

*Commission on Colleges  
Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges*

**A FOCUSED INTERIM REPORT**

**Clark Community College  
Vancouver, Washington**

**October 24, 2000**

**Prepared by**

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*A Confidential Report Prepared for the Commission on Colleges that  
Represents the Views of the Evaluator*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This evaluator representing the Commission on Colleges of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges visited Clark College in Vancouver, Washington, on October 24, 2000. The one-day visit was for the purpose of preparing a Focused Interim Report to address three of the General Recommendations made in the 1998 Evaluation Committee Report. Specifically, the evaluator addressed General Recommendations 1, 3, and 4 of the Report which were selected by the Commission for the focused visit.

Clark College is a two-year community college that received re-affirmation of its accreditation by the Commission following a full-scale evaluation in October 1998. Clark College was founded as a private junior college in 1933 and received initial accreditation in 1937. Since that time it has continued to grow and become an outstanding state institution that continues to seek new ways to serve both its students and the community in which it is located.

The College's new administrative team headed by President Dr. Tana Hasart made every effort to ensure a comfortable and informative stay for the evaluator doing the focused visit. The Focused Interim Report prepared for the Commission by the staff at Clark College appropriately addressed the Commission's selected recommendations, and the support materials provided during the visit were very helpful to the evaluator in determining the institution's compliance with the Standards in question. The attention given to preparation for the visit and the hospitality provided by the College employees was very much appreciated.

The evaluator's report will focus separately on each of the recommendations made by the Commission. Commendations will be provided at the completion of remarks about each recommendation.

**Recommendation 1, Standard I.A and Standard I.B:** Strategic planning must be institutionalized. Efforts need to be integrated into an on-going institutional plan that identifies priorities and serves as the basis for moving the institution forward in a systematic manner.

The Focused Interim report provided by Clark College states that following the 1998 accreditation visit, the new president Dr. Tana Hasart appointed a committee to address the recommendations of the Commission team. The appointed team was directed to review the research and planning documents already compiled by the College and to use such materials to address the recommendation regarding strategic planning. The work of this team resulted in the development of an institutional "Taxonomy of Issues" which later became the basis for many of the College goal statements that were created by the several educational units of the institution. The strategic unit initiatives were part of the exhibits provided to the evaluator during the visit. The printed initiatives not only are tied to specific College goals that are part of the institutional plan, but they list specific individuals responsible for ensuring that the initiatives are achieved. In addition the initiatives reference specific budget considerations that will have to be made to complete the project. During the evaluator's discussion with the newly appointed full-time deans, several comments were made by the deans about how making the initiatives part of the College budget process has increased the importance and credibility of the initiatives among the teachers and staff working at the College.

Discussion between the evaluator and three members of the College Board of Trustees gave further evidence to the fact that the institutional plan is given serious consideration. When at lunch with the evaluator, the trustees spoke with passion about future plans of the institution. They were quick to point out that the attention given to the implementation of the College institutional plan had a considerable impact on the direction the institution was taking with respect to its affiliation with both Washington State University and the area high schools served by the College. Further evidence of their commitment to implementation of the plan was that the mission statement, vision statement and College values are printed in the College catalog and beautifully framed and hung in all of the buildings on campus. The Trustees have spent considerable time with the Carver model of institutional governance and thus have developed "Results Policies" which is a direct way to provide to the community feedback that describes how the College is serving the community. The Board expects periodic feedback from the administration as to how effectively this process is being used to ensure compliance with the institutional plan. This new planning model adopted by the Board of Trustees has resulted in an annual report to the citizens of Clark County which describes the accomplishments in each of the seven policy areas adopted as part of the institutional plan.

Evidence that the information presented in the institutional plan is being assimilated among the people within the institution is a special project titled "Renaissance Kids" which is being sponsored by the College Student Senate. What made this piece so impressive was that the College president was unaware that the students had incorporated such statements in their program until the Student Senate President presented her with a syllabus outlining the goals of the program. To ensure that the process established has continued viability, the administration has employed a half-time research analyst to assist the director of institutional effectiveness in collecting and reporting of data that will be used to begin a new cycle of implementation of the institutional plan.

**Commendation:** The administration and the Board of Trustees have accepted the challenge of institutionalizing their plan and have given serious attention to the development of materials and strategies will ensure that the strategic planning being done by the College is being integrated into all aspects of the institution. Their commitment to comply with the recommendation made regarding Standard I is clearly evident.

**Recommendation 3, Standard 4.A - Faculty Selection, Evaluation, Roles, Welfare and Development:** A plan should be created for addressing the utilization of both full-time and adjunct faculty ... Particular attention should be paid to the Paralegal Program as to oversight and supervision by full-time faculty and/or administration.

The same research and planning support team that was appointed to study how the strategic plan could be integrated into the daily operations of the College was given the task of creating a plan for appropriately utilizing full and part-time faculty. Considerable research was done to compare the use of full and part-time faculty in the various departments of the institution. Based on such research an "ideal" mix of full and part-time faculty was proposed for each department. The information supporting this study is included in the focused interim report provided by the College. Two very important steps were taken to ensure a fair balance of full and part-time faculty in the instructional programs. First three new full-time instructors were added to the instructional staff and secondly three new full-time administrators were added to relieve the administrative duties formerly required of division and department heads allowing them to return to full-time teaching. In addition through negotiations, an agreement has been worked out whereby faculty have a process for appealing to the administration when any of them believe they have an excessive workload. Furthermore, full workloads in several departments have been reduced to ensure more equal workloads among the faculty.

The concern about the Paralegal program was also addressed. When the instructional areas were restructured due to the hiring of four full-time administrators in the instructional division, the Paralegal program was placed in the Business and Technology program cluster that is coordinated by a full-time faculty member. In visiting with the administrator in charge of the cluster, the evaluator was assured that careful evaluation of the program has taken place and that he is very comfortable with that arrangement. The evaluator is convinced that this new arrangement with a full-time administrator in charge of the cluster has removed any concerns about the viability of the program.

**Recommendation 4, Standard Four - Faculty Evaluation:** A consistent system be developed to conduct, report, and monitor evaluation of adjunct faculty to ensure teaching effectiveness.

The Research and Planning team was also given the responsibility for addressing the concern about adjunct faculty evaluation. As they began to address this recommendation, they also looked closely at the methodology and instrument for evaluating full-time faculty. The team determined that a better system needed to be developed for all faculty both full-time and adjunct. Thus, considerable research was done and the faculty evaluation system was completely revised. Furthermore, the same instrument used to evaluate full-time faculty was also used to evaluate adjunct faculty. It was also determined that before an appropriate evaluation system could be developed, new job descriptions needed to be written for all faculty. A ten member Faculty Evaluation Task Force was appointed to develop the new faculty job description and evaluation instruments that would provide feedback about teaching performances. This new instrument and job descriptions were the subject of contract negotiations that were being concluded the day-the evaluator was visiting the campus. However, a memorandum of understanding regarding this new evaluation system and the job descriptions was agreed to on August 29, 2000, between the administration of the College and the Clark College Association for Higher Education. Thus, it is clear to the evaluator that considerable progress regarding the recommendation concerning evaluation of adjunct faculty has been made. A complete text of the agreement language is included in the focused visit report provided by the College.

**Commendation for recommendations 3 and 4:** The efforts made by both administration and the faculty to work toward an agreeable solution for utilization and evaluation of both its full-time and adjunct faculty has addressed the recommendation of the Commission in a most admirable fashion. Furthermore, the addition of four full-time administrators appointed to monitor the quality of instruction offered by Clark College with the new instrument is a definite move to ensure quality instruction for all the students at the College.