

College of the Redwoods
Accreditation Progress Report
October 15, 2007

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Preamble

We the faculty, staff, and trustees of College of the Redwoods acknowledge the gravity of the Commission's findings that the college "deviates significantly from the Commission's eligibility criteria, standards, or policies" and has failed "to respond to conditions imposed by the Commission." Despite the ongoing evolution of the standards of the ACCJC, the college did not understand their full significance nor grasp how to practically implement them. We now better appreciate what is required of the college and are fully committed to correcting the deficiencies noted in the Team Report of 2007. We are also most appreciative of the Commission's continued interest in assisting the college to improve the quality and effectiveness of our programs and services.

Although we have much work ahead of us, the college has initiated significant changes that leave us hopeful of resolving the four recommendations made by ACCJC. Foremost among these is a change in college leadership. Under the leadership of a new interim president, the college took immediate action. On July 2, being notified of the Commission's actions, the new president established direct contact with the Commission, seeking clarification of its concerns and conveying the college's commitment to resolve the identified problems. Immediately thereafter, he appointed two trusted college leaders to serve with him as the Accreditation Response Team leaders. By August 1, the Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC) reconvened. Working groups formed to address each crucial area, identifying specific tasks and establishing timelines for completion. Focused on building a framework for planning, the ASC met weekly throughout the semester to monitor progress in all areas and to solve problems as obstacles arose.

In addition, cognizant that we have been unable over the course of several years to resolve the Commission's concerns on our own, the college sought outside assistance. To that end, the college contracted with three external consultants to advise us in meeting the Commission's recommendations and to guide us in developing a framework for linking planning, research, and decision making.

To further engage the entire college in the accreditation effort, the Accreditation Response Team leaders collaborated with members of the Academic Senate, Program Review Committee, Curriculum Committee, Institutional Research, and Title III leadership to make accreditation and data-informed decision making the theme of convocation. To that end, the college planned a series of related workshops, speakers, and discussions for Flex Day (August 23), Convocation (August 24), the Academic Senate Retreat (August 25), and an all-college accreditation workday (August 31).

To facilitate the transparent sharing of information, the college created—and updated daily—the Accreditation Information and Evidence website, which quickly became a one-stop-shop for accessing all accreditation-related information. In addition, the response team leaders hosted Friday morning accreditation updates. These question-and-answer sessions were recorded live and broadcast to all campuses. Additionally, the president held an accreditation information session specifically for students and scheduled daily drop-in times for any accreditation-related concern.

Through these many activities, the college community became fully aware of the importance of accreditation and the urgency required in completing the work. The response was stunning. Determined to accomplish as much as possible in the short time available, faculty and staff alike voluntarily increased their workloads, extended their workdays, and worked on weekends. Faculty hurried to complete program reviews and update course outlines. Directors hastened to implement recommended changes. Committees revised their agendas, increasing the length and frequency of their meetings. Support staff worked overtime to prepare minutes, agendas, and needed documents. As a result of this intense effort, the college has completed—or will have completed by the end of the semester—an impressive list of accomplishments. Among the most notable are the following achievements:

- Completed annual reviews for *all* academic disciplines and programs
- Updated or inactivated course outlines more than five years old
- Adopted an integrated planning process that links functional planning and budgeting to broader college goals and objectives
- Developed a three-year strategic plan with goals and objectives to pilot for *this* year
- Implemented an enrollment management plan that appears to have stopped the decline in enrollment
- Prepared a thorough and externally-validated analysis of the college's financial condition
- Created a budget projection tool for forecasting scenarios with variable inputs and outcomes
- Developed a plan for administrative reorganization that will bring the college into full financial recovery for the 2008-09 fiscal year
- Increased institutional research capacity to provide data for planning and decision making
- Convened an institutional effectiveness committee and revitalized the College Council

Understandably, we are proud of the work we have accomplished. Although the current pace of activities cannot be sustained indefinitely, the college was determined to demonstrate our commitment to rectifying past deficiencies and resolving our probationary status. In that process, the college has undergone an unexpected transformation. In uniting to address the Commission's recommendations, the college has engaged in thoughtful and collaborative deliberation about what it means to be an effective institution and has gained an appreciation for institutional research as a foundation for planning and assessment in a continuous cycle of improvement that imbues every aspect of the college.

The college now recognizes that while meeting accreditation standards is urgent, our effort this year is not just about producing an acceptable progress report; rather, it is about improving our effectiveness as a college. Accepting and using ACCJC standards—not as externally imposed, punitive mandates, but as standards of best practices—has energized the college to improve its institutional effectiveness. While the college still has much work to accomplish, we believe that the activities the college has engaged in thus far will lead to a shift in institutional culture that is evidence-based, collaborative, and informed by data. The sanctions imposed by the Commission have truly served as a catalyst for change. The faculty, staff, and trustees of College of the Redwoods look forward to the Commission's evaluation of our efforts.

Response to Recommendation 1 (2005)

Recommendation 1: *The team recommends that the college develop and implement a means of systematic, collaborative, and evidence-driven Program Review for all instruction, student services, and institutional support areas. In order to assure maximum effectiveness, such reviews should be conducted on a regular cycle that links the findings to the annual planning process for all programs and services.*

To correct the deficiencies still remaining in meeting this recommendation, the college has focused on the four areas noted in the Team Report of 2007:

- Implement program review for instructional programs
- Update outdated course outlines
- Develop and implement program review for operational support services
- Tie program review to budgeting and planning

Progress has been made in all four areas, with some of the work completed and the rest scheduled for completion by December 2007.

Implement program review for instructional programs

Since the accreditation team visit in April 2007, the Program Review Committee (PRC) has implemented the program review process developed last year. During April and May, the committee offered program review training sessions on all three campuses, evaluated all student services program reviews, and developed a calendar of review dates for all instructional programs and disciplines. Originally, the reviews were to be spread over two semesters; however, after being notified of the college's probation status, the PRC revised the calendar to complete the annual reviews for all academic disciplines and programs (not undergoing a comprehensive review) during fall 2007 and to complete this year's comprehensive reviews by late November. Half of these comprehensive reviews were scheduled to be completed by October 1. To expedite this work, members of the PRC led three annual review workshops and one comprehensive review workshop as part of convocation activities in August. Stressing the urgency of completing the reviews accurately, PRC members demonstrated how to directly access the necessary data provided by Institutional Research (IR) via the new Accreditation Information and Evidence website. As the workshops were held in wired classrooms, faculty could immediately begin their reviews. By the end of convocation, 75 faculty members (83 percent of full-time faculty) had participated in the workshops.

Faculty worked extremely hard to meet the new deadlines, since the first groups to be reviewed needed to submit their program review materials by mid-September. To assist faculty in every way possible, members of PRC, Institutional Research, and the Center for Teaching Excellence provided support every Friday to faculty writing program review reports. Members of PRC devoted additional time to refining the process for effectively managing the mass of material they would soon be receiving.

In late September, the PRC evaluated annual reviews for 17 disciplines and 5 programs and in early October comprehensive reviews for 5 programs. Annual reviews for another 37 disciplines and programs are in process, with all work scheduled to be completed by mid-November. By late November, comprehensive reviews for the additional 5 programs will also be completed.

To date, the program review process has provided an opportunity to identify both strengths of instructional areas as well as challenges that require attention. Some of the highlights include the student-centered approach of faculty. For example, mathematics faculty produced a free electronic textbook that has saved students an estimated \$100,000. Another positive impact is that faculty have made a transition from knowing little about student learning outcomes (SLOs) to routinely including them in course outlines, and virtually all disciplines reviewed are engaged in refining SLO assessment. This process has also revealed areas that require improvement. Several reviews identified a disconnect between disciplines and integrated facilities, equipment, and staff budgeting. The college views this as an opportunity to use program review to repair and strengthen our planning and resource allocation processes. Additionally, this process has allowed us to identify inconsistencies in data provided by IR and develop solutions that will improve future program reviews.

Update outdated course outlines

At the direction of the Academic Senate co-presidents, the Curriculum Committee is treating curriculum-related accreditation work as its highest priority during fall 2007. The committee delineated two goals: making meaningful progress toward rewriting *all* official course outlines to incorporate student learning outcomes and making meaningful progress in course outline inventory maintenance. To that end, the committee developed a comprehensive list indicating the status of all course outlines, circulated it to all divisions, and urged faculty to immediately revise any course outline more than five years old and to inactivate courses that were no longer being regularly offered. To assist faculty in this work, the committee made available worksheets, sample inactivation memos, documents on language for stating course objectives, a catalog description style sheet, flow charts illustrating the curriculum process, interactive official course outline forms, and many other documents relevant to course outline and student learning outcomes. Throughout September, the committee hosted well-attended, two-hour course outline workshops.

Faculty responded to the call, submitting a flood of course outline updates and inactivation requests. To meet this demand, the Curriculum Committee worked many hours, including weekends, to provide extensive feedback on all aspects of course proposals. Using Blackboard discussion technology, committee members engaged in ongoing dialog with course outline authors, to ensure the high quality of every course outline. Committed to act on every course update received, the committee greatly extended the length of their meetings. In addition to the many hours spent in preparation, in one two-week period alone, the committee met for over 14 hours. Another eight-hour session was scheduled for October 12, when an additional 55 outlines were on the agenda.

As a result of this effort, in September alone, faculty revised or inactivated 144 course outlines. Whereas in August, only 27 percent of the college's official course outlines of record had been revised within the last five years, by October 1, 43 percent were current. The Curriculum Committee expects by mid-December to have acted on another 300 outlines. At that time, 80 percent of the official course outlines will be current.

Develop and implement program review for operational support services

With student services and instructional program review processes in place, the PRC and the Accreditation Steering Committee addressed how best to enfold operational support services into the review process. After some deliberation, Business Services, Human Resources, and Institutional Research agreed to use the comprehensive and annual program review template developed last year by Student Services. All noninstructional programs, departments, and services now fall under the administrative program review umbrella. As a result, the college has two official program review streams—instructional and administrative. The vice president of Student Services, as co-chair of the PRC, will coordinate the administrative program review effort.

Now entitled “Student Services and Learning Support and Administrative Services,” Section IV of *The Program Review Self-Study Resource Guide* includes a schedule of comprehensive and annual reviews for Human Resources, Institutional Research, and all areas under Business Services. Administrative service areas will follow the same six-step comprehensive review process that has been used successfully by Student Services: 1) pre-review planning, 2) unit self study, 3) external review, 4) writing of the final program review report, 5) creating the transformation improvement activities, and 6) implementing the improvement activities. A timeline specifying activities and responsibilities is included. All administrative service areas are scheduled to complete updates annually and comprehensive self studies every five years.

During fall 2007, annual reviews will be completed for the Arcata Instructional Site, Bookstore, Child Development Center, Security, Facilities and Grounds, Financial Aid, and Information Technology Services. Annual reviews for Food Services and Institutional Research, and comprehensive reviews for Human Resources and Fiscal Services, are scheduled for spring 2008.

Tie program review to budgeting and planning

Program review documents contain information critical for planning and budgeting. Thus, program review is merely the first step of a larger process. The next step, however, is still in the formative stage. Programs must be linked, through program review, to institutional goals and objectives, as well as to planning and resources. The provisional process calls for the Institutional Effectiveness Committee to assess program reviews for their alignment with other planning documents and report to our governing bodies. The details will be refined over the next few months as programs begin to move through the process. Collectively these steps will represent a collaborative, data-informed process that will lead to continuous improvement of the college.

Response to Recommendation 5 (2005)

Recommendation 5: *The team recommends that the district improve its planning processes to include: the development of a long-range educational plan; the development of a facilities master plan; and the development of an information technology plan. It is further recommended that the district develop a long-range financial planning process to provide early notice of structural imbalances between revenue and expenditures; to identify resources needed to adequately support changes in technology systems, facilities, and enhancement to student support systems; and to regulate the pace of changes consistent with available funds.*

To correct the deficiencies still remaining in meeting this recommendation, the college has focused on the major suggestion noted in the Team Report of 2007:

- Tie together the disconnected processes of strategic, technology, facilities, and fiscal planning into an interrelated set of practices

Last May, recognizing the need to integrate the disparate planning processes at the college, Title III staff began researching institutional effectiveness and planning models. In August, several members of the Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC) volunteered to work with Title III staff. This integrated planning workgroup researched integrated planning models, developed drafts, and reported back to the larger steering committee. After studying the college's existing documents to determine which elements could be incorporated into the new planning framework, the ASC realized that the college faced several additional obstacles. The strategic plan expired in 2007, and the goals enumerated in the college master plan were not clear or measurable. Faced with the dilemma of developing new plans from scratch or refining existing documents that were intrinsically flawed, the ASC recognized that meeting the requirements of Recommendation 5 in the short time available would be the college's greatest challenge.

In late August, the workgroup invited Scott Epstein, an executive planning advisor from the Datatel Center for Institutional Effectiveness, to the college. The advisor met with them to clarify questions that had arisen about the provisional model. The workgroup then shared this initial model with constituent groups on campus. While progress had been made in understanding what the conceptual framework of an institutional planning model might look like and how the component parts would work together, the workgroup recognized that the college did not have the time, personnel, or expertise to develop a complete plan on its own in the remaining time available. Thus, in September the college contracted with Epstein to work with us. The contract stipulates that over a three-month period, the college will develop a sustainable planning process. This includes a three-year strategic plan as well as functional plans (technology, facilities, and long-range financial) aligned with college-wide goals and objectives.

As the next step, the Accrediting Steering Committee identified 18 individuals to work with Epstein in developing a first draft of a new strategic plan for the college. This team, currently referred to as the Coordinated Planning Team, is chaired by the president. The goal of the team is not only to develop a strategic plan that integrates all functional and unit-level planning across

the district, but also to pilot a collaborative *process* of data-informed continuous planning. Since this process is new at the college, we are in the early stages of development.

The Coordinated Planning Team's first action was to establish a timeline for the development of the three-year strategic plan and the provisional (one-semester) pilot plan. The team also outlined an annual cycle for ongoing planning. In late September, working with the consultant, the team reviewed an external scan analysis of current conditions to be used as a framework for planning. In early October, the team reviewed the college mission statement and wrote draft goal statements with corresponding objectives for the strategic plan. The goals are broad statements of what is to be accomplished over the next three to five years, while the objectives are measurable statements about the end results that services or programs are expected to accomplish in a given period of time. The team identified four provisional goals and objectives:

Goal 1 Enable student attainment of educational goals

Objective 1.1 – Increase persistence of students with educational plans

Objective 1.2 – Increase student retention in courses

Objective 1.3 – Increase student success

Objective 1.4 – Increase number of courses articulated with UC and CSU systems

Objective 1.5 – Improve schedule development process

Goal 2 Build a sustainable college organization to effectively support the learning environment

Objective 2.1 – Improve hiring process

Objective 2.2 – Increase satisfaction with technology services

Objective 2.3 – Increase satisfaction with auxiliary services

Objective 2.4 – Increase access to and use of data

Objective 2.5 – Increase capacity for data-informed decision making

Goal 3 Maintain fiscal stability

Objective 3.1 – Increase FTES

Objective 3.2 – Increase efficiency and reduce redundancy

Objective 3.3 – Increase reserves to five percent

Objective 3.4 – Increase user understanding and use of financial data to improve management of financial resources

Goal 4 Contribute to the economic and social well-being of the northcoast community

Objective 4.1 – Increase employer satisfaction with CR students and CR graduates

Objective 4.2 – Increase the number of students who enter the workforce in higher wage jobs

Objective 4.3 – Increase college-going rate of local high school graduates and GED recipients

Objective 4.4 – Increase community support of CR programs

Objective 4.5 – Increase community satisfaction with CR course offerings

In October, the team shared the draft goals and objectives with the college community. Based on feedback from college-wide discussion, the team will refine the goals and objectives and select key performance indicators to measure progress made toward achieving the goals. Targets, which are defined as established levels of desired performance, will also be identified. This work is scheduled to be completed by the end of October.

While developing the strategic plan, the team is also coordinating the development of the functional plans (facilities, technology, financial). As the chairs of the functional planning committees are part of the Coordinated Planning Team, they have already been able to begin this work.

Technology Planning: The Technology Advisory Group (TAG) has continued to refine the function of the group, writing a preliminary mission and vision draft that defines and formalizes its scope and activities, membership, decision-making process, and communication structures. To develop a computer replacement and retirement policy, TAG has gathered data on the number, age, and memory capacity of all computers in the district. This preliminary work will help inform future technology planning at the college. Specific objectives, targets, performance indicators, and an action plan will be developed in tandem with the college's strategic plan because the technology plan's objectives must support the larger goals and objectives of the college.

Facilities Planning: A new Facilities Planning Committee has recently formed, and the chair convened the first meeting in early October. The facilities plan leader has collected documents to be used by the team in a scan of current conditions. Information about seismic conditions, bond planning, building conditions, and the state architect's plans for new college buildings is included in a facilities planning resource binder and will be posted online as well. The committee will use this data as they develop specific objectives that will support the larger goals and objectives of the college. Performance measures and targets will be identified, as well as an action plan delineating tasks, responsibilities, and timelines. The draft facilities plan is expected to be completed in November.

Financial Planning: The Director of Fiscal Services, a member of the Coordinated Planning Team, has developed a financial projection model that will be used to gather and analyze financial data and project revenues, expenditures, and fund balances in a five-year forecast. The financial modeling tool is table driven with information presented in an easily understood format with tables and a summary. This tool will be used to inform decision making, especially where a contemplated commitment may affect multiple future years. Multiple scenarios can be maintained for comparison. The first use of the new tool is to project FTES for the purpose of developing budgets. Fiscal Services, in collaboration with IR, will incorporate data such as enrollment and graduation rates at feeder high schools, county population growth trends, and other information to project future FTES for the college. The college's financial planning goals, objectives, and targets are likely to be identical to those in the strategic plan.

Thus far, the integrated planning process currently being developed has clarified three-year goals for the college, set specific objectives for achieving those goals, aligned functional planning with the overall goals of the college, brought functional planning out of isolation and into a more collaborative process, and built annual assessment into the planning process.

Work in progress: Additional progress is planned for this semester. The Coordinated Planning Team will complete and share with all constituent groups the first draft of the college strategic plan in early November. The strategic plan will cover three years, starting with 2008-09 and will additionally set provisional goals and targets for the remainder of 2007-08. These provisional goals will serve as a pilot of the planning process, allowing the team to use lessons learned this year to refine the plan.

In November, after completing the first draft of the strategic plan, the Coordinated Planning Team will address the next step: assisting work units in developing action plans delineating the tasks, responsibilities, and timelines needed for the college to meet its objectives. As the final step in this initial process, the team will outline an annual cycle for ongoing planning, in which objectives, performance indicators, and targets are assessed and reported to college audiences—and new objectives, indicators, and targets are set for the next cycle. All of this work is expected to be completed by December.

Future actions: Once the strategic plan and functional plans are in place and an action planning process is in use, the college must embrace three more changes: 1) The strategic goals and objectives must inform planning at the department/work unit level; 2) strategic planning must be the guide for decision-making and governance structures; and 3) the college must assess annually its progress in effectively meeting its goals. The Coordinated Planning Team will continue this work, sharing their drafts with the college community and refining the process, until the college has in place mutually agreed upon planning processes that improve the college's educational effectiveness.

Response to Recommendation 6 (2005)

Recommendation 6: *The team recommends that the college develop a financial plan that will accomplish the following goals: Respond to declining revenue resulting from the loss of full-time equivalent students, establish a prudent and sufficient unrestricted general fund balance reserve, and address changes in annual expenditures to assure that such expenditures are equal to or less than available resources.*

To correct the deficiencies still remaining in meeting this recommendation, the college has focused on the six areas noted in the Team Report of 2007:

- Identify the underlying causes of the deteriorating financial condition
- Reduce expenditures to stem deficit spending
- Develop a plan to achieve mandated minimum expenditure requirement in fiscal year 2007-08; Explain how proposed expenditure reductions will be affected by the state's 50-percent law
- Propose actions that would assist in reversing the trend of declining enrollment
- Tie financial plan to long-range planning; Establish specific goals (beyond balancing the budget) to be achieved
- Communicate transparently unfiltered budget information to the college community

Identify the underlying causes of the deteriorating financial condition

The main cause of the college's financial distress is that revenues have been declining faster than expenditure reductions have been developed. Over 95 percent of the district's unrestricted funds come from sources tied to enrollment, and enrollment has declined every year for the past five years. Full-time equivalent student (FTES) counts eligible for state funding have declined from 5686 in 2001-02 to 4482 in 2006-07. Initial projections for 2007-08 were based on a continuing decline; however, current projections for the year indicate a leveling off of the decline and perhaps even a small surge in FTES. At census, FTES were estimated at 2288 for the semester, up 1.6 percent over fall 2006. While the numbers appear promising, demographic trends in the college service area suggest that maintaining enrollments may continue to be a challenge for several more years.

For the past five years, expenditure reductions have not kept pace with the decline in revenue. Salaries and benefits represent over 85 percent of the expenditures for the 2007-08 unrestricted general fund. Although faculty and staff FTE have declined due to a policy of not replacing all positions becoming vacant, reductions have substantially lagged behind the decline in students. Total FTES have declined 21 percent since 2001-02. Although faculty positions have declined 21 percent over the same time period, other staffing has declined only 11 percent.

The current level of FTES cannot support the current level of staffing; moreover, normal attrition due to retirement and turnover is not sufficient to correct the imbalance.

Reduce expenditures to stem deficit spending

In February, the preliminary budget projection for 2007-08 showed proposed expenditures exceeding estimated revenues by \$3 million even after including \$1 million in identified savings in salaries and benefits. At that time, the Board of Trustees appointed an ad hoc committee to study the district's budget and enrollments and to recommend solutions to the board. The work of implementing those recommendations is ongoing. By June, the budget imbalance was reduced to \$1.5 million, in part by incorporation of recommended budget solutions. By September, further staff reductions due to leaving open positions vacant reduced this number to approximately \$535,000. By incorporating final budget revenue and expenditure changes, including an estimated \$347,000 in additional revenue from revised FTES projections for 2007-08, the budget imbalance is now \$322,909.

In July, at the president's request, Business Services developed a draft financial recovery plan. The plan analyzed the key financial indicators affecting financial stability and established financial recovery goals and measures. Additionally, it provided a list of areas for which specific action plans could be developed. The proposed plan recommended balancing the budget for the 2007-08 fiscal year through the use of one-time solutions and achieving full recovery by 2008-09 through permanent solutions.

During the summer, the plan was reviewed and validated by an outside consultant, Chuck Ely; by the College Finance Division at the Chancellor's Office; and by the Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team (FCMAT).

In September, the director of Fiscal Services provided the trustees with an overview of the proposed financial recovery plan. The presentation covered enrollment trends, budget deficits, reserves, and staffing levels, as well as potential solutions based on increased revenue and reductions in expenditures.

Because financial recovery may entail restructuring the institution—including administrative reorganization, program discontinuations, layoffs, and changes in assignments—specific state codes and contract provisions must be followed. Therefore, the adopted budget for 2007-08 is expected to be out of balance.

The president is formulating an administrative reorganization plan, intended to bring the college into full recovery for 2008-09. He will present the plan to the trustees in time to meet the March 15 contract and legal timeline. Full recovery means accomplishing all of the following:

1. Develop a balanced budget with at least a five-percent reserve. Any one-time solutions will add to the reserves, and permanent solutions will have been identified for future years.
2. Stabilize enrollments through implementation of sound enrollment management practices.

Develop plan to achieve mandated minimum expenditure requirement in fiscal year 2007-08; Explain how proposed expenditure reductions will be affected by the state's 50-percent law

The college has been out of compliance with its 50-percent obligations for the past two years. In 2005-06, the district spent less than the mandated 50 percent on instruction by \$376,846. The state board of governors granted an exemption for that fiscal year. For 2006-07, the district will again be out of compliance, although the actual amount is now expected to be considerably less than the \$600,267 previously estimated. Current projections for 2007-08 show the district to be back in compliance.

Several factors have contributed to the college's inability to meet the mandated requirement. For 2006-07, increases in faculty reassigned time significantly affected the calculation, as the budget was not adjusted to accommodate the increase. Another significant factor has been the disproportionate decrease in faculty positions. During the period 2001-02 to 2007-08, faculty positions *declined* 21 percent while administrative positions *increased* 11 percent over the same period. Reductions in staffing proportional to the cuts in faculty would help the college comply with the mandated spending requirement.

The college expects to request an exemption from the 50-percent law for 2006-07. The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges would consider any district exemption request at their March 2008 meeting. The state board may approve the exemption request, disapprove it, or approve a partial exemption. Any deficiencies not exempted must be made up in the subsequent two years. If not made up, the amount of the deficiency would be deducted from the district's state apportionment the third year.

Propose actions that would assist in reversing the trend of declining enrollment

Last year, the Enrollment Management Task Force formed to identify contributing causes of declining enrollment. Although demographic changes in the county account for part of the decline, the task force identified additional factors, such as student barriers and changes in enrollment procedures. As a major step in addressing declining enrollment, the vice president of Student Services developed a three-year enrollment management plan with enrollment goals based on historic enrollment patterns. Student Services is now coordinating development of class schedules and is working closely with Academic Affairs to develop course offerings that meet student needs and that allow for multi-semester planning and registration.

During May 2006, Institutional Research developed and conducted a Student Services survey of student attitudes toward the current schedule of classes offered, toward online courses, and of other factors that affect students' choice of and attendance in courses. Results of this survey will be used in making decisions regarding future enrollment management actions.

Additionally, Student Services developed a telemarketing campaign; improved the introductory information provided to new and prospective students; increased the availability of financial aid information; and changed the registration process, extending the registration period through the first week of classes and eliminating deregistration for nonpayment of fees. Waitlists were

increased and classes were not automatically canceled due to low enrollment. In an overall effort to make the campus friendlier to new students, faculty and staff implemented a new program, Week One Welcome (WOW!), during the first week of fall semester.

Early indicators suggest that enrollment efforts may be successful in stemming the decline in enrollment. At the end of the first week of classes, total headcount was up 4.9 percent over fall 2006. At census, FTES was up 1.6 percent over fall 2006.

Tie financial plan to long-range planning; Establish specific goals (beyond balancing the budget) to be achieved

The draft of the new strategic plan provisionally identifies maintaining fiscal stability as one of the college's primary goals. Objectives include increasing FTES, increasing efficiency and reducing redundancy, increasing the reserves to five percent, and increasing user understanding and use of financial data to improve management of financial resources. While baselines, targets, and performance measures still need to be established, work has already begun. For example, the new enrollment management plan has already produced a modest increase in FTES, and Fiscal Services is working closely with Institutional Research to create budget scenarios based on FTES estimates.

Communicate transparently unfiltered budget information to the college community

In August at convocation, the president announced that a financial recovery plan had been developed and was being reviewed by external consultants to validate its effectiveness and to lend it credibility. Warning that layoffs would be necessary, he made a commitment to discuss potential layoffs with constituent groups before any specific reductions were finalized.

Following the September board meeting, the president shared the financial recovery plan with the entire college community. While the plan did not identify specific actions to be taken, it did make public relevant financial and enrollment data, providing a clear analysis of the problem. Additionally, faculty and staff can now access budget and enrollment information through the Accreditation Information and Evidence website as well as through links to Business Office reports and to Institutional Research.

During September, the president met with the Academic Senate; the faculty and classified employees' unions; and the administrators, managers, and confidential employee group. Reiterating his commitment to base any reductions in programs, faculty, or staff on data and program review, he announced that the administrative reorganization plan will be unveiled in December or January.

Response to Recommendation 7 (2005)

Recommendation 7: *The team recommends that the college improve its capacity for collaborative and data-driven decision-making. Such decision-making should incorporate broad-based participation, use of qualitative and quantitative data, and establish appropriate measures of effectiveness.*

Because of the absence of an institutional research department for nearly a decade, the shift in institutional culture to one that is evidence-based, collaborative, inclusive, and informed by data has been a slow and deliberate one for the college. By last spring, despite a vacancy in the IR director position, the Institutional Research department had developed the capacity to conduct research and supply data to the Enrollment Management Committee, to student service areas, to program review, and to all college employees through the IR webpage.

While IR was poised to provide more data for the college, the IR Advisory Committee had concerns about how the college would use IR-provided data as the college did not yet have a process in place for institutional research to systematically inform planning and decision-making. In an open letter to the college community in May 2007, the committee warned that “for data to have real usefulness at CR, the college needs to have a broad-based, collaborative system for sharing data among many stakeholders. . . . Unless such structures are in place,” they warned, “the expanding use of data will make little difference in solving CR’s problems.”

The committee identified three critical needs to be addressed by the college as a whole:

- Collaborative development of an institutional effectiveness function
- Identification and implementation of clearly defined, broadly based structures for planning and decision making
- Training for all decision makers in requesting, assessing, understanding, and using available data

In July, in response to these needs, the Academic Senate and Title III leadership made data-informed decision making the theme for the August convocation addresses and workshops, flex day activities, and professional development presentations throughout the semester.

In August, the Integrated Planning Workgroup, a subcommittee of the Accreditation Steering Committee, tackled the first problem of developing an institutional effectiveness function and presented their preliminary work for consideration at convocation breakout sessions and the Academic Senate retreat. IR recognized that for data to have relevance and utility for the college, it must not exist in isolation but must be used in establishing and monitoring the college’s effectiveness. Institutional research could only have meaning in a culture that embraced institutional effectiveness. By mid-September, the Accreditation Steering Committee had agreed upon the preliminary definition of the membership, purpose, and functions of an institutional effectiveness committee.

The Accreditation Steering Committee then wrote and widely circulated a draft administrative procedure establishing the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) as a neutral clearinghouse for program review and planning information, using the mission and goals of the

college as the lens for evaluating and integrating plans. The IEC's function, as written, is to provide oversight, coordination, analysis, and reporting on the effectiveness of the college. The committee will review strategic priorities, assist in establishing and/or revising indicators of institutional effectiveness, use data and research to assess effectiveness of programs and plans, and produce and disseminate data-informed assessment reports to all college governance partners.

In September, the steering committee sent an invitation to all college employees, requesting those who were interested to apply for appointment to the IEC. The president, in collaboration with the Academic Senate co-presidents, then appointed the at-large committee members.

The newly hired IR Director, who is well experienced in institutional effectiveness assessment, will chair the IEC. The first meeting convened on October 12. One of the first tasks of the new committee will be to develop formats for reflecting information back to those who have completed program reviews and for disseminating assessment reports to the planning and decision-making bodies.

Simultaneous with the formation of the IEC, the college addressed the second critical need cited by the IR Advisory Committee: the identification and implementation of clearly defined, broadly based structures for planning and decision-making. Throughout September, faculty and staff held a series of meetings to discuss the revitalization of the dormant College Council. The college tentatively agreed that all significant policy, planning, and budgetary decisions should go through College Council before going to the Board of Trustees; a procedure for all decision-making would need to be clarified, with safeguards built in; and the Board of Trustees would need to assure that process would be followed.

On September 28, College Council met and discussed its role, responsibilities, and processes. The council will receive data-informed reports on the health of the institution from the IEC and will be responsible for using that data for decision making and planning in a way that supports the effectiveness of the college. It was suggested that the council should attempt to gain consensus for decisions and to include a process for voicing dissenting opinions. Members were charged with returning to their constituent groups for feedback before critical decisions were finalized regarding the activities and processes of the College Council.

Although these structures and processes may need to be adapted, they do provide a solid starting point for data-informed decision-making and for the continuous assessment of institutional effectiveness. As program reviews and functional plans move through the system, the college will evaluate and refine the decision-making process.

While building the theoretical framework for a decision-making process has been essential, so too is preparing the college community for full participation in that process. The college is addressing this third critical need: training decision makers in accessing, understanding, and using available data. If faculty and staff are to participate fully in a collaborative, data-informed institutional culture, they must be able to access data easily and be aware of how they can use that data to improve student success. Interest appears high. To date, over 200 faculty and staff

have attended 18 sessions offered by IR and Title III and have begun to integrate data and research into academic program planning and institutional management.

An increasing awareness of the potential uses of institutional research is evident at the college. IR is working with selected academic departments and programs to identify and develop data indicators for student learning outcomes and program outcomes and to collect baseline data on those program indicators. As an example, IR is working with Student Services to collect baseline data on support service project indicators. Another ongoing project involves the collection and analysis of data for the Nursing Retention, Assessment, and Preparation (RAP) project. Several new projects to support instructional area innovation are currently being considered. For example, IR is developing methods for a pilot study that will track the success rate of students in math sections offered in a variety of formats. Yet another project will track the retention/success rate of students enrolled in a cohort of linked developmental English and learning success courses, combined with intensive EOPS services and support. IR also provides training to faculty and staff on how to use data for academic program planning and decision-making. Division chairs, directors, and enrollment managers have recently been shown how to access historic term course section reports to inform class scheduling. IR has also been working with Fiscal Services to develop a budget scenario-building tool for long-term financial planning, using elements from the college data warehouse.

Frequent IR and Title III workshops, presentations, and training sessions, coupled with a twice-monthly IR update and a Title III newsletter, keep the college community abreast of recent developments and serve to stimulate interest in using data to inform innovation and planning.

As these requests for data at the college increase, so must IR's ability to provide accurate data efficiently. To that end, Title III purchased a large-capacity server, a Web server, and tools for extracting data for the IR data warehouse. Title III funds have been allocated for external validation of the warehouse design and for programming the data structures necessary for web-based access to the data warehouse. By mid-December, parts of the system will be automated, allowing IR to fulfill more requests for data, as currently all reports must be created manually. Eventually, all college employees will have web-based access to the college's data warehouse, and the warehouse will be the single source of data for all program evaluation, planning, and decision making at the college.

In uniting to address the three critical needs identified last spring, the college has gained an appreciation for how institutional research can be used as the foundation for planning and assessment at all levels in a continuous cycle of improvement. Faculty and staff are now more aware of how data will be used to measure and improve effectiveness at the course/department/program level and that data will be used to assess a plan or program's role in meeting the goals and mission of the college. The college also understands that data will inform decisions on budgeting and planning. While there is still much work to accomplish, the shift in institutional culture to one that is evidence-based, collaborative, and informed by data is well on its way.

APPENDIX A: List of Supporting Documents (in separate bound volume)

Recommendation 1

- Program Review Calendar for Instructional Programs
- Academic Program Review Template for Annual Reviews
- Academic Program Review Template for Comprehensive Reviews
- Sample of Completed Annual Academic Review
- Sample of Program Review Summary
- Curriculum Committee Flowchart
- Course Outline Template
- Samples of Blackboard Discussion Threads Regarding Course Outlines
 - Art 46: Techniques in Printmaking
 - Math 25: College Trigonometry
 - Sign Language 1A: American Sign Language
- Samples of Completed and Approved Course Outlines
 - Art 2: Introduction to Art
 - Anthropology 6: Forensic Anthropology
 - Biology 17: Trees, Shrubs, and Wildflowers
 - Business Technology 162: Machine Transcription
- Summary of Curriculum Committee Actions Sent to Academic Senate
- Program Review Guide Section for Administrative Programs
- Program Review Calendar for Administrative Programs

Recommendation 5

- Strategic Planning Process Diagram
- Timeline for the Development of the Strategic Plan
- Provisional Goals and Objectives from the Strategic Plan
- Financial Planning Projection Tool Template

Recommendation 6

- Graph: FTES 2001-2006
- Graph: FTES fall 2007
- Chart: Staffing Levels 2001-2006
- Chart: Compliance with 50% Law 2005-07
- Final Budget 2007-08
- Proposed Financial Recovery Plan
- Enrollment Management Steering Framework (Action Planning)
- Enrollment Management Framework
- Draft Recruitment and Retention Plan

Recommendation 7

- Draft Administrative Procedure for Institutional Effectiveness Committee
- Administrative Procedure for College Council
- Institutional Effectiveness Diagram
- Summary of Title III and IR Training Sessions
- Sample Program review Data Set from IR
- Census Day Report, fall 2007

Daily Enrollment Report
Sample Historic Course Section Report
CR's Data Warehouse Planning Diagram
Sample *Title III Activities Update*
Sample *IR Update*

APPENDIX B: Statement of Report Preparation

The preparation of this report was guided by the **Accreditation Response Team Leaders**:

Tom Harris	Interim President/Superintendent
Cathy Dickerson	Title III Director
Pam Kessler	Professor of English

Credit for the work that provided the content for this report and for the documents from which material and data were drawn belongs to many committees, workgroups, and individuals.

The **Accreditation Steering Committee** identified the tasks that needed to be accomplished, monitored progress in all areas, and problem solved as obstacles arose. The committee was composed of the following members of the district's faculty and staff:

Tom Harris, Chair	Judy Kvinsland
Abe Ali	Carol Mathews
Sue Alton	Kerry Mayer
Dave Bazard	Roxanne Metz
Jeff Bobbitt	Susan Nordlof
Tom Cossey	Jose Ramirez
Ron Cox	Mike Richards
Paul DeMark	Tony Sartori
Cathy Dickerson	Keith Snow-Flamer
Helen Edwards	Steve Stratton
Tim Flanagan	Tracey Thomas
Pam Kessler	Scott Thomason

The **Integrated Planning Workgroup**, a subgroup of the Accreditation Steering Committee and the heart of the college's accreditation effort, compiled research, developed diagrams, drafted proposals, and led college-wide discussions regarding institutional planning and decision-making structures. The workgroup was composed of the following faculty and staff:

Cathy Dickerson, Chair	Pam Kessler
Sue Alton	Judy Kvinsland
Jeff Bobbitt	Roxanne Metz
Ron Cox	Keith Snow-Flamer
Helen Edwards	Tracey Thomas

The **Program Review Committee** and the **Curriculum Committee** took on the task of completing several years' worth of work in one semester.

Program Review Committee:

Dave Bazard, Co-Chair
Mike Richards, Co-Chair
Bob Brown
Dave Chimovitz
Toby Green
Bill Honsal
Cindy Hooper
Ruby Jager
Melody Pope

Administrative Services Subcommittee:

Keith Snow-Flamer, Chair
Chris Gaines
Sheila Hall
Aeron Ives
Julia Morrison
Lynn Thiesen

Curriculum Committee

John Johnston, Chair
Peter Blakemore
Jeff Bobbitt
Dave Gonsalves
Allen Keppner
Paul Kinsey
Diqui LaPenta
Ken Letko
Pat Padilla
Maureen Scott
Gary Sokolow
Janice Tatum
Michelle Woods

The **Coordinated Planning Team** developed the new strategic plan and piloted an integrated planning process for the college. The team consists of the following members:

Tom Harris, Chair
Scott Epstein, Guest Facilitator
Sue Alton
Ron Cox
Martha Davis
Cathy Dickerson
Helen Edwards
Tim Flanagan
Joe Hash
Pam Kessler

Jason Leppaluoto
Roxanne Metz
Jose Ramirez
Tony Sartori
Keith Snow-Flamer
Steve Stratton
Tracey Thomas
Scott Thomason
Susan Wendt

The **Enrollment Management Committee** researched, developed, and implemented the new enrollment management plan and eliminated potential barriers to student registration. The committee is comprised of the following members:

Keith Snow-Flamer, Chair
Michael Butler
Paul DeMark
Marla Gleave
Allen Keppner
Pam Kessler
Sharrie King
Sydney Larson

Carol Mathews
Barbara Morrison
Jon Pedicino
Ryan Petersen
Jose Ramirez
Michael Richards
Mary Thompson

The **Facilities Planning Committee** and the **Technology Advisory Group** have begun preparatory work to align the functional plans with the larger objectives of the college.

Facilities Planning Committee:

Tim Flanagan, Chair
 Paul Agpawa
 Michael Bailey
 Steve Brown
 Bill Connors
 Leslie Haddock
 Tricia Hawkins
 Ray Kingsbury
 David Maki
 Frank Martinez
 Stephen McCollum
 Mike Mendoza
 Barbara Morrison
 Todd Olsen
 Keith Snow-Flamer
 Tracey Thomas
 Scott Thomason
 Mark Winter

Technology Advisory Group:

Steve Stratton, Chair
 Paul Agpawa
 Dave Arnold
 Renee Byers
 Jeff Bobbitt
 Paul Chown
 Tom Cossey
 Ron Cox
 Amy Daily
 Kathy Goodlive
 Melissa Green
 Stephan Grimes
 David Holper
 Anna Imrem
 Joy Lund

Roxanne Metz
 Ruth Moon
 Jamie Peterson
 Jose Ramirez
 Michael Regan
 Mark Renner
 Keith Snow-Flamer
 Erik Sorensen
 Lynn Thiesen
 Cheryl Tucker
 Brian Van Pelt
 Bruce Wagner
 Pat Watson
 Mark Winter

Division Chairs and Directors funneled program review and course updates from the departments to the committees and served as communication channels for all information regarding accreditation.

Helen Edwards	Business, Technology
Pat Girczyc	Health Occupations
Joe Hash	Physical Education/Athletics
Tony Sartori	Math, Science, Engineering
Justine Shaw	Arts, Languages, Social Sciences
Michael Thomas	Humanities, Communication
Mike Wells	Public Safety Center

Title III Staff compiled research, collected data, presented workshops on the interpretation and use of data, and created and maintained the accreditation website.

Fiscal Services analyzed enrollment and staffing trends, identified the causes of the college's financial difficulties, proposed solutions, and developed the new budget scenario projection tool.

The **Academic Senate co-presidents** served as taskmasters, encouraging and energizing us all to maintain the high quality of our work while taking on additional tasks.

Credit is also due the many **faculty and staff** who contributed their support, expertise, and extraordinary amounts of time to this report and to the accreditation effort.

Lastly, we must acknowledge our **external consultants**, whose knowledge and experience informed our efforts and validated our work:

Scott Epstein	Datatel Center for Institutional Effectiveness
Lisa Petrides	Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education
David Wolf	Former president of ACCJC

Preliminary drafts of the report were posted on September 17, October 2, and October 8 on the Accreditation Information and Evidence website for review and comment by the entire college community. The report was reviewed and discussed by the college's Academic Senate on September 21, September 28, and October 5, 2007, and by the Board of Trustees on October 9, 2007.

Copies of the *Accreditation Progress Report for College of the Redwoods, October 15, 2007* and *Supporting Documents for the Accreditation Progress Report for College of the Redwoods, October 15, 2007* are available for public viewing in the college library and on the college website.