

Progress Visit Report

**Folsom Lake College
100 Scholar Way
Folsom, CA 95630**

A Confidential Report Prepared for the Accrediting Commission
for Community and Junior Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited

Folsom Lake College

on

April 5, 2005

Mr. Robert Garber, Team Chair
Vice President, Student Services, San Diego Miramar College

Dr. Deborah G. Blue, Team Member
Associate Director, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

April 18, 2005

TO: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

FROM: Robert Garber, Team Chair

SUBJECT: Progress Visit Report,
Folsom Lake College
April 5, 2005

Introduction:

A comprehensive evaluation team visited Folsom Lake College on October 14-16, 2003. Following this visit, The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges granted Folsom Lake College its initial accreditation with the requirement that the college submit a Progress Report by March 15, 2005, followed by a visit by Commission representatives. On April 5, 2005, Mr. Robert Garber and Dr. Deborah G. Blue conducted a site visit to the college in order to evaluate the college's assertions in the Progress Report prepared by the college, and to determine if significant progress has been made addressing the standards of institutional good practice recommended by the Commission.

In general, the team found that the college had thoroughly prepared for the visit and provided all of the information necessary to evaluate their progress. The progress report was well written, making it possible for the team to understand the steps taken by the college to respond to the Commission's recommendations. The college further assisted the team by providing substantial documentation to support the responses in the progress report. Finally, the college arranged a schedule of meetings with key college personnel who were able to provide first-hand information related to the issues addressed in the Progress Report. Among those interviewed were the President, Vice President, of Instruction/Accreditation Liaison Officer, District Vice Chancellor, Vice President of Administrative Services, Academic and Classified Senate Presidents, Associated Student President, and other key faculty, staff and administrators able to knowledgeably respond to the team's questions. In addition to the meetings associated with the Progress Report, the College President requested that the team conduct an open forum for the college community. The forum was attended by approximately 20 participants who asked questions and voiced support for the college's processes.

The Progress Report requested by the Commission was designed to address progress with regard to the following Commission recommendations:

College Responses to the Team Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: *The college has implemented several planning-related activities that must now be evaluated in order to determine what has been effective and what has not. Because of the absence of clear links between the processes, the team recommends a) the development of a complete blueprint of the mission review, research, planning, and evaluation cycle in order to more clearly communicate these processes to faculty, staff, and the community. This blueprint would include definitions of all relevant terms, detailing of the processes for implementing and evaluating the plans, and a clarification of links between college mission, goals, plans and resource allocations (Standard 1.4, 3A.1, 3A.3, 3A.4, 3B.1, 3B.2, 3B.3, 4D.6, 5.10, 6.7, 8.5,9A.1); and b) the proper training of decision-makers in assessing and using research resources currently available (Standard 3A.2).*

Observations:

In response to the above recommendation, the College has taken initial steps to develop an institutional approach to integrate mission review, research, planning and evaluation into a coherent process that will allow the College to make decisions and address the critical issues facing them as a developing institution. The college began this task shortly after receiving this recommendation from the Commission by initiating a process to create a Strategic Plan for Folsom Lake College. Working through the campus Educational Planning Committee which is comprised of representatives from all key constituent groups, three primary documents were created to guide this process: 1) *Developing the FLC Strategic Plan*, 2) *FLC Strategic Planning Components flow chart*, and 3) *Blueprint for the FLC Mission, Research Planning and Evaluation Cycle*. Taken together these documents address the first phases of the College's attempt to clarify the links between mission, goals, plans and resource allocations. In addition to developing these documents that will guide the campus' strategic planning, the College began the process by holding two events to review draft revisions of the institution's Mission and Vision Statement.

With regard to the second part of the recommendation, the College has hired a Research Analyst who has assisted by developing a research agenda, providing information supporting the current strategic planning process and reaching out to the campus community to educate them on the availability and use of research data to inform institutional decisions.

Findings and Evidence

The team reviewed all of the pertinent documents and met with administration, faculty, staff and a student representative to discuss the process and progress in addressing this recommendation.

The documents provided gave a clear indication that the College has made progress in developing a template and timeline for a strategic plan. In *Developing the FLC Strategic Plan*, the College has identified key components of the strategic plan and a proposed

timeline for completing each component. Based on discussions with the members of the Educational Planning Committee, there is a clear commitment to following this process through to completion. However, because of some issues related to the current ambiguity in the participatory governance structure that is being addressed through Recommendation #5, the strategic planning process is somewhat behind schedule and steps that were to have been completed by the end of this spring semester will now have to wait until the fall.

The process for integrating strategic planning with decision making, evaluation and resource allocation is further clarified in the document *FLC Strategic Planning Components*. This document shows that the College is making progress in creating clear linkages and information flow between strategic planning, educational master plans, program review, student learning outcomes, and campus participatory governance committees. While this represents a future orientation more than a current institutional practice, the evidence suggests that the College is moving in the right direction to establish these critical linkages. Similarly, the *Draft Blueprint for FLC Mission, Research, Planning & Evaluation Cycle* takes further steps in the right direction by defining a process and integrating tasks and responsibilities aimed at building a coherent connection between planning, mission, goals and decisions.

Meeting with the Research Analyst and his supervisor, the Vice President of Instruction, also validated the statements in the report that progress has been made in training decision makers to utilize available data. In reviewing the research agenda document that was provided, it was clear that affirmative steps have been taken to identify research priorities that reflect college needs and will provide critical information to aid decision makers. In addition to the research agenda, other documents showed evidence of presentations to college-wide meetings, surveys related to campus climate and mission/vision priorities, and demonstrations of data templates that will enable departments to make better informed enrollment planning decisions.

One observation that became very clear during the visit was that the College faces many critical challenges as a developing institution. Within the context of literally building a new campus, expanding the curriculum, hiring many new faculty and staff, and serving a rapidly growing student population, it was clear that the administration, faculty and staff are fully committed to building a quality, comprehensive institution. At the same time, they recognize and are committed to the importance of establishing an institutional process that integrates planning, evaluation and resource allocation functions that will be critical to Folsom Lake College's future success.

Conclusions

As a result of a thorough review of documents provided and numerous discussions with the administration, faculty, staff, and a student representative, it is clear that Folsom Lake College has made substantial progress toward making the institutional changes detailed in Recommendation #1. Since the College received its initial accreditation from the Commission, following an October 2003 site visit, they have shown focus and commitment to responding appropriately to this recommendation. And, while this is truly

a work in progress, it is apparent from all of the evidence collected that the College will continue along the current course until this task is completed.

Recommendation 2: *The Los Rios District has developed a strategic plan to serve the people within the district through the creation of four colleges and a series of educational centers affiliated with each of those colleges. The team recommends that, in order to increase effectiveness, this plan should include appropriate provision for the delivery of necessary instructional and student support services for all of the existing centers and at those that may be created in the future. (Standards 4A.4, 5.6, 6.1, 7A.1, A.1, 9A.2)*

Observations

The College asserts in its Progress Report that the Chancellor's Executive Staff has had discussion on centers development on an on-going basis. Centers are defined in conformity with state definitions and off campus sites that do not conform to the state definition are defined as outreach centers. The College asserts that Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD) allocates resources for centers development using established procedures and allocation formulae in the same way they apply to the colleges. However, it is ultimately the college that determines the allocation of faculty and staffing at the centers, which provides the colleges flexibility to meet the programmatic needs of the centers in the context of the college as a whole. Folsom Lake College is faced with the challenge of resource allocation decisions for the continually increasing enrollment growth at the Folsom Lake College campus and the Rancho Cordova Outreach Center, and the El Dorado Center campus.

Findings and Evidence

The team met with the President and Vice President of Instruction to discuss the college's progress with centers development and resource support; the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Finance, Administration and Human Resources from the District Office and the Vice President of Administrative Services to discuss the budget allocation formula that generates funding to the College for the support of the El Dorado Center and the Rancho Cordova outreach center. The recently hired Vice President of Student Services was also interviewed to discuss student services program delivery at the El Dorado Center and the Rancho Cordova Outreach Center.

Team interviews and documents in the team room which included the LRCCD Strategic plan, and an agenda and meeting notes from the Chancellor's Executive Staff meeting, provided evidence of the district's discussion of centers development and funding. LRCCD develops centers and allocates resources to support the construction and capital outlay needs for centers and outreach centers in three phases. Each of the three phases is defined in approximately 25,000 assignable square footage increments. The first phase of center development is supported with district capital projects funds and the district bond measure funds. The second phase which meets California Community Colleges criteria for center status and state funding is supported by the state funds and local bond measure

funds. The third phase which is at build-out between 60,000-80,000 assignable square feet must meet State criteria for State Capital Outlay funding.

Faculty positions are allocated to colleges through district formulae based upon weekly student contact hours per full-time equivalent students. Support staff are not formula generated, however they are allocated based upon growth in facilities square footage and full-time equivalent students. Faculty assignments and position allocations to centers and support staff assignments and position allocations to centers are determined by the college. Management positions go through a district implemented process for recommendation, review and approval. At present, there is a combination of full-time staff assigned at Folsom Lake College's off-campus centers, as well as administrators and support staff from the Folsom Lake College campus rotating between their assignments at the Folsom Lake campus and the El Dorado Center (EC) and Rancho Cordova Outreach Center (RCC) sites to provide instruction, student support services and administrative oversight. All student support services and bookstore services are provided at both the EC and RCC sites.

Conclusions

The LRCCD and Folsom Lake College have continued to discuss the development of centers, and the district formulae for allocating resources to colleges for centers is well understood by members of the college. The college determines the staffing needs of the centers and makes resource allocations in the context of the college as a whole, community needs and data and analysis from program review. Since the comprehensive accreditation visit in October, 2003, the College has continued to hire more full-time faculty, administrators and support staff to support their soaring enrollment growth, new educational programs and curriculum development, and center expansion. The team found evidence that Folsom Lake College is making substantial progress in meeting Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 5: *The team recommends that the college community give high priority to fostering trust by clearly outlining and guaranteeing the roles and responsibilities of faculty, staff, and administrators through the development and implementation of consistent processes that provide for the inclusion of all appropriate constituencies. (Standard 10B.6 and 10B.8)*

General Observations

The team discussed the issue of trust in interviews with members of the college community throughout the day. Overall, the College's view of trust among members of the college community was positive. Support staff described their colleagues, administrators and faculty as thoughtful and described their ideas and participation in governance as valued. Students reported no perceived problems of trust regarding their role and responsibility in college decision-making processes. Faculty opinion of trust was varied. Administrators, most of whom are new, perceive relationships with faculty

as improved. In the open forum at the end of the visit, members of the college community were thanking each other for their efforts in writing the Progress Report and preparing for the Progress Visit, which displayed a sense of camaraderie among members of the college community.

Findings and Evidence

In response to Recommendation #5, the college's Recommendation #5 team members and the research analyst developed and administered a climate survey and wrote an *Accreditation #5 Survey Research Report*. In addition, Recommendation #5 team members met with participatory governance committees and constituency leaders to gather verbal input and request written responses. The interviewed groups included the five participatory governance committees: Budget and Institutional Facilities Planning, Curriculum, educational Planning, Matriculation/Student Success, and professional Activities; the Academic Senate, the Classified Senate, Associated Student Government, Administration, and the Area Spokespersons. The discussions focused on college decision-making processes and the current climate of trust.

In several interviews with faculty, staff and administrators, the College described their challenge as struggling with transitioning to representative governance, at a growing college where it was no longer possible for everyone to be a part of all college committees or planning meetings. College staff viewed the areas where there is lack of clarity in the *College Participatory Governance and Collegial Consultation Document* and inconsistent implementation of the governance process as written, as the factors responsible for conflict, lack of trust and slowed college processes. The College reports there is consensus to revise the CPGCC document to add clarity by: defining committee charges; delineating classified staff roles on the committees; reducing overlaps in committee responsibilities; and delineating how tasks enter and exit the system and make their way to the college president.

The team found evidence that the College's efforts to revise the *College Participatory Governance and Collegial Consultation* (CPGCC) document began in fall, 2004. The team reviewed documented minutes of the Folsom Lake College Coordinating Council for December 2004, when the Council discussed the history of the CPGCC document; faculty, classified staff, students and administrators shared their observations of what's working well or not so well; and possible solutions were identified along with common interests, and other concerns and information. It was evident from documents in the team room and from interviews with representatives from the college committees, senates, and the student government president that the College has made substantial progress in their review and discussion of alternative options to improve the participatory governance structure and processes. College faculty, classified staff and administrators described their desire to streamline their governance structure and processes by redefining the composition and role of the Coordinating Council as an umbrella participatory governance council, to establish linkages between the Coordinating Council and the

Collegial Consultation Standing Committees. The College reported their plan to complete the revision of the CPGCC before the end of the spring, 2005 semester.

Conclusions

During the visit, faculty, staff, students and administrators with whom the team met displayed a team spirit in their dedication to the college and respect for one another. Overall there appeared to be a positive climate of trust and respect among members of the Folsom Lake College Community. The team found evidence that the college has made substantial progress in response to Recommendation # 5. However, to ensure that the College continues to move forward in its efforts to improve participatory governance, clarify roles and responsibilities in decision-making processes and improve trust among members of the college community, it is critical that the college complete its revision of the CPGCC document as planned in spring, 2005.