

Responses to 2001 Visiting Team's Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Institutional Planning

The college should develop a comprehensive strategic plan that incorporates the results of all campus planning activities.

As documented in the College of San Mateo Interim Report of October 2002 and the Midterm Report of March 2004, College of San Mateo (CSM) has improved its internal planning and has a successful comprehensive strategic planning process that incorporates the results of campus planning activities.

The Strategic Planning Committee, a committee of College Council, the college's shared governance body, was formed in 2001. With input from the four council constituencies—students, classified staff, faculty and administrators—this committee has developed the College of San Mateo Strategic Planning Model, which has guided college planning since 2002. The Strategic Planning Model relies heavily on various plans for college initiatives and on program review. Research and evaluation are built into the process.

Each year, the Strategic Planning Committee drafts the strategic objectives and action steps, which are developed according to the College Council calendar that provides the timeline for planning activities. The Strategic Planning Committee created and published, in the fall of 2006, the CSM 2006-2008 Strategic Plan (previously called College Goals), which contains the college's two-year objectives and annual action steps; the mission statement and accompanying documents; the history of strategic planning at CSM; examples of goals that have been accomplished together with the lead person(s) responsible and completion dates; and progress made to effectively identify and target measurable outcomes and more explicitly to link goals with budget development processes. This document was a first for CSM.

In developing the strategic objectives, the Strategic Planning Committee incorporates the college technology, enrollment management, facilities and other plans. Facilities planning is ongoing as the college works to complete projects funded by the passage of two general obligation bond measures passed in the fall of 2001 and fall of 2005. College Council, with representation from the four college constituencies, serves as the institutional facilities oversight committee and reviews facilities and construction projects.

The Strategic Planning Committee is currently tying budget to the objectives and action steps and improving upon the matrix format that serves as a guide, as well as a final report, of progress made on the action steps. The college is also undertaking the task of developing an educational master plan, using the strategic plan as the foundation.

Recommendation 2. Integration of Institutional Research, Planning and Evaluation

The college should support the development of a “campus climate of evidence” in which institutional research supports planning and decision-making and yields fuller understandings of both the college and the community it serves.

As outlined in the Interim and Midterm Reports, College of San Mateo has made significant progress in the development of a “campus climate of evidence.” To help ensure that institutional research more effectively supports both program-specific and college-wide planning, the dean of articulation and research now reports directly to the college president and also coordinates research activities with the two vice presidents. The dean meets with the president weekly to set research priorities. In addition, he continues to devote his time almost solely to institutional and community research, and he supervises two classified staff members, one of whom is responsible for matriculation-related research and one of whom is responsible for articulation and other research work. Research results are published in Research Briefs that are available online on the College of San Mateo website. Results of college research have served, for example, as the basis for revamping the basic skills English curriculum and reviewing online course offerings based on students’ needs.

A district research committee was formed in 2004; its mission is to coordinate the three district colleges’ research efforts to obtain consistent data to support college and district planning. CSM’s dean of articulation and research serves on this committee. At CSM, in March 2007, the new college president formed a subcommittee to determine the critical categories of information needed to develop a college research agenda. In addition to the work of the district research committee, an Enrollment Simulation and Planning study, commissioned by the district Chancellor’s Office, has gathered research from the community to analyze fluctuation in college enrollment and to study future district enrollments. CSM managers and committees responsible for planning have made use of the data contained in the report.

In support of a “campus climate of evidence,” a College Assessment Committee—including the college president, the vice president for instruction, a division dean, the dean of articulation and research, faculty members from various disciplines, a classified employee, and a student representative—began its work in the spring of 2004. The committee hosted a meeting with a WASC official on outcomes assessment and a hands-on workshop for faculty, in addition to developing strategies for the integration of outcomes assessment into planning and decision making. Student services began focusing on assessment in the fall of 2003 with a WASC official attending a retreat for student services leads. In 2002-2003 each unit of student services reviewed its objectives, identified possible student learning outcomes, and developed student satisfaction surveys.

The purpose of the College Assessment Committee is “to encourage improved teaching and learning at CSM through the student learning outcomes assessment cycle.” This committee, charged with leading the campus community in developing and assessing SLOs, has planned workshops, allotted meeting times for faculty dialogue, developed strategies for assessment, and promoted an open exchange of assessment results leading

to improved student learning. The College Assessment Committee has been very productive, providing leadership for the college in articulating and assessing student learning outcomes and developing institutional student learning outcomes.

At the beginning of the fall term, the dean of articulation and research sends out enrollment reports to each instructional division for programs/departments to use in program review. This information previously came from the district research website. To better understand and use the data, the dean of articulation and research now customizes the data so that the data appropriately reflect individual programs. For example, last semester the dean tailored the art department's enrollment data so that art history, studio art, 3D art, and photography, all programs within the art department, received individual reports, resulting in meaningful data that each program could use in its program review; instructional program reviews now require not only the reporting of enrollment data but also reflection on its significance. The dean of articulation and research also assists programs and departments requesting more research in an effort to meet community needs and improve program offerings.

Recommendation 3. Program Review

The college should fully implement its self study plan regarding program review. Strong faculty and administration leadership is needed to ensure that all programs participate and do so in a timely manner. Also, a clear pathway needs to be established that links program review recommendations to the budgeting process.

Program review is fully implemented and closely linked to the budgeting process. As documented in the Interim and Midterm Reports, in 2002-2003, all 20 of the student services programs and 45 of the instructional programs—approximately 68 percent of the instructional programs, a significant increase over the prior year—had completed program reviews. These program reviews were used in resource allocation; for example, instructional programs failing to submit program reviews did not receive funding for instructional equipment, nor were they granted full-time faculty positions.

In the spring of 2006, a subcommittee of the Academic Senate and two instructional deans revised the annual instructional program review document to streamline the form and to make the process and results more meaningful to the faculty and administration. The document, implemented in the fall of 2006, integrates a department's short-term and long-term goals, an evaluation of the results of assessing student learning outcomes and enrollment trends, and now includes instructional equipment and faculty position requests. The student services program review document is reviewed annually and revised as necessary. The budget process is now linked to program review. Ninety percent of the 65 instructional programs and 100 percent of the 20 student services programs completed program review in the summer and fall of 2006.

Under the Strategic Planning Model, discussed under Recommendation One, instructional and student services program reviews directly support the development of college strategic objectives and relate, through the vice presidents of instruction and student services and the Budget Subcommittee, to college budgeting.

Recommendation 4. Enrollment Management

The college should develop and implement an effective enrollment management plan based on current and projected data about the college service area and students the college can serve. This plan should be addressed in coordination with recommendations relating to institutional planning. The plan should address declining student enrollments, changing demographics, and current instructional needs of the community.

As stated in the Interim and Midterm Reports, data for the fall of 2003 revealed a decline in students when compared with the fall of 2002, yet the data still showed a 3.7 percent increase in enrollment (960 more students) over the fall of 2001. As discussed under Recommendation One, the college subsequently began to develop a comprehensive enrollment management plan. At that time, enrollment management documents were drafted by two subcommittees: one subcommittee composed of student services personnel and chaired by the dean of admissions and records, and the other composed of instruction personnel and chaired by the dean of the language arts division. An integrated Enrollment Management Committee was formed with members from the four college constituencies - administration, faculty, staff, and students - whose charge was to review the two subcommittees' draft documents and develop a comprehensive college-wide enrollment management plan in 2004.

In 2005, the Enrollment Management Plan was submitted to College Council. This plan established priorities in order for the college to meet its mission of student-centered learning. In March 2006, the plan was revised and the Enrollment Management Committee focused on marketing, outreach, retention, research, and refinement as part of CSM Strategic Objective 2, FIES Growth. To address this focus, activities have been implemented and documented, and the results refined after careful assessment of the outcomes. A webpage was created in April 2007 that contains the plan as well as agendas and minutes of the committee's meetings (www.smccd.edu/portal/csmemc).

In spring 2007, the new college president launched an initiative designed to increase enrollment and improve student retention. A number of activities have been undertaken to support this effort. First and foremost, he has made student enrollment and retention a standing agenda item for President's Cabinet. Twice monthly, a group of representatives from various departments throughout campus meets with President's Cabinet to discuss this issue. The goal is to facilitate coordination and cooperation among the many different groups and individuals who are collectively responsible for college marketing and recruitment. The college has also launched "Students Speak," a focus group initiative, which is providing information about how students perceive CSM's programs and services. Results from this effort will be used to inform the development of a plan for outreach and targeted recruitment.

In March 2007, the President's Office sponsored a high school summit meeting attended by faculty and staff from the college as well as local high school staff. This meeting resulted in numerous recommendations for increasing enrollment of 2007 high school graduates at the college; many of the suggestions were implemented immediately. As a follow up to this activity, the president has held meetings with principals from most of CSM's feeder schools.

Additional activities related to enrollment management that have been undertaken in spring

2007 include revitalization of the student ambassadors program which matches CSM students with specific high schools to foster student-to-student outreach; the implementation of Operation Welcome Mat, a service that assists students in getting oriented to the college during the first week of classes; and the redesign of the college website for easier navigation. The college is also in the process of developing a strategic marketing plan, which will be completed in fall 2007.

In addition to the college efforts, CSM staff members have also been working with district office staff on a “Futures” campaign, designed to increase student participation in the concurrent enrollment program throughout the district.

Recommendation 5. Technology Plan

The college should develop a long-range technology plan and a mechanism for its periodic updating.

As summarized in the Interim and Midterm Reports, in November 2002 a Technology Planning Committee, composed of administration, faculty, classified staff, and students and led by the then newly appointed electronic resources information librarian, began work on the College of San Mateo Technology Plan 2002-2005. The plan created a standing college Technology Advisory Committee (TAC) charged with “gathering information on the status and needs of technology on campus and providing prioritized lists for the budget process.” This initial plan also contained a set of technology guiding principles; goals, strategies and action steps; and an implementation grid. It also included principal parties responsible for the action steps as well as a chart for documenting progress on each step. Once developed, the plan helped the college prioritize needs and set goals for technology, and allowed for more prudent and fiscally responsible budgeting for technology.

In 2006 the charge of the TAC was expanded to include a particular focus on the technology needs of faculty. To that end, TAC considered the minimum standards document for faculty computers, initially developed by the district Information Technology Systems (ITS) staff, and adapted these standards to allow for the needs of instructional faculty who teach courses requiring a higher standard.

Early in 2007, a faculty committee member reviewed and updated the initial implementation grid portion of the plan in order to identify the current status of the action steps for 2006-2007. TAC members reviewed and concurred with her work.

In fall 2007, TAC will be augmented with faculty members who make significant use of technology in their classrooms. During 2007-2008, TAC will have the additional and increasingly important task of aligning the technology plan with the new facilities plan. In particular, TAC members will look at a collaborative and sustainable approach to maintaining the currency of technology on campus.

Recommendation 6. Diversity

The college should address the challenges of diversity not simply as a matter of recruitment and affirmative action, but more fully as an issue of campus climate.

As acknowledged in the Midterm Report, College of San Mateo has addressed the challenges of diversity in several ways since the 2001 accreditation site visit.

The college Mission, Vision, and Values Statements, all initially adopted by College Council during the 2001-2002 academic year, acknowledge our desire to serve our diverse community and to foster “sensitivity to, respect for and appreciation of” the diversity among students, staff, faculty and administrators. Moreover, in March 2002, College Council adopted a Diversity Statement which, together with the other college statements, is published in the College Catalog and posted on the college website.

Diversity has long been a college goal; it continues now as a strategic objective. For the 2006-2008 academic years, Strategic Objective 3, Diversity lists five action steps, all encouraging tolerance, mutual respect, and the free exchange of ideas. For several of these action steps the college president is the designated lead, setting the tone and signaling the importance of diversity as an institutional goal.

The President’s Lecture Series: Diverse by Design, now in its fourth year and featuring three speakers each semester; regular Campus Conversations on Diversity, led by college psychologists and offering a more personal opportunity to discuss specific topics related to diversity; and the opportunity annually for selected employees to participate in a two-day training program through the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles are among the ongoing college activities promoting sensitivity to and respect for diversity.

Also, in fall 2004, the college formed the College Diversity Advisory Committee (DIAG). This committee, which consists of a large and dedicated group of faculty, classified staff, administrators and students, serves in an advisory capacity to the president; its charge is to develop and promote in and out of classroom activities and events that recognize, foster and validate the diverse communities within the college. For example, DIAG was instrumental in securing a Fulbright Scholar In Residence, a professor from Tokyo, Japan, to teach at CSM in spring 2007.

The Academic Senate had as one of its 2003-2004 goals to “build in [to the program review] student equity indicators & student success by gender and ethnicity” and to update the college’s Student Equity Plan. The former goal is in process; the latter was completed in September 2005. Among other important issues that the senate is working on is further incorporation of diversity into the curriculum.

Recommendation 7. Training related to employee evaluation procedures

The district should conduct regular trainings for supervisors of classified staff and meet the obligation to initiate and guide the staff evaluation processes so that they are timely and consistent, and the college administration should follow through in conducting those evaluations.

As reported in the October 2002 Interim Report and March 2004 Midterm Report, the district improved its internal procedures with respect to classified staff evaluation by

updating its computer database records on classified staff and improving its mechanism for advising supervisors when classified employee evaluations were to be performed. Since 2004 district staff has maintained a spreadsheet indicating when evaluations are due and whether or not they have been completed. Quarterly email reminders are now sent to managers reminding them of due dates for classified staff evaluations; this process is currently a manual one, and district staff members plans to investigate automating the reminders. Employees who receive two successive successful evaluations are evaluated biennially rather than annually.

To improve evaluation completion rates district-wide and to make the evaluation process more meaningful for both the classified staff member being evaluated and the manager conducting the evaluation, district human resources staff developed a new, simplified evaluation form and procedures, which were implemented in 2005. The new form enables managers to evaluate the performance of a classified employee in ten different categories, summarize the employee's strengths as well as indicate areas for growth and/or improvement, and state progress on previous goals as well as identify goals for the coming year. The person being evaluated is also invited to make written comments, as part of the evaluation process, if he/she wishes to do so. According to those classified staff responding to a question in the 2005 accreditation survey, 64 percent feel that performance evaluations are fair and appropriate.

Completion rates at the college for classified staff who were scheduled for evaluations in 2005-2006 varied from division to division, but overall the average completion rate was 50 percent. To improve the completion rate, Human Resources has encouraged college efforts to make supervisors' completion of employee evaluations a part of supervisors' evaluations by senior managers.

All managers throughout the district have been trained in the use of the new evaluation form and procedures, and they have also received training on other administrative matters through a series of monthly meetings known as Managers' Forums. This training for managers, both administrators and classified supervisors, was begun in spring 2004; the forums are conducted monthly and coordinated by the district vice chancellor responsible for human resources and employee relations.

A variety of topics are addressed in the Managers' Forums. Among those related to classified staff have been collective bargaining settlements and reviews of CSEA and AFSCME contract language; workers' compensation changes; managed hiring; vacation scheduling; compensatory time off accruals; AB 500 (short-term temporary positions requiring board approval before hiring); and screening committees and selection procedures.

Recommendation 8. Financial Resources

The college should develop a long range financial plan (two to three years). The plan needs to reflect a realistic estimate of enrollment and estimate of resources. This planning should take place in coordination with the college's overall planning activities.

As stated in the 2002 Interim and 2004 Midterm Reports, the college had not yet developed a long-range financial plan for three primary reasons: (1) in May 2001 the chief financial officer retired and was replaced by an 20-month interim financial officer; in February 2003 the position was permanently filled by the present dean of administrative services; (2) shortly after the permanent dean assumed his post, the state, district, and college were faced with a severe budget crisis, diverting his time and resources to the college financial issues needing immediate attention and making the development of any long-range financial plan relatively meaningless; and (3) for several years running the district had been uncertain about whether it would become a basic aid district, a situation that made long-range financial planning difficult.

Nonetheless, the college recognizes the importance of developing a long-range financial plan. With greater economic stability within the state, and as more state budget stability is achieved, the college is now using its existing processes to develop long-range financial planning beyond the current practice of annual fiscal-year planning already in place. Long-range financial planning is taking place, as annual financial planning does now, under the immediate leadership of the dean of administrative services, in conjunction with the CSM Budget Subcommittee, which he chairs. The Budget Subcommittee is a committee of College Council, through which all college planning and budgeting is coordinated.

In spring 2006 the dean of administrative services began working with the chief financial officer of the district to develop for college use a model that enhances the recently developed district allocation model by projecting college enrollment and financial resources for the general fund for a period of at least two years beyond the current budget year. For a given upcoming budget year, the college budget model projects the college budget based on estimated financial resources and estimated growth provided initially by the vice president of instruction and subsequently reviewed for concurrence or modification by President's Cabinet. The model's projection of the college budget for a given year can then be adjusted by modifying enrollment projections for future years as warranted by changing enrollment trends. The information derived from the model can then be employed to develop a college financial plan that in turn informs the college's strategic planning process. President's Cabinet reviewed an initial draft of the model in early summer 2007.