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# PROGRESS EVALUATION REPORT

College of the Sequoias  
915 South Mooney Boulevard  
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A Confidential Report Prepared for the Accrediting Commission  
for Community and Junior Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited  
College of the Sequoias on November 29, 2007

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# College of the Sequoias

## Team Roster

November 29, 2007

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# REPORT

A two person accreditation team visited the College of the Sequoias on November 29, 2007. This focused visit was for the purpose of determining whether the institution had addressed the issues in their 2006 Accreditation Evaluation Report which led to its accreditation being placed in Warning status by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.

Team members were provided with copies of the 2006 evaluation report and the institution's 2007 Progress Report. In addition, team members had web access to College documents and policies.

During the one day focused visit the team inspected additional documents that were requested prior to the visit and interviewed several members of the college faculty and staff. The team appreciated the openness and candor demonstrated by the College and its staff during the development of this report.

The narrative below describes what the team found with regard to each of the five recommendations contained in its 2006 evaluation. The narrative also includes the visiting team's recommendation regarding the warning status of College of the Sequoias.

## **Recommendation 1: Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

**The team strongly recommends that the College establish a positive campus climate through an inclusive dialogue that embodies a culture of respect, civility, and trust to improve institutional decision-making, planning, and effectiveness (January 31, 2007 ACCJC Letter).**

The November 29, 2007 visiting team found substantial progress on this recommendation. The Progress Report prepared by College of the Sequoias concluded that 70% of those surveyed felt that the atmosphere on campus had improved over the last three years. Individual interviews confirmed this perception. Virtually everyone interviewed stated that the climate on campus had improved over the last year in particular. Explanations for this change usually started with a discussion of the Superintendent/President and his open and inclusive leadership style. In fact, the Progress Report states that almost 77% of employees agreed that the Superintendent/President has an open door policy for employees and the public at large.

In preparation for the team visit in 2006, the College conducted a survey which indicated that 46.3% of faculty and 47.2% of classified staff agreed that communication on campus was effective. The College's 2007 survey found that faculty and classified staff (77.9% and 76% respectively) perceived that the college communicates effectively through its website, email and publications. Further, the same survey indicated that 82.9% of full-time faculty and 62.4% of classified staff felt that administration, faculty and classified staff work collaboratively to further institutional improvements. These percentages compare to 52.0% and 58.5% respectively on the same item in the 2006 survey.

There is an obvious (30%) increase in positive perceptions of faculty on this issue. Classified employees did not share this substantial increase (4%) in positive perception. Interviews with leaders of the classified staff revealed a general positive impression of the direction the College is taking with regard to inclusion.

**Conclusion: The visiting team found that the College had made satisfactory progress on this recommendation.**

### **Recommendation 2: Institutional Decision Making and Planning**

**The team recommends that the College engage all campus constituent groups in an institutional decision-making and planning process, which is linked and central to the college mission. The process should be an ongoing, effective, and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, research, and re-evaluation. This cycle should include such process as curricular development, program review, and assessment and allocation of technology, physical, financial, and human resources (January 31, 2007 ACCJC Letter).**

The November 29, 2007 visiting team found substantial progress on this recommendation. The Progress Report prepared by the institution states that all campus committees are staffed and meeting on a regular basis. On-campus interviews support this assertion. A report prepared by the Faculty Senate President to the Board of Trustees during the fall of 2007 stated that there were approximately 400 faculty “slots” on campus committees which were all filled. This averages out to about 2.5 slots for each full-time faculty member. Lack of faculty involvement was a significant concern for the 2006 visiting team. This concern seems to have been addressed.

The 2007 campus survey also supports the conclusion that all of the structural components for an effective planning process are in place. Generally, there is a very high level of agreement (82.5%) that the Mission Statement guides development of new programs and services. Of note is that 89.9% of full-time faculty agreed or strongly agreed with this survey element.

An important element of an effective planning process is whether the budget follows the objectives and goals established through the planning process. Comparisons between the 2006 and 2007 campus surveys indicate little change in perceptions on this element of planning. However, the publication and dissemination of a document by the Budget Oversight Committee and the VP for Business Services entitled “Fiscal Principles and Procedures for College of the Sequoias” should help the campus to understand how fiscal decisions are made and the philosophical foundations underpinning those decisions.

**Conclusion: The visiting team found that the College had made satisfactory progress on this recommendation.**

### **Recommendation 3: Student Learning Outcomes**

**The team recommends that the College develop, review, and measure student learning outcomes in all of its courses, programs, degrees/certificates, the general education pattern, and institution-wide practices (January 31, 2007 ACCJC Letter).**

The November 29, 2007 visiting team found substantial progress on this recommendation. Evidence across the campus indicates that faculty have a heightened awareness of and support for the value of student learning outcomes (SLOs). The Academic Senate and the administration agreed to a set of "SLO Guidelines." The campus has a SLO Coordinator with 20% reassigned time and will add another 20% of coordination time in spring 2008. With the implementation of Curricunet in fall 2007, faculty have an easier method of reporting SLOs and assessment techniques for their courses. SLOs are posted on line or in Curricunet.

In academic programs, the progress of SLOs varies. At the least, most departments are in the process of identifying SLOs for their courses. The participation rate is high and inclusive of adjunct faculty. In many departments, assessment techniques have been identified as well. Common assessment tools have been developed for some courses. In some departments, assessment has been conducted, results analyzed, and response plans developed.

Although most programs have focused on SLOs at the course level, some departments (e.g., Administration of Justice and Human Services) have developed SLOs at the program level. Currently, SLOs for distance education courses are handled within the discipline area. SLOs for student services programs—nearly complete in fall 2006—are being reconsidered using an alternative model.

In a collaborative meeting in spring 2007, the campus developed institutional learning outcomes (ILOs). The ILOs will be presented for campus approval in spring 2008.

A year ago SLOs had been discussed and a number of voluntary training sessions had been held, but only a few departments had completed the SLO process. A year later, a significant number of departments are addressing SLOs and moving to identification of assessment tools. Using assessment information for improvement is limited to a small number of programs.

According to the Progress Report Survey conducted by the college for the Accreditation Progress Report, 86% of full-time faculty agree that the curriculum process includes identification of SLOs as part of course approval; this is a significant increase over the percentage (49%) in the 2006 Accreditation Survey. Ninety-seven percent of full-time faculty agree that their program or division is developing SLOs; 92% of full-time faculty agree their program or division is developing SLO assessments.

**Conclusion: The visiting team found that the College had made satisfactory progress on this recommendation.**

### **Recommendation 5: Access and Diversity**

**The team recommends that the College focus on the needs of its diverse populations both on-campus and in the community, including new students, non-traditional populations, and persons of limited English ability. The College must pay particular attention in all of its learning environments to the needs of persons with disabilities, including access to facilities, services, instructional materials, and print and electronic media. The College should ensure that its public representations are universally accessible (January 31, 2007 ACCJC Letter).**

The November 29, 2007 visiting team found substantial progress on this recommendation. Strong efforts have been made to provide comparable support services to students at off-site locations. At the Hanford site, a full-time counselor has been assigned for both counseling and outreach efforts and given a line-item budget to ensure services are comparable to those on the main campus.

Under the President's leadership, previous successful programs such as LISTO (Title V grant) have been merged with new initiatives such as the First Year Experience to expand the numbers of students served and to have greater impact on various cohorts of students. At least nine learning communities are in place including a transfer cohort and a basic skills cohort. The college has just recently been awarded a TRIO grant as well. The college also reinstated the MESA program in fall 2007.

In another example, the college's participation in Campus Change Network has merged with the Student Equity Committee to revitalize the college's attention to underrepresented students. Also, the Student Equity Committee is now a standing committee of the College Council. Recognizing that the 2005 Student Equity Plan was inadequately implemented, under new leadership a Summit was held in spring 2007 to review and rewrite the plan. Among the goals in the new plan are increasing the number of written materials for non-English speaking students and developing new ways of meeting needs of diverse students, such as distance education.

The Faculty/Staff Diversity Committee has refocused its mission and developed an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Plan which, in draft form, has been considered widely through the participatory governance process on campus. The EEO Plan is expected to be presented to the Board of Trustees in spring 2008. The college has retained a legal firm to train committee members in best practices in recruitment and selection. Using a Train the Trainer approach, a Faculty/Staff Diversity Committee member will sit on each campus selection committee.

**Conclusion: The visiting team found that the College had made satisfactory progress on this recommendation.**

### **Recommendation 6: Policies and Procedures**

**The team recommends that the College develop a process by which all policies are regularly reviewed and updated to meet Accreditation Standards, including, but not limited to:**

- **Tenure Review**
- **Hiring & Evaluation processes (management, classified, and faculty)**
- **Employee Professional Ethics**
- **Board policy concerning Ethics Policy violation**
- **Boardsmanship Training & Development**
- **Accommodations for students and staff**
- **Academic Honesty Policy**

**(January 31, 2007 ACCJC Letter)**

The November 29, 2007 visiting team found substantial progress on this recommendation. The team found significant and numerous policy revisions in the sections of the College's policy manual relating to the District, Board, the General Institution and Human Resources. The Academic Affairs, Student Services and Human Resources sections of the manual continue to be worked upon. The Administrative Procedures which go along with the Board Policies are also the focus of continued work. The College is a member of the Community College League of California's Policy Service.

In reviewing the new Board Policy on Board Ethics the 2007 visiting team could not find anything relating to process in case of a violation. This language may be a part of the Administrative Procedures currently under revision.

**Conclusion: The visiting team found that the College had made satisfactory progress on this recommendation.**