Ad-Hoc/Special Evaluation

Peer-Evaluation Report

Clatsop Community College

Astoria, Oregon

October 14, 2025

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A confidential report of findings prepared for the

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

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INTRODUCTION

The evaluator was charged with reviewing and evaluating the extent to which Clatsop Community College had made progress in addressing Recommendations 1 (1.B.1, 1.B.3, 1.B.4) of its Fall 2021 Ad Hoc Report and the Warning sanction imposed on March 3, 2025.

VISIT SUMMARY

The evaluator worked with college staff to organize a full schedule of meetings. College staff were responsive and helpful in putting together the schedule and responding to requests for additional information both before and during the visit. During the visit, the evaluator met with the President's Cabinet, President's Council, Board of Education, Interim Director of Institutional Research and Data Architecture, Budget Advisory Committee, Student Services and Instructional Leadership, Instructional Council with some additional full-time faculty, and the college president. Participants were open, collegial, and honest in their interactions and conversations with the visiting evaluator.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Fall 2021 Ad Hoc Report with Visit; Review and revise institutional planning processes to ensure that data collectively support mission fulfillment and effective strategic decision making. (2020 Standard(s) 1.B.1;1.B.3;1.B.4)

1.B.1 The institution demonstrates a continuous process to assess institutional effectiveness, including student learning and achievement and support services. The institution uses an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement.

1.B.3 The institution provides evidence that its planning process is inclusive and offers opportunities for comment by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

1.B.4 The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it considers such findings to assess its strategic position, define its future direction, and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, planning, intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement of its goals.

Progress on Recommendation 1

The college has taken significant steps towards addressing the recommendation. Under the leadership of the current president, the college completed the work on a new strategic plan, finalized the adoption and implementation of a new ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software, establishing an in in-house office of institutional research, adopted a balanced budget for the current fiscal year, and made some adjustments to the shared governance structure of college councils and committees. Each of these actions are key elements of a sound foundation of business processes the college needs to implement an ongoing institutional planning process.

Strategic Plan

The college developed a 2025-2030 Strategic Plan with five strategic priorities. The plan is comprehensive in scope and reflects a thorough and thoughtful analysis of the college's internal and external environments. It lays out a strategic framework that is hierarchical starting with the college mission, followed by college values, vision, and the five strategic priorities. Under each priority are a series of objectives. Supporting each objective are sets of key actions the college plans to implement in order to achieve the related objective. Each objective also has a set of indicators meant to measure progress towards achieving the objective. One of the indicators for each objective has been designated as a key indicator. A Strategic Plan Scorecard lists each objective and its key indicator along with a baseline, target, and current status for each indicator. Additionally, the Scorecard has a Progress column where each indicator is given a green, yellow, or red designation to show if the college is on track in achieving each objective through the accomplishment of its key actions. Through the two-page Scorecard, college employees can quickly see progress towards achieving each of the Strategic Priorities via their supporting objectives.

The Strategic Plan also contains an Institutional Effectiveness Dashboard for measuring mission fulfillment. The Dashboard lists indicators for each of the five strategic priorities as well as a baseline, target, and current status for each indicator. Based on the status, each indicator is also given a color of green, yellow, or red, showing if the college is making adequate progress in meeting the goal for each indicator. The Dashboard also contains a definition of mission fulfillment that is based on indicator scores on the Dashboard.

Under the Strategic Priority of "Student Success," the college has adopted indicators of student achievement in the areas of persistence, retention, and a combined indicator of completion and post graduate success (completion or transfer). The targets for these indicators were selected from the average score of state/regional peers for that indicator. While the methodology for selecting the baselines and targets was explained to the evaluator during the visit, there is not a documented explanation and such an explanation would be helpful for any dashboard users. Furthermore, while the college selected initial

baselines and targets, the methodology for adjusting them, tracking progress, and using them for ongoing annual planning is still undetermined. The process used to determine the initial baselines and targets does not facilitate tracking progress over time. Since this is a goal of college leadership, the college will need to re-evaluate its methodology moving forward.

Additionally, the new Institutional Research office has developed dynamic data dashboards including a dashboard that shows various disaggregations of the student achievement indicators. In the dashboard, completion and transfer are shown separately rather than combined. This dashboard was completed just prior to the visit so the college has not yet had the opportunity to begin evaluating the data to identify achievement gaps that would be meaningful to address nor ways to integrate the use of disaggregated student achievement data into college processes or planning. The college may need to make refinements to the dashboard to ensure alignment with the Institutional Effectiveness Dashboard, reflect decisions around indicator baselines and targets, and support the use of the dashboard in an ongoing annual planning processes. In addition, the college would benefit from going through a process of analyzing disaggregated student achievement data and identifying any achievement gap(s) that are meaningful to the college and could inform institutional planning and continuous improvement efforts.

The college was intentional about implementing an inclusive process for developing the strategic plan. Part of the process included using surveys, focus groups, and interviews to gather feedback from a broad array of internal and external constituents. Additionally, the college organized five groups of employees, one for each strategic priority, and tasked them with developing objectives and key actions under each priority. Members of each Strategic Priority Group were from multiple departments and represented broad and deep participation by employees across the institution.

Administrators, staff, and the Board of Directors claimed that the recently adopted Strategic Plan was the best one the college has ever had and is being integrated into college operations in ways that previous plans weren't. They all gave examples of how elements of the strategic plan was becoming embedded in college procedures and activities. Reports to the Board are organized around Strategic Priorities. The Strategic Priorities are also being embedded in performance reviews. Some college departments are aligning their department goals and plans with the Strategic Plan. Several departments are actively engaged in Key Actions in the Strategic Plan including making adjustments to the new student intake process, improving high school dual credit programming, and making improvements to advising. Budget requests from departments must align with elements of the Strategic Plan. Institutional budget cuts made in the prior fiscal year were guided by the Strategic Plan. Finally, multiple staff stated that working on the Strategic Plan has given people a common focus and helped break down internal silos. The college should continue to intentionally embed use of the Strategic Plan into existing business processes.

ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) Software Implementation

The adoption of a new ERP software system has given the college the ability to generate a multitude of student enrollment and financial data reports. Prior to making the adoption, the nature of the prior ERP made it difficult for the college to collect and report even basic things such as enrollment reports and tuition payments. The new ERP is foundational to tracking and disaggregating student achievement measures and managing the college's finances, key elements of an annual planning process. Staff, administrators, and board members commented on how nice it is to have a system that can produce actionable data that helps them all in their respective institutional roles.

In-house Office of Institutional Research

Before establishing an in-house Office of Institutional Research, Clatsop Community College was in a contractual relationship with a sister college, Linn-Benton Community College, to provide institutional research services. However, it was difficult to obtain quality data, at least partially because the two colleges had different ERP tools. After the adoption of a new ERP, the college president reassigned an existing employee with the needed skillset to launch the inaugural CCC Office of Institutional Research. As mentioned previously, doing so has allowed the college to dig into its enrollment data in a way that it never could before. Additionally, the Institutional Research office has updated the list of state/regional and national peer institutions based on clear criteria and is beginning to use peer data. With this new capacity, the college should not only continue its efforts to develop data visualization tools such as the dashboards, but also train employees on how to use them, and develop protocols for responding to data requests in order to establish sustainable practices with limited resources.

Adopted a Balanced Budget

With a new ERP that allowed the college to better understand its financial situation in combination with strong college leadership, staff presented the college Board of Directors with a balanced budget for the first time in many years. In addition, college staff were able to provide Board members with data informed answers to their questions. As a result, the adoption of the budget was much easier for the Board and it was able to pass it after only two meetings instead of what had been a common practice of using five or more meetings to pass the budget.

Adjustments to Shared Governance Structure

In the process of developing and beginning to implement the Strategic Plan, the college is making adjustments to its committee and council structure. The President gave the College Council the charge to monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The College Council has broad representation from across the institution making it an excellent body for gathering diverse perspectives and being part of an annual institutional planning process. The college will assign the College Council to analyze data from

quarterly student surveys and annual constituent surveys and make recommendations based on the data. Strategic Priority Groups give reports to the College Council. While initially established as ad hoc groups, they have not disbanded. The college is considering whether to continue with them and how they may operate in an annual planning process.

The college created a Policy & Procedure group tasked with updating college policies and procedures. Previously, the management of policies and procedures was under the purview of the College Council. However, the broad scope of responsibility of the College Council inhibited its effectiveness. With the formation of the new group, the College Council can focus on implementation of the Strategic Plan. Similarly, the new group can update policies and procedures more expeditiously. The group could consider updates to the policy and procedure framework that could support the ongoing institutional planning process.

Developing an Ongoing Institutional Planning Process

The college just adopted its new Strategic Plan a few months ago and is just entering its first full year of implementation. The college is still determining how to organize and implement an ongoing institutional planning process that would assess institutional effectiveness through data collection, analysis, and decisions about resource allocation. College leadership, faculty and staff are still figuring out the implementation details of how such a continuous process will function. The process could utilize existing groups such as College Council and the Budget Advisory Committee. The college should also consider how to incorporate the results of student learning assessment and disaggregated student achievement data. There is not currently an intentional process for including these things into institutional planning. As the college works to develop an annual planning process, it should build on its recent success to create a process that it can sustain for the foreseeable future.