

Progress Visit Report

Modesto Junior College
435 College Avenue
Modesto, California 95350

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

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited

Modesto Junior College

on

November 19, 2007

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Date: December 7, 2007
To: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
From: Shirley J. Kelly, Team Chair
Subject: Report of Progress Visit
Modesto Junior College, November 19, 2007

Introduction

A comprehensive visit was conducted to Modesto Junior College in October, 2005. At its meeting of January 11 - 13, 2006, the Commission acted to require of Modesto Junior College a Progress Report and visit. The visiting team, Dr. Shirley J. Kelly, Dr. Nelle Moffett and Ms. Rhea Riegel, conducted the site visit to Modesto Junior College on November 19, 2007. The purpose of the visit was to validate the Progress Report prepared by the college and to determine if sustained, continuous, and positive movement toward institutional good practice had occurred. The team concluded that the college has made little progress in meeting the recommendations.

The team found that the college had prepared well for the visit by arranging for meetings with the individuals agreed upon with the team chair and by assembling appropriate documents in the meeting room used by the team. In addition, on the day of the visit staff was available for meetings as needed, and additional documents were provided upon request. The team met with the College President, Vice President of Student Services, Vice President of Instruction, Dean of Business and Chair of the Budget Committee, Academic Senate President, Accreditation Liaison Officer, Faculty SLO Trainer, Yosemite District Chancellor, and, by videoconference, the Vice Chancellor responsible for finance.

The Progress Report and visit were expected to document improvement in the following areas:

Recommendations

Recommendation 4. The team recommends that the college develop a planning initiative to address issues of staffing, support services, and programs on the East and West Campuses. (IB.2; IB.3; IB.4; IB.6; IIB; IIB.3a; IIIA.2; IIIC.1a,b,c) Note: This recommendation was also given to the college by the previous accreditation team (prior Standard 4A.4).

Recommendation 6. The team recommends that in order to best serve the needs of students, the district and the college engage in a collaborative process to ensure a transparent and equitable allocation of financial resources and that the district and the

college implement a process to communicate budget issues with each other on an ongoing basis. (IIIC.1a; IIIC.1d; IIIC.2; IIID.1a,b,c; IIID.2a; IIID.2b; IIID.2d; IIID.2e; IIID.2g; IIID.3; IVB.2d; IVB.3d; IVB.3g)

Recommendation 7. The team recommends that the college develop and implement a strategic planning process for connecting long-term program and services planning to financial resource development, as well as to facilities, human resources, and technology planning, consistent with the mission of the college. In addition, the team recommends that to accomplish its plans, the college develop and implement a short-term cyclical process that includes (a) clear institutional goals that are archived through tactical actions that are based on institutional data and research, allocation of resources, timelines, and primary office of responsibility, (b) a method to report accomplishments on each tactical action, and (c) measures of institutional effectiveness that document achievement of the college mission and demonstrate continuous improvement. (IA.4, IB, IIA.1, IIA.2, IIA.3, IIB, IIB.1, IIB.3, IIB.3a, IIC, IIC.1, IIC.1c, IIIA.6, IIIC.1a, IIIC.1d, IIIC.2, IVA.1, IVA.5)

College Responses to the Team Recommendations

Recommendation 4. The team recommends that the college develop a planning initiative to address issues of staffing, support services, and programs on the East and West Campuses. (IB.2; IB.3; IB.4; IB.6; IIB; IIB.3a; IIIA.2; IIIC.1a,b,c) Note: This recommendation was also given to the college by the previous accreditation team (prior Standard 4A.4).

Since the team visit, the college has developed an Educational Master Plan which is to be the central piece of the college's planning agenda. One hundred twenty-five faculty and administrators were interviewed during eighty-four sessions to discuss the current status and the future of each program and service within the college. The completed plan was presented to the college participatory governance committee. A college-wide forum was held to review the plan and the set of recommendations. The college also has a Facilities Master Plan and Technology Master Plan.

The Yosemite Community College District has developed a strategic plan. The college plans to align its own strategic plan with the district plan. The campus strategic planning process was initiated through a leadership retreat in which drafts of institutional vision, mission, and values statements were developed. These statements are to be the basis for the development of goals and objectives for the strategic plan.

The lack of a Strategic Plan that would connect the separate plans into a cohesive whole is seen by the team as a roadblock to a successful budget process, making it difficult to set priorities. There is also concern that the EMP is not part of the college's daily activities, and that it is not being used by the Deans. Finally, program review is still in pilot, and shows no evidence of ties to planning, budget, or staffing. The college intends to begin the development of its strategic plan during December, 2007, using external

consultants to structure the process, but as of the progress visit, planning efforts at the college are isolated and inconsistent. In effect, the college is still planning to plan.

Furthermore, none of the plans address specifically the issues of programs and services on the two campuses as required by this recommendation.

Conclusion

This team recommendation required that the college address the issues of staffing, support services, and programs on the two campuses. The team was unable to find these issues addressed in the Educational Master Plan as currently constituted. The college has not met the requirements of this recommendation.

Recommendation 6. The team recommends that in order to best serve the needs of students, the district and the college engage in a collaborative process to ensure a transparent and equitable allocation of financial resources and that the district and the college implement a process to communicate budget issues with each other on an ongoing basis. (IIC.1a; IIC.1d; IIC.2; IID.1a,b,c; IID.2a; IID.2b; IID.2d; IID.2e; IID.2g; IID.3; IVB.2d; IVB.3d; IVB.3g)

The District has a long-standing model for allocating funds to the two colleges and central services. A task force was convened in Spring, 2007, to review this model for the first time in more than ten years. The task force met twice to review the state budget process and the college allocation process. They agreed to continue meeting in Fall, 2007.

Modesto Junior College has created a standing advisory committee on College Budget and Planning. The committee is charged to 1) review and make recommendations on the college allocation process, 2) provide the college president with recommendations on the budget development process, and 3) review specifically proposed funding requests and allocations. The college has also established a Taskforce on Part Time Overload. The committee will make recommendations on budget allocations and FTES targets.

Conclusion

The team confirmed that the district is currently reviewing the allocation model. The team was able to confirm that the district allocation has been made clearer to the college and communication between the college and the district has improved.

Recommendation 7. The team recommends that the college develop and implement a strategic planning process for connecting long-term program and services planning to financial resource development, as well as to facilities, human resources, and technology planning, consistent with the mission of the college. In addition, the team recommends that to accomplish its plans, the college develop and implement a short-term cyclical process that includes (a) clear institutional goals that are archived through tactical actions that are based on institutional data and research, allocation of resources, timelines, and primary office of responsibility, (b) a method

to report accomplishments on each tactical action, and (c) measures of institutional effectiveness that document achievement of the college mission and demonstrate continuous improvement. (IA.4, IB, IIA.1, IIA.2, IIA.3, IIB, IIB.1, IIB.3, IIB.3a, IIC, IIC.1, IIC.1c, IIIA.6, IIIC.1a, IIIC.1d, IIIC.2, IVA.1, IVA.5)

The team found very little evidence of progress on this recommendation. The college has developed an Educational Master Plan which includes profiles and resource needs for each of the individual units. The primary purpose of this document was to identify facilities needs for planning construction under Measure E. In addition to the interviews noted above, this document was developed with the facilitation of a consulting firm and with participation by the architect. The document did not describe any process for its update or for using the information in the document for prioritizing and allocating resources. Several people interviewed indicated that, other than the development of a separate spreadsheet of unit needs, the document had not been used. It was not clear to interviewees how this document links to annual unit planning, strategic planning, program review, or resource allocation.

The campus strategic planning process was initiated through a leadership retreat in which draft statements of institutional vision, mission, and values were developed. These statements are to be the basis for the development of goals and objectives for the strategic plan. A consultant is scheduled to start this process within the next few months. Other processes are on hold waiting for the strategic planning process to be developed. A pilot effort to design and implement a Program Review process is underway with full implementation planned for Fall 2008.

Planning for construction under Measure E appears to be in progress. There is a prioritized list of projects, and initial decisions are being made about the location of programs and services, including consolidation of Student Services. It is not clear to what extent the existing Educational Master Plan recommendations are playing a part in this planning in any direct way. The college is embarking on a significant construction process in the absence of a college strategic plan, including goals and objectives, as well as in the absence of agreed upon priorities and directions. Measure E was created with a little bit of something for everyone. As the reality of the limited resources becomes evident against the projected needs in the Educational Master Plan, the college may face quite a challenge to determine how to divide up the Measure E resources.

Regarding the recommendation, the college does not have and has not yet begun the development of a strategic planning process. There is no existing process for linking programs and service planning to financial, human, physical, and technology resource allocation. The enrollment projections in the Educational Master Plan are not connected to the new enrollment management initiative. Therefore, the efforts to turn around the three-year enrollment decrease are not related to the growth projections that are, at least to some extent, being considered in the construction of new facilities.

The college does not have a short-term, cyclical planning process. The college started to develop a Program Review process and implemented a pilot with 4-5 departments. This

process was put on hold pending the development of a strategic plan. Resource allocation occurs in the absence of college goals and tactical plans. The absence of clear direction, the start and stop pattern, and the perceived lack of follow-through have created morale and trust issues in the college. The urgency for starting on the bond construction has put the college in an untenable position of having the cart before the horse.

In addition to the general confusion and lack of progress on planning, the college has lost some of the sparse research capacity that it had at the time of the last site visit. The college is no further along in identifying measures of institutional effectiveness and having access to data that support decision-making and continuous improvement. For example, the pilot Program Review documents cited “data not available.” Historical and projected enrollment data were provided at the unit level for the Educational Master Plan by district IT; however, the limited research capacity at the district level is not able to support the college in any consistent or strategic way. There is no committee that meets district-wide to identify priorities or common needs for data at the colleges. The college currently has a vacant Director of Research and Planning position and a half-time research analyst who does not have reliable access to data. The college has hired, on a contract basis for one year, the former district researcher to provide research assistance.

Conclusion

The team found that the college has made only minimal progress toward meeting this recommendation.