

Follow-Up Visit Evaluation Report

Moorpark College
7075 Campus Road, Moorpark, CA 93021

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

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited
Moorpark College/Ventura County Community College District

on

October 31 - November 1, 2011

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Follow-Up Visit Report

DATE: November 21, 2011

TO: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

FROM: Deborah J. Travis, Ed.D., Team Chair

SUBJECT: Report of Follow-Up Visit Team to Moorpark College/Ventura CCC District
October 31-November 1, 2011

Introduction

A comprehensive visit was conducted to Moorpark College in October, 2010. At its meeting of January 11-13, 2011, the Commission acted to require Moorpark College to submit a Follow-Up Report followed by a visit. The visiting team, Dr. Deborah Travis, Dr. Gregory Gray, and Dr. Edward Karpp, conducted the follow-up site visit to Moorpark College from October 31-November 1, 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 had resolved the recommendations made by the comprehensive evaluation team and now meets the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies.

Since the focus of Moorpark College's follow-up visit was on the seven (7) District Recommendations and one (1) Commission Concern, the team divided its time between the Ventura County Community College District Office and Moorpark College, reviewing evidence and interviewing individuals/groups at both locations. In general, the team found the Ventura CCC District and Moorpark College representatives sufficiently prepared for the visit with a well-organized evidence room at the District level and appropriate interview schedules at both locations allowing the team to conduct its assessment in a timely, organized manner. Over the course of the two days, the team met with the Chancellor of the Ventura CCC District, the Board of Trustees, members of the Ventura CCCD executive staff, members of the Ventura CCCD Citizens' Advisory Committee, a District Planning Consultant, the President of Moorpark College (who is also the Accreditation Liaison Officer), the College's Academic Senate, Classified Senate, and Associated Student Body presidents, and the institutional researcher.

The Follow-Up Report and visit were expected to document resolution of the following seven (7) District recommendations and one (1) Commission Concern:

District Recommendation 1:

In order to meet the Standards, the District, in concert with the three Colleges, shall develop clearly defined organizational maps that delineate the primary and secondary responsibilities of each, the College-to-College responsibilities, and that also incorporate the relationship of major District and College committees established to assure the integrity of activities related to such areas as budget, research, planning, and curriculum. (IV.B.3.a-b, IV.B.3.g)

District Recommendation 2:

In order to meet the Standard, the District, in concert with the three Colleges, shall document evidence that a review of District Policies and Procedures that may impede the timely and effective operations of the departments of the Colleges has taken place and that appropriate modifications are made that facilitate the operational effectiveness of the Colleges. A calendar that identifies a timeline for the regular and consistent review of policies shall be developed. (IV.B.1.e)

District Recommendation 3:

In order to increase effectiveness, the Teams recommend that the District conduct a periodic outcomes assessment and analysis of its strategic planning and decision-making processes, leading to sustainable continuous quality improvement in educational effectiveness in support of student learning and district-wide operations. (IV.B.3)

District Recommendation 4:

In order to improve communications, the Teams recommend that the District assess the effectiveness of its formal communications and utilize constituency and community input/feedback data to implement improvements to ensure that open and timely communication regarding expectations of educational excellence, operational planning, and integrity continues and is enhanced at all levels of the organization. (III.A.3, IV.B.3)

District Recommendation 5:

In order to meet the Standard, the Board of Trustees shall complete an analysis of its self assessment pursuant to Board Policy 2745 and formally adopt expected outcomes and measures for continuous quality improvement that will be assessed and reported as a component of the immediately succeeding self-assessment. (IV.B.1.g)

District Recommendation 6:

In order to meet the Standards, the Board of Trustees shall establish clearly written policies and corresponding procedures to ensure that decision-making is administered by staff in an equitable and consistent manner across and within the three Colleges. (III.A.3.a, III.A.4.c, IV.B.1.b-c)

District Recommendation 7:

In order to meet the Standards, the Board of Trustees shall assess its actions in relation to its policy making role and implement a program for ongoing Board member professional development to enhance and improve the demonstration of its primary leadership role in assuring the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services delivered by the District Colleges. (IV.A.3, IV.B.1. e-g)

Commission Concern: The Commission noted that a recent HR audit revealed a lack of minimum qualifications and/or equivalencies for a total of 110 full- and part-time faculty district-wide. The District reported it is currently engaged in the formal review and verification of degrees for all new hires and for those who lack an equivalency review at each of the Colleges. The Commission requires the results of that review be included in the October 2011 Follow-Up Report from all three Colleges. (Standard III.A.2)

College Responses to the Team Recommendations

General Observations and Comments:

The team found Moorpark College and the Ventura CCD had initiated specific actions to respond to the seven recommendations and the Commission concern provided in the College's October 2010 Comprehensive Evaluation Report. Evidence of such activities reflected considerable effort over the past year focused on resolving the issues and bringing the College into compliance with Accreditation Standards. The evidentiary CD provided documentation of such activities (received by the follow-up team while on-site) and direct interviews affirmed the scope and chronology of District and College data gathering, dialogue, and policy development work.

However, the follow-up team also assessed the College and District levels of effort and progress in dealing with the multiple concerns cited in the recommendations as variable and disparate. Team members noted that certain recommendations had been addressed thoroughly and nearly resolved, while other recommendations remained in varying, and even preliminary, stages of discussion and intended for future resolution. Specific findings regarding the resolution and/or progress on the recommendations are provided in the following sections of this report. The follow-up team found the limited momentum and partial resolution of the issues cited in the recommendations to be of fundamental concern, particularly in light of the two-year requirement for compliance with Accreditation Standards.

District Recommendation 1:

In order to meet the Standards, the District, in concert with the three Colleges, shall develop clearly defined organizational maps that delineate the primary and secondary responsibilities of each, the College-to-College responsibilities, and that also incorporate the relationship of major District and College committees established to assure the integrity of activities related to such areas as budget, research, planning, and curriculum. (IV.B.3.a-b, IV.B.3.g)

Findings and Evidence:

Through the coordination of the Ventura CCCD, Moorpark College, Oxnard College, and Ventura College engaged in a systematic approach to addressing District Recommendation 1. Initially, the Chancellor, the Board Policy Committee, and the Board of Trustees reviewed existing policies concerning the delineation of systems and functions (Board Policy 2205) for adequacy and alignment with District and College responsibilities. A revised policy was adopted in April 2011 to provide clarity on primary and secondary responsibilities. The amended policy was reviewed as evidence and affirmed through team member interviews.

Additionally, the Chancellor, College presidents, and appropriate District and College staff members met on numerous occasions to gather/review effective organizational mapping models and to develop a corresponding administrative procedure to Board Policy 2205 designed to include a Functional Mapping Narrative, a Functional Mapping for Decision-Making document, and a Governance Process Chart. To date, draft documents have been prepared and presented to the Chancellor's Cabinet for feedback and for review/discussion at the Colleges. The team assessed and affirmed statements within the Follow-Up Report that specify the work on Recommendation 1 is in progress and not complete.

While the Follow-Up Report indicates a completion date of Fall 2011 for these organizational mapping documents, the team's onsite evidentiary review and interviews with appropriate staff clearly indicate an extended timeline for the needed input and finalization of the documentation. This evaluative finding is based on the previously stated draft nature of the currently available documents, and more significantly, through on-site meetings with the Moorpark College Academic Senate president who declined to sign the Follow-Up Report. Separate interviews between the team members and the Senate president yielded a consistent appraisal that intentional, amplified conversations with the Moorpark College Senate and other College constituencies will be necessary to fully address organizational mapping and delineate College and District relationships in order to "assure the integrity of activities related to areas of budget, research, planning and curriculum" cited in Recommendation 1.

Conclusion:

The team acknowledges the systematic work on organizational mapping that the Ventura CCC District and its three Colleges, Moorpark, Oxnard, and Ventura, have initiated in response to District Recommendation 1. By its very foundational nature, this recommendation represents the key to articulating roles and responsibilities in a multi-college district, identifying gaps in structures and resources for planning, research, and curriculum, and improving effectiveness and communication. To date, this recommendation has only been partially addressed and compliance with the Accreditation Standards has not been achieved. The team recommends the Ventura CCC District and its Colleges collectively affirm the urgency of compliance with Accreditation Standards and accelerate and enhance their efforts to address all components of District Recommendation 1.

District Recommendation 2:

In order to meet the Standard, the District, in concert with the three Colleges, shall document evidence that a review of District Policies and Procedures that may impede the timely and effective operations of the departments of the Colleges has taken place and that appropriate modifications are made that facilitate the operational effectiveness of the Colleges. A calendar that identifies a timeline for the regular and consistent review of policies shall be developed. (IV.B.1.e)

Findings and Evidence:

During the follow-up visit, team members reviewed documentary evidence and conducted interviews to affirm intentional District and College efforts focused on addressing District

Recommendation 2. Specifically, the team evaluated activity on the three elements of the recommendation, including; 1) the development of a calendar/timeline for policy review, 2) the review of policies and procedures that might impede operations, and 3) the appropriate modifications of identified policies or procedures to facilitate effectiveness.

The Chancellor's Administrative Council provided the initial structure and venue for discussing and addressing District Recommendation 2. Through this body, the Board Policy Committee received and recommended to the full Board of Trustees the adoption of a two-year policy and procedure review cycle to systematically identify criteria and evaluate impacts of same on District and College operational effectiveness. Team members confirmed the Board's adoption of the two-year cycle on March 8, 2011 and reviewed as evidence the Board of Trustees Policy/Procedure Review Calendar. The team found this component of Recommendation 2 to be adequately addressed and suggests the District regularly monitor the sequence, origination points, and appropriate constituency involvement of this new policy/procedure review system.

At the Administrative Council's February 14, 2011 meeting, the College presidents were charged with gathering and summarizing input on policies and procedures that might be impediments to effective College operations. On April 1, 2011, feedback summary statements from all three College presidents were presented to the Consultation Council and a consensus determination made that no specific policies/procedures were impediments but rather that inconsistent operating practices needed attention and/or modification. The team confirmed this review process through meeting notes and staff interviews. In addition, the team found evidence that certain operating practices had been modified to establish consistency across the District, particularly with respect to human resources forms, notices, and access to informational documents.

However, while validating the data-gathering policy/procedure review process and the modifications to certain operating practices, the team also assessed the breadth and context of the data included in the summary statements as recorded in the Moorpark College Follow-Up Report. Through an evaluation of on-site documents and interview responses, particularly from the Academic Senate, the team members determined the summarizing of the College's input on policy/procedure impediments may not have sufficiently conveyed potential barriers and thus constrained opportunities to enhance operational effectiveness.

Conclusion:

The team acknowledges the scope and extent of District and College work resulting in considerable progress on District Recommendation 2. Of its three inter-related components, the recommendation for the development of a calendar for the regular and consistent review of policies has been fully addressed. With regard to the review and modifications of policies and procedures that may impede operational effectiveness, the team find these elements to be partially addressed and recommends the District and Colleges analyze all collected data for potential impediments and continue to modify operating practices to ensure consistency and appropriate application.

District Recommendation 3:

In order to increase effectiveness, the Teams recommend that the District conduct a periodic outcomes assessment and analysis of its strategic planning and decision-making processes, leading to sustainable continuous quality improvement in educational effectiveness in support of student learning and district-wide operations. (IV.B.3)

Findings and Evidence:

Through a review of the evidence and multiple interviews with Board and staff members, the team found the Ventura CCCD had responded to Recommendation 3 by organizing and conducting an in-depth Board planning session on June 28, 2011. Team interviews with the District's Planning Consultant and others verified information contained in the Moorpark College Follow-Up Report, indicating the planning session included a progress update on Board goals and consisted of presentations from District and College staff. The Board discussed revising its goals at this planning session, and ultimately a revised set of three overarching goals was approved by the Board in October 2011. The revised goals are multi-year goals, and while the Board does not intend to revise them on an annual basis, Board members expressed their intent to conduct regular updates of progress on its new goals. The team found there is some concern at the College level that faculty did not have sufficient opportunity to comment on the Board goals; however, the Board's focus on its planning process has not affected College-level planning. Board objectives related to the revised goals appear to be focused on the completion of activities (e.g., adopting a common course numbering system) rather than outcome measures (e.g., retention rate, transfer rate).

The team affirmed the planning session also included a discussion of outcome measures and deadlines, but it could find no evidence of specific outcomes or timelines being incorporated into the plan to date. Interviews with College/District representative and constituency leaders indicate the absence of outcome measures in the planning process may be at least partly due to the academic purview related to certain Board goals/activities and the absence of deadlines may be at least partly due to College planning processes/cycles that are ahead of Ventura CCC District efforts in specific areas. After the Board planning session, the Board conducted a meeting with the district's Citizens Advisory Committee to get input from the external community. The team confirmed, through interviews with committee members, that the group went through the goals in detail with the Board and provided advisory input.

Team members found that all five District Board members attended the planning session but only two responded to the assessment cited in the Follow-Up Report. According to the Board members interviewed, the assessment was a standard Board meeting evaluation used by the District and not a specifically-developed tool to gather information on participants' satisfaction with the planning session which might have been more relevant and useful. Indicative of work still in progress, the team verified the next step in responding to District Recommendation 3 will be the formation of district-wide task forces that will develop the implementation plans and action steps to address the revised Board goals.

Conclusion:

The team documented the Ventura CCC District's progress in improving its planning process and found that the District and its Colleges have partially addressed this recommendation. However, the process is still being refined and remains incomplete without well-defined outcome measures and clear timelines. The team recommends the District focus and accelerate its work on defining outcome measures, developing appropriate timelines, and integrating its periodic outcomes assessment data into the strategic planning process in order to promote sustainable continuous quality improvement. The team further recommends that the District, through its functional mapping and related documents, articulates the District Office responsibility (separate from the Board's oversight responsibility) for future and ongoing reviews of strategic planning and decision-making processes

District Recommendation 4:

In order to improve communications, the Teams recommend that the District assess the effectiveness of its formal communications and utilize constituency and community input/feedback data to implement improvements to ensure that open and timely communication regarding expectations of educational excellence, operational planning, and integrity continues and is enhanced at all levels of the organization. (III.A.3, IV.B.3)

Findings and Evidence:

To assess the effectiveness of its formal communications, the Ventura CCC District initiated data gathering activities to collect feedback from Moorpark, Oxnard and Ventura Colleges about communication challenges and issues. Feedback was summarized by the College presidents at a Chancellor's Consultation Council meeting in April 2011 and the Office of Administrative Relations was charged with developing a communications improvement strategy to address identified concerns and gaps. As noted in the Follow-Up Report and documented by the team, the communications improvement strategy included:

- Complete migration to portal by all Colleges and the District Administrative Center (DAC);
- Dissemination of periodic communication updates via technology from the DAC;
- Creation of new administrative advisory bodies: District Administrative Council and District Presidents Council;
- Formation of a new operating committee, Human Resources Operating Committee (HROC);
- Development of the HR Talk program with monthly interactive, information sessions; and
- Expansion of the Citizens Advisory Committee to 21 members to ensure community input.

In addition to the expanded communication efforts, the team verified the District has identified at least two means of potentially assessing the effectiveness of formal communications on a potentially regular basis. The first method is a committee self-appraisal survey, traditionally conducted in November although the District is reviewing the timing of survey administration

due to its proximity to the beginning of the academic year. The second method is a district-wide employee survey, which the District's now-eliminated Institutional Research Office conducted. While the team could discern no concrete plans to use either to assess the effectiveness of communications in 2011-2012, team members believe these assessment tools may support the District and Colleges efforts to improve communications and more fully address Recommendation 4.

Through its interview process, the team found that some staff members feel that communication between the District and the Colleges has improved, while others believe it has worsened particularly with respect to centralized functions such as Information Technology. However, there was common acknowledgement that District communications need to be more formal and less direct than internal College communication patterns. The team found that email communications from the District to the Colleges may be less effective and other forms of communications need to be considered.

While District Recommendation 4 from the Comprehensive Evaluation Visit in October 2010 focused on District/College communications, the team found that only some District and College staff members believe communication is an issue. Others, including the Moorpark College Academic Senate president, believe that communication is not an issue but rather the real problem stems from the unclear and inadequate delineation of authority between the District and the Colleges.

Conclusion:

The team acknowledges the focused efforts of the Ventura CCC District and the Colleges in responding to District Recommendation 4 and finds the recommendation has been partially addressed to date. The new administrative advisory bodies, the expanded Citizens Advisory Committee, and the added communication strategies indicate a commitment to improving the effectiveness of communications throughout the District. These efforts have increased the opportunities for constituency and community input and the team recommends the District develop clear purpose statements for each of these bodies aligned with District, Board, and College communication goals.

While the District has assessed its formal communications through the collection of College feedback and discussed possible methods for collecting feedback about the effectiveness of communications in the future, there is no evidence that regular assessments will be implemented to ensure ongoing effectiveness and continuous improvement. It is also not clear if the District will measure improvements in constituency satisfaction with formal communications as a means to gauge effectiveness. The team recommends the District incorporate regular assessments of formal communications such as committee self-appraisal and employee surveys, to ensure improved communications and fully address the Accreditation Standards cited in District Recommendation 4.

District Recommendation 5:

In order to meet the Standard, the Board of Trustees shall complete an analysis of its self

assessment pursuant to Board Policy 2745 and formally adopt expected outcomes and measures for continuous quality improvement that will be assessed and reported as a component of the immediately succeeding self-assessment. (IV.B.1.g)

Findings and Evidence:

The team verified the Ventura CCCD had amended its policy statement (BP 2745) regarding Board of Trustees self-evaluation for the purpose of strengthening both policy and procedures to align with this recommendation. District policy BP 2745, and Administrative Procedure AP 2745 were amended to include language that specified performance goals and assessment as an outcome of the evaluation.

In addition, the team reviewed evidence and confirmed through interviews that the Board annual self-evaluation took place during May 2011. However, because an assessment instrument and written objectives were not established in 2010, it was impossible to have an analysis of the accomplishment of those objectives. The team affirmed that the Board developed objectives and eleven measurable activities for the 2011-2012 academic year, and an evaluation and analysis of achievement of these outcomes will occur at a similar Board session in May/June 2012.

Conclusion:

District Recommendation 5 has been addressed to a considerable extent. The team found the District Board of Trustees initiated an annual self-assessment activity and has made significant progress in improving its self-evaluation process through the inclusion of objectives and outcome measures. However, the improvement component of the process will remain incomplete until the newly-developed measurable objectives for 2011-12 are analyzed during the annual Board self-evaluation session scheduled for May/June 2012. The team recommends the Board complete the self-evaluation process as scheduled and ensure the self-assessment activity is conducted on a yearly basis.

District Recommendation 6:

In order to meet the Standards, the Board of Trustees shall establish clearly written policies and corresponding procedures to ensure that decision-making is administered by staff in an equitable and consistent manner across and within the three Colleges. (III.A.3.a, III.A.4.c, IV.B.1.b-c)

Findings and Evidence:

In conjunction with its efforts to respond to other accreditation recommendations, the District utilized an information gathering process conducted by the College presidents to collect data on policy and procedure issues impacting equitable decision-making. A list of campus concerns was prepared by each College president, returned to the Chancellor, and discussed in Chancellor's Cabinet session for potential action. The team found that these concerns and significant inconsistencies included:

- Inconsistencies between Colleges regarding the application/granting of early tenure;

- Inconsistencies regarding the allocation model and budget allocations;
- Inconsistencies regarding grant application and student field trip approval processes;
- Concerns regarding academic calendar and late registration activities; and
- Concerns regarding hours of operation/schedules, particularly Friday operational hours.

Evidence of multiple discussions of the identified concerns was reviewed by team members and specific actions focused on addressing/resolving them were documented. These actions include the Board adoption of a two-year review cycle for policies and procedures, with an explicit assessment by the Board Policy Committee of impacts on campus/District operations, an in-depth review and clarification of the budget allocation model at the District Council on Administrative Services (DCAS), a scheduled review of existing District/College grants for alignment with goals and uniform administrative practice, and in-service trainings on operational procedures for grant procedures. The team found that some concerns and inconsistencies remained to be addressed and believed they stemmed from incomplete or unclear District/College communications.

Conclusion:

This recommendation has been partially addressed. The team found substantive District and College progress in developing consistent decision-making processes and positive efforts in responding to District Recommendation 6. The team recommends the Board and appropriate bodies continue their work in resolving uniform practice concerns and communicate to all constituencies the decision-making protocols and standard operating procedures.

District Recommendation 7:

In order to meet the Standards, the Board of Trustees shall assess its actions in relation to its policy making role and implement a program for ongoing Board member professional development to enhance and improve the demonstration of its primary leadership role in assuring the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services delivered by the District Colleges. (IV.A.3, IV.B.1. e-g)

Findings and Evidence:

The team reviewed Board documentation and conducted interviews with the Chancellor and Board members, confirming the revisions of BP 2740 and AP 2740 which strengthen and emphasize the Board’s policy-making role and calls for Board attendance at trustee workshops and conferences. Since the Comprehensive Evaluation Visit in October 2010, members of the Board of Trustees have participated in several professional development workshops designed to support the Board’s governance and policy-making responsibilities, including a New Trustee Orientation, the League’s New Trustee Training, and the Association of Governing Boards conference.

The team reviewed the Board’s Professional Development Calendar for the upcoming year that is utilized for planning purposes and confirmed the Board’s new practice of sharing ideas and specific suggestions with the full membership upon return from a professional development event. The team observed collegiality, positive energy and enhanced understanding of the Board

member role in its interviews regarding the activities focused on addressing District Recommendation 7 and believes the Board and District are headed in the right direction. However, there is still a concern and finding at the District and College levels that some Board members periodically advocate for and/or request actions specific to Colleges and/or programs rather than adhering to a policy-making role and speaking with a commonality of voice.

Conclusion:

Based on the limited extent of time and current evidence provided, the team finds that District Recommendation 7 has been fully addressed. However, the team remains concerned about the consistency and long-term sustainability of the Board's demonstration of its primary leadership role and reiterates its recommendation for ongoing professional development for all Board members. The team encourages the Board to continue its professional growth related to Board roles and responsibilities, governance, organizational effectiveness and ethics, and recommends the Board be vigilant in assessing and monitoring its actions to ensure clear and effective policy and decision-making.

Commission Concern: The Commission noted that a recent HR audit revealed a lack of minimum qualifications and/or equivalencies for a total of 110 full- and part-time faculty district-wide. The District reported it is currently engaged in the formal review and verification of degrees for all new hires and for those who lack an equivalency review at each of the Colleges. The Commission requires the results of that review be included in the October 2011 Follow-Up Report from all three Colleges. (Standard III.A.2)

Findings and Evidence:

Through a systematic audit of personnel files and a multi-tiered follow-up process with affected faculty members, the District and Colleges identified potential deficiencies and ultimately affirmed the minimum qualifications for nearly 100 instructors. Team members verified the thoroughness of the process and the full remediation of personnel files which now include appropriate academic transcripts and/or approved equivalencies for all teaching faculty. The team also confirmed the establishment of a new district-wide equivalency process which will be instrumental as a safeguard against future problems of this nature.

Conclusion:

The team finds District and Colleges have adequately responded to the Commission Concern and have fully addressed the human resources issue regarding the lack of minimum qualifications of specific instructors. The team recommends the District continues its vigilance and rigor in its faculty hiring practices and encourages the implementation of the technology-based system for recording and monitoring HR qualifications currently under consideration.