Comprehensive Peer Evaluation Report

Central Oregon Community College

Bend, Oregon

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Introduction

Central Oregon Community College was founded in 1949. It is the longest standing community college in Oregon. It covers 10,000 square miles encompassing all of three counties and parts of three others. The College is governed by a seven member Board of Directors elected from geographic zones. COCC's main campus is located in Bend. Other campuses are located in Redmond, Madras, and Prineville (a joint facility shared with Crook County and OSU Open Campus) . The college employs 111 full time faculty, 52 adjunct faculty, and approximately 200 part time faculty across the four campuses.

COCC is currently undergoing a period of significant development and change. Over the past five years the college has experienced more than a doubling of enrollment of credit FTE students. New campuses in Prineville and Madras were opened to students in 2011 and a new Technology Education Center at the Redmond campus is planned to begin construction in 2012. The main campus in Bend has recently completed construction of a culinary center. Two new buildings for health careers and science are currently under construction. Also, the college has seen a turnover in senior instructional administrators with the vice president for instruction and three instructional deans starting in their position within the last two years.

It is also important to note in terms of context, COCC, like most Northwest Association institutions, did their First Year Report in 2011. However, since COCC's last comprehensive visit was in 2002, the transition vagaries of moving from a ten year to a seven year accreditation cycle required COCC to have their comprehensive visit in 2012 ---just one year after the First Year Report.   COCC will have another First Year Report due in 2013.

The "Team" was impressed with the manner in which COCC responded to this challenge. Their self-study was well written and demonstrated their many strengths and significant human and financial resources. It also pointed out areas in core theme development and measurement that the college will need to improve upon in the future.

2) Mission and Core Themes

The mission statement is an explanation of institutional purpose. The core themes are a further explication of the mission statement with clear goals, objectives and measurable indicators. The most important point of analysis is whether the mission statement accurately explains institutional purpose and in terms that are measurable. It represents the starting point for all other institutional evaluation.

While the COCC mission statement does set up the core themes with the term "postsecondary" education, it somewhat confounds the measurability of the mission by using the phrase, "a leader in regionally and globally responsive…..postsecondary education." How does one measure leadership in regionally and globally responsive postsecondary education? The mission statement should articulate institutional purpose in terms that are measurable.

Additionally, it is unclear as to the role of the stated "Goals," and how they inform or fit into the mission and core themes. The core themes, not the goals, represent the further explication of the mission statement.

The institution has identified four core themes that explain the purpose of COCC. Core Theme 4, "Lifelong Learning," has been designed in such a way that it includes both credit and noncredit classes. For an accurate assessment of Core Theme 4 progress, it would seem that the credit and noncredit areas would have to be separated. It also raises the question of whether the credit components of Core Theme 4 would be better placed appropriately in Core Theme 1, 2, or 3.

Finally, core theme indicators should be designed in such a manner as to reflect a broader representation of contribution from the entire institution. Every institutional operation should be able in some way to articulate how it contributes to core theme accomplishment and mission fulfillment. As COCC prepares for its next First Year Report, it is suggested that they broaden the scope of indicators that measure core theme success.

3) Governance and Leadership

COCC has an active and highly involved elected Board of Directors that represent geographic zones in the college's service area. A two year planning cycles requires the Board to review mission and core themes. On a monthly basis they review performance outcomes. It is clear that the Board understands and supports the college's mission providing oversight in those policy areas appropriate to the Board's role. It is also clear that Board members take seriously their role in representing their constituents. Satellite facilities in Redmond, Madras, and Prineville are a result of Board member advocacy.

Despite a high level of senior administration turnover due to retirements and movements to other colleges, the college has a highly functioning administrative team providing leadership in all areas of college operations. Record levels of enrollment, the coming on-line of new facilities, and the fluctuating financial situation, while challenging, have been a demonstration of their competency.

4a) Assessment Core Theme 1

COCC's Core Theme 1, Transfer and Articulation, addresses the Board's goal of preparing students with the academic and related skills needed to successfully achieve education and training beyond the community college level. The Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer (AAOT) degree is the primary transfer degree offered in Oregon and at COCC. While students may also transfer under the Associate of Science (AS) degree or the Oregon Transfer Module (OTM), those with the goal of transferring are advised toward earning the AAOT.

Academic faculty are well qualified and dedicated to their students and their profession as evidenced by the success COCC students have in transferring and completing baccalaureate degrees. They regularly

participate in professional development to stay current in their fields of expertise. Student give them high praise for their approachability and caring.

COCC actively engages in improving articulation for both high school students and COCC graduates. The College partners with Oregon State University-Cascades campus, participates in the development of statewide AAOT outcomes, and participates in College Now to offer high school students the opportunity to earn college credit while still enrolled in high school. COCC continuously seeks to ways to increase baccalaureate degree opportunities for the residents of Central Oregon.

In planning for Core Theme 1, the college claims that planning and assessment permeate all aspects of COCC. A review of documentation, as well as interviews with faculty and staff, did not reveal evidence that Instructional Outcomes Priorities, Academic Program Planning or General Education Planning and Review are aligned with core theme objectives and indicators (3.B.1). Faculty, department chairs and instructional administrators do participate in the Review and Support Committee that annually assesses courses on criteria of balance between COST/FTE and Revenue/FTE, 3-year average FTE, and Average Faculty Load. Assessment of student learning is not included in program review. The Evaluation Committee could not determine if the planning for and evaluation of educational programs and services is systematic or informs transfer and articulation (4.A.2, 4.A.4).

Core Theme 1 has four objectives. Interviews with faculty, staff and administration produced little evidence to suggest that the college community participated in the development of the objectives. In addition, the Evaluation Committee did not find evidence that core theme 1 planning was being well informed by the collection of appropriately defined data for analyzing and evaluating accomplishment of the core theme. It is also unclear what improvements will be made as a result.

Objective 1: Design entry and support services to promote access and success for students intending to transfer. While the College reports that overall, they have attained an acceptable or aspirational target on three of the four indicators in this objective, it is unclear to the Evaluation Team, following interviews with faculty and staff, the connection between the data collected and its direct relation to the Core Theme itself. In addition, the analysis is more a validation of past activities and not a plan for improvement based on the results.

Objective 2: Provide students with the opportunities to make reasonable progress toward degree completion and/or transfer. The College is not, according to its' scoring rubric, at an acceptable level in three of the five indicators that measure student progress toward degree completion and transfer. A review of the actions taken does not indicate what improvements the college is planning to move them toward acceptable or aspirational targets. As with Objective 2, the analysis is more a validation of past activities and not a plan for improvement based on current results.

Objective 3: Provide students with a rigorous general education experience via high quality teaching. Faculty members are expected and supported to continuously improve teaching pedagogy and content expertise. The College achieved acceptable or aspirational scores in six of the seven indicators regarding rigorous education. However, the Evaluation Committee did not find evidence of a clear connection between the majority of the indicators measured and the actual objective being measured.

Objective 4: Students with the intent to transfer are able to do so successfully. The indicators selected to measure this objective clearly align with the intended outcome. While the College fell below an acceptable level on the number of students who receive a transfer degree within four years, the College is making gains in the number of students earning transfer credentials, transferring within one year of degree completion, ability to success at OSU (GPA) and transfer students earning a baccalaureate within 6 years. Additional satisfaction data complement these more direct measures.

Central Oregon Community College has committed resources to multiple trainings for faculty regarding the development and use of assessment rubrics. While faculty share rubrics as well as the data obtained, the sharing of information appears to be centered more on best practices in teaching rather than on assessment of student learning. The Evaluation Team found evidence that individual faculty or departments/programs are actively engaged internally in the assessment of student learning at the course and program level. However, this work is not shared as part of a larger discussion and analysis of student learning at COCC. Sufficient evidence was not found to suggest the College community is well informed or engaged in documenting regular and comprehensive assessment of student achievement or that students who complete its educational courses, programs and degrees, wherever and however delivered, achieve identified course, program and degree learning outcomes (4.A.3). COCC states that a solid foundation in general education is central to successful transfer (Core Theme 1).   Nine general education outcomes have been developed with corresponding rubrics being used over a three-year cycle to assess each. However, it is not clear what use is made of information collected in the General Education Outcomes Data Exchange and how it relates to all degrees and improvement in student learning across the curriculum. Review of documentation demonstrates to the Evaluation Committee that the College community has yet to form any connection among student learning outcomes assessment, program review, core theme 1 accomplishment or mission fulfillment.

Concern:

The Evaluation Committee is concerned that the institution has not completed identification of learning outcomes for all programs and degrees and that student learning outcomes assessment is not connected with core theme accomplishment or mission fulfillment. Further, the Evaluation Committee is concerned that assessment of student learning does not occurs systematically and that the Institution has not implemented a comprehensive system of outcomes assessment nor demonstrates use of assessment results for the improvement of student learning (4.A.3).

 Educational Resources

Central Oregon Community College (COCC) offers a number of transfer degrees, career/technical degrees, and occupational certificates. Based upon interviews with faculty and instructional staff, as well as review of documentation, the College Catalog and the college's website, the Evaluation Committee affirms that the college has adequate educational resources and capacity to achieve its mission and is in compliance with Standard 2.C with the following exception. COCC states that it has adopted program and learning outcomes across all college academic programs. While the Evaluation Committee found

course level student learning outcomes published on the website and in course syllabi, course level outcomes are not consistent in format or content. CTE programs have developed program-level learning outcomes but, with few exceptions, academic program outcomes could not be identified. In addition the Evaluation Committee could not establish that student learning outcomes have been developed at the degree level.

Concern:

Despite recent work to identify General Education outcomes, the Evaluation Team is concerned that the institution does not appear to have fully identified and published expected program and degree learning outcomes (2.C.2, 2.C.11).

4b) Assessment Core Theme 2

The Core Theme of Workforce Development directly relates to the Board goal of achievement of a student population with the workforce knowledge, content proficiency, and collaborative work skills necessary for lifelong employment. The Theme includes four identified objectives, listed below with discussion of indicators under 3.B.

The theme of Workforce Development is supported as an essential element of institutional mission. As noted in the Comprehensive Self Evaluation Report, CTE students constitute 39% of degree-seeking students in 59 programs. The institution is involved in credit and non credit workforce development, small business development, and provides career services that support student entry into the workforce. Of note, CTE faculty members provide career counseling as well as academic advising. Multiple partnerships with local business entities and employers support academic programs, facilities, and student support systems. Educational and student support resources to support Workforce Development are substantial and meet standards for 2.C. Faculty and administrators are highly motivated to provide quality CTE programs that meet goals of student access and success. Students voiced strong approval of the competence, caring, and commitment of faculty members and support staff. However, the rapid growth in enrollment of students in CTE programs and continuing education areas has stressed academic and support systems.

Concern: Some faculty members in CTE programs have high advising loads. The institution is encouraged to monitor the adequacy of numbers of full time, part time, and adjunct faculty members in order to ensure quality student advising, learning, and program completion (Standards 2.B.5, 2.D.10).

3.B Core Theme Planning
The institution has engaged in ongoing and systematic planning in the area of Workforce Development. Multiple stakeholders are engaged in planning efforts, although these efforts are not always coordinated in a holistic manner.

Objective 2.1 Entry and support services are designed to promote success for students participating in CTE programs.

Indicators for this objective focus primarily on indirect measures such as student satisfaction. Indicators are delineated as acceptable and aspirational benchmarks. However, it does not appear that indicators are clearly aligned with the objectives. For example, student satisfaction with financial aid or enrollment services may indicate student perceptions of staff friendliness, wait time, or other services that may or may not relate directly to delivery of services that promote student success. Based on discussion with faculty and department heads, these indicators do not seem to provide meaningful measures for evaluation of the related objectives that would lead to evaluation of accomplishment of the theme.

Objective 2.2 Prepare students with knowledge and skills necessary to meet current industry needs. Faculty members are expected to continuously improve their practice and to adjust content to align with change to industry standards.

Indicators provide benchmarks such as student satisfaction with education and percentage of programs that maintain satisfactory enrollments. Indicators also delineate percentages of faculty members successfully completing the annual review process or earning promotion, but do not directly speak to how faculty members maintain curricula aligned with changes to industry standards. Interviews with faculty and department heads confirmed that multiple methods are used to keep curricula and faculty current and relevant, however the stated indicators do not reflect these efforts. More direct measures, such as program-level assessment of stated student learning outcomes, would provide stronger evidence for student achievement of competencies.

Concern: While recognizing that the indicators and benchmarks were developed within the context of the short time frame between the Year One and Year Seven reports, the evaluator notes that many of the indicators may not provide objective and meaningful data for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives (Standard 1.B.2).

Objective 2.3 Student completion of CTE credentials and employability.
Indicators for Objective 2.3 focus on direct measures of student completions.
Objective 2.4 COCC will assist industry partners in regional economic development.
Indicators for Objective 2.4 include qualitative analysis of CTE Advisory Committee recommendations and involvement in regional community development. While interviews and data suggest the Small Business Development Center is effectively increasing employment and small business development, metrics for this indicator provide conflicting evaluation, so the effectiveness of the metric is questioned.

Standard 3.B. Planning
Planning for Core Theme 2, Workforce Development, is consistent with the institution's plan as determined by Board goals of access, success, and strategic partnerships. Multiple programs and services are aligned to deliver comprehensive services for CTE students. Planning has led to increases in facilities and programs to meet the needs of CTE students and regional employers. The evaluators observed multiple new buildings constructed to meet demands for skilled workers, including a new allied health building scheduled to open in fall 2012 and the planned Technology Center in Redmond,

OR. New CTE programs include veterinary technician and pharmacy technician programs, which are designed to fulfill local, regional, and national needs for graduates in these areas. These facilities and programs demonstrate strategic alignment of fiscal and human resources as well as support from regional partners.

Standards 4.A. Assessment and 4.B. Improvement
The institution engages in ongoing assessment of students, faculty, and academic and support programs. Discussions with multiple stakeholders indicated that faculty and staff are regularly engaged in evaluating the effectiveness of programs and services. While faculty members are primary evaluators of educational programs, feedback from students and program advisory committees provide additional input. Because multiple programs and services contribute to Workforce Development, planning and assessment occurs in many areas of the institution. For example, Career Services, Continuing Education, CTE academic programs, the Small Business Development Center, and other entities are effectively contributing to the achievement of Core Theme 2. However, many of these programs appear to operate without holistic alignment and integration of planning and assessment. Integration of the planning and assessment processes is called for in Standard 4.A. and would allow the institution to more effectively measure effectiveness and mission achievement related to Workforce Development.

Each CTE program has clearly identified student learning outcomes which are available linked from program websites (Standard 2.C.1). CTE programs also have course outcomes which are provided to students on course syllabi. Outcomes assessment occurs primarily at a course level, and the evaluator was unable to confirm that a systematic process for outcomes assessment occurs at the level of programs or degrees. The Comprehensive Self Evaluation Report refers to a process for continual review by the faculty-run Curriculum Committee to ensure rigor and appropriate content; interviews suggest the process is primarily designed for prospective review of proposed new degree programs. Review by program advisory committees provides the primary process for regular continuing review of CTE programs to ensure rigor, relevancy, and appropriate content.

Interviews, review of web pages, and the Comprehensive Self Evaluation Report did not reveal a method for systematic assessment of student learning outcomes for CTE program outcomes and Related Instruction that would inform academic and learning-support planning/practices and enhance student learning at a program or institutional level. For example, while multiple faculty members provide coherent examples of course-level assessment and resulting changes that were made to courses or sequences of courses, faculty members and deans agreed that the assessments did not provide verifiable understanding of student attainment of the stated program outcomes by students completing the program. The GEODE process, designed to assist with assessment of general education outcomes, allows faculty to upload artifacts from course assessment, sharing measurement criteria (rubrics) for course outcomes and faculty self-critique and recommendations for course-level improvement. While the Self Evaluation Report states that the nine general education outcomes are applicable to all CTE and transfer degrees, interviews suggest that there is considerable faculty confusion about the role of these outcomes in the CTE programs as well as the goals and outcome assessment of the related instruction components of CTE and certificate programs.

Concern: Assessment of student learning occurs primarily at the course level. Interviews and the Self

Evaluation Report did not provide evidence of a regular and comprehensive system of student achievement that documents student achievement of the identified outcomes for programs and degrees including outcomes of related instruction (Standards 2.C.11, 4.A.3.).

4c) Assessment of Core Theme 3

Core Theme 3, Basic Skills, is aligned with the Board goal that students will "have academic achievements and basic learning skills necessary to successfully pursue education at the community college level." The primary organizational units addressing Core Theme 3 are the Adult Basic Skills Program, the Math Department, and the Humanities Department.

Two objectives guide the institution's activities aimed at fulfilling this element of the College's mission: Objective 3.1. Students who began at the basic skills, English Language Learner, or post-secondary remedial level will be able to succeed in college level courses.

Objective 3.2. Students progressing in Adult Basic Skills will demonstrate momentum by attaining foundational skills in writing and mathematics. Data used to assess progress in achieving these objectives came from a variety of pertinent and valid sources, including the State of Oregon's Adult Basic Skills Program Review process as well as institutional measurements.

Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 contained seven (7) indicators. Five of the seven were assessed at the acceptable level (none at the aspirational level), while two fell short of acceptable—each by one percent of performance expected. Overall, the outcome score for Core Theme 3 was 71.4%, just eclipsing the mission fulfillment level. Initiatives to increase all outcomes scores, not just those underperforming, were evident in the programming of Basic Skills units—and applauded.

The Evaluation Committee noted that while long-standing commitment to serving students in need of developmental level work has been in place of years, considerable change has occurred during the last two years in the overall basic skills component—in both leadership and programming. Principal changes within the ABS and remedial arena are: the realigning of the organizational structure to have all ABS program components reporting to an instructional dean, creating the Transitional Studies Taskforce, and significant curriculum and scheduling changes in mathematics and writing.

These changes reflect modifications following observations that two of the indicators were not meeting designated acceptable thresholds. First of all, the reporting relationship of all ABS components was aligned with remedial math and writing—potentially significantly improving collaboration and student success. The Evaluation Committee observed that, in fact, this desired result was occurring. Additionally, a new dean with substantial experience in ABS at both the community college and state levels was hired during this academic year.

The Evaluation Committee compliments the institution for restructuring the Basic Skills environment

into a more integrated system in an intentional effort to enhance student progress from GED to post-secondary success. Secondly, the institution created and has invigorated in recent months the Transitional Studies Task Force, with representation from ABS, math and writing faculty members, tutoring, student services, and SEM. Again, the Evaluation Committee observed the synergy and collaboration of the Task Force, and compliments the institution on this on-going initiative. Thirdly, significant course redesign and scheduling occurred in credit-bearing courses—and in particular in math courses 60 and 65—intended to promote student progress and success in these courses and correct a shortfall observed in Indicator 3.2.c. While this shortfall was minimal, just one percent point, it is significant that continuing work was directed towards improving on-going and continuing improvement in this element of the Objective 3.2.

Observations on Indicators and Benchmarks

Two observations on the definition of indicators and the levels of benchmarks are provided by the Evaluation Committee for consideration by the institution as it "anticipates greater increases in student progression and success."

First, for Objective 3.2, each of the three indicators includes *both* WR 60 or MTH 10, perhaps limiting the assessment utility value for each course as a separate entity for analysis and improvement. Secondly, the benchmarks for all indicators for Objective 3.2 established by the Accreditation Coordinating Team for the "acceptable" and "aspirational" levels seem to be set at rather modest levels. Discussions with Basic Skills administrators and program leaders confirmed attention to setting these levels at higher levels of achievement—with particular focus on aspirational targets.

Overall Observations on Core Theme 3: Basic Skills

In closing, a concern is noted in the observation that the institutional reported multiple times "work in progress" vis-à-vis program outcomes in the Basic Skills core theme. For instance, "…ABS administrators and instructors are currently developing institutional-specific program outcomes," and "COCC is providing training to ABS Instructors on developing consistent course and program outcomes." It is recommended by the Evaluation Committee that this work continues with due diligence and pace—building on and incorporating the strengths of the outcomes required by the State of Oregon in Adult Basic Skills into an institutional set of student learning outcomes promoting continued student achievement and success in their studies and the accomplishment of program outcomes.

4b) Assessment Core Theme 4

Planning for Core Theme 4 as described in the self-study consists of the definition of Lifelong Learning. COCC defines Lifelong Learning for Core Theme 4, as including (1) "hav[ing} access to and participat[ing] in wide-ranging lifelong learning opportunities that enhance wellness, quality of life, and cultural appreciation." and (2) "access and institutional viability." Both of these parts of the definition are Board Goals, and therefore are consistent with the institution's comprehensive plan. (3.B1) The first part is a traditional definition of lifelong learning and a traditional part of the mission of community colleges. The Extended Learning team is pleased to have their work fronted as a core theme of the college. The planning for Extended Learning is in two business plans, one for Community Learning and one for

Continuing Education. These plans have yet to be revised to align with the core theme.

The second part of the definition extends lifelong learning to credit courses not traditionally considered as lifelong learning including credit courses taught on other than the Bend campus, credit courses taught on non-traditional days and non-traditional hours, and credit courses taught online. This extension of the definition begins to make the line between credit and non-credit courses so blurry that meaningful assessment becomes difficult.

Standard 4.A and B Assessment in Lifelong Learning

While there is clear assessment of Continuing Education and Community Learning courses and faculty, the indicators in this core theme do not provide a way to demonstrate the assessment actually happening in the program. The evaluation committee also sees no indicators with which to begin assessment of the first part of 4.1 "Provide a variety of cultural enrichment. And it does not understand how indicator 4.1.b "Student course expectations are met" demonstrates objective "4.1: Provide a variety of enrichment and avocational opportunities, beyond credit instruction, for all ages." The evaluation team also notes that the enrollment information being gathered for assessment of offerings in 4.2. is at a high enough level that using it for meaningful decision making may be difficult. Even if one removes the data for credit courses, there is no disaggregated information about which campuses the added offerings and enrollments are coming from, so it is not clear how the information could be used for making future decisions about where to add more classes, where additional offerings are working, etc. Some disaggregated data are mentioned in the summary for 4.2, and there is information about what initiatives have contributed to the meeting of the indicators at an acceptable level, but there is no information on how this data will be used for future decision making related to this core theme.

The evaluation committee therefore suggests that the institution and Extended Learning revisit the objectives and indicators for Core Theme 4 to be sure that the data being collected will aid in meaningful assessment.

In addition, as indicated in 3.b above, assessment of Core Theme 4 is confused by the blending of credit and non-credit courses in the core theme definition. Are credit courses offered at other campuses or on Saturdays any more lifelong learning than credit courses offered on the Bend campus or credit courses offered at 9:00 a.m.? And how does the percent of College District populations served, indicator 4.2.e.(Percent of College District population served), measure lifelong learning per se rather than measuring how the college as a whole serves its community?

Concern:

Clarity of assessment for Core Theme 4 is compromised because of the mixing of credit courses and non-credit courses, events, etc. The evaluation team suggests that the definition of Lifelong Learning be limited to non-credit courses and events and that all credit bearing programs be included in Core Theme 1, Transfer and Articulation, Core Theme 2, Workforce Development, or Core Theme 3, Basic Skills. This redefinition will clarify Core Theme Planning (3.B) for all four core themes and will also clarify assessment of Core Theme 4 (4.A).

5) Human Resources

The accreditation committee finds that the college has met Standard 2.B with addition attention needed in two areas as they will impact the college's ability to achieve its mission and core themes.

With increased enrollment, additional pressures to accommodate students in advising, registration, financial aid, and enrollment have been significant. The college has been challenged to identify a process for determining whether a sufficient number of personnel are employed to meet student demand. The college needs to assess the adequacy and capacity of faculty and staff to achieve its educational objectives and core themes. 2.B.4

Professional development funds are available for faculty and staff. Full-time faculty members have access to professional development funds through a variety of funding sources. However as the college has grown there is concern among classified and professional staff that there are insufficient funds or time to leave the workspace to take advantage of professional development opportunities (2.B.3)

6) Student support services

Student Support Resources

Overall, the college is in compliance with Standard 2.D. however focus is needed in several areas. There are programs and services that support students in their learning and development. These support services play a key role in impacting student success and the college's ability to fulfill its mission and core themes.

It is commendable that departments within Student Services have developed assessment plans, with individual mission statements, student learning outcomes, measurement tools and timelines. However, further work is needed to intentionally align department goals, assessment plans and support services with the college's mission and core themes. As the college plans for the delivery and expansion of services at each of the four campuses, it is recommended that the college develop a systematic way to assess the needs of students and the community in relation to core theme support. (2.D.3, 2.D.8 and 2.D.11)

In the last six years, the college has grown significantly in both enrollment and campus locations. With this growth, the college is commended for attempting to address the demand by increasing staffing in selected areas and creating positions in retention, multicultural activities and technology in support of the Board's priorities and values. However, there is concern regarding faculty and staff's ability to maintain an acceptable level of service to students, including faculty and professional staff advising loads, with the current level of enrollment. (2.D.1)

While the self-study did not fully address the provision of safety and security at all locations, there is

evidence that the college has increased its campus security presence on the Bend campus and that security services are provided at the other campuses via agreements with the local police. This type of partnership with the local community is commendable. There is concern, however, regarding the college's ability to provide an adequate level of service if enrollment continues to grow and buildings become more spread out on the various campuses. (2.D.2)

Auxiliary services, including the bookstore, residence housing and food services are gathering input from students and the campus community to better provide services. It is commendable that the college has partnered with the local hospital and Oregon State University-Cascade Campus to provide personal and crisis counseling to the general student population and specifically to students living in the residence hall. While educational resources, such as tutoring has been programmed in the residence hall in support of transfer and workforce themes, each auxiliary service area needs to continue to identify how these services support the college's mission, core themes, and intellectual climate and enhance student learning. (2.D.12)

Advising for new and continuing students involves both full-time faculty and professional advising staff. The college is in the process of redesigning its advising system. With the implementation of *Grad Tracks* several flaws in the current advising system have been discovered. Specifically, curriculum changes are made and the academic advisors learn of the changes after the catalogue has been printed. This impacts the academic advisors knowledge of program requirements and the ability of advising staff to fulfill their responsibilities. There is concern that students are not provided timely, accurate information which in turn negatively impacts their program completion and graduation from the college. (2.D.10)

7) Fiscal Resources, Physical, and Technological Infrastructure

Fiscal Resources (2.F)

While the Oregon State economy has struggled to recover, Central Oregon Community College has been able to maintain its fiscal stability, maintain the Board's mandated operating reserve, and grow its institutional resources. COCC has an impressive budget model for evaluating and forecasting budget scenarios based on information that is responsive to any number of current and projected planning assumptions. The budget model provides financial and fund balance projections that assist the institution's annual budget process and long-term financial planning. The model is inclusive of the multiple revenue streams that support the operations of the institution.

From the self-study and in interviewing fiscal staff, it is evident that the institution has clearly defined policies, guidelines and processes for budget development and fiscal management that are inclusive of the campus community and the Board. The evaluator compliments COCC on its ability to fund campus improvements without placing an additional debt burden on the General Fund. In particular, the institution should be recognized for its ability to expand campus facilities and assist in the expansion of campus programs through both renovation of current facilities and expansion through new capital projects. However, despite the institutions strong resources and commitment to supporting expansion,

the evaluator is concerned that the substantial growth in square footage from new construction throughout the entire service district might place a strain on the current resource levels in the campus services and technology services departments. (2.F.5)

From information present in the self-study and in meeting with COCC fiscal staff and administrators, it is evident that the institution is meeting the relevant accreditation standards. COCC is financially sound, exerts great effort in planning and forecasting its financial resources, has excellent written policies and procedures, devotes resources to capital planning and debt management, manages its auxiliary services according to sound financial principle, engages in a yearly financial audit by an outside qualified party and shares the results of that audit with its Board, and has a defined long standing relationship with the COCC foundation to provide fundraising activities that support the mission of the institution. The evaluator believes that the COCC fiscal staff and administrators have an understanding of the value of fiscal sustainability to the institution. What is not clear in the self-study is how the fiscal resources are contributing to the institution's ability to meet its core themes and therefore demonstrating mission fulfillment.

Physical and Technological Infrastructure (2.G)

COCC has four beautiful campuses covering approximately 250 acres, with 29 buildings and over 550,000 square feet under roof. COCC has comprehensive facilities located throughout its service area that support all forms of instruction. In a review of the self-study and in conducting interviews with campus services and campus construction staff and administrators, it is apparent that the physical resources of the institution are managed in a manner so as to ensure they remain adequate and usable for instruction and other student support functions. The evaluators compliment COCC on the work it has done in recent years on facility expansion, its awareness of the importance of different learning environments and involving faculty, staff and community partners in the design and development of new and renovated structures. Campus facilities are maintained in good condition and facilities staff performs required maintenance in order to keep current facilities as useful as possible. COCC recently completed an extensive facilities audit to assess deferred maintenance needs and their relative priorities.

The COCC campus safety department is responsible for ensuring the campus is a safe environment for staff and students to learn and interact. In a review of the self-study, it was not evident that the institution had complied with Standard 2.G.1; however, in an interview with a campus safety administrator, it was apparent that the institution has complied with the standard and has planned extensively and implemented multiple measures to ensure that all campus facilities within the service area are safe.

COCC maintains state of the art computer and networking access for its students and staff. The technology services department and its personnel provide network infrastructure support, computing services, telephone management services, and hardware support functions for all of the COCC campuses. The technology services staff maintains secure wireless networks that allow students, staff and the community to use personal computers to access the internet.

The institution maintains adequate security over all hardware and software resources. Access to computing infrastructure is kept in secure, limited access locations. The evaluators compliment technology services on the amount of preparedness in place to protect the institution in the event of a disaster. The technology services department has an extensive system in place to protect the institution and restore computing functions thus limiting any disruption in operations. An Uninterrupted Power Supply system is available, in place, and tested weekly, should a power disruption occur.

COCC takes a comprehensive approach to technological advancement and planning. Campus technology services is currently developing a technology project assessment tool to assist in meeting the software and hardware planning needs of the institution. Technology services staff assist on campus committees that discuss new building construction and new program development so as to ensure that the technological needs of staff, faculty, and students are met.

From information present in the self-study and in meeting with COCC campus services, construction and technology services staff and administrators, it is evident that the institution is meeting the relevant accreditation standards. The evaluator believes that the COCC campus services, construction and technology services staff and administrators have an understanding of the value of their respective departments to the institution. What is not clear in the self-study is how the departments are contributing to the institution's ability to meet its core themes and therefore to demonstrate mission fulfillment.

8) Library

The COCC Library is located in a beautiful facility that is spacious, clean, welcoming, and clearly oriented to meet student needs for individual and group spaces, quiet areas, and access points to information. The extensive art work and displays create a gallery-like impact and further the library's atmosphere of a place for study, work, and reflection.

COCC Library policies regarding access to and use of its services and resources are documented and readily available on the library website (2.A.13). In regards to library and information resources, COCC library staff have been intentionally and systematically emphasizing the development of a collection comprised of electronically accessible information while still purchasing print books and periodicals. The librarians indicate this approach best addresses the college community's information needs in that it provides timely access to information resource to students, faculty, and staff both on and off COCC campuses and locations. As indicated in the self-study and interviews, librarians actively solicit collection development feedback from other faculty through a variety of methods, including a section addressing student information needs on the course approval form for new and revised courses. The available evidence clearly indicates that through its purchases, subscriptions, and participation in the Orbis Cascade consortium, the COCC Library holds or provides access to an extensive range of information that meets the needs of its college community. Stated succinctly, the COCC Library is information resource rich, especially in terms of information databases, and meets the information needs of its users.

The Library has a systematic approach to information literacy instruction in offering five online classes (Library 100, 127, 199, 227, 299) taught by library faculty. Course descriptions from the catalog for all classes and the course outcomes for LIB 100 and LIB127 clearly indicate their focus on information literacy, which combined with technology literacy is one of the general education outcomes. Statistics provided by library staff covering 2009 to winter quarter 2012 indicate the classes are well attended, averaging approximately 28 students per section. This is in addition to the individual information literacy sessions librarians teach at the request of other faculty.

In meeting with the college's Composition Committee, comprised of writing and library faculty, it is evident that librarians work very closely with their faculty colleagues in the Humanities Department to embed information literacy into writing curriculum. Librarians act as resources to writing faculty, both in teaching about information literacy and helping develop assignments appropriate to this outcome. This work directly addresses the Oregon state mandate of embedding information literacy into writing classes for higher education institutions. At the time of this report, information from the Composition Committee indicates that librarians and writing faculty are well on their way to systematically embedding information literacy in the Writing 60, 65, 121, 122, and 227 course curricula. With the committee having existed for less than two years, the members of the committee report that they are planning to systematize the assessment of the information literacy instruction but need more time and data to make the assessment meaningful.

Regarding assessment of library services and resources, the COCC annual survey of graduates has two broad questions asking their level of satisfaction with library services and facilities. The library consistently scores high in this survey. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), last administered by COCC in 2011, had no direct questions relating to library services and resources. A supplementary question included in the survey by the Oregon Consortium addressed general student satisfaction with library resources, including services, facilities, and study areas.

At the library level, documentation and interviews indicate that staff engage in a variety of assessment activities to inform decision making. These activities consist of informal assessment based on librarians' observations, anecdotal evidence, student comments, and short surveys developed by librarians, complemented with more formal surveys also developed in-house by library staff. The clearest example of assessment leading to decision making as reported in the self-study was a 2011 survey administered to students about the library environment and work and study needs. Responses focusing on quiet study areas and group study areas led to a reallocation and redesign of library spaces to address student needs, described in more detail in a tour of the library. While the library has employed other more informal surveys, the library director expressed concern about students starting to suffer from "survey fatigue." Examples of a more informal assessment approach include the library's experimenting with laptop and tablet checkouts. Circulation data indicates heavy use of this technology and as a result the library is purchasing more of these portable electronic devices. Library staff indicates that in the relatively brief time this pilot program has been in place they have not yet assessed how the devices are being used or their impact on student learning beyond soliciting anecdotal information.

From the self-study and in interviewing library staff, it is evident they engage in a variety of both formal and informal assessments, some quite creative. It is also evident that the staff is comfortable with this approach and uses the assessments to inform decision making and planning. What is not evident is whether the assessment taking place is continuous and systematized.

From information present in the self-study and in meeting with COCC librarians, it is clearly evident that the library is meeting the relevant accreditation standards. The library staff solicits information from students, staff, and faculty using a mixture of informal and formal methods. They use this information in decision making and planning (2.E.2, 2.E.4). The library provides excellent information resources, especially electronically based, with sufficient currency, depth, and breadth to meet the needs of the college community (2.E.1; Eligibility Requirement 13). Librarians actively engage in information literacy instruction and collaborate with other faculty in meeting that general education outcome (2.E.3). The library staff's understanding of the library's importance at the college and their commitment to meeting the information service and resource needs of the college is readily apparent and commendable. It is also clear that the staff is very cognizant of the importance of anticipating and being responsive to future college information needs.

What is less evident is not that the library staff is undertaking assessment, but the consistency and systemization in which they are doing so to inform decision making and planning. Also, while the library is clearly meeting the accreditation standards, it is not clear how the library is contributing to the college meeting its core themes and fulfilling its mission. This is not to say these things are not happening; it is to say that in its documentation the COCC Library has not clearly stated how its services and resources connect to achieving the core themes.

9) Mission fulfillment

In a number of ways COCC is an anomaly among community colleges in the northwest. Their credit enrollment has more than doubled over the past five years. They attribute this growth not only to the economy but dually enrolled OSU-Cascade campus students, growth in students from Latino communities, and dually enrolled high school students. While the growth is not unusual, what is unusual is the fact that the college has been able to increase total employee staffing 30% with full time employees increasing 29%. Additionally staff has also had salary increases.   A number of factors have contributed to their financial stability; but importantly, they have maximized their opportunities through excellent management practices. A strong Foundation has also contributed to the financial benefit of the institution. It seems clear that COCC does have the financial resources to sustain the institution at least into the near future.

While financial stability is vital to every institution, the fact is that it is a "means," not an "end." The larger issue is the role finances play in supporting the mission and ultimately ensuring an effective institution. What role do finances play in achieving mission fulfillment? How can finances be expressed in terms of core theme indicators. Student services, human resources, facilities, etc. are also "means" that contribute to the achievement of a core theme and ultimately mission fulfillment. So, to what

extent should core theme indicators reflect the contribution of those functional areas of the institution?

As mentioned in the introduction, COCC had one year between their First Year Report and their full scale visit. Given that time frame, COCC did an admirable job in identifying core theme indicators and gathering evidence to measure progress on mission fulfillment. However, during Team discussion questions were raised whether the indicators were broad or comprehensive enough to inform the institution regarding the contribution from areas of the college such as financial, student services, or other supporting /contributing functional components.

Perhaps an alternative approach might be to look at indicators from two perspectives. The first perspective would be from a purely outcome view. What indicators best represent the intended outcome of the core theme. What indicators best represent mission fulfillment. The second perspective would be a set of contributing indicators designed to measure the contribution of functional areas of the college such as student services, budget, facilities, human resources etc. These indicators would represent a more holistic view of the institution and inform the college as to the important contribution (or not) each functional area makes in core theme accomplishment and mission fulfillment.

11) Recommendations and Commendations

Recommendations

 The Evaluation Committee recommends that the Institution identify learning outcomes for all transfer and applied courses, programs, and degrees, and develops a systematic method for applying the results to improve student learning (2.C.2, 2.C.11, 4.A.3, Eligibility Requirement 22).

Recognizing that all institutional activities should support core themes, the Evaluation Committee recommends that the institution recognize and document how institutional activities support the college mission and core themes. (3.B.1)

The Evaluation Committee recommends that the institution articulate a more comprehensive methodology for assessing core theme fulfillment. For example, indicators might include student learning outcomes, program outcomes, nationally normed tests, feedback from transfer institutions and employers, and student satisfaction, etc. (1.B)

<u>Commendations</u>

The Evaluation Committee commends the Board of Directors for their high degree of engagement and support of the college, its Mission, and the communities served by the institution.

The Evaluation Committee commends the faculty and staff for their dedication to the mission and commitment to student success.

The Evaluation Committee commends the college for its recognition and development of extensive community partnerships as they contribute to and further the college mission.

The Evaluation Committee commends the college for its on-going commitment to the development, management, and protection of financial resources.

The Evaluation Committee commends the college for having a facilities project development process that is inclusive of the campus and the community and recognizes the role that facilities play in mission fulfillment.

The Evaluation Committee commends the library for the breadth, depth, and currency of the information resources made available to students, faculty and staff both on and off campus; for its commitment in keeping up-to-date information technologies available to its users; and in its work in addressing the general education outcome of "technology and information literacy."

The Evaluation Committee commends the institution for the planning and implementation of instructional programs, facilities, and institutional processes that are responsive to regional workforce development needs.