Follow-Up Report 2011

College of Marin
835 College Avenue
Kentfield, CA 94904

A confidential Report Prepared for the Accrediting Commission
For Community and Junior Colleges
This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited

College of Marin

on

October 31, 2011

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Team Members:
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College of Marin Follow-Up Report 2011

December 5, 2011

TO: Accreditating Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

FR: Dr. José M. Ortiz, Team Chair

RE: Report of Follow-Up Visit Team to College of Marin, October 31, 2011

Introduction:
A comprehensive visit was conducted to the College of Marin in October, 2010. At its meeting of January 11-13, 2011, the Commission acted to require the College of Marin to submit a Follow-Up Report, followed by a visit. The follow-up visiting team, Dr. José M. Ortiz, Ms. Nancy Meddings and Ms. Rhea Riegel conducted the site visit to College of Marin on October 31, 2011. The purpose of the team visit was to verify that the Follow-Up Report prepared by the college was accurate through examination of evidence, to determine if sustained, continuous and positive improvements had been made at the institution, and that the institution has resolved the recommendations made by the comprehensive evaluation team and now meets the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies.

The college had prepared well for the visit by arranging for meetings with the individuals and groups agreed upon earlier with the team chair, and by providing appropriate evidence both online and in the meeting room used by the team. Over the course of the day, the team met with the President of the College, two members of the Board of Trustees, committee chairs, the Academic Senate President, and members of the faculty and staff. Two team members visited the Indian Valley Campus, as well as the main Kentfield Campus.

The Follow-Up Report and visit were expected to document resolution of the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college regularly update all institutional plans and systematically evaluate the effectiveness of all planning and resource allocation processes. The college should communicate to all stakeholders the results of these assessment activities, and implement identified improvements on a continuous basis to support and improve student learning. Additionally, the team recommends that the college ensure that planning is linked to budgeting for the effective use of its resources.
Recommendation 2: In order to meet the Commission’s fall 2012 deadline, the team recommends that the college accelerate its efforts to identify and assess measurable student learning outcomes for every instructional, library and student support program. The team further recommends that the college incorporate student learning outcome assessment results into program planning and resource allocation for the improvement of student learning.

Recommendation 3: In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college allocate resources to create a sustainable infrastructure to support a distance education program that can deliver high quality curricula and support student access and success.

Recommendation 4: In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college strengthen the role of research through broad institutional dialogue and critical analysis of research data, especially in light of the changing student demographics. Institutional efforts should focus on providing information based on statistical data and communicating it widely to all appropriate constituencies in order to improve institutional effectiveness.

Recommendation 5: In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college remedy the lack of library services, learning resources and student support services for evening, Indian Valley Campus and online students.

Recommendation 7: In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the college develop a facilities master plan to ensure the effective utilization and quality of physical resources which are necessary to support its programs and services.

Recommendation 8: In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college establish and communicate a sustainable technology plan for the acquisition, maintenance and replacement of its infrastructure, equipment, support and training to meet institutional needs. The team further recommends regular evaluation of this plan for its effectiveness in prioritizing and funding current and projected long term technology needs.

Recommendation 9: In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the board focus on developing policies that support the quality, integrity and effectiveness of student learning programs and services. The board should deliberate with due diligence and make timely decisions that are in the best interests of the institution. The board should act as a whole and adhere to board policy once a decision has been made, and support the superintendent/president’s authority in administering board policies and procedures.
College Responses to the Team Recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college regularly update all institutional plans and systematically evaluate the effectiveness of all planning and resource allocation processes. The college should communicate to all stakeholders the results of these assessment activities, and implement identified improvements on a continuous basis to support and improve student learning. Additionally, the team recommends that the college ensure that planning is linked to budgeting for the effective use of its resources.

**Findings and Evidence:** The team reviewed an Integrated Planning Manual (IPM) developed by the College of Marin in October 2010, which now has been revised and updated twice (March 2011 and August 2011). In addition, the planning model, which is a key component of the plan, was revised in April 2011. The IPM details all planning processes and their timelines, including the relatively new planning process that ties resource allocation to program review. The revised annual planning cycle includes academic and budget planning, as well as strategic and long term planning. All areas perform a full program review every three years, and a mini program review annually to update resource requests, as evidenced by program review templates and completed program review documents. Requests for funding originating in program reviews are aggregated on the college research website, which was viewed by team members, to allow planning committees to understand the volume and costs of requests. Committees that report to the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC) use a common rubric that ties ranking to the strategic plan and other college goals to evaluate requests. Faculty and staff interviewed during the visit were in agreement that the new process through PRAC seemed to be working well. The college also assessed its planning processes through employee surveys. Results are publicly available on the college research website, and were discussed by the PRAC Committee (as recorded in their minutes) and in open forums. In interviews, the college president was complimented on his accessibility and efforts to communicate planning processes.

**Conclusion:** College of Marin has made substantial progress in meeting the recommendation, as evidenced by the development and evaluation of the IPM, linking the planning/resource allocation process through PRAC, and improved communication to stakeholders regarding the planning process. However, not all programs completed either a mini or full program review in 2010-11 based on the completed ones available on the research website. Per the planning manual, complete implementation of the annual program review process (full or mini) will not occur until 2012-13. In addition, some institutional plans are still early in the process of updating (see recommendations 7 and 8, technology and facilities master plans) and some plans have not yet been evaluated. The team concludes that this recommendation has been partially addressed.
Recommendation 2: In order to meet the Commission’s fall 2012 deadline, the team recommends that the college accelerate its efforts to identify and assess measurable student learning outcomes for every instructional, library and student support program. The team further recommends that the college incorporate student learning outcome assessment results into program planning and resource allocation for the improvement of student learning.

Findings and Evidence: Institutional learning outcomes, also adopted as the college GE outcomes, are assessed using rubrics developed for this purpose. The rubrics were piloted in spring 2011. There is also an Excel tool, viewed by team members, that allows for easy aggregation of assessment results for college level outcomes. Course level student learning outcomes (SLOs) have generally been identified, and assessment cycles have started. Most programs (98.54% according to the Curriculum Committee SLO website) have identified student learning outcomes. There are four overarching student services SLOs identified, and each department is assessing one in fall 2011 (except Matriculation, which is in the process of being reorganized). Degree and certificate SLOs have been identified for the most part, and the assessment cycle is in the early stages. The office of planning, research and institutional effectiveness (PRIE) has done a tremendous job in assisting with web-based tools and resources to aid in tracking and mapping SLOs.

Conclusion: The College appears to generally be at the developmental level with SLOs, nearing proficiency at the course level. There was no evidence of SLOs for some areas (the library, matriculation) and the assessment cycle is still in the initial or early stages. The Follow Up Report seems to have had some optimistic projections; for example, it states that each student services department would assess two or three division level SLOs in fall 2011, and in fact they seem to be assessing just one. At the current rate, assessment of all SLOs in the student services area is not scheduled for completion until 2013-14, according to the student services SLOs assessment plan. The college’s assessment plan indicates that college level/GE outcomes will be assessed in appropriate courses on a rotating schedule, but did not clearly identify that rotation. The concern is not that the SLOs will not be assessed, but that the ongoing rotation for that assessment mentioned is not clearly defined. Assuming that all college/GE outcomes will be assessed by the end of the term, the rotation should identify when the next round of assessment would occur for each. This speaks to the need for ongoing sustainable assessment, beyond the first round. College of Marin will need to continue a very dedicated focus on SLOs, especially assessment, in order to meet the Commission’s 2012 timeline. The recommendation is partially addressed.
**Recommendation 3:** In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college allocate resources to create a sustainable infrastructure to support a distance education program that can deliver high quality curricula and support student access and success.

**Findings and Evidence:** College of Marin has taken a number of actions to improve distance education (DE), including offering a great deal of faculty training through a part-time online learning faculty resource instructor as the college migrates to the Moodle learning management system. The resource instructor publishes a newsletter called *DE@COM* that lists eight training opportunities on Moodle in fall 2011. Through commendable cooperation from faculty, online services such as counseling and an online writing center are in the process of development. The Academic Senate has formed a Distance Education Committee (DEC) that has been instrumental in improving the curriculum approval process and course outlines of record for DE. Visiting team members that met with DEC faculty members were very impressed with their efforts to improve student success in online classes. In addition, policies and procedures have been reviewed and revised to include distance education including board policies, administrative procedures, improvements to the DE webpage, schedule of classes, and MyCOM portal.

**Conclusion:** The college has made some progress towards developing high quality online curricula and supporting student success. Evidence of this improvement includes increased faculty training, efforts to develop support services, and revision of curriculum development to include distance education. However, critical aspects that led to the recommendation are still missing. The first is the development of a distance education plan that aligns with the college’s strategic plan and educational master plan. While several publications mention a three year plan to develop distance education, no administrators, faculty or staff could produce a plan, and some were totally unaware one existed. A plan, verbalized by the vice president of instruction, to hire an English faculty member and assign that person .40 to support DE, is the only official staffing plan when the current part-time faculty resource instructor leaves at the end of December. While there is a line item in the budget for distance education currently, it only covers hosting for Moodle and the faculty member who is leaving. The only budget plan mentioned in interviews, outside of the .40 staffing, was writing some grants. There are forty sections of online courses in the fall 2011 catalog, and every instructor, online or onsite, will be getting a Moodle course shell for spring 2012. The college still needs to develop a plan and dedicate sustainable and adequate resources to support student access and success online. The college partially meets the recommendation.
**Recommendation 4:** In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college strengthen the role of research through broad institutional dialogue and critical analysis of research data, especially in light of the changing student demographics. Institutional efforts should focus on providing information based on statistical data and communicating it widely to all appropriate constituencies in order to improve institutional effectiveness.

**Findings and Evidence:** The team reviewed physical and virtual evidence showing clear indication that the College of Marin has strengthened the role of research and communicated data widely through various channels. The Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness (PRIE) staff have created a data dashboard that is easily accessible to all staff. The data dashboard allows faculty to drill down into course and section level data to understand their students, while providing administration the ability to view aggregate data at the department, division, campus or college level. A number of statistical reports are now available on the PRIE website, and the college is publishing its first fact book. Starting in April 2011, PRIE has sent out monthly targeted briefings, called “data nuggets”. Data provided by PRIE forms the basis of institutional dialogue related to program review, outcomes assessment and other institutional planning. Ongoing dialogue about research data includes public forums with the president at both campus sites, use of data in the new program review/PRAC process, and discussion at the president’s cabinet and in other committees and senates.

**Conclusion:** The PRIE office has done a commendable job in a short time frame in designing, developing and providing methods for statistical data to be widely communicated for dialogue and analysis. In interviews, members of the college spoke enthusiastically about the clarity of data and ease of use of data tools made available to them. As further data channels such as the fact book are developed, the college should easily be able to incorporate data analysis into the integrated planning and decision making process to improve institutional effectiveness. The team believes the college has satisfied this recommendation and has met the standards.

**Recommendation 5:** In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college remedy the lack of library services, learning resources and student support services for evening, Indian Valley Campus and online students.

**Findings and Evidence:** Due to the current migration to Moodle, several services that hoped to fully be online for fall 2011 have been delayed, including the online chat with a counselor and online tutoring through CCC Confer. According to counseling and tutoring staff, it is hoped that these services can be integrated and offered through Moodle. There is a new distance education webpage and location on the MyCom Portal that provide helpful information on services including schedules and forms. There are also services centered at Kentfield for evening students, such as the library. The Indian Valley campus (IVC) continues to expand; it has hosted vocational programs for years, and as featured in the fall 2011 schedule, transfer and general
education courses are available. It has some student services available comparable hours to the Kentfield campus, notably admissions and records and financial aid.

**Conclusion:** A site visit by the team to the Indian Valley Campus confirmed that services are still very minimal, although almost twenty five percent of the college enrollment attends the IVC. In the catalog, the only information for the IVC bookstore is a phone number; there is no assessment and testing service listed at IVC. Many services have extremely limited hours at IVC, such as DSPS (three hours weekly). There is particular confusion regarding library services; administration identified a media center/library at IVC, but the staff working in the media center was unaware that library services were supposed to be offered there; in addition, there was no signage identifying a library area. The college has not fully responded to this recommendation.

**Recommendation 7:** In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the college develop a facilities master plan to ensure the effective utilization and quality of physical resources which are necessary to support its programs and services.

**Findings and Evidence:** In response to this recommendation, the superintendent/president requested of the Facilities Planning Committee (FPC), co-chaired by faculty member Dr. Erik Dunmire and Laura McCarty, to establish plans to meet the terms of this recommendation. The FPC began its work last November 2010. The team verified documentation from the superintendent/president and the FPC to this regard. Subsequent meetings by the FPC were documented in several committee meeting notes. In fall 2010, the FPC and PRAC sent the Governance Review Council (GRC) a recommendation to revise the FPC’s charge, including the creation of a five year facilities master plan.

College of Marin is hiring a consultant (VBN Architecture) to facilitate the development of the facilities master plan. The Facilities Planning Committee identified and documented the steps for creation of the plan. There is a core group of faculty that will provide input, and an in-house committee to work on the plan has been formed. The college is clearly galvanized and ready to move forward. The targeted date for plan completion is currently summer 2012.

**Conclusion:** At this stage, the college has a “plan to plan”. Progress has been made since the team visit, and the college is moving towards satisfying this recommendation. The team recommends that evidence of a completed facilities master plan be included in the college’s mid-term report. The College has not fully responded to this recommendation.
**Recommendation 8:** In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college establish and communicate a sustainable technology plan for the acquisition, maintenance and replacement of its infrastructure, equipment, support and training to meet institutional needs. The team further recommends regular evaluation of this plan for its effectiveness in prioritizing and funding current and projected long term technology needs.

**Findings and Evidence:** The status of this recommendation is very similar to recommendation seven. The Technology Planning Committee (TPC) began its work to address this recommendation in spring 2011. At this point in time, the committee’s work has resulted in the hiring of a consultant (WTC Consulting) with a target date for a final technology plan delivery in April 2012. The contract with the consultant has been reviewed by the team chair. Further contract negotiations are currently underway. The Technology Planning Committee (TPC) co-chairs were interviewed by the team chair to verify progress being made as depicted in the Follow-Up Report. The Vice President of College Operations (VPCO) provides guidance to the committee. The TPC has been very involved in developing a strategy for creating the plan and the elements to be included.

**Conclusion:** The College again has a very concrete “plan to plan”. Progress is being made, and the college is moving towards satisfying this requirement. The team recommends that evidence of a completed sustainable technology plan be included in the college’s mid-term report. The College has not fully responded to this recommendation.

**Recommendation 9:** In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the board focus on developing policies that support the quality, integrity and effectiveness of student learning programs and services. The board should deliberate with due diligence and make timely decisions that are in the best interests of the institution. The board should act as a whole and adhere to board policy once a decision has been made, and support the superintendent/president’s authority in administering board policies and procedures.

**Findings and Evidence:** The board is coalescing and supporting the new president. They have acted as a whole on a project to revise and update all board policies and administrative procedures with assistance from the Community College League of California, with expected completion at the end of the 2011-12 academic year. The president and the board have participated in two retreats with positive results, including identification of concepts related to effective decision making which will aid them in timely decision making as they move forward. There has also been improvement in the development of board agendas and communication between the president and the board. The superintendent/president continues to work with the various board members toward creating a unified, effective board. This work is not complete. The team chair interviewed two current board members who affirmed the findings of the team.
Conclusion: The team ascertained that the boards of trustees and the superintendent/president have approached this recommendation in a serious and deliberate manner. Many of the challenges identified in the comprehensive visit are being addressed, albeit we recognize that this adjustment takes time if the institution is to sustain this effort. The team recommends that evidence of continued progress to meeting this recommendation be included in the college’s mid-term report. The College has not fully responded to this recommendation.