Progress Visit Team Report

for

Windward Community College

A Report Prepared for
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the progress report team that
visited Windward Community College

November 15, 2005

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Introduction

In January 2003, the ACCJC reviewed a request by the University of Hawai‘i Community Colleges to approve a UHCC system reorganization. As part of its review of the proposed substantive change, the Commission examined the structure and functioning of the UHCC system. In the course of working with the UHCC System, and with individual colleges, a previous concern regarding program review was noted regarding Windward Community College. This deficiency at the College was linked to system-wide inadequacies in governance structure and resource planning. The Commission continued to require institutional reports, and to send visiting teams, for the fall 2003, spring and fall 2004, and spring 2005 semesters.

The concern about program review and planning began in the comprehensive review of Windward Community College in fall 2000, in which a recommendation was made that the college address the lack of a systematic program review process that is directly tied to institutional planning, as follows:

> **Recommendation 6: The college shall carry out its educational planning in a way that draws upon program evaluation results and ties educational planning directly to planning for staffing, budget development, and program elimination/addition (Standards 4.A.1, 4.D.2, 4.D.6)**

That recommendation carried through in subsequent reports and visits to Windward Community College in 2002, 2003 and 2004. As a result of the Commission action in January 2005, the college was placed on Warning based upon deficiencies in addressing the system recommendations as well as the college-specific recommendation 6. The college was required to prepare a progress report on these recommendations, followed by a visit in April, 2005 of Commission representatives.

At its June 2005 meeting, the Commission acted to accept the college's April 2005 progress report and required another progress report due on October 15, 2005. The progress report was to be followed by a visit of Commission representatives. During this period, the College remained on Warning. The purpose of the report and visit was to assess the college's progress regarding the recommendations since the June 2005 Commission action, focusing on the College recommendation (6) on educational planning and use of program review as well as the responses to the University of Hawaii

System Recommendations. The progress report visit was conducted by a two-person team on November 15, 2005.

The University of Hawai'i system provided a report in response to the system recommendations and the Windward College report provided comments in addition to that report. The UH CC System visiting team findings are presented in a separate team report.

The team reviewed the College and UHCC progress reports in preparation for the visit, as well as previous accreditation team and college reports. The team found the college to be prepared for the visit, including the creation of an appropriate interview/meeting schedule and a team room with appropriate documentation.

During the one-day visit, the team met with the Chancellor, the Accreditation Liaison Officer, and the Institutional Researcher, the Executive Team, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, the Budget Committee, the Strategic Planning Committee and those program representatives doing program reviews. There was also time devoted to an open forum for faculty and staff at the end of the visit. The team found the college responsive and open in addressing the issues and concerns of the Commission.

College Response to the Commission Recommendation 6

In response to the June 2005 action letter, the college instituted several new policies that support program review and educational planning. From June to September, the college created and adopted three new policies: Strategic Planning, Budget Development and Program Review Policies and Procedures. Each of these policies describes the purpose of the policy, identifies the responsible parties and offers a general timeline for activities and/or products.

As noted in the previous team report and confirmed by the Chancellor, the Strategic Planning Committee was dormant in the previous year and did not meet. In the newly developing planning structure, the Strategic Plan is intended to be the primary decision-making document of the college. At the time of this visit, the Strategic Planning Committee had met once under the new policy, on November 3, 2005. The college states that strategic planning will be improved by linking it to program review and validating it with empirical data. Over the summer, the administration had provided data and reports that provided evidence that the plan currently in place was a valid one. This activity of validating the current plan is not consistent with the proposed planning sequence. The college might wish to consider using data to update goals rather than trying to select data that support the plan as it is written. The planning calendar indicates that the Strategic Planning Committee, which will be active only from December through February, will receive the year's program reviews, affirm or modify the priorities and/or resources requested, and forward the reviews to the Budget Committee for use in budget development.

The Budget Committee also has met only once under the new policy, on November 8, 2005. The committee reviewed its new charge, agreed on an expanded membership to include administrators and students, and received budget updates. The team found the committee to be comfortable with its new charge and the members enthusiastic that budget planning will be more realistic and transparent when linked to strategic planning and program review data.

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee has been in place since 2004 and is charged to oversee all college assessment efforts, including assisting in program review. Since the last progress report and visit, the college shortened its previous timeline for program review and now has a schedule which called for the first program reviews to be due on December 1, 2005. The IEC also called for all departments to submit 20% of their Student Learning Outcomes (due the day of the Commission's visit), so that all student learning outcomes would be complete in five years. The team saw several examples of departmental and course student learning outcomes, done in a variety of styles. The committee reported that departments are at different stages of completion, with 42% of the courses now having student learning outcomes. The committee is also sponsoring continued staff development to deepen the institution's understanding of student learning outcomes. The committee discussed the perception of many that the college is moving from an informal to formal assessment and planning mode that should yield more useful data. The team concurs that the college is becoming more aware of the importance of data and its use in program review and assessment but is concerned that the timelines for the completion of such items as student learning outcomes (5 years) will not support the full and timely implementation of an assessment system. The college is aware of the need to expedite the process and the team agrees that a more timely completion of course level student learning outcomes would be a crucial step in establishing a more systematic approach to assessment.

The team visited with program representatives who were in the midst of completing their program reviews for this year. The team was provided with two draft program reviews, one completed with data provided from the University of Hawai'i system data on Program Health Indicators, and the other completed with data from a federal grant evaluation report on the program. While the programs attempted to follow the system template, much of the data was unavailable. Although it was the intention of the research office to provide a data set for the programs under review to complete the agreed-upon system form, it was unable to do so. Since the system template for Academic Support Services is still under construction, the academic support unit of the college was developing their own template. The template was unavailable for review at the time of the visit. In short, while the program reviews were in progress, the individuals trying to complete them expressed concerns about the usefulness of the templates and frustration about their inability to garner appropriate data with which to complete the task. The visit took place exactly two weeks before the due date for program reviews and several faculty expressed dismay about starting the process without data.

Conclusion

The college has made some progress based upon the suggestions of the previous visiting team by instituting several policies and a governance structure aimed at formalizing a planning process that includes program review and ties it to budget and staffing. Unfortunately, the team was unable to assess its effectiveness due to its very recent implementation. Although program reviews were in progress, the new committees had met only once and the schedule of decisions regarding planning and budgeting were in the future. The two draft reviews examined by the team demonstrated a good faith attempt to use available data from various to assess the programs, but they had no context within which to be evaluated. Program review, as it is currently being executed is not systematic across programs and thus does not meet the standard. At the time of the visit there was no common data set, the committees that were to oversee the process had only had one organizational meeting, and the program reviews had yet to be submitted. Thus, the team could not verify through examination of evidence that this new committee structure and set of processes will lead to an integrated, systematic approach to planning, assessment and program review. The college has not yet satisfied the recommendation.