

Abstracts

Standard I Abstract

The self study shows that Skyline College has a strong commitment to its mission, which places an emphasis on the achievement of student learning in an open-access, diverse, student-centered environment. This mission statement is widely disseminated to both internal and external constituencies. The college has significantly increased its use of quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate, plan and improve its effectiveness in accomplishing its mission since its previous self study.

The college mission statement has just been updated using an open and collaborative process. The statement—which has been approved by the Board of Trustees—will be reviewed and revised in the future as needed. Used extensively in college planning and decision making, the mission statement addresses all parts of the college’s programs and services and is tailored to the needs of the students and community. There are no planning agenda items regarding the mission statement.

Skyline is committed to developing and using an ongoing, inclusive process focused on the assessment of student learning outcomes at all levels—course, department and degree. These assessments are designed to improve student learning and all the institutional processes that support it. The college is developing and implementing several new processes to enhance already existing processes to aid in this endeavor. Among these are the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycle (SLOAC) process and the Balanced Scorecard. The Balanced Scorecard provides trend data regarding program and service outcomes and establishes benchmarks in many areas. Systematic planning is based on analysis of all data related to the mission of the college. While the SLOAC process is not complete, it is well defined and being actively pursued. There are no planning agenda items regarding institutional effectiveness.

Standard II Abstract

The self-study assessment reveals that Skyline College offers high-quality instructional programs, student support services, and library and learning support services in an atmosphere conducive to student learning, one that enriches understanding and appreciation of diversity and encourages personal and civic responsibility, as well as the intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development of its students. The college values a campus climate that reflects its belief in a “students-first philosophy.”

General education programs reflect a breadth and depth appropriate to meet the needs of the students and community in which it is located. With a commitment to providing a high quality educational experience, Skyline has recently completed an Education Master Plan which has helped to evaluate current effectiveness and offers a framework and focused guidance for other types of planning for the college in the coming years.

In spring 2002, Skyline College initiated the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycle initiative convening a steering committee representative of faculty from all

divisions. The committee has been very successful in supporting the college to integrate the process. Steering committee members serve as experts and trainers for other members of campus throughout the process. The process began at the course level and has made great progress. Institutional student learning outcomes are being drafted as well and have undergone many revisions through the shared-governance process. The assessment cycle implementation schedule will begin in fall 2007. The committee has yet to begin its work integrating student learning outcomes at the program level. Skyline is taking a positive approach and providing plenty of opportunity to participate in the student learning outcomes and assessment process.

Skyline has an active program review process which all instructional and student services programs utilize to evaluate their effectiveness. Recently, there has been an in-depth evaluation of program review in efforts to improve the process and integrate it in the planning and budget cycle. The Curriculum Committee has approved the new process, and the new process has been implemented.

Standard III Abstract

The self study shows that Skyline effectively uses its human, physical, technological, and financial resources to achieve its broad educational purposes—including stated student learning outcomes—and improve institutional effectiveness.

Human resources are sufficient in number, appropriately skilled, and offered sufficient professional development to meet the needs of students. Hiring practices are both rigorous and fair. Evaluation procedures are clearly specified for each category of employee and are carried out systematically. The college offers a rich selection of activities that promote the appreciation of diversity. The study shows the need for a comprehensive ethics code for all personnel and for more systematic evaluation of professional development activities. Both of these needs are addressed in the planning agenda.

Physical resources have undergone significant change since the last accreditation self study. Two buildings have been seismically retrofitted, with another building currently in the process. Two new buildings have been added, funded primarily by a bond issue: the Student and Community Center (building 6) and the Science Annex (building 7A). Since the passage of a second bond measure, the college is also planning to build an additional three new structures: a wellness center, an administration and multicultural center, and an automotive transmission center. Two existing buildings are also scheduled for renovation. The self study shows that the process for designing these changes in the college's physical resources is well integrated with institutional planning as it was done in conjunction with the Education and Facilities Master Planning Project that involved all constituencies on campus. That master planning was in turn based on the college mission and goals, both of which are student centered. The self study also shows that existing buildings are adequately maintained to assure the safety of the people who use them. Maintenance is regularly evaluated and minimal standards are maintained.

Technology resources are shown to be well planned to support student learning and services and to support other college needs for communication and research. Extensive training is

available for all users, primarily through the Center for Teaching and Learning. Technology is adequately maintained, but this is an area of concern since staffing is minimal. The self study shows the need for improvement in planning for the replacement of computer equipment, software and licenses and for assessing the effectiveness of the college's use of technology. These needs are addressed in the planning agenda.

Financial resources for the college come from a variety of sources. The primary source is based on state apportionment to the district which is then allocated to the colleges by an agreed-upon formula. Financial planning at the college is by a well-documented process that involves all constituencies and is based on college mission and goals. Information about financial resources and management is widely available both to those who serve on planning and budget committees and to the college as a whole. External audits are conducted yearly for all funds and the audits are reported to the Board of Trustees and posted on the web. Both short-term and long-term financial stability are adequately accounted for. The district has a long-term plan to fund employee post-retirement benefits. The self study found no deficiencies in this area and so there are no planning agenda items for this part of the standard.

Standard IV Abstract

Skyline College values and encourages an honest and open shared-governance process within its community and throughout the district. Administrators, faculty, staff, and students strive to build a collaborative environment that encourages taking an active role in the improvement of the college's programs and services. Full constituency representation is integrated in all planning and decision-making bodies. These include College Council, the College Budget Committee, and the Institutional Planning Committee. The President of Skyline College and the district value, support, and function effectively and collaboratively within the shared-governance process.

Constituencies of Skyline College feel the environment is collegial and collaborative. However, there is concern that it is becoming increasingly difficult to participate in planning and decision making through the shared-governance process because of the confines of the current workload assignments and the belief that there are so many committees and concurrent initiatives, that it is difficult to fully understand, participate or stay informed of all that goes on at the college. The college takes this concern seriously and plans to effectively address this situation.

Skyline College's governing body is the Board of Trustees, a six-member board consisting of district community members and one student member. The district board provides administrative and financial support for Skyline College in a collegial, collaborative manner. Employee surveys are somewhat mixed regarding the district and the board's consistency with policy and practices. Planning agendas have been formulated to address this concern including more effective communication from the district and more frequent surveys to monitor leadership, governance and morale.