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Accrediting Commission for
Community and Junior Colleges

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Cañada College

4200 Farm Hill Boulevard

Redwood City, California 94061

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

This report represents the findings of the External Evaluation Team that visited Cañada College on October 21, 2013 through October 24, 2013.

Pamela T. Luster, Chair

Commendations/Recommendations

College Commendations:

1. The team commends the college for imbuing a culture of inclusion by fostering a high level of participation in the decision making process leading to outstanding collegiality and collaboration among the faculty, staff, students, and administration.

2. The team commends the college on the high level of engagement of the students in the Center for Student Life and Leadership which is evidenced through their involvement and knowledge of all shared governance committees, an active and well trained student council, and their participation in services that facilitate their success such as Beating the Odds, the Student Ambassador Program, and various on-campus student leadership opportunities.

3. The team commends the College for creating and fostering a culture of collaboration among faculty, classified professionals, and students that promulgates a rich, interactive, and relevant learning environment for underrepresented students in STEM disciplines.

4. The College is to be commended on the Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CIETL) for bringing the college together in dialogue to support student learning. CIETL provides more than leadership in faculty development; it is the heart of the college, affording a place for all members of the College community to engage in conversation about student learning.

District Commendation

1. The Team commends the District on its strategic planning, especially its foresight in planning to become a Basic Aid or "Community-Supported" Community College District. The SMCCCD planned for the funding modification that has stabilized and materially enhanced the revenue sources for the District. In addition, the District was successful in passing a Parcel Tax which provided a significant and stable revenue stream for five years. The District also carried out the difficult budget reductions that were necessary to adjust to the state's severe fiscal crisis, without employee layoffs. Strong leadership, planning, and decisions have enabled the District not only to stabilize in better financial times but also to prosper due to enhanced revenue. As a result, the District has enabled the Colleges of the District to move forward in serving students with additional classes, counseling, and other educational opportunities.

evidence that the College conducts sufficient assessment to close the loop in its planning cycles.

The College has addressed the recommendation, corrected the deficiencies, and meets the Standards.

Recommendation 2

To fully meet the standards, the college should develop a collegial process for the timely completion of Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) development and documentation at the institution, general education, program and course levels, and formalize the documentation of SLO assessment. The college should ensure that the process is faculty driven, broadly supported, and ultimately used as the basis to plan and implement institutional improvements to courses, programs, degrees and services. (Standards IB1, IIA1c, IIA2a, IIA2b, IIA2e, IIA2f, IIA2h, IIA2i, IIB4, IIC1c, and IIC2.)

Much work has been done on the SLOs since the 2007 visit; numerous examples given in the self-study demonstrate ideal effects of SLOs development and assessment. The college has demonstrated effective development, implementation, and assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that has helped the institution reach "proficiency" status.

The Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CIETL) offers workshops in the mechanics of assessment as well as providing forums for the discussion of learning outcomes. There appears to be great interest in e-portfolios as a method of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Institution Level Outcomes (ILOs) assessment. It was noted repeatedly in the Self Study that program level assessment efforts are in beginning stages. Those that have completed a cycle (such as the Counseling Program) provide a good model. There is strong evidence that the College is engaged in a robust campus wide dialogue including all constituencies in utilizing ePortfolios as an assessment tool for ILOs.

The college has implemented a TracDat database to capture, store, and retrieve SLO data. The TracDat application is used across the campus for both Instruction and Student Services areas. The TracDat database allows wide dissemination and collection of SLO assessment data. SLO work is also guided by a faculty Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Coordinator along with a Student Learning Outcomes Advisory Committee (SLOAC).

SLOs are identified for each course as part of the curriculum development process and reflected in course outlines of record (CORs). CORs are reviewed by discipline and department faculty and then submitted to the college's curriculum committee for review and approval.

SLO assessment plans are presented and reviewed through Annual Plans/Program Reviews. These plans are also reviewed by the Instructional Planning Council and routed to other

Recommendation 3

To increase institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the college provide support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators through the development and implementation of consistent processes for the delivery of distance education. (Standards II.A.1.b, II.A.2.d and III.C.1.a)

It is evident that the College has created a support structure that promotes effective online learning environments. The College has actively utilized the Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CIETL) to pilot, evaluate, and support innovative teaching and learning practices (4 different workshops scheduled in September deal with use of technology). Training services are also available through a district program, Structured Training for Online Teaching (STOT). This recommendation has also been met through the development of a Distance Education Handbook (which includes guidelines for regular and effective contact) and the hiring of a full-time Instructional Designer to help in curriculum design and best practices for distance education.

Evaluation of online teaching and learning is in the early phases of implementation. The college Curriculum Committee evaluates and approves Course Outlines and Records and Distance Education Supplements to ensure that regular and effective contact is provided. Distance education courses are also reviewed by the Instructional Designer/Distance Education Coordinator, or by a member of the college Distance Education Advisory Committee (DEAC). Faculty are also provided access to a Distance Education Handbook, Rubric for Online Instruction, Regular and Effective Contact Guidelines, and Distance Education Accessibility Guidelines.

Evidence demonstrates that the College has expanded Student Support Services for distance learning. For instance, there is an online "ASK Cañada" link on the homepage, an easily accessed Distance Education webpage, and from there, an easily identifiable link to the Distance Education Student Services, which includes an e-counselor. Recent surveys have indicated that the vast majority of students taking online classes are local and also taking face-to-face classes. While the need for extending online Student Services is not currently pressing, the College continues to pursue its Student Services goals related to Distance Education in anticipation of gradual expansion of DE offerings.

The Library continues to support DE courses through the online access to multiple sources of information, including databases and e-books. It continues to explore the expansion of electronic information and the challenges this transition brings. The Library and Learning Center provide instruction related to information competency.

Standard I – Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Standard IB- Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations

The College has aligned with the principles of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative. The College exhibits LEAP's core values in identifying essential learning outcomes, investing in high-impact educational practices, conducting authentic assessments, and ensuring inclusive excellence. The creation of Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CIETL) has proven to be an important institutional investment that has helped the College to realize these core values.

Widespread and inclusive dialogue characterizes the College. This dialogue occurs in multiple venues and focuses on student learning and student achievement. The College has created a genuine culture of inquiry. Significant data addressing student learning and achievement is provided by the Office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness, and this data is widely shared with the college community. Additionally, the College has established its own standards for student achievement against which the data is compared. These student achievement standards were established after widespread dialogue among all college constituents utilizing small group discussion in open public forums. Analysis of, and response to, the data are a regular component of the program review process. In May 2012 the Academic Senate passed a set of resolutions supporting the priority of student learning outcomes and their assessment.

Findings and Evidence

Two particularly noteworthy developments came out of institution wide dialogue about assessing and improving learning outcomes. One was the creation of the Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CIETL), a program designed to provide professional development activities focused on improving teaching and student learning. The other was restructuring how student services does program review, shifting program review from individual department reviews to common-service-based reviews, emphasizing and assessing how certain student services are delivered across departments. This structure looks at the effectiveness of services as received from a student perspective rather than from the silos of the individual departments delivering the service. For instance, the assessment office, counselors, and Admissions and Records combine for a common program review focusing on successfully meeting the needs of students as they navigate through key college admissions processes. These are but two examples of how the College engages in, and responds to, dialogue about continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes. (I.B.1)

Standard II – Student Learning Programs and Services

Standard IIA – Instructional Programs

General Observations

Cañada College offers 63 Associates' degrees and 40 certificates. It is evident that the college has a deep commitment to providing students from diverse backgrounds access and support to high-quality programs that further educational goals in the areas of transfer, career/technical, basic skills, and lifelong learning. The college also provides access to a University Center where students earn bachelor's degrees in Allied Health, Business Administration, Child Development, Human Services, Nursing, Psychology, and Spanish/English interpretation. The institution also hosts a Middle College that provides the opportunity for approximately 100 junior and senior year high school students to pursue college-level education.

There has been significant work done at the College to meet the Accreditation Standards. It appears that efforts have been continual, rather than sporadic, in nature, and there has been an emphasis on providing documented procedures to make College processes and decision-making transparent. The Integrated Planning Calendar allows the college community to know what decisions are being made, by whom, and when.

The Participatory Governance Manual and the Curriculum Handbook provide processes by which new courses and programs are created. The Curriculum Handbook gives guidance to faculty and documents the processes that are followed for course development. Qualified faculty play the lead roles in developing courses and in their assessment. There is a clear philosophy on general education courses for degrees, which align with the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and CSU GE requirements. There are core areas of study for degrees and certificates. There are articulation agreements in place. The process for development of new courses seems clear, but new program development is a bit vague, especially in determining how fields of study are chosen for programs. Course development is done through the curriculum committee, but program development is through the Academic Senate. Also, the College definition of "program" is not clearly defined in the document.

The College has an emphasis on data-driven decision-making, and the data packets that are provided for program review are well constructed and detailed. Especially useful are the questions intended to help writers analyze the data presented. SLO assessment data is collected through TracDat.

There are a variety of teaching methodologies used at the College, including online instruction. Distance Education guidelines exist to define regular and substantive contact between faculty and students. There is support for professional development of faculty, both

in online and other methods of instruction, through The Center for Innovation in Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CIETL).

CIETL serves as a central unifying entity on the campus, engaging members of the College community in the improvement of teaching and learning. It is highly visible on campus, both in terms of its central location and in its presence in distributing and coordinating information on critical instructional and student service initiatives. CIETL offers workshops on improving instruction, such as teaching methodologies, technology training, assessment training, and work with ePortfolios. However, they do much more than traditional faculty development; bringing together faculty and staff to discuss Basic Skills projects, student learning outcomes assessment, and ePortfolio development.

CIETL has initiated a series of "Conversations with Colleagues" that focus on topics that are of interest to the community, such as academic standards, research for measuring institution-set standards, and cheating. New orientations for all employees, faculty and staff, are held in CIETL, as are many committee meetings. CIETL has also sponsored Faculty Inquiry Networks that have led to the development of learning communities, such as one combining specialized ESL and math classes. CIETL assesses its activities through regular surveys and by gathering information from faculty on FLEX days so that their offerings are of interest and well-attended.

Findings and Evidence

The College has done a remarkable job developing pathways such as College for Working Adults, Career Advancement Academy, and programs such as the Multi-Media Art and Technology to accommodate the needs of its student populations and to respond to the local employment demand. The College has made great strides in understanding the community—both internally and externally- and in initiating pathways and programs which address the needs of the students. (II.A.1.a)

The Office of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness utilizes external and internal data scans to support assessment of educational needs. In addition, comprehensive five-year data packets are provided for use as part of the Annual Plan/Program Review Process. Data are provided to identify enrollment patterns and course offerings, college efficiency, student performance profile, student enrollment, student goal orientation, student demographics, and education attainment level. (II.A.1.a)

The college has created a Comparison of Student Performance in Face-to-Face and On-line Courses that ranges from 2008/09 to 2011/12. It is not evident that further disaggregated data analysis has been performed to identify student learning and achievement in distance education courses (II.A.1.a).

The college's Student Performance and Equity Dashboard highlights 16 indicators related to student success. The college has presented current data, benchmarks, and goals for 19 areas. The college had also administered a Noel-Levitz survey to measure student satisfaction. According to the spring 2010 Noel-Levitz survey, Cañada students reported satisfaction higher than the national average on 61 of 70 items in the survey. (II.A.1.a)

Through the curricular process, appropriate delivery methods and modes of instruction are addressed. These delivery modes are not determined through a formal evaluation of students, but through individual instructor reflection and informal agreements in academic divisions about which type of courses should be offered through distance education (II.A.1.b).

The college Curriculum Committee evaluates and approves Course Outlines of Record and Distance Education Supplements to ensure that regular and substantive contact between faculty and students is provided. Distance education courses are also reviewed by the Instructional Designer/Distance Education Coordinator, or by a member of the college Distance Education Advisory Committee (DEAC). Faculty are also provided access to a Distance Education Handbook, Rubric for Online Instruction, Regular and Effective Contact Guidelines, and Distance Education Accessibility Guidelines. The creation of Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CIETL) to pilot, evaluate, and support innovative teaching and learning practices has helped further the college's mission of providing a, "...learning-centered environment, ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to achieve their educational goals..." (II.A.1.b)

Cañada College's distance education (DE) course offerings have risen from 21 in fall 2012 to 41 in spring 2013. As stated in the Self Evaluation Report, the college relies on the expertise of faculty to determine if DE is an appropriate mode of instruction. The college Curriculum Committee evaluates and approves methods of instruction for all courses. The college provides faculty with several resources for DE course development. Faculty also have access to a number of training opportunities though CIETL. The College's Instructional Designer/Distance Education coordinator also provides direct support. It is evident that the institution has made a meaningful investment in developing administrative and support structures that support instruction.

Guidance for providing regular and effective contact between instructor and students in the online environment is found in the Distance Education Handbook. Evaluation of distance education is in the beginning stages. There is a well-defined strategic plan for 2012-2013, with measurable goals. The Substantive Change proposal for Distance Education provided data on success and retention rates for students meeting face-to-face, online only, and both face-to-face and online. This analysis showed that online only students were not as successful as those taking face-to-face or both formats. (II.A.1.b)

Interviews with administrators, faculty, and staff and a review of the College catalog and Strategic Plan reflect a commitment to teaching methods that are responsive to the broad range of learners at the College. The instructional designer, a position recently converted to a full 1.0 FTE, the CIETL, STEM, learning communities, STOT, and @One demonstrate an ongoing culture of curricular flexibility that promotes innovation and supports the needs of the College community. (II.A.2.d)

The college has a developed curriculum review and approval process. The Curriculum Committee Handbook provides clear guidance for faculty in creating, modifying, and updating courses to ensure currency and relevancy in courses and Course Outline of Record (COR). Curriculum committee members receive regular training on curricular processes and the committee has streamlined the approval processes so that the information is accessible to the community and continually updated. It is required that all Course Outlines of Record provide a justification of how a new or modified course aligns with the college's mission. Course and program quality control are reviewed and assessed through an Annual Plan/Program. (II.A.2.e)

Instructional programs that lead to degrees, certificates, employment, and transfer are in place and align with the College mission, assured through the curriculum justification statement in the Curriculum Handbook. This document also details the processes that are intended to ensure currency of courses and programs. A comprehensive review of CORs in CurricUNET revealed that several CORs were out-of-date and exceeded the College's stated six-year cycle (e.g., Paralegal). This fact was noted in the Paralegal annual program review, but it appears that there are no processes to address courses that fall out-of-cycle in maintaining currency.

Cañada College has developed a program review process that is annually submitted with comprehensive reviews being submitted on a six-year cycle for both academic and non-academic programs. It provides a venue for the reporting and discussion of SLOs. New program development is outlined in the Participatory Governance Manual. Programs Reviews are vetted through the Instructional Planning Council and then presented to the Curriculum Committee. Program Reviews are presented in open forums where the campus community is invited to attend and ask questions. (II.A.2.e)

Achievement of student learning and program effectiveness is measured in program review through two modalities; analysis of student performance metrics, and assessment of student learning outcomes and program learning outcomes. As previously mentioned, the Annual Plan/program Review document requires faculty, "to demonstrate that course student learning outcomes are being assessed and the results are used to improve teaching and learning." There is robust –and enthusiastic--dialogue about innovate ways to measure student progress such as ePortfolios. The evidence suggests an institutional culture that has, in a short time, created extensive dialogue about learning outcomes across the College.

treatment of faculty, staff, administrators, and students. (III.A.4, III.A.4.a, III.A.4.b, III.A.4.c)

Cañada College provides professional development activities for faculty, staff and administration. Professional development needs are included in the Annual Plan/Program Review documents submitted by each department. Funding for professional development comes from a variety of sources, including General Fund resources, Measure G tax revenue, the President's Innovation Fund, Basic Skills, The Trustees Fund for Program Improvement, and grant and categorical funding. Faculty and classified staff collaborate with the college administration for college-sponsored professional development activities. (III.A.5)

The Trustee's Fund for Program Improvement is a District fund that is allocated to support faculty members and others to participate in educational activities beyond the normal professional duties and responsibilities. The Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CIETL) established in 2009, oversees all professional development that is focused on teaching and learning. CIETL has many development opportunities for faculty, staff and administrators to continually update their knowledge and competency in all areas of teaching and learning. The 2013 Employee Voice Survey resulted in 78% of 131 participants expressing that there were sufficient opportunities for continued professional development. 89% felt encouraged to be creative and come up with new ideas and improvements. (III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b)

Cañada College's Participatory Governance handbook outlines the hiring justification process. Staffing needs within division and departments are primarily identified through the Annual Plans/Programs Reviews, with Comprehensive Program Reviews being performed every six years. Generally new positions are requested one a year unless there is an unexpected vacancy. The process of identifying needed positions is integrated with the overall planning process and the participatory governance process. (III.A.6)

Conclusions

Cañada College employs qualified personnel in appropriate numbers to uphold and serve the student learning programs of the College. As new resources become available the College has in place a plan to hire more full time faculty. The College operates under District policies and procedures for Human Resource matters. Evaluations are in place and are conducted systematically. Hiring committees are well trained and supported by the DOHR. Staff development trainings are many for all staff at Cañada College supported by District and College resources. The Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning provides professional development in all areas of teaching and learning at the College.

The College meets the standard.

Recommendations

Standard III – Resources
Standard IIIC – Technology Resources

General Observations

The Self Evaluation Report provides evidence to validate that technology is used effectively to support student learning. The Technology Plan is designed to ensure student success and preparation in technical communication skills. Technology planning is integrated with institutional planning.

As evidenced by the current Cañada College Technology Plan, revised 2011, the College conducted a review and revision of its technology plan. There is evidence to support that the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD) uses technology effectively to support student learning programs and services. Instructional and student support technology is centralized at the District-level with a close, customer-service working relationship with the Colleges to address campus needs. The District offers a variety of technology services, professional support, facilities, hardware, and software to enhance the effectiveness of college operations. These include desktop and media support, personnel/student data support, network/phone/server support, and web services.

The District Information Technology Services Department is responsible for the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. SMCCCD has been employing the Banner software system for over a decade. The District is experienced with this cross-functional, integrated application and has effectively employed the human resources, financial, and student modules of the system. Technology resource infrastructures and software are in place for the effective delivery of distance education. The District has established consistent and standardized aspects of instructional technology for instructional personnel at all three Colleges through the SMCCCD Strategic Plan for Information Technology 2012-2016.

The District Information Technology Services is responsible for the technological infrastructures and software essential for the effective delivery of distance education. The Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CIETL) provides training for faculty and staff in the effective utilization of technological resources. In addition, the Distance Education Coordinator assists distance education faculty with planning online courses. The Distance Education Handbook outlines specific processes and procedures related to distance education.

A variety of technological resources are used to support student learning program and services and to improve institutional operations. As evidenced by the Self Evaluation Report, these include: smart classrooms; internet-connection for personnel workstations; public and private Wi-Fi; web-based scheduling, registration and matriculation; my.smccd.edu provides email for all students; and various student services platforms for student records keeping and

management. In addition, the Technology Plan, the Educational Master Plan and the Information Technology Strategic Plan evidence the interconnectivity of the institutional planning process.

Findings and Evidence

The College works closely with the District Information Technology Department to evaluate current technology used and determines what needs are required by faculty and staff members. Technological needs are identified through the annual plan/program review process. In addition, as evidenced by a technology request form, faculty and staff may also submit requests for technology outside of the annual plan/program review process. The President's cabinet reviews the recommendations of the prioritized lists of the Instructional Planning Council, Student Services Planning Council, and Administrative Planning Council. The District Information Technology Service also corroborates with colleges regarding technology needs to ensure technology supports the needs of learning, teaching, college-wide communications, research, and operational systems. (III. C. I.)

The College provides evidence via the Educational Master Plan, Technology Plan and the District Strategic Plan for Information Technology to support its claim that information technology services provided by the District enhance the effectiveness of the college in meeting student learning needs. The district offers a variety of technology services, professional support, facilities, hardware and software to enhance the effectiveness of college operations. These include: desktop and media support; personnel/student data support; network/phone/server support; and web services. (III..C.1.a)

The Self Evaluation Report provides evidence to support the claim that the College provides quality training in the application of its information technology to students and personnel. The College assesses the need for information technology training through surveys and workshops. The college has established technology training opportunities for faculty, staff, and students. The Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning coupled with the Distance Education Coordinator have been instrumental in providing training for faculty in the effective use of technology in instruction. Workshops, online tutorials, and Structured Training for Online Teaching (STOT) have been offered. Additionally, a Distance Education Handbook has been produced. As evidenced by the college website, examples of online training for students include My.Smccd Tutorials and Student WebAccess Tutorials.(III..C.1.b.)

The Self Evaluation Report provides evidence that the College, working with the District Information Technology acquires, maintains and replaces technology systematically to assure effectiveness for student learning. The College working with the District Information Technology Services systematically plans, acquires, maintains and upgrades technology infrastructures for the enhancement of its programs and services. As outlined in the Self