EVALUATION REPORT

San Diego Miramar College
San Diego, CA

A confidential report prepared for
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited
Miramar College on November 7, 2011

Susan Carleo
Chair

1

NOVEMBER 2011 VISITING TEAM ROSTER

Dr. A. Susan Carleo, Chair
President
Los Angeles Valley College

Ryan Cartnal
Director of Research and Assessment
Cuesta College

Jonathan Cole
Professor of Physics
Mira Costa College

Dr. James Hottois
Superintendent/President
Palo Verde College

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

San Diego Miramar College, part of the San Diego Community College District, filed a Follow Up Report in response to the recommendations following the comprehensive visit in the fall of 2010. The Commission's representatives visited San Diego Miramar College and the San Diego Community College District office on November 7, 2011.

The purpose of the visit was to review the progress on the issues described in the follow up written report. During the visit the team was able to speak with district and college representatives and review documents that were cited as the evidence to demonstrate progress on the team's previous recommendations.

RESPONSES TO THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations from 2004 and 2010 were addressed in the written report and were the basis for conversations, interviews and review of data.

The Nov. 7, 2011 visit was intended to determine if the recommendations resulting from earlier visits had been addressed. In its January 31, 2011 letter to the college president and the chancellor of the district, the ACCJC addressed the findings of the 2010 and 2004 comprehensive visits. The three 2010 recommendations, the three 2004 college recommendations and one 2004 district recommendation were all addressed in the Nov. 2011 follow up visit. The recommendations addressed in this visit included the college's ability to create a culture of evidence to guide its decision-making, the fulfilling of employee evaluation requirements, and the excessive administrative turnover. The team also reviewed the college's use of resources to support its library and its plans to further its educational master plan for technology, facilities and personnel.

The visiting team conducted interviews with eighteen members of San Diego Miramar College and five members of the District. Questions asked were designed to assess the extent the actions of the college and the district have moved the college forward.

Overall Observations and Conclusions:

The team noticed that those interviewed expressed a sense of confidence in the future of the district and college leadership. The college has worked hard to address the recommendations it received at the conclusion of its 2010 visit. In general progress has been observed in all areas. In several instances as noted in the report, more time and effort is needed before the college can demonstrate that it has fulfilled the requirements of the recommendations.

2010 Recommendation 1: Culture of Evidence
The team recommends that the college increase its capacity to foster a culture of evidence to support not only the assessment of progress toward achieving its stated goals, but also its planning processes, resource allocation, and evaluation mechanisms as they relate to the improvement of institutional effectiveness. (I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.7, III.C)

Observations:

> The 2010 team found that although data were increasingly available and an interim researcher had been assigned part-time to Miramar College, it remained unclear whether the college had the capacity to create a "culture of evidence" in which data were not only available, but used to assess the degree to which the institution effectively accomplished its mission. Facilitated in large part by the further integration of the part-time campus based researcher into the assessment of the college's institutional effectiveness, the 2011 follow-up team found evidence of an increased capacity to foster a culture of evidence. For example, the college has included a research request component into the annual program review process and is in the process of examining the use of evidence in college-wide decision making.

Conclusion:

> The college has significantly increased its capacity to foster a culture of evidence. In addition, the college has begun to assess its strategic goals and has plans to assess its overall planning and resource allocation process. Since the college has not completed an entire cycle of its new integrated planning process, it has not had the opportunity to assess the overall effectiveness of the new process.

Recommendation:

> The team concludes that the college has made progress toward satisfying the elements of 2010 Recommendation 1. The team recognizes that the college could not have fully resolved this recommendation by the 2011 follow-up visit. Therefore, the team recommends that at the next regularly-scheduled site visit, the visiting team check the college's progress toward assessing the first full iteration of its completed planning cycle.

2010 Recommendation 3: Evaluation Processes for All Employee Groups

The team recommends that the college improve and fully implement its evaluation processes for all employee groups by:

- *Creating a tracking system that clearly indicates the status and completion of evaluations, including those for adjunct faculty and classified staff, and*
- *Adding a student learning outcomes component in faculty evaluations (III.A.1.b, III.A.1.c).*

Observations:

Tracking system: The College has created tracking systems that clearly indicate the status and completion of evaluations for all employees. One system accounts for all regular employees of the college including faculty, classified staff, managers and administrators. A second system accounts for adjunct faculty, who are often transitory in their employment status. The team was able to confirm the existence of the systems and that they accurately reflect the completion status of evaluations.

Student learning outcomes component in faculty evaluations: In reviewing the 2010 team's recommendation, the visiting team noted that the faculty evaluation process is part of the district wide collective bargaining agreement with the faculty union.

In its response to the 2010 team recommendation the college notes that "Assessment of Student Learning Skills" is one of eight criteria for the evaluation of student learning (the word "assessment" has replaced the words "testing & measurement" via a side letter between the district and the union.) The team found the following "examples of behaviors demonstrated by competent faculty" under the general heading of "Assessment of Student Learning Skills:"

- Expressing an awareness of student needs;
- Checking for student understand of content on an ongoing basis;
- Directing students not prepared for current level of coursework to proper courses for help;
- Conducting preliminary testing to determine student levels when and if appropriate;
- Using sample tests to assess skills when and if appropriate (ESL, vocational education);
- Matching course content to students based on individual student knowledge level and learning abilities, to the degree appropriate;
- Discussing student progress and potential challenges with other instructors and in department meetings.

Conclusion:

The team does not find evidence that the district or the college has focused assessment on student learning outcomes. Similarly, the team did not find evidence that there is a dialogue about using evidence to improve the achievement of student learning outcomes.

Tracking System: The college has developed a tracking system which tracks evaluations for all employees of the college. This part of the 2010 team's recommendation has been met. Future teams will likely be able to determine whether the tracking system has been used effectively over time.

Student Learning Outcomes Component in Faculty Evaluations: Through collective bargaining the district and the college changed faculty evaluation forms to include an item described as "Assessment of Student Learning Skills." The college has taken an important first step to speak to the Standard. The team does not find that the college has addressed the broader issue of faculty use of data on student learning outcomes to improve "effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes."

During the visit, the college pointed out to the team that this recommendation was unique to Miramar, even though the other colleges in the district follow the same faculty collective bargaining agreement.

Recommendation:

The team concludes that the recommendation of the 2010 team has been partially met. A lack of a similar 2010 recommendation to the district or its other two colleges does not lessen the obligation of Miramar College to meet Standard III.A.1.c. The visiting team agrees that coordination at the district level would be useful in the future,

The team recommends that the college speak directly to the expectations of Standard III.A.1.c and the second bullet of 2010 Recommendation 3 in a future written report to the Commission.

2010 Recommendation 4: Administrative Turnover
The team recommends that the college take action to resolve the problem of excessive turnover in its administrative leadership. (III.A.2, IV.B.2, IV.B.2.a, IV.B.2.b, IV.B.2.c; Eligibility Requirement 5).

Observations:

The college acknowledges "that administrative turnover has been a significant and ongoing concern" and is taking actions it hopes will resolve the issue. At the same time, officials at the college and the district deny that the turn over which

6

the 2010 team and which this team also found is excessive or even uncommon. This team is impressed by the efforts being made by the district and the college to assure that new administrators are well qualified for their positions and adequately prepared when they join the college. Those actions include:

- Exit interviews with administrators who resign;
- Visits to the current sites of candidates for Vice President or above;
- Changes in the selection process;
- Training and professional development for new administrators;
- Review of data for the employee satisfaction survey;
- Staffing study to determine the effects of the district-wide hiring freeze;
- Development of procedures to foster better communication with constituent groups.

However the team does not find evidence that excessive turnover, particularly in the senior ranks, has been stemmed. At the time of the 2011 visit, only one vice president had been in office for a year or more. Two of the vice presidents who were at Miramar College at the time of the 2010 visit are no longer there.

During the year since the comprehensive visit, a single individual serving as "Acting" Vice President for Student Services and "Interim" Vice President of Instruction was appointed. Shortly before the visit, an "Interim" Vice President for Student Services was appointed. At the time of the visit, a recommendation was to be presented to the Board of Trustees to appoint a permanent Vice President of Instruction.

The team notes that two of the vice president–level positions at Miramar College have had a total of five different incumbents since the team's visit in 2010 and the unduplicated headcount of individuals holding vice presidential positions since 2006 individuals has increased from 11 in 2010 to 14 at the time of the 2011 visit. The College has a current opening for the Vice President of Student Services. Thus, administrative turnover has continued through the current year.

There are likely many different reasons for what seems to the team to be excessive turnover in senior leadership at Miramar College. The San Diego Community College District adheres to a practice which may contribute to the turnover. When a position becomes vacant, the district policy requires that an "acting" administrator be appointed. The expectation is that an acting administrator will serve for no more than a few months. The district then undertakes a formal search process to find an "interim" administrator, generally from within the district, who may serve for a year or more but who will *not* be considered for the position on a permanent basis. A person serving as an "acting" administrator may be considered for the "interim" position. During the incumbency of the "interim" administrator the district undertakes a search for a person to fill the position on a permanent basis.

Conclusion:

The 2010 team report raised concerns about the college's ability to reach its goals due to significant and continuing turn over at the vice presidential level. As noted in the 2010 team report (page 42) continued excessive administrative turnover affects the college's ability to develop objectives beyond a single year and the administration's ability to provide effective leadership (IV.B.2, IV.B.2.a, Eligibility Requirement 5).

The team found that the excessive turnover in administrative leadership is hampering the president's ability to guide institutional improvement (IV.B.2.b).

Recommendation:

The team concludes that the district and the college have been responsive to 2010 Recommendation 4. However, there has not been sufficient time since the 2010 team's visit to determine whether the problem has been solved. The team recommends that Miramar College report on progress stabilizing its senior administration at the time of its regular, three-year Midterm Report.

2004 Recommendation 1: Campus-Based Research
The College build upon efforts to foster a "culture of evidence" through campus based institutional research. (I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6)

Observations:

The 2010 team found that Miramar College had partially resolved the key elements of 2004 Recommendation 1. Specifically, the 2010 team acknowledged not only the wide range of district-provided data available for program review, enrollment management, and environmental scanning, but also the assignment of an interim campus based researcher to the Miramar campus two days per week. Despite these positive changes, the 2010 team determined it was unclear as to whether the college had the capacity to fully assess its ability to effectively accomplish its mission.

The 2011 follow-up team was impressed by the volume and quality of district-provided data for Miramar College. The team found evidence indicating that the campus based researcher was not only located *on* campus two days a week, but was now integrated *into* the college, serving as a participating member on several decision-making committees. This integration has allowed the college to better utilize available data in decision making, as well as frame new inquiries in support of institutional effectiveness.

8

Conclusion:

Miramar College continues to benefit from the availability of district-provided research data as well as the presence of a part-time campus based researcher. Although the college has been unable to hire a full-time campus based researcher, the district is committed to doing so when fiscal conditions allow. In the meantime, the campus based researcher's presence on campus two days a week and the researcher's further integration into the college culture has resulted in a demonstrable increase in the college's ability to foster a culture of evidence. Data are now used to improve institutional effectiveness and initiate new inquiries on how to improve student learning.

Recommendation:

The team concludes that Miramar College has met the expectations of the 2004 College Recommendation 1.

2004 Recommendation 3: Acquisition of Library Materials and Databases
Acquire library materials and database at a level sufficient to support student learning.
(II.C.1)

Observations:

The 2010 team, in responding to the 2004 team's recommendation, found that Miramar College partially met the expectations of this recommendation. It had increased its book budget to $20,000 annually beginning in 2006-2007. The team concluded that "… [t]his limited budget will make it extremely difficult for the college to acquire a sufficient collection in the future." The 2011 visiting team was able to verify that the college is spending about $84,000 annually for acquisitions for the library and that the conclusion of the 2010 was a result of incomplete information provided by the college. The team was impressed by the college's ability to maintain this effort at a time when the resources for college libraries seem scarce.

The 2010 team noted that the existing "…library facility has impacted the college's ability to fully meet this recommendation. The team understands that the new library facility will help to alleviate this problem." The team went on to note that there would need to be a commitment of resources to properly equip the new library. During the 2011 visit, the team was able to verity that appropriate resources have been allocated properly equip the new library thus making it a valuable resource to support future student learning.

Despite significant financial challenges, Miramar College has made substantial progress in providing funding for library materials and databases. As noted in the college's 2010 self-study, the acquisition budget for books has been increased from $8,900 per year in 2004-05 to $20,000 per year beginning in 2005-07. The

9

college's 2007 midterm report indicated that the budget would be increased by an additional $20,000 per year, but due to college budget cuts the amount has remained relatively static for the past five years. Purchase of materials was further hampered by the elimination of Instructional Equipment and Library Materials (IELM) funding in 2009-10.

The college's 2010 self-study noted that funding for electronic databases had been zeroed out in 2009-10 due to loss of state Telecommunication and Technology Infrastructure Program (TTIP) funding, which previously averaged $36,000 per year. However, the college's 2011 follow-up report corrects this information, noting that the college replaced the lost TTIP funds with database funding from its college-wide discretionary budget. This discretionary database funding of $50,587 in 2009-10 and $35,000 in 2010-11 is evidence of strong college support for maintaining its databases.

Despite these discretionary funds, total expenditures on print materials and database funding have decreased from a high of approximately $100,000 per year in 2006-07/2007-08 to $64,700 in 2010-11. The largest part of this loss is due to the elimination of IELM funds. However, interviews with library staff indicate that that the budget is sufficient to satisfy faculty requests for materials and to adequately support student learning. Interviews further indicate that the dean of Library and Technology has been able to successfully advocate for funding when gaps have been identified. The president of the Associated Students states that students are in general satisfied with the library resources available at the college.

The college library will be significantly enhanced in summer 2012 with the opening of a new 30,000 square foot Library and Learning Resource Center, replacing the current 9000 square foot facility. The new library, paid for by Proposition N bond funding, will include shelving space to accommodate up to 100,000 volumes, two library computer classrooms and 84 public access computer stations. The college has committed $100,000 in funding from the bond's Furniture, Fixture and Equipment Budget for the purchase of library materials.

Conclusion:

Miramar College is acquiring library materials and databases at a level sufficient to support student learning. In a time of diminished resources, Miramar College has maintained its support for print and electronic resources in its library. It has expended on average almost $84,000 per year on all forms of media for the library. The college has also identified funds to be used to expand the print resources with the opening of the new library in the fall of 2011. A new library is nearing completion and will be appropriately equipped to support student learning into the future.

Recommendation:

> The team concludes that Miramar College has met the expectations of 2004 Recommendation 3.

2004 Recommendation 4: Integrated Planning
The College uses its strategic plan to drive the development and full integration of the educational master plan with the technology, facilities, and human resources plans and related institutional processes. The human resources plan should be developed with special attention to providing sufficient administrative and staff members for projected institutional growth. (Standard III.A.6, III.B.1, III.B.2, III.B.2.b, III.C.2, III.D.1.a, III.D.1.b)

Observations:

> The 2010 Team found that "...[i]t is unclear how the strategic plan, master plan, and technology, facilities, and human resources plans are all tied together and integrated—especially in relation to the program review process. Also, the hiring freezes tied to the Selected Employee Retirement Plan (SERP) extend the staffing problems since key positions remain empty, with no plans to address the situation. Administrative turnover is a major concern as well as the lack of plans for addressing staff attrition and for new staffing needs to support new facilities."

> The 2011 team notes that this recommendation has two distinct parts:

> 1. The strategic plan should drive the development and integration of the Educational Master Plan with the technology, facilities and human resources plan.

> 2. The human resources plan should assure that staffing meets the needs of institutional growth.

> The college has made significant progress integrating its various plans. When the 2010 team visited, the college had just developed what some refer to as "the planning wheel" which described the college's annual planning cycle (Figure 2 in the 2011 report) showing how the various college planning processes come together.

> In the past year the college has put significant effort into further developing and integrating its planning efforts. At the time of the Nov. 2011 visit, the college was in the process of assuring that the goals described in its strategic plan are integrated into individual program reviews and that the formation from program reviews informs the continuing review and development of the strategic plan. The Interim Vice President of Instruction had a strong background in research and planning. The team understands that the newly appointed permanent vice

president holds similar strengths, giving a strong indication that the college understands the need for planning and the use of data to guide its decision-making.

The college continues to rely on a <u>staffing plan</u> which was developed by the District in 2004. The team did not find any plans designed to guide the district and the college as they adjust to continued expansion of facilities and enrollment at Miramar College. However, the district has reported that it is developing a new staffing plan which, like the 2004 plan, will be based on staffing formulas.

Conclusion:

<u>Integration of Plans:</u> The college has made significant efforts to integrated its various planning processes with the strategic plan serving as the guiding document. While it is possible to say that this remains a "work in progress" the team concludes that the college has integrated its plans.

<u>Human Resources:</u> Contrary to the statement in the follow up report (p. 16), the team found that the district has not updated its human resources plan since 2004 (see "2004 CR 4-11"). The follow up report references a comparison to staffing at other community colleges undertaken in the summer of 2011. No data from that comparison are presented in the report nor were they made available to the team during its visit.

The 2011 team's conclusion mirrors the conclusion of the 2010 team: "Administrative turnover is a major concern as well as the lack of plans for addressing staff attrition and for new staffing needs to support new facilities."

Recommendation:

The team concludes that the college and the district must immediately address the need for an up-to-date staffing plan which addresses issues of staff attrition, growth of enrollments and the addition of new facilities at Miramar College.

2004 District Recommendation 3: Research Function
In order to build upon their efforts to strengthen institutional effectiveness and to foster a culture of evidence throughout the district, the district office and the colleges should cooperate in the development of an enhanced research function with both strong district and strong College components. (Standard I.B.3, I.B.6, IV.B.2.b)

Observations:

The 2010 team acknowledged not only the wide range of district-provided data available for program review, enrollment management, and environmental scanning, but also the quality and usability of the data. The 2011 follow up team

found additional evidence of exemplary data that are utilized to increase institutional effectiveness at both the district and college level.

However, the 2010 team questioned the capacity of Miramar College to foster a culture of evidence without a full-time campus based researcher. Nevertheless, the 2010 team was encouraged by the part-time assignment of a campus based researcher.

The 2011 follow-up team found substantial evidence indicating that the campus based researcher was not only located *on* campus two days a week, but also was integrated *into* the college as a participating member of several decision-making committees. This integration has allowed the college to better utilize available data in decision making, as well as frame new inquiries in support of institutional effectiveness.

Conclusion:

There is clear evidence that the district office and the college have cooperated in the development of district and college research functions in support of institutional effectiveness.

Although the district has been unable to assign a full-time campus based researcher, it is committed to doing so when fiscal conditions allow. In the meantime, the campus based researcher's two days on campus and further integration into the college culture has resulted in a demonstrable increase in the college's ability to foster a culture of evidence, use data to improve institutional effectiveness, and initiate new inquiries as to how the college can improve student learning.

Recommendation:

The team concludes that the district and the college have met the expectations of 2004 District Recommendation 3.

SAN DIEGO MIRAMAR COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES INTERVIEWED:

College President
Vice President of Student Services (Interim)
Vice President of Instruction (Interim)
Vice President of Administrative Services
Faculty Co-Chair for Accreditation
Faculty Senate President
Dean of Library and Technology
Head Librarian
Library Staff
Faculty evaluation coordinator
Articulation Officer/Chair, College Research and Program Review Committees
Research and Planning Analyst
Chair, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee
Public Information Officer
Past Classified Senate President
Classified Senate Vice President
Senior Office Manager
Associated Student Body President

SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE INTERVIEWED:

Chancellor
Vice Chancellor of Instructional Services and Planning
Vice Chancellor of Student Services
Director of Institutional Research and Planning
Vice Chancellor of Human Resources (Acting)

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED:

College goals and objectives, year-end report for 2009-10
Faculty Senate minutes, various dates
Planning Process Presentation and related materials
Revised strategic plan
College Governance Handbook