tracking System (LOTS) database was created to help faculty and administrators identify which learning outcomes the College's 1,250+ courses support. The user-friendly, online database allows instructors to identify how the campus-wide learning outcome competencies are addressed in their courses. Faculty classify the competencies from Level 0 to Level 3 depending on whether the competency is assessed, taught, and/or practiced.

The LOTS database allows any member of the college community to create easily customizable reports. For example, one could run a report to show a list of courses which *teach* and *assess* the sixth competency of the Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning outcome. This competency requires students to "demonstrate logical reasoning skills through formal and informal proofs." The report would show that courses from a variety of disciplines such as Computer Science, General Engineering, Mathematics, and Philosophy teach and assess this competency.

Outcomes reports may also focus on a particular course. For example, a report can be created to show the competencies *taught* and *assessed* in English 110. As may be expected, the majority of the competencies for Written Communication are taught and assessed in English 110. English 110 also helps students achieve the eighth competency of the Responsibility outcome. Students in English 110 are taught and assessed on their ability to “complete work independently and appropriately acknowledge the source of ideas and contributions of others.”

Campus-Wide Outcomes & Degree Outcomes

Campus-Wide Outcomes (Required for All Degrees)

1. *Written Communication*

Written Communication encompasses all the abilities necessary for effective expression of

3. Responsibility

Responsibility encompasses those behaviors and dispositions necessary for students to be effective members of a community. This outcome is designed to help students recognize the value of a commitment to those responsibilities which will enable them to work successfully individually and with others. This outcome includes abilities designed to help students:

- 3.1 Identify and comply with clearly stated expectations, policies, and procedures.
- 3.2 Appropriately question or change stated expectations, policies, and procedures.
- 3.3 Recognize and accept consequences resulting from a failure to comply with stated expectations, policies, and procedures.
- 3.4 Meet obligations necessary to complete individual and group tasks.
- 3.5 Clearly communicate to affected parties any difficulties that may prevent them from fulfilling obligations.
- 3.6 Demonstrate common courtesies and show respect for the needs, difficulties, and rights of others.
- 3.7 Strive for excellence in contributions, performances, and products.
- 3.8 Complete work independently and appropriately acknowledge the source of ideas and contributions of others.

4. Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning

Quantitative Reasoning encompasses abilities necessary for a student to become literate in today's technological world. Quantitative reasoning begins with basic skills and extends to problem solving. This outcome includes abilities designed to help students:

- 4.1 Evaluate and interpret quantitative and symbolic reasoning information/data.
- 4.2 Recognize which quantitative or symbolic reasoning methods are appropriate for solving a given problem, and correctly implement those methods.
- 4.3 Demonstrate the ability to estimate a solution to a presented problem.
- 4.4 Translate data into various formats such as symbolic language, equations, graphs, and formulas.
- 4.5 Implement calculator/computer technology to solve problems.
- 4.6 Demonstrate logical reasoning skills

process to evaluate and improve each non-instructional unit over the next five years. This process parallels the PA&I process for instruction that has been in existence since the 1998-99

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

The Evaluation Team recommends that the College clarify the role of faculty and staff in institutional governance and should make the decision-making process regarding budget, capital equipment and staff allocations clear and visible to the college community. Structures need to be established that encourage meaningful participation of faculty, staff, and students in the governance of the College and the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder must be defined clearly and publicized widely. Further, a system that facilitates two-way communication between faculty and the administration should be established to promote coordination and cooperative working relationships. (4.A.2, 6.A.3, 6.C.6)

The College has taken many steps over the last two years to clarify roles, encourage participation, and facilitate college-wide communication. The College began the process in summer 2003 and still continues to make improvements. The President had numerous meetings and discussions with key faculty and staff to discuss the recommendation and formulate a plan to address it. These faculty and staff meetings included the Instructional Council Chair, the Chief Faculty Negotiator, the Executive Vice President, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, and Director of Public Information. After many discussions, the President decided that the focus of

Information Office, EVP staff have worked hard to solicit stories and post information on the latest happenings around the College. As a result, more people than ever are reading the *CommuniGator* and coming forward with new story ideas. The *CommuniGator* truly has become the main source of up-to-date information at the College. The *CommuniGator* can be viewed during the on-campus site visit on the College's Intranet site.

A second major step to improve communication was the taking of meeting notes or minutes during each President's Staff meeting. Membership on the President's Staff includes all those who directly report to him, as well as two instructional deans and one student services dean who report to the Executive Vice President. The group meets each Tuesday morning to share information, discuss key issues, and provide input to the President on matters of importance. In the past, no formal minutes nor informal notes were taken. Beginning in fall 2003, members of President's Staff took turns summarizing the meeting discussion. The notes include the note taker's name, members in attendance, and a brief summary of the items discussed. The notes were posted weekly on the GatorNet with a link posted on the *CommuniGator*. Staff also wrote a *CommuniGator* story regarding the new procedure for note taking, making sure others knew about the change. All President's Staff notes can be viewed in the on-campus exhibits.

Faculty and staff also expressed the desire to meet with the President on a more ongoing basis. Prior to this, the President held a once-a-year, state-of-the-college address in May before the end of the academic year. This was his time to update the college community on key issues and major developments of significant impact, recap the year, and look toward the future. While many faculty and staff attend and find this information useful, they have said they wanted more meetings so they could hear about important issues directly from the President in a more timely manner. In addition, 0.0005 Tc -4o9nt impas36d sht d t ,.15 Tditioaske taken. Begi ,iregarp000uni-1(ne4.ce pos

has undertaken a massive effort to put policies and procedures in writing (as thoroughly discussed under Recommendation One).

CLARIFYING DECISION-MAKING

In order to clarify decision-making at the College, it became important to document the role of the various college-wide committees. While some of this information was documented during the self-study, it became apparent that more work needed to be done to clarify the authority and scope of each committee, where decisions or recommendations were made, committee membership, etc. The Vice President for Resource Development, a member of President's Staff, volunteered herself and her office staff to facilitate this project. In spring 2004, staff started with a list of identified committees and interviewed all committee chairs and administrators responsible for each committee regarding roles and purpose. During the interview process, staff members were able to identify other committees in existence that were not documented. Once complete, President's Staff reviewed the committee list and discussed possible next steps. The list was then shared with all administrators and key managers at the annual summer administrators' retreat (2004). Some of the ideas that emerged were to make minimum requirements for each committee chair that would include taking meeting notes or minutes, posting minutes, meeting dates, and membership on the GatorNet, as well as advertising college-wide when seeking new members on the committee.

To facilitate these changes, the Vice President for Resource Development and Executive Vice President called a meeting in December 2004 with all committee chairs. During this meeting, committee chairs were asked to review the proposal. The committee chairs came up with category names for the different types of college committees. Currently, there are three types of committees: financial, policy, and operational/programmatic. They also thoroughly discussed the various pathways by which committee decisions and recommendations are made. A one page summary sheet was developed to help committee chairs clarify the decision pathways for their respective committees. Chairs also discussed the minimum requirements for committees (i.e. all committee chairs must publish an agenda and minutes, etc.). Final collection of data from committee chairs was done in February 2005 to complete the decision pathways for each committee and agree on minimum standards. All committee information will be posted on the GatorNet by April 2005 so that all faculty and staff can access it. The committee clarification proposal and a sample committee information sheet detailing all research on current committees can be found in Appendices 4.3 and 4.4, respectively.

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Perhaps the biggest change to impact governance was the expansion/change of the President's Staff to a cabinet beginning in fall 2004. There was a perception that some of the interests of faculty and staff were not represented on the President's Staff with the current membership. People believed that the membership needed to be expanded to include faculty and classified/exempt staff. The President spent the 2003-04 academic year deliberating and researching a possible new structure. As part of his research, he met with the chair and vice chair of the Instructional Council on several occasions.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE

The Evaluation Team recommends that the College develop and maintain a multi-year fiscal forecast of the major categories of revenue and expenditures that is fully aligned with the College's strategic and facilities master plans. (7.A.2, 7.B.5, 7.B.7)

Green River explicitly changed how it performed its budgeting in response to recommendations from the 1993 self-study. The College had already improved its efforts to link the development of the budget to strategic planning. However, in terms of operating funds prior to 2003, staff budgeted on a one-year basis.

Upon receipt of the recommendation in 2003, the College developed a multi-year forecast and began including that forecast as part of the college-wide budget process/package. This began in the annual cycle immediately following the receipt of the recommendation. The multi-year forecast is now updated annually.

The budget package, including the multi-year forecast, is reviewed with the individual members of the Board of Trustees (typically prior to the June Board meeting) and then presented as a recommendation for Board approval consistent with the Order Delegating Authority. A copy of the most recent multi-year forecast included with the 2004-05 budget package can be found in Appendix 5.1. The entire budget package can be reviewed in the exhibits during the on-campus visit.

On the capital side, the College has been preparing multi-year forecasts for some time consistent with the requirements for the capital requests made every two years to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the state Office of Financial Management, and the state legislature. These capital requests are an end product of our Facilities Master Plan which is in turn driven by the Instructional Plan. The Facilities Master Plan can be found on the Green River Web site at www.greenriver.edu/MasterPlan/. The latest version of the Facilities Master Plan can also be viewed in the on-campus exhibits, as can the latest version of the Instructional Plan.

CONCLUSION

Green River Community College believes that it has fully addressed or is in the final stages of fully addressing the five recommendations from the 2003 self-study. To review, the College has accomplished the following:

We have implemented a process to develop and approve college policies and procedures. (Recommendation One)

Faculty members have identified and/or reaffirmed learning outcomes for all degree and certificate programs. They have developed rubrics to assess these outcomes, have begun to systematically assess these outcomes, and have begun using the results of assessment to improve teaching and learning. (Recommendation Two)

Holman Library faculty and staff have revised its collection development policy to specifically address its media collection. They have also made a number of improvements to increase access to library resources for students at Enumclaw and for distance education students. The library is also in the process of completing its first comprehensive Program Assessment and Improvement process. (Recommendation Three)

The collective efforts of faculty and staff, under the leadership of the President, have led to improvements in college governance. Specifically, there are numerous examples of efforts to improve communication on campus, to detail the various decision-making processes, and to make faculty and staff feel more connected with the President through a cabinet. (Recommendation Four)

Business Office staff have created a new multi-year budget forecast to provide more information to the Board of Trustees. (Recommendation Five)

We believe that our efforts fully address the recommendations from our ten-year evaluation report.