

Summary

Standard 2A

Truckee Meadows Community College continues to demonstrate its commitment to high standards of teaching and learning. TMCC has been engaged in five major planning efforts to promote this commitment. These planning efforts are all in support of our mission and strategic goals.

The college has recently engaged in efforts to improve the evaluation process of programs to ensure that the programs, policies and methods of delivery are compatible with our mission. This process has had one full year of implementation and changes have been made to further improve the process. The college plans to evaluate this process each year so that continued improvements can be made.

One area that is still in the process of implementation is the development of course and program outcomes. Much has been gained in terms of faculty now being cognizant of the need and benefits of developing such measures. Furthermore, many courses now have outcomes assessment procedures. These procedures however are still lacking for the majority of programs on the campus. The Student Learning Outcome Assessment committee is working with the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the office of Professional Development and the Institutional Research office to develop timelines for the implementation of program level assessments.

The faculty continues to have the major role and responsibility in the design and implementation of the curriculum. The processes for the developing of curricula and programs have recently been reformulated. The rationale for this was that as the college has grown, the processes had not been changed and therefore were outdated and unclear. The changes to the processes were made by a subcommittee of the curriculum committee with input from the academic standards committee.

The faculty continues to develop new ways to interact with the library. The relationship that the faculty has with the library staff is for the most part positive and collaborative. Many faculty have worked the library to develop tours for their courses and to actively involve the reference librarians in their writing projects. This has led to students being more pleased with the services offered by the library.

Scheduling of rooms at the college has been an area of concern for some time. In 2002-2003 an ad-hoc committee carried out a campus wide space analysis to develop strategies for meeting the needs of growing enrollments. In addition in 2003-2004 outside consultants were hired to develop a space utilization report. These reports led to a number of recommendations that have begun to be implemented.

Standard 2B

TMCC provides a wide variety of offerings including associate degrees, certificates of achievement, training and workshops. TMCC engages in assessment at three levels: the institutional level, the program/department level, and the course/unit level.

The college has been quite productive in developing processes and evaluation and updating processes for assessment of the college at these various levels. Most notably these efforts have led to the development of a new program review process and development of new rationale and assessment of General Education at TMCC. These activities while housed within the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs have been driven by faculty across the institution.

The Program and Discipline Review process is thorough and ensures input from different perspectives. The review process focuses on how the program/discipline is linked to the mission of the college and an evaluation of the strengths/weaknesses, including student outcomes and level of efficiency of the program/discipline. In addition, the program/discipline makes recommendations for their program/discipline which are evaluated in terms of the self-study. While the program review process is working well there are some areas of weakness which must be addressed. Recommendations are made within the body of the report of the recommendations and timelines for the recommendations to be completed.

The program Outcomes Assessment process at TMCC focuses on using information about student learning for the purpose of improvement of the program being assessed. This process is highly structured and the reports are placed on the web. However, implementation of this process has been variable. Furthermore, it is unclear how the feedback is actually incorporated into a plan of action. One reason for this variability is that this was not a process initially driven by the faculty therefore one suggestion is to have the faculty become integrated into the process.

As previously indicated the College has focused on General Education for the past 6 years. This year two subcommittees of faculty senate joined with the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee to develop a mission and outcome assessment plan for General Education at TMCC. The following has been accomplished in this area: development of general education mission statement, goals, and abilities that will form the basis of assessment. The college is currently engaging in developing the learning objectives and outcomes for all of its general education curriculum which will be reviewed by the general education committee.

TMCC is also engaging in other assessment activities such as:

- Matriculation evaluation and research through the QUEST (Quality Education Starts at TMCC) program. This research indicates that Quest participants have higher persistence rates than those not in the program.
- Placement Test Validation utilizing the ACCUPLACER test scores.
- Course outcomes assessment process. The student learning outcomes assessment details the process by which courses will be assessed.

Thus TMCC is engaging actively in assessment. Many of the processes are newly (within past 6 years) developed and seem to be working well and understood by the faculty. One overall concern though is that there appears to be a lack of integration across these efforts. One reason for this may be that the office that was responsible for coordinating these efforts no longer exists and that the specifics of who will be coordinating these areas has not yet been completely defined.

Standard 2C

TMCC offers a variety of pre-baccalaureate degree and certificate programs. Within each degree or certificate program, the disciplines from which classes are required to meet the general education requirement are outlined. The course catalog outlines the general description of general education courses.

As previously indicated the college has recently reformulated the rationale for its general education requirements. The rationale that was previously developed for the general education curriculum had become outdated; therefore a committee was organized to work on the general education curricula. This committee was composed of faculty from across the college to ensure representation from the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, mathematics and the social sciences. The work that this committee has done is commendable and it has also generated a time line for the implementation of the assessment of the curriculum, which will begin in fall 2005.

TMCC attempts to facilitate the transfer and acceptance of credit by having clearly stated policies. While the catalog is clear on this process it is not very “user friendly” and many students may not be aware of how the process works. There also appears to be insufficient staff to process the evaluation of transcripts upon receipt. The UCCSN system has been engaging in a process of common course number to facilitate students transfer among its institutions. This process has begun and many areas are complete however, full common course numbering is expected to be completed by the end of 2005.

TMCC offers academic advising in a number of ways. TMCC has 2 full time academic advisors, one full time international student advisor, and 5 peer advisors. It should be noted that the college has 5 full time counselors who primarily are responsible for personal counseling. Prior to fall 2004 these counselors provided many academic advising services. There is some concern that with this new arrangement students are not being seen as timely as possible for academic advising. The academic advising office is now offering the option of having faculty from across the college hold academic advising hours through the advisement office. The hope is that this will facilitate the connection between students and faculty in their area of interest and will also help to serve a larger population.

There does appear to be possible confusion for students on how to obtain advising or find out information regarding advising. For example, currently academic advising is at times listed under Program advising or counseling. These would be relatively easy problems to solve with a search function on the TMCC website.

TMCC is meeting the requirements in the areas of transfer credit, academic advising, remedial course work testing, and faculty standards. TMCC's open policy for admission facilitates students approach to remedial coursework as part of the learning process and the student/faculty ratio in most programs is extremely good.