GENERAL RECOMMENDATION TWO

General Recommendation Two: The committee found evidence that some programs, but not all, conduct regular and systematic program reviews and assessments. Therefore, the committee recommends that

- the institution's processes for assessing its educational programs be clearly defined, encompass all of its offerings, including General Education and programs offered through e-learning, be conducted on a regular basis and be integrated into the overall planning and evaluation plan. (Standard 2.B.1, Policy 2.2 and Policy 2.6).
- through regular and systematic assessment, the institution demonstrates that all students who complete their programs have achieved the stated outcomes of these programs. (Standard 2.B.2 and Policy 2.2)

COLLEGE RESPONSE

Clark College has made deliberate changes to the educational program review and assessment process since the 2008 ten-year accreditation evaluation visit. As noted in the 2008 self-study, the instability in college leadership over the past ten years resulted in different priorities and misunderstood expectations in the college's educational program review and assessment activities. The changes made since 2008 are being institutionalized through the Instructional Planning Team (IPT), just as future changes will be. Moreover, the recent stability in leadership has afforded IPT the opportunity and clear direction to develop a program review and assessment process, consistent with the accreditation standards, that measures student outcomes in programs.

The program review and assessment process is governed by IPT, a contractually defined committee including two faculty members from each unit, one adjunct faculty member, the registrar, instructional deans, the Vice President of Instruction (VPI), the President of Clark College Association for Higher Education (AHE, the faculty union), and up to two students. IPT has the following responsibilities:

- Institute and oversee the instructional planning process;
- Make recommendations to the Vice President of Instruction regarding academic policies such as distribution, transfer, and degree requirements; oversee program reviews; and
- Make recommendations to the Vice President of Instruction regarding the approval of new programs and changes to and deletions of current programs.

The specific policy that governs the program assessment process, referred to as program review and enhancement, was negotiated by the AHE and adopted in 2006 as seen in the AHE contract in Article I.H.

According to the Clark College Instructional Plan, the policy decrees that program review and enhancement activities should focus faculty efforts to make "documentable differences in the success of their students." The program review and enhancement activities began in Fall 2006. All programs are mandated to perform self-review and enhancement activities. Faculty report their assessment findings and improvement strategies on an Annual Report Form (ARO). Completed forms are posted to the intranet. (Appendix 2.1) The steps to complete the program review and enhancement projects are listed in the Instructional Plan (IP). The process will take place on an annual basis. (Appendix 2.2)

Further work was conducted by IPT to improve the program review and enhancement process during the 2007-2008 academic year as reflected in the IP. In March 2008, the Instructional Planning Team recommended to the Vice President of Instruction the adoption of the IP. The IP has three major sections that set the guidelines for 1) program-related enrollment growth projections and targets, 2) annual program checks or assessments, and 3) the development process for new programming. The Vice President of Instruction adopted the plan immediately and implementation occurred in Fall 2008, during the time of the ten-year accreditation visit.

The plan formalizes the annual assessment of department/discipline data indicative of program effectiveness, especially for career and technical educational programs. The process is intended to identify what support is needed for specific departments and programs, allocate the required resources, and guide the enhancement of programs.

The program assessment is based on a series of data points by department/discipline. These data points include:

- Department Student Success Rate;
- Overall Department Fill Rate;
- Numbers of Certificates and Degrees Earned in Each Department in the Past Five Years;
- Employment Rate[1];
- Percent of Part-Time and Full-Time Faculty by Department and Program;
- Departmental Student/Faculty Ratio;
- Five-Year History of FTES and Percent of Change in the Past 3 Years;
- Direct Cost per FTES; and
- Five-Year Trend in Cost per FTES.

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[1] The employment rate is based on a survey, so it does not result in precise data. However, it serves as a good indicator.

In conjunction with the Office of Planning and Effectiveness, the Office of Instruction prepares this data during the summer quarter. When faculty return in the fall before classes start, the Program Check Screening Committee, made up of faculty, evaluates the data. The outcome of this evaluation falls into two categories: 1) satisfactory data points that are shared with the relevant department, which can use the information to develop its program review and enhancement projects and 2) data points that identify a need for improvement, which will prompt the committee's recommendation to the VPI that the department should develop a program action plan for improvement.

If the VPI accepts the recommendation of the Program Check Screening Committee, a Program Action Team (PAT) is formed for each department designated. The PAT is generally composed of the dean and at least one faculty member, depending on the size of the department. The PAT is asked to complete a PAT Report Form. The Report identifies why the program was flagged and then provides a matrix for the faculty to identify what strategies they will employ to improve their areas of weakness. (Appendix 2.2) The Instructional Plan describes the process:

> The program check procedure consists of five steps: (a) annual collection and assembly of program check data, (b) initial screening of program check data, (c) formation of Program Action Teams as needed, or routine delegation of program enhancements to faculty members according to the Program Review and Enhancement Policy, (d) development of an action plan, and (e) follow-up evaluation of action plan outcomes.

During the 2008-2009 academic year, the first year of implementation, five departments were selected to develop an action plan: 1) Agricultural/Horticulture, 2) English as a Non-Native Language, 3) Fitness Trainer, 4) Philosophy, and 5) Health Occupations. Each department was identified for program action for its own reasons. (Appendix 2.3) Reports from the Program Action Teams identified a variety of improvement activities and strategies:

- Research various prerequisites that may impact student success resulting in adjustments through Curriculum Committee (Philosophy and Fitness Trainer);
- Examine placement scores related to student success to determine if adjustments are needed (Philosophy);
- Develop specific marketing and recruitment materials (Fitness Trainer);
- Improve faculty advising (Fitness Trainer and Health Occupations);
- Obtain more accurate intent codes on student records (Fitness Trainer and Agriculture/Horticulture);
- Work with advisory committees to better identify program needs; (Agriculture/Horticulture)
- Enhance course capacity and scheduling to better serve students needs (Health Occupations); and
- Adjust and stabilize faculty and program staffing levels (Agriculture/Horticulture and Health Occupations).

Agricultural/Horticulture, Fitness Trainer, and Philosophy continued their review during the 2009-2010 academic year.

Field Survey, English, Mathematics, Health/Physical Education, Adult Basic Education/English as a Second Language, and Nursing were recommended to complete a program action plan in 2009-2010 in addition to those stated above. Most of the departments identified had an considerably low proportion of full-time teaching faculty. To mitigate the problems this imbalance created and might cause in the future, resources were distributed to English, Mathematics, Health/Physical Education, and Adult Basic Education/English as a Second Language to convert part-time faculty positions into a total of twenty full-time temporary contracts. This decision was made in order to maintain a high quality of instruction, especially in light of the 30% growth in enrollment over the last year. In the Agriculture/Horticulture department, funding was allocated to provide a classroom instructional technician to augment program support. As stated above, the program check/department assessment process has led to a more deliberate resource allocation process, especially in support of programs experiencing measurable distress.

The program check process has proven quite effective in multiple ways. For example, it has been used to prioritize resource allocation and assist faculty in developing strategies to improve student success. Despite its effectiveness, though, the process examines only department/discipline viability statistics, and, however detailed those statistics may be, they cannot present a complete picture. The process is hampered by its inability to examine the program comprehensively and holistically. This limitation was made obvious in the evaluation of the 2008 accreditation self-study.

The evaluation of the 2008 accreditation self-study made clear that program outcomes should be associated with the degrees and certificates offered by the college, not with the departments/disciplines. This realization led to a significant change in the process as compared to the approach Clark College chose to adopt in 2006, and the shift complements the program check process. To commence work on this new alignment, IPT convened a small subcommittee during Winter 2009.

The charge of the subcommittee was to review the college's current definition of an educational program in relation to the accreditation standards and learning outcomes. The subcommittee recommended, and the VPI and IPT concurred, that a program be defined as an "area of study leading to a degree or certificate." The new definition shifts the focus of program assessment to align more clearly with accreditation standards.

Although the program definition change was paramount, it was only the start of a multi- year process. IPT decided to begin work by focusing on general education learning outcomes in the Associate of Arts (AA) degree. General education requirements are often fulfilled with courses for the AA degree as well as CTE programs. Therefore, the AA degree learning outcomes, once developed, will serve as a starting place to identify general learning outcomes in the CTE

programs. Moreover, the AA degree was chosen first because it had not been assessed in a holistic way; the assessment work was only conducted at the course and department level.

To address the lack of learning outcomes identified for the AA degree, IPT formed another subcommittee during the summer of 2009. This group created a timeline and work plan to draft learning outcomes associated with the general education program, specifically the transfer degree. (Appendix 2.4) Through discussion and literature reviews of educational assessment processes, the subcommittee recommended the learning outcomes be developed based on the distribution areas of the AA degree: communication skills, quantitative skills, health/physical education, humanities, natural science, and social science.

Clark College begins each academic year a couple weeks before fall quarter with Fall Focus. At Fall Focus 2009, faculty were invited to learn, discuss, and provide input about the change in the definition of program and its implications to the assessment process. (Appendix 2.5) This only began the conversation. A faculty group was formed to draft the learning outcomes for the AA degree within each distribution area. As the learning outcomes were drafted, they were presented to the college community for feedback and critique. After comprehensive discussions across a variety of instructional committees (e.g., IPT and Outcomes Assessment Committee), constituencies, intranet feedback forms/surveys, and email, the AA degree learning outcomes have been finalized as follows:

- Obtain, evaluate, and ethically use information.
- Communicate with various audiences using a variety of methods.
- Perform mathematical calculations without the aid of a calculator.
- Solve quantitative problems and interpret the solutions.
- Demonstrate progress toward healthier behaviors.
- Analyze, interpret, and evaluate works and ideas in the Humanities within appropriate global and historical contexts.
- Evaluate, analyze, and explain events, behaviors, and institutions using perspectives and methods in the Social Sciences.
- Analyze patterns of power, privilege and inequality.
- Apply fundamental principles and relationships from the Natural Sciences to solve problems.
- Evaluate claims about the natural world using scientific methodology.

IPT adopted these learning outcomes on January 27, 2010. Any course that falls within a distribution area (including eLearning and other modes) will now be expected to incorporate the learning outcome associated with that distribution area. Student work related to each of these outcomes will be collected throughout the student's enrollment at Clark.

During Winter 2010, the administrator spearheading the program assessment initiative for the AA degree solicited faculty participation in the development of assessment rubrics associated

with each AA degree learning outcome. The notice stated that the rubric would be drafted during spring break or the first part of spring quarter. Since few faculty responded to the recruitment, the timeline will be lengthened to include the first part of April 2010. Faculty will be selected based on their disciplinary expertise relevant to the chosen AA outcome and their relevant assessment experience, particularly rubric development. Each selected faculty member will draft a rubric with no more than six elements and three evaluation categories; these rubrics will be examined and refined by broader faculty groups in each of the distribution areas. (Appendix 2.6)

The IPT subcommittee wanted to ensure that the assessment of the AA degree learning outcomes would be integral to current student and faculty efforts, not derived solely for the basis for assessment. In other words, the IPT subcommittee proposed that the outcome evaluation use students' coursework within the AA degree distribution areas. Therefore, the subcommittee recommended the use of an ePortfolio system to store students' artifacts of coursework related to the learning outcomes as they complete it.

The proposed bi-yearly assessment process includes eight steps:

1. As students complete AA degree requirements, they will select course artifacts that demonstrate learning relevant to each of the ten AA outcomes.
2. Students collect, organize, and archive relevant course artifacts in an ePortfolio system.
3. Students submit a completed ePortfolio.
4. Institutional research selects a random sample of ePortfolios for detailed analyses.
5. Faculty evaluators use rubrics to assess level of proficiency demonstrated in artifacts for each specific outcome.
6. Institutional research conducts data analyses.
7. Results are distributed to college community and community partners.
8. Appropriate organizational action is taken based on results.

While the eight steps listed above outline the process, many details still need to be addressed. To conduct the assessment, faculty volunteers must be identified; a suitable ePortfolio system must be chosen, and a method to prepare students to create their ePortfolios must be developed. (Appendix 2.7)

The plans for implementing the ePortfolio system are being linked to other planning efforts. One such effort is the college-wide Retention Plan. The Retention Plan describes multiple strategies to improve retention and academic success, one of which is a first-year seminar class that might be required for all first-year, first-time, degree-seeking students. Preliminary discussion has identified academic success, college support services, and library and technology usage as curricular areas to be covered in the proposed seminar.

Discussion has also occurred to incorporate an ePortfolio orientation/training for students within the curriculum of the first year seminar. This strategy could incorporate the students'

orientation to the ePortfolio system. It would provide the necessary mechanism to train students regarding when and how to use the ePortfolio system to capture and store their artifacts related to the learning outcomes within their program. Moreover, all students in all courses, regardless of the course modality, will be able to submit their coursework related to each program outcome. Additional analyses will be conducted to ensure students' artifacts meet the outcomes at the same degree of proficiency, whether the work is submitted from distance learning or face-to-face courses.

Because a significant amount of activity has occurred to develop and plan for the assessment of the AA degree, in February 2010, IPT charged CTE programs with identifying both the learning outcomes associated with the program as well as the assessment methods to determine if students are meeting the outcomes. A report form for program assessment, identifying learning outcomes and assessment methods, was created and distributed to the deans for completion.

CTE faculty have historically focused their program assessment efforts on outcomes specifically related to the discipline, rather than including general education requirements. Currently, some of the career and technical programs have completed the report form for program assessment and submitted the program outcomes. (Exhibit 2.1)

To fund the training necessary for faculty with varying levels of skill and expertise in program outcome assessment, the college submitted and received a Perkin's grant that will be used to instruct CTE faculty. The faculty training, currently under development, is scheduled to be conducted before July 2010. (Appendix 2.8)

The college is currently developing a six-year plan to completely institutionalize program assessment, including distance learning offerings:

2010-2011

- Begin to formalize, through IPT, the components of program review and assessment.
- Implement relevant faculty training on program review and assessment through the Teaching and Learning Center.
- Pilot ePortfolio that links students' work to program learning outcomes for courses that support AA transfer degrees.
- Document the outcomes and assessment methods for 50% of CTE degree programs.
- Document the outcomes and assessment methods for all transfer degree programs.

2011-2012

- Develop and revise policies and procedures in the College's Instructional unit to make explicit how program assessment results will inform decisions about resource allocation and operational planning.
- Document the outcomes and assessment methods for 75% of the CTE degree programs.

- Implement the assessment plans and develop program improvement strategies for 25% of all degree programs.

2012-2013

- Implement the assessment plans and develop program improvement strategies for 50% of all degree programs.
- Revise college-wide and instruction-specific policies and procedures to explicitly identify how program assessment results will inform decisions about resource allocation and operational planning.

2013-2014

- Document the outcomes and assessment methods for all the CTE degree programs.
- Implement documented assessment plans and develop program improvement strategies for 75% of all degree programs.
- Prepare for and host Year 3 accreditation visit associated with new Standards 1 and 2.

2014-2015

- Document college-wide program assessment, develop reports, and use assessment data to prepare accreditation self-study, allocate resources, and plan for operations.

2015-2016

- Prepare for and host Year 5 accreditation and visit associated with new Standards 3 and 4.

Conclusion

Clark College has reevaluated and modified its program assessment practices over the last four years. During this time, stability in the college leadership has enabled the college to continuously improve and strengthen the program assessment process. While the college continues to solidify and improve this process, faculty continue to participate in activities that strengthen curriculum and student learning.