

ACCREDITATION PROGRESS REPORT

This document is a Progress Report to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The Commission Team made its accreditation visit to Long Beach City College (LBCC) from October 1 through 3, 2002. The Accreditation Commission reviewed the institutional self study report and the report of the evaluation team at its January 8-10 meeting, 2003. In a letter of January 17, 2003 to Superintendent-President Dr. Jan Kehoe, the Commission reaffirmed accreditation for Long Beach City College with a requirement that the College complete a Progress Report by October 15, 2004. This is to be followed by a Commission mid-term visit in the fall of 2004.

The College was asked to focus its Progress Report on three recommendations and concerns:

3. The team recommended that the College conduct an actuarial study of retiree medical benefits and consider setting a reserve for the cost of these benefits (Standards 9A.2, 9C.1, 9C.3)
4. The team recommended that the College immediately review, clarify, improve, and document its accounting practices, processes and procedures to ensure conformity with good accounting practices (Standard 9A.4, 9B.6)
5. The team observed a pervasive institutional climate permeated by suspicion and mutual distrust by leaders of all employee constituent groups. To ensure that the climate does not further erode and undermine powerful College-wide initiatives, the team recommended that all groups at Long Beach City College immediately find and use internal and external resources and processes to reestablish the spirit of collaboration and collegiality (10B.5, 10B.8, 10B.9)

The information below provides a response to the three recommendations followed by attachments supporting the evidence for statements given.

RECOMMENDATION #3

On May 29, 2003 the college received an actuarial study of retiree health liabilities, which was prepared by Total Compensation Systems, Inc. (Document A). The study determined that the additional cost of pre-funding retiree health liabilities was \$1,075,829. Based on this actuarially determined pre-funding amount, the Fiscal Year 2004-2005 budget was adopted with a reserve of \$1,075,829 in the Unrestricted General Fund. (Document B)

RECOMMENDATION #4:

The Director of Fiscal Operations has reviewed the staffing levels of the Fiscal Operations department with assistance from a Human Resources consultant. As a result, a proposed reorganization has been developed, which will be considered by the Executive Committee.

Accounting procedures have been reviewed internally by a team comprised of the Director of Fiscal Operations, the District Comptroller, and the Internal Auditor. Additionally, the District's independent auditor -- Goodrich, Goodyear and Hinds --

reviewed the internal control structure, application of state rules and regulations and federal compliance requirements. Both of these efforts have resulted in clarifications and improvements, which are being documented in the form of a user friendly FAQ (frequently asked questions) document. It is being written in a format focusing on usability to the general College community. (Document C)

RECOMMENDATION #5

Of the concerns expressed by the Accrediting Commission, recommendation #5 has been the most challenging to respond to. The recommendations refer to a climate of suspicion and mistrust. These issues are difficult to quantify or document with methods normally associated with Accreditation responses since these issues are perceptual in nature. Some constituent groups believe that much progress has been made in moving powerful College wide initiatives forward. The Academic Senate and Community College Association believe that progress has eroded. There is continuing disagreement between faculty leadership and administration over information presented and the process followed to resolve issues. The following information attempts to give a balanced institutional response to Recommendation #5.

Powerful College-Wide Initiatives That Have Advanced Progress

A systematic evaluation of the College-wide initiatives in the Educational Master Plan conducted by all College departments and planning committees was done during the fall, 2003 Semester. Despite the disagreements referenced above, the evaluation process documented that the initiatives have not eroded, progress has continued to be made and College is overall on track with the Educational Master Plan. (Document D).

The annual College Effectiveness Report, presented to the Board of Trustees in the summer of 2003, also indicated significant progress resulting from the College's initiatives in the Educational Master Plan including an increase in degrees and increasing success in student basic skills and vocational courses. (Document E).

Resources and Processes Used to Build Consensus

Since the visit of October 2002, and despite on-going areas of contention, actions have occurred to attempt to re-establish the spirit of collaboration and collegiality at the College.

The Academic Council (AC) Consisting of the President, the President's Executive Committee and the Academic Senate Executive Committee, the AC agreed to have the National Conference (NCCJ) work with the group to facilitate a collegial spirit of collaboration. This process has been on-going since March, 2003. Progress has included the establishment of subcommittees to address issues and make recommendations. This has led to a process for 1) reviewing and solving past issues that continue to need attention, 2) reviewing issues that arise in the course of work, and 3) anticipating issues that may surface as planning committee work moves forward (Document F) . Currently, four subcommittees are working on block scheduling, planning committee voting, accreditation follow up, and the college hour. National Conference representatives have facilitated six monthly meetings of the AC thus far and

have provided training to increase problem-solving skills. (Document G). Additionally, meetings between the Superintendent-President and Academic Senate President now take place bi-weekly. There has also been a request for assistance from the Community College League who has agreed to provide some support after a list of issues has been identified and submitted by the Academic Senate.

Classified Service The College and classified service have made important progress as well. There has been a new spirit of collegiality between constituent groups belonging to or impacted by classified service. Progress includes improved labor relations evidenced by the settlement of grievances at the lower levels without the need for arbitration; a reclassification study with negotiated implementation in three phases; the formation of the Health and Welfare Benefits Committee to ensure all constituent groups had input to any changes in benefit; information meetings between HR and classified staff regarding the State fiscal situation and layoffs (Document H); classified participation in an interest-based bargaining conference in San Francisco; and meetings to improve communication between the Human Resources Director and President of AFT prior to Personnel Commission meetings (Document I).

Planning and Review Long Beach City College has a comprehensive on-going planning process that involves all constituent groups and, since accreditation, a number of additional efforts have been accomplished. A formal evaluation process of the plan itself and the planning process has occurred which included departments, committees and a campus-wide survey. There is a general trend for faculty and administrative co-chairs on college wide taskforces and committees. The Staff Planning Committee (SPC) has been reconstituted and revised to focus on long term planning and development of the classified staff including the review of appropriate staffing skills and resource levels required to support the institution.

Additional College wide evidence of working together to resolve issues and establish a spirit of collegiality includes a focus on constructive problem solving at the Administrator's year-end retreat in September, 2003 (Document J); the establishment of a cross constituent based task force to resolve issues related to PeopleSoft implementation; and a cross-constituent task force resolution of issues related to the Middle College at the PCC Campus (Document K).

Collaborative meetings have occurred that demonstrate progress towards building consensus and re-establishing collegiality: Examples include presentations and forums to various campus groups on the Facilities Long Range Plan (Document L) and joint deans and department head meetings to craft school plans, determine capital outlay needs, and establish hiring priorities. The 18-month long celebration of the College's 75th Anniversary was a campus wide effort in which information was distributed to all constituent groups and all were encouraged to participate through communications and requests for participation. The revitalized Classified Employees Recognition Week has promoted joint efforts between the classified union and the District and a new Classified Staff Development Day is now held on a regular basis.

Discussions have taken place in many constituency groups, including Academic Council, regarding the need for better communication to anticipate and prevent

disagreements due to lack of adequate and timely communication. There has been an increase in the consistent use of email, phone and presentations. The Pacific Coast Campus (PCC) has established a series of communication strategies to keep faculty, staff and administrators informed about activities and changes at PCC. Various Schools and Divisions have developed routines for working with faculty on school plans and other issues. (Documents M).

Continuing Areas of Disagreement

The faculty leadership groups, embodied in the Academic Senate and the Community College Association (CCA - faculty bargaining unit) continue to feel that the climate referred to in Recommendation #5 has not only failed to improve but has further deteriorated. Their views are based on a number of issues not yet resolved and about which there is neither concurrence on facts nor on the appropriateness of roles in the process. These include communication and participation revolving around a proposed re-organization of departments and programs within Academic Affairs; the contention that a new college-wide "block scheduling" pattern was instituted without mutual dialogue and agreement with the Academic Senate and other faculty leadership; a perceived lack of timely information and dialogue concerning decisions affecting faculty; the processes by which decisions were made regarding appointment of a new interim Dean of Instruction at PCC, and interim Dean of PE and Athletics; and the relocation of department offices and support staff. Finally, this feeling of continued deterioration was evidenced by a vote of "No Confidence" in the Vice President of Academic Affairs by both the Academic Senate and CCA. Subsequently, the filing of a lawsuit by the Vice President of Academic Affairs against the Academic Senate and the Senate President regarding the process lead to the vote of "No Confidence." The Academic Senate has requested outside assistance in helping to resolve some of these issues in addition to the assistance that has been given to the Academic Council from NCCJ. (Document N)

The administration's view regarding many of the issues raised by the faculty leadership groups is that certain issues are contractual in nature and that others fall into the purview of administrative responsibility and oversight. "Shared governance" and appropriate responsibilities of the groups involved underlies many of the areas of disagreement.

The classified union (AFT) has mixed perceptions of the progress made by the College toward re-establishing collegiality and collaboration. They comment predominantly on the situation as it pertains to classified employees, but they believe that the experience of other constituent groups influences the overall environment. They believe that the issue most in need of improvement is "shared governance." Despite these views, AFT has made efforts to remedy the situation and believes that it has been met halfway by the District in many of these attempts. There is a feeling on the part of AFT that there has been improvement in the general working relationship between classified union leadership and administration due to hard work and a higher level of trust than had previously existed. They indicate a willingness to continue working to improve relations between all the constituency groups at the College. (Document O)