

*Commission on Colleges
Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges*

A REGULAR INTERIM REPORT

Truckee Meadows Community College
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*A Confidential Report Prepared for the Commission on Colleges that Represents
the Views of the Evaluators*

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Introduction

Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) was accredited initially in 1975 and has had its accreditation reaffirmed, as required, since then. The last full-scale visit was in 1995, and the accreditation was reaffirmed in December 1995. A progress report addressing the first of five recommendations was submitted in December of 1996. A focused interim visit was held in 1997, and the accreditation was reaffirmed in December 1997. In 1998 the Commission on Colleges approved a proposal for a distance education endeavor for the immediate service area, and a focused interim report and evaluation visit took place in 1999. The visit concerned distance education and emphasized the role of the library and compliance with policies on assessment and faculty evaluation as they related to distance education. This report follows a regular interim visit held on October 5 and 6, 2000.

The purpose of this regular interim evaluation was to permit the Commission on Colleges to monitor TMCC's ongoing compliance with standards and policies based on Recommendations 1 through 5 on pages 49 and 50 of the 1995 Evaluation Committee Report and other institutional changes that have occurred since the last evaluation.

The college prepared a regular interim report including responses to these 5 recommendations and responses to a series of questions about institutional changes. The report represents a significant amount of work and goes into considerable detail about TMCC's work on the five recommendations. It was helpful to the evaluators. Many appendices were included containing supplemental information. The evaluation was conducted in conformity with the Commission's suggested outline for the visit, and a series of individual and group meetings were held with Regents, administrators, faculty members, classified staff members, and students.

The evaluators thank everyone whom they met and those who prepared for and provided hospitality during the visit. All information requested was provided, and all those interviewed were forthright and helpful.

Part A

Actions taken regarding recommendations in the 1995 Evaluation Committee Report.

1995 Recommendation #1

One degree program and several certificate programs identified in the body of this report lack a component of general education or other related education, resulting in noncompliance with Commission Policy 2.1 General Education/Related Instruction requirements and Eligibility Requirement 10. The committee recommends that the College incorporate the missing components into those programs no later than the fall term of 1996.

Instructional deans reviewed their respective areas and made recommendations for an internal approval process to verify the components of all degrees and certificates. It was agreed that separate courses rather than embedded curriculum would serve the students better. The one exception is the existing embedded curriculum in the Dental Assisting Certificate of Achievement Program where the embedded competencies in mathematics equated to a three credit, college level mathematics course. It was approved by the Mathematics Department and the Faculty Senate.

The College Catalog clearly states the general education requirements for each occupational program. All future degree and certificate of achievement programs will have related instruction and general education course requirements rather than embedded curriculum.

The qualifications and transcripts of occupational faculty are reviewed to assure that they have the academic background to successfully teach the general education courses required in their programs. Mathematics and English faculty design occupational courses that have a good proportion of discipline content and applied content. If no one in the programs is qualified to teach those courses, then English and Mathematics faculty teach them.

1995 Recommendation # 2

Documents exist which identify criteria, indicators of institutional effectiveness, and assessment processes. However, there is little evidence that planning; assessment of student learning outcomes; and relevant data retrieval, interpretation, and application actually take place. Also, sufficient supporting data for institutional program review and evaluation could not be found. There is not a conceptual framework or scheme which links data/information to a planning process which would provide the institution a sense of direction or purpose. Many of the basic components are present, but they are not focused. In fact, most employees freely admit there is no general sense of where the institution is going or shared vision. It is recommended that the College immediately implement energetic efforts to correct this situation. These efforts should be clearly delineated, have specific time lines, and involve all constituencies (Standard I - Institutional Mission and Objectives; Standard V - Educational Program and Its Effectiveness; Commission Policy 25 - Educational Assessment).

TMCC devotes dedicated, informed staff to leading the efforts in planning, evaluation, and the assessment of educational outcomes. These processes and their results are discussed at many levels of the institution and involve all faculty and academic administrators and some classified staff and students. Planning happens at many levels from the Nevada Board of Regents through the Chancellor's Office, and especially on the campus.

The college uses a "Chart for Institutional Effectiveness" to measure accomplishments by major performance indicators. The areas of inquiry are directly related to the University

and Community College System of Nevada's mission for community colleges. Institutional Research staff report annually on TMCC's progress toward meeting these goals. Data are gathered and disseminated in a FACT BOOK and in other documents, many of which are available in both hard copy and electronically.

TMCC has a Planning and Policy Council which is chaired by the President. It reviews the results of environmental scanning, the updated Academic Master Plan, and Program Reviews. Each academic program is reviewed at least once in a five-year cycle, and involves material which is used both internally and externally by the Chancellor's Office and the Board of Regents. Finally, TMCC has an Assessment Plan for academic and administrative assessment. Learning outcomes are assessed by program as well as in specific areas such as general education.

Commendation

The faculty and administration of TMCC have worked hard to create and continually improve the planning and evaluation processes of the institution. Faculty are engaged in assessing course and program outcomes, and they are beginning to use results of these assessments to improve teaching and learning. The products of planning and assessment are widely available, and planning and evaluation activities are expected parts of the life of the institution. In fact, many members of the faculty and staff believe that these activities are critical to the institution's continuous improvement.

Suggestion

The staff in Institutional Research, Planning, and Evaluation should consider creating training opportunities for faculty to learn ways to use the results of the many assessments which are taking place to directly improve teaching and learning. A number of faculty are already doing so, and they could assist the staff by presenting what they are doing to their colleagues.

1995 Recommendation #3

The Committee recommends that faculty, in concert with appropriate administrators, define opportunities within their curricula to ensure that students acquire the skills associated with accessing, retrieving, and applying information resources and technologies (Standard Two - Educational Program and Its Effectiveness; 2.A - General Requirement; Standard Indicator 2.A.8; Five-Library and Information Resources.

In response to this recommendation the institution was proactive in making significant changes and improvements. Among the more noteworthy changes are: A new library facility was ready in the spring of 1996 that allowed for increased media services; the college raised \$200,000 for materials and equipment; ways for students to utilize equipment and services more extensively were identified; in-service or staff development opportunities were made available; and the Senate Curriculum Committee revised

requirements for new courses to include designated assignments that use available technologies. Additionally a campus-wide Technology Committee was established, changed the reporting responsibilities of the director of the Library to the Associate Dean of Information Resources to enhance the technical support of the library; the library staff developed unit plans or initiatives to change the image of the library, expand faculty and student use, and expand technology.

A Library-Faculty Survey during 1996-97 revised the instructional mission of the library and identified strategies for expanding and improving the librarians' role as teachers. Input from the survey has produced positive, innovative projects such as inclusion of library assignments in many courses, the creation of a Library Research Assignment booklet, comprehensive library tours with "hands-on" technology workshops, and expanded use of the World Wide Web and other research technologies. Library research assignments have been developed for several courses.

A comprehensive website (60 pages) has been developed and a program "Yahoo of Academic Websites" has been linked to the pages to assist students and faculty with research in their disciplines. All who have access to the WWW have access to the library's full text web based databases 24 hours, 365 days per year. It is possible to access such databases as EBSCO, ProQuest, SIRS, Access Science, Encyclopedia Americana, and the Book Catalog.

Starting in the fall of 1996, three faculty surveys and four student surveys have been conducted to ascertain the performance of the Library in meeting both instructor and student needs. The results of the surveys have been analyzed and positive improvements have resulted.

Commendations

The administration of Truckee Meadows Community College is to be commended for not cutting funding for the library during recent financial shortfalls in order to uphold a commitment to provide these services to students and faculty.

The library's staff is to be commended for their enthusiasm, dedication, dependability, and tireless efforts in expanding the library's role in instruction, information literacy, student research support, as well as providing remote access to online public catalog and electronic databases.

1995 Recommendation #4

While there are indications that there are departments in the College closely following Standard Four - Faculty and Policy 4.1 Faculty Evaluation as they relate to faculty evaluation, some are not adhering to the utilization of multiple indices for this

process. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the College achieve consistency in faculty evaluation across campus by adhering to the provisions of Policy 4.1.

The full time faculty evaluation process was drafted by a subcommittee of the Faculty Senate followed by input from the full Senate and administration. After discussion and negotiation, agreement was reached for an annual evaluation consisting of multiple indexes. A "Personal Annual Plan" that is developed in the spring and refined in the fall drives the process. Other instruments include a self evaluation, student appraisals, and class observation. An annual evaluation is prepared by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and it contains a review of the faculty member's college and division responsibilities, professional activities, community service, professional growth, and student evaluation results. The evaluations are on file in the Office of Human Resources.

Part time faculty evaluations are done by department chairs. The instruments used include classroom observation forms, instructor self appraisals, and student appraisals. Evaluations are on file in the faculty's respective Dean's office.

The evaluation process for tenure track faculty is determined by the University and Community College System of Nevada.

Suggestion

Because teaching is the primary role of faculty, it is suggested that the Annual Evaluation Report prepared by the Vice President of Academic Affairs contain a more comprehensive appraisal of the faculty's teaching competence with recommendations for future improvement as appropriate.

1995 Recommendation # 5

It is recommended that priority be given, particularly in the instructional area, to establishing an organizational structure and accompanying operating procedures which are clearly defined and understandable; allow for responsible participation in decision making, implementation, and evaluation; offer assurance of reasonable stability over time; and provide ample opportunities for effective communication throughout the institution (Standard VIII - Administration).

Team members were impressed with the great strides which TMCC has made in working to improve the 1995 visiting team's concerns in these areas. The current president actively engages in activities which provide greater opportunities for governance and which enhance communication at the college. He chairs the Planning and Policy Council, made up of administrators and leadership from the faculty, classified staff, and students. This group discusses every major issue and concern on campus. They commission "Design Teams" which work in the spirit of Total Quality Management by gathering the major participants in new endeavors to work on problems and propose solutions to them.

The president has begun a process of hosting monthly forums on topics of concern to the campus. As well, he and others use e-mail and the college's web site to post information, the results of studies, and the like. These processes are trusted and have grown to be expected by the faculty, and their leadership has given the president high praise for them and for the communications channels he has established.

Commendation

The president and many administrators, faculty, and classified staff are to be commended for initiating and supporting the major gains which have been made in improving communication and encouraging campus-wide, meaningful participation by faculty and staff.

However, the results of the recent faculty climate survey and conversations which visiting team members had with faculty and staff lead to the conclusion that improved communication and information sharing may not be happening at all levels of leadership; therefore, the visiting team believes that work remains to be done on this recommendation and that improvements must be made horizontally among some members of the administration as well as vertically among them and others on the campus.

A number of those interviewed expressed anxiety about the fact that the current president has announced that he will be leaving the college at the end of this year. The Board of Regents is currently setting up a presidential search committee and a process for selecting his successor. Members of the community expressed hope that the Regents will select a person who will be dedicated to maintaining the improvements made in shared governance and in communication.

Some faculty expressed concerns about growth in administration, particularly in a time of tight budgets. They said that they were unclear about the need for these new positions, and they did not know what some administrators' responsibilities were or had changed to become.

Suggestion

Create, update, and disseminate job descriptions for all administrative positions. Post them on the web site.

Suggestion

The Planning and Policy Council should be aware that some faculty are concerned about administrative growth; as new positions are created, the need for them should be explained to the TMCC community.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that priority be given, particularly in the administration, to establishing operating procedures which are clearly defined and understandable; allow for responsible participation in decision making, implementation, and evaluation; offer assurance of reasonable stability over time; and provide ample opportunities for effective communication throughout the institution (Standard VIII - Administration).

Commendation

The visiting team commends TMCC on the progress it has made in the last five years in planning, assessment, the incorporation of information technology in the library and other areas, and the increased opportunity for faculty to participate in governance.

Part B

The following comments reflect the responses TMCC has given in its Interim Evaluation Report and the observations of the evaluators.

- 1. What changes, if any, have been made in the mission and goals of the institution since the last full-scale evaluation and why have they been made? How have these changes been reflected in the educational programs and/or functioning of the institution?*

The college's Mission and Goals were developed following the 1995 Evaluation Report. Consultants were hired to assist the college with a participatory process for involving the community in setting these goals. As a result of the new goals, TMCC reports several positive changes including: more faculty participation in decision making; improved communications; better data collection related to institutional effectiveness; more outcomes research; shared governance; use of environmental scanning in planning.

These changes have impacted instruction in a number of positive ways including: a process for faculty to compete for program development funds; the addition of new degrees and the revision of existing ones; faculty review of program vitality; a new faculty-developed Student Conduct Policy; more faculty staff development opportunities.

- 2. What changes, if any, have been made in the requirements for graduation and why?*

TMCC is required to follow the policies of the University and Community College System of Nevada that has not required any changes.

3. *In the undergraduate (or lower division) curriculum, what new majors, minors, or degrees/certificates have been added? What majors, minors, or degrees/certificates have been discontinued? What significant changes have been made in existing majors, minors, or degrees/certificates?*

TMCC has added a significant number of emphases for its existing AA, AAS, AS, and AGS degrees. These emphases are equivalent to a minor in other institutions and, in most cases, require 24-30 credit hours to complete. TMCC uses the emphasis avenue to keep pace with community needs since it can take a year or longer to get a degree approved due to the Board of Regents approval schedule.

TMCC reports the following changes:

Revised Degree Titles:

Automotive	to	Automotive Technician Educational Cooperative
Drafting	to	Engineering-Drafting Technology
Food Service	to	Culinary Arts
Office Administration	to	Computer and Office Technology

New Degrees:

Apprentice Programs
Computer Information Technology
Dental Hygiene
Diesel Technician Educational Cooperative
Dietetic Technician
Early Childhood Education
Environmental Controls Technology
Environmental Science
Graphic Communications
Legal Assistant
Mental Health Services
Military Occupations
Fire Science Technology
The Associate of Science Degree

Programs Discontinued:

Solar Energy Program

4. *At the graduate level, if programs are offered, what significant changes have been made and why have they been made?*

NA

5. *What changes have been made in graduate non-degree or credential programs? Please provide rationale for the changes.*

NA

6. *What changes have been made in special programs providing academic credit (summer session, extension, correspondence, travel, and foreign centers), and why have they been made?*

TMCC reports that it does not have extension, correspondence, travel courses, or foreign centers.

Several occupational programs have modified their start and end dates for the semester in order to schedule a third semester during the summer to make it easier to schedule work experience components.

TMCC added a Weekend College program in 1998 by scheduling a variety of General Education and occupational courses on Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday to provide additional options for students to complete their education.

7. *What changes have been made in undergraduate and graduate admissions, grading, student non-academic programs, and student support services? Why? Compare the current enrollment figures with those reported in the last institutional self-study.*

TMCC has made no changes in admissions, graduation requirements, nor grading since 1975.

There have been a number of positive changes in student non-academic programs and student support services. These include: an Outreach College created in 1997 "to create learning opportunities and offer greater access to education and training services through collaboration and entrepreneurship"; a revised admissions application which includes students' educational goals; the ability to download this and other forms from the web; an improved catalog; the ability to register online; the ability for students to access and print transcripts, grades, their class schedules, and a degree audit on the web; a walk-in advisement center, staffed by peer advisors; an updated career center; better student service in financial aid; programs for high school seniors; expanded child care services and hours; and expanded writing center and peer tutoring. All of these improvements have been established to meet student and community needs, and all are within the scope of the college's mission and goals.

Although there have been changes in the way the Nevada System has counted enrollment, TMCC had a headcount enrollment of 8,460 students and an FTE 3,434 in 1995-96. In 1999-2000 the headcount was 10,214 and the FTE was 4,654.

8. *What significant changes have been made in policies affecting the faculty? Has the faculty increased or decreased in size? How have faculty salaries and other benefits been improved? To what extent has the faculty been strengthened? In case faculty ranks are used, compare the number and percentage at each rank level with the figures last reported. Describe the institution's plan for the continuing evaluation of all faculty members. See Standard Four—Faculty and Commission Policy 4.1—Faculty Evaluation.*

The major change which has been made—and referenced in this report in numerous locations—is the successful effort to include faculty in the institution's governance and policy formulation. Additional significant changes include: increasing academic standards in the hiring of full- and part-time faculty; instituting a three-level program review process; starting a process to review workload, especially in occupational programs; increasing the number of sabbaticals and mini-grants awarded; instituting a merit process for faculty at the top of the salary scale; creating an Employee Development Center which provides training for faculty and staff, often in areas relating to the use of the computer; emphasizing diversity and multiculturalism.

The size of the faculty has grown. In 1995 TMCC had 81 full-time and 341 part-time faculty. In spring term 2000 there were 155 full-time and 292 part-time faculty. Counselors and librarians are included in these numbers.

Salaries have increased annually by merit increases at a rate of 2.5 percent per year since 1995. COLAs have been given in some years.

The faculty has been strengthened in a number of ways including: a strong faculty senate with membership on every significant college committee; a cooperative faculty federation which works with the administration and the Senate; mentoring for all new full-time faculty; extensive use of the web to keep communication flowing and to have information available to all who wish to access it.

TMCC has strengthened faculty evaluations by using student evaluations more often, and improving the evaluation criteria. Multiple indices are used. See the response to General Recommendation Four of the 1995 report in Part A of this report.

9. *What changes have been made in the physical plant (new buildings, demolition or remodeling of old ones)?*

The Interim Evaluation Report details six projects which have occurred since 1995. A number of significant additions and renovations have taken place at all locations. New sites have been added.

10. *How have the library/learning resources and laboratories been maintained to keep pace with the growth of instruction or with significant program changes, such as computer science or health technologies?*

This is addressed in Part A of the Interim Evaluation Report under Recommendation #3.

Additional computer classrooms have been added.

11. What significant changes have been made in the financial structure and condition of the institution (budgetary increases and/or decreases, operating surpluses or deficits, plans for the future)?

Few significant changes have occurred in the College's budget in the last five years. There has been growth in state budgets as the enrollment has grown. Non-state budgets have also grown from \$200,000 to over \$500,000. In FY 2000 TMCC overspent part-time faculty dollars, but the college balanced this by cutting in other areas; new controls have been instituted to prevent a recurrence of this situation.

The System will implement a new Higher Education Formula on July 1, 2001. This new formula promises to correct inequities which have been present in the old system; however, Truckee Meadows is apt to lose some instructional dollars in the first two years of this formula's use.

12. What significant changes have been made in the leadership and management of the institution? Explain. See Standard 6.C - Leadership and Management.

A number of significant changes have occurred—all positive and all well received on campus—since the 1995 team visit and evaluation report. They have been detailed in several places in this report.

The main structures of governance include the Leadership Team (president and three vice-presidents) working with faculty and faculty committees. The Planning and Policy Council is the main vehicle for shared governance.

Design Teams and forums and electronic communication are widely used. Planning and budgeting have been opened up for general participation.

13. What existing plans for the future have been achieved and what new plans have been formulated?

Among the plans which have been achieved are: a shared governance structure which is used; improved faculty/administration communication (with some exceptions; see the new recommendation); improved systems for planning and assessment; expanded and renovated physical facilities; expanded and improved student services; expanded academic programs.

New plans include: working with the new System funding formula; expanding outreach to community; building facilities and programs with local school districts; developing programs at sites of the main campus.

14. With respect to Standard One - Institutional Mission and Goals, Planning and Effectiveness; and Standard Two - Educational Program and Its Effectiveness, note the importance of evaluating and monitoring results (outcomes) as a means of determining institutional effectiveness. Keeping to a concise format, the institution should endeavor to describe explicit achievements expected of its students and to adopt reliable procedures for assessing those achievements.

Succinctly describe the institution's current status in meeting the requirements of Standard 1.B - Planning and Effectiveness; and Standard 2.B - educational Program Planning and Assessment. In connection with Standard 2.B, please relate how the institution's planning is based on regular and continuous assessment of programs in light of the requirements of Commission Policy 2.2 - Educational Assessment.

TMCC is heavily invested in planning and assessment. A great deal of staff time and quite a lot of financial resources have been and continue to be spent on these activities. Campus administrators, including the Leadership Team, are involved with faculty in participating in planning retreats, assessment retreats, evaluation of personnel, and program review. There are many products of planning, both in hard copy and in electronic form, and they are widely available. There is a major role for faculty in decision making.

TMCC discovers (among other things) the rate of employment of program completers within six months of graduation; the rate of successful completion of required license/certificate exams; program completers' satisfaction with technical education programs; program completers' satisfaction with general education preparation; graduate rate; retention rates; persistence rates; graduation rates; success of remedial math students; and success of remedial English students.

Since statistics have been gathered over time, the college now has enough to draw conclusions and make decisions based on these data. Many programs are using the results of assessment as they plan for the future, and others are learning how to do so in this academic year.

Team members believe that TMCC is actively engaged in using assessment results to make plans for the future.

Conclusion

TMCC has made significant progress on four of the five recommendations contained in the 1995 Evaluation Report. The report on changes since the last self-study and visit is

complete and shows continuing progress. One recommendation and commendations have been included in this report:

Recommendation

It is recommended that priority be given, particularly in the administration, to establishing operating procedures which are clearly defined and understandable; allow for responsible participation in decision making, implementation, and evaluation; offer assurance of reasonable stability over time; and provide ample opportunities for effective communication throughout the institution (Standard Six - Governance and Administration).

Commendations

The faculty and administration of TMCC have worked hard to create and continually improve the planning and evaluation processes of the institution. Faculty are engaged in assessing course and program outcomes, and they are beginning to use results of these assessments to improve teaching and learning. The products of planning and assessment are widely available, and planning and evaluation activities are expected parts of the life of the institution. In fact, many members of the faculty and staff believe that these activities are critical to the institution's continuous improvement.

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The president and many administrators, faculty, and classified staff are to be commended for initiating and supporting the major gains which have been made in improving communication and encouraging campus-wide, meaningful participation by faculty and staff.

The visiting team commends TMCC on the progress it has made in the last five years in planning, assessment, the incorporation of information technology in the library and other areas, and the increased opportunity for faculty to participate in governance.