

Follow-Up Report

*Submitted to the Accrediting Commission
For Community and Junior Colleges,
Western Association of Schools &
Colleges on October 11, 2010*

Authors

Utpal K. Goswami, Vice President of Instruction
Faith Mason, Associate Faculty and Librarian
Karen Nelson, Title III Activities Director

College of the Redwoods

**7351 Tompkins Hills Road
Eureka, CA 95501-9300**



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Statement of Report Preparation

College of the Redwoods is pleased to submit this Follow-Up Report of progress in addressing the Recommendation made by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges in its letter of January 29, 2010. This Report has been prepared by a three-member team consisting of Dr. Utpal K. Goswami, Vice-President of Instruction (VPI); Faith Mason, Associate Faculty and Librarian; and Karen Nelson, Title III Activities Director.

Preparation of the report started with a review of documents, observed institutional developments, initiatives, events and milestones to assess how the college was addressing the issues raised in the Recommendation. There were regular meetings of the writing team. Interviews were held with the Academic Senate Co-Presidents David Holper and Mark Winter, President Jeff Marsee, and Vice President Keith Snow-Flamer. The writing team members met with various constituent groups, including classified staff and faculty, and also reviewed materials from the Accreditation Self Study group for Standard IV (the college is currently also preparing for a comprehensive visit by ACCJC in Fall 2011).

The initial findings were presented as broad themes to the Board on August 3, 2010 [Evidence 1]. After evaluating additional institutional documents and considering feedback received, a second expanded report was presented to the Board on September 12, 2010 [Evidence 2]. The Academic Senate devoted a substantial part of a meeting to evaluate [Evidence 3] the document and provide feedback. Based upon all the evidence gathered and feedback received, the draft of the final Report was posted on September 27, 2010 on the CR website for constituent review and feedback [<http://www.redwoods.edu/Accreditation/documents.asp>]. All input from constituents was considered and many suggestions were incorporated into the final report. The final report was presented to the Board for its review and approval on October 9, 2010. [Evidence 4]

The writing team has made a deliberate and conscious attempt to craft an report which is based upon evidence and which is also consistent, to the extent possible, with constituent understandings of where the institution is at this point in time.

Abstract

This follow-up report responds to the **ACCJC Recommendation 1 (2009)** that reads: “In order to meet the Standard and improve both communication and operations of the College, the team recommends that the College undergo a review of roles and responsibilities of each constituent group. In so doing, the College should develop means by which trust can be enhanced and respect increased among the constituent groups to create an environment that supports empowerment, innovation and leads to institutional excellence.”

The college has taken the recommendation seriously. Between February 2010 and October 2010 the college initiated a number of actions to clarify roles and responsibilities and to improve communication and trust. The college has initiated the process of revising the mission, vision and values statement to help guide its actions. It has also started the process of reviewing and revising all of its board policies and administrative procedures. The Board has established an ad hoc Board Related Policy Committee (BRPC) to specifically revise sections 1 and 2 of the board policies.

The college has developed and published current organizational charts. In addition, committee roles, membership, functioning processes and reporting have been improved. Constituents can now access and view important governance information by going to a single webpage. The governance process is now more inclusive with the creation of the newly formed Managers Council and the inclusion of students in many committees and the College Council.

The college has improved the planning process, including the processes and timeline of the Program Review Committee, compositions and timelines of the College Council and closing the loop with a functioning Budget Planning Committee. The college has evaluated the implications and nuances of AB 1725 and executive cabinet members have conducted organizational communication sessions with faculty and staff to discuss roles and responsibilities.

The President has adopted a number of additional mechanisms to enhance communications with faculty and staff while Vice Presidents have started initiatives to encourage bottom-up communication. The Instructional Council will bring together all Deans, Area Coordinators and Program Coordinators into matters relating to operational aspects of instruction. The appointment of an Adjunct Faculty Coordinator will foster increased communication with and promote inclusion of associate faculty in the college community.

The college has explored processes for conflict resolution. A one-day training was held, attended by a cross section of faculty, staff, administrators and trustees, on Interest-Based Problem Solving by a team from Los Rios Community College District. Nationally known communication experts Drs. Peter and Susan Glaser were invited to present sessions during Convocation. The college is showing some evidence of being able to work through conflict and disagreements. The college continues to assess its progress as evidenced by the technical assistance visit by Scott Lay and Jane Patton in October 2010.

This report indicates that, though there may still be disagreement about what roles and responsibilities should be and what approach should be used for decision-making, the college believes it has substantially met the requirement of clarifying roles and responsibilities.

This report indicates that the college still has work to do in the matter of enhancing trust. The expectation is that sustaining the initiatives through multiple cycles will allow gradual building of trust.

Follow-Up Report

College of the Redwoods

Section I: Introduction and Background

On October 15, 2009, College of the Redwoods submitted a Follow-Up Report to address two recommendations from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges: Program Review (2008); and Leadership and Governance (2009). On October 20 and 21, 2009, Dr. Marie Smith and Mr. James Barr of the ACCJC visited the college to verify the progress stated in that Report. In December 2009, the college submitted an Accreditation Follow-Up Report Addendum to provide information to the Commission concerning more recent activities.

In January 2010, the ACCJC acted to remove the college from warning status, with the requirement that the college complete a new Follow-Up report by October 15, 2010. This document constitutes that report. The recommendation cited in May 2009 and reiterated in the Commission's letter of January 2010 is as follows:

Recommendation 1 (2009): In order to meet the Standard and improve both communication and operations of the college, the team recommends that the college undergo a review of roles and responsibilities of each constituent group. In so doing, the college should develop means by which trust can be enhanced and respect increased among the constituent groups to create an environment that supports empowerment, innovation and leads to institutional excellence.

While the Commission did not provide a list of specific problem areas that jeopardized the college's accreditation, in the process of preparing this report, the writing team made an attempt to ascertain the contributing factors. The college believes that the following may have contributed to the findings of the Commission:

- The mission and vision statements lack clarity and are too long and cumbersome, making it difficult for members of the community to connect their work and roles with the mission and vision.
- The organizational charts did not reflect the de facto state of reporting and communication.
- The understandings about planning processes were muddy.
- The college had not examined its policies and procedures for currency and consistency in some time.
- Because the college had been in such a period of constant change, many players were unaware of which policy was in effect at a given time. Constant and frequent change in the administration resulted in a lack of faith in existing policies and procedures because of a sense that procedures might change at any time.
- The roles and responsibilities and memberships of many committees were undefined and it was unclear how the committee process worked and what the communication routes were.

- Every so often, an organization needs to revisit the agreements regarding how to function as an institution. With the passage of time, implied understandings (such as level and extent of consultation on operational procedures or what inclusion in decision-making means) tend to evolve as people change, resulting in different people developing dissimilar understandings or interpretations. The college has not revisited such agreements or understandings, resulting in multiple constituencies having differing perceptions of roles and responsibilities.
- Concerns have been expressed by constituent groups that policies and procedures have not been followed accurately.
- The opinion of a significant number of faculty is that policies were not followed in faculty prioritization and integrated planning.
- Many employees have concluded from their experiences that there is an administrative preference for directive, as opposed to participatory or collaborative, decision-making in operational activities.
- Many employees' have the opinion that communication lacks transparency.
- At times, some constituents have been unable to resolve their differences in a productive manner, such as resigning from committees instead of engaging in discourse.
- There is an inherent problem in a representative form of governance where information does not flow back well from the representatives to their constituents.

Subsequent to receiving the ACCJC recommendation, and in order to assess employee opinions and views, the college contracted with Noel-Levitz to conduct an employee satisfaction survey in February 2010. As a part of the survey, employees were asked to rate the importance of a number of aspects of campus culture and policies and to rate their satisfaction with how each of these matters was handled at the college. Among the top issues for which the gap between the importance and the employees' satisfaction were the largest are:

- How openly and honestly the executive leadership communicates with employees of all levels.
- Whether there is a spirit of teamwork at the college.
- Whether appropriate departments are consulted when key decisions are made about the use of college resources.
- Whether employees feel that their voice is heard by the administration when they express suggestions for institutional change.
- Whether there is good communication between the faculty and the administration.
- Whether the college involves its employees in planning for the future.

These results reaffirm the Commission's recommendation. The results and a summary analysis of this survey can be seen at <http://www.redwoods.edu/Accreditation/CESS.asp> [Evidence 5]

The following sections will demonstrate the specific ways in which the college is addressing the ACCJC recommendation and the progress made so far.

Section II: Clarification of Roles and Responsibilities

The college's recent history has been filled with constant change. Over the last seven years College of the Redwoods has had four presidents and multiple vice presidents. There have been varying enrollments, staffing levels and budgets. The college has been cited with numerous accreditation deficiencies. Lack of institutional stability, change in personnel, and rapid change were major stressors affecting the college's ability to function smoothly, as well as the ability of employees to communicate effectively. Trust and rapport suffered throughout the district. The college made a series of rapid decisions due to institutional imperatives such as declining enrollment and potential loss of apportionment. The result was that many employees believe that many more internal decisions were made with the directive approach than were warranted or permitted by current agreements or according to the constituents' interpretation of AB 1725.

Issue of Decision-Making Approaches

In an institution of higher learning, there are three main ways which decisions about the governance of the college are made:

1. **Collaborative:** interested and affected groups work together and all opinions are shared during this process to come up with mutually agreed upon solutions such as education program development or the registration process.
2. **Participative:** information and points of view, comments and recommendations are sought, and provided to the decision-making body, such as the President, the Cabinet, or the Board of Trustees. An example of this category is facilities master planning.
3. **Directive:** in this process, no consultation takes place and the President, the Cabinet or the Board of Trustees take action without collegial consultation. An example of this type of decision-making could occur when responding to an urgent situation such as an earthquake.

While AB 1725 speaks to collegial consultation for certain faculty roles, an institution of higher learning has to make many decisions (that are not related to AB 1725) where it has to adopt one of the decision-making options based upon circumstances. The choice of the option has the potential for conflict with the implied constituent expectations regarding decision-making. Such conflicts over roles and responsibilities are typically more pervasive during a period of transition such as a change in presidency or a retrenchment period for an institution. Over the last two years College of the Redwoods has utilized, at various times, all three methods of decision-making.

Issues of AB 1725

The college's Board Policy 203 clearly indicates preference for the first two types of decision-making. BP 203 also outlines the college's interpretation of AB 1725. This policy and others can be seen at <http://www.redwoods.edu/district/board/policies/bp/BP203.Htm> [Evidence 6]. Since board policy of College of the Redwoods decided to use elements of both 'primacy' and 'mutual agreement' to comply with collegial consultation mandated by AB 1725, potential for misunderstanding and miscommunication is very high. For example, even though the general understanding may indicate otherwise, one cannot answer in the affirmative to this very simple question: 'Do faculty have a primary role in curriculum?' This is because according to BP 203

faculty has primacy only in course development; program development is a matter of mutual agreement. At the same time, BP 203 is silent regarding the roles of staff and students. It is expected that the revised policy will address the matter.

Issue of Organizational Structure and Planning Processes

The visit of the ACCJC team in 2009 coincided with a period of change and uncertainty regarding the organizational structure and reporting lines. The college was in the process of developing and adjusting to a new Program Review Process and Integrated Planning Model. In addition, committee structures and governance process (culminating with the College Council) were not yet fully affirmed. The institution was also in the middle of a significant change in the committee structure as the President reduced his involvement in most committees to allow the consultative process to work.

Issue of Inclusion

While the Education Code clearly delineates faculty roles, the roles and responsibilities of other constituent groups are not so well defined. As a result it is left to the institution to determine the extent and level of inclusion of other constituents. College of the Redwoods was at a point in time where it especially needed to evaluate the role of managers, staff and students in institutional process.

Action I: Mission and Vision

The vision, mission and values of a college serve as a guide and driving force for its actions. The College of the Redwoods mission, vision and values statements are lengthy and not very useful in their current form. Many employees cannot recite, paraphrase or summarize the ideals within our vision, mission and values statements.

The college has taken seriously the task of clarifying and revising these statements that underlie the many decisions that are part of meeting the needs of our students and community. An open meeting facilitated by Pam Fisher of the Association of Community College Trustees was held on April 29, 2010 to brainstorm about prospective changes to the mission and vision statements and the core values of the college [Evidence 7a and 7b]. This was a well-attended meeting, with 38 people present, including seven who took advantage of telecommunication technology to attend remotely. Many creative ideas emerged from this enthusiastic meeting and draft phrasings were suggested by the eight small discussion groups [Evidence 8]. An ad hoc committee [Evidence 9] has been appointed by College Council to merge these phrasings into one or several possible draft mission statements to which the college community as a whole will have the opportunity to respond this fall. Following that response the new mission and vision statements will be finalized and adopted by the Board utilizing their board policy review protocol. The strategic planning process coming up in 2011 will be rooted in the new mission and vision statements [Evidence-10].

Action II: Organizational Chart & Committee Structure

Starting with the Fall 2009 semester President Jeff Marsee began revising the college's organizational structure and the organizational chart to reflect the new structure of administrative roles and positions at the college. Reporting lines were streamlined, and committee structures have been revised. Subsequent to that, the President's cabinet members also revised their organizational charts.

The college has also substantially completed the task of clarifying the roles and membership structure of the committees [Evidence-11]. A significant number of committees have published roles, membership structure and committee actions. A webpage has been created to provide access to all committee information in one place [link]. After several years of fluidity and varying committee compositions, the organizational structure, committee structure, and constituency roles and responsibilities have now been solidified. The current organizational chart can be viewed at <http://www.redwoods.edu/HumanResources/OrgCharts/index.asp> [Evidence 12]. The new organizational chart has been shared with the Administrators, Managers and Directors (AMD) and classified staff, and is included in the faculty handbook.

Action III: BP/AP Revision

The college has started the process of revising Board Policies (BPs) and Administrative Procedures (APs). Over a period of time the college evolved in such a way that many inconsistencies now exist between BP/AP and other college processes. An illustrative example is the discrepancy between Senate By-laws and APs on curriculum committee chair. APs refer to co-chairs (VPI and faculty) while Senate By-laws refer to one chair (faculty). Over the summer, the Senior Administrators and the AMD group, who usually meets quarterly, convened either weekly or biweekly to work, among other things, on revising BPs and APs utilizing a planning matrix [Evidence 13a and 13b]. Intensive AMD summer meetings provided administrators, managers and directors an opportunity to work collaboratively as a cohesive unit. The draft revisions to BPs and APs have been routed to the appropriate governance units—such as a sunset list to College Council and AB 1725 matters to Academic Senate. All revised board policies will be presented to the Board for their approval.

The revision process has not been completed and is expected to take additional time since many matters deal with 'mutual agreement' aspect of collegial consultation. It is our belief that the completion of the process will significantly reduce friction points, especially between faculty and administration. The BP/AP revision process has also been very educational for the AMD group in that they were able to delve into the detailed nuances of AB 1725. As a result the AMD group certainly has developed a good understanding of AB 1725. There are also plans to have discourse with faculty to resolve differences in understanding.

Action IV: Improve Planning Processes

Program Review: During the 2009 - 2010 academic year, the Program Review Committee (PRC) worked diligently to review and evaluate Instructional and Student Services programs and departments. In May, 2010 the PRC provided an Executive Summary [Evidence 14] of all programs and departments to various senior staff, the Academic Senate and in Fall 2010, to the Board of Trustees. This summary detailed three main components for all programs and departments - Trends, Budget and Assessment - and suggested integrated planning recommendations to improve the linkages between resource allocation and program review information.

In addition, the PRC assisted with the integrated planning process, recommending improvements for the program review process and the Integrated Planning Model (IPM) process. Revisions were made to the program review templates and data sets and recommendations were provided to various Integrated Planning Functional Committees (IPFCs) and the Budget Planning Committee (BPC) to improve the flow of planning information.

In Fall 2010, the PRC met and revised the program review cycles and calendars to accommodate proper resource allocation based on program review data. These modifications are the result of a formal recommendation to improve the IPM process based on the evaluation of the PRC progress in the 2009-2010 academic year [Evidence 15]. The PRC identified the IPM timing deficiency and altered the process as needed. This new cycle allows:

- the PRC to review and evaluate programs and departments every spring semester,
- the IPFCs to review and evaluate program and department needs every fall semester,
- the BPC to receive priorities from the IPFCs in fall for inclusion to the preliminary budget
- The PRC has developed an addendum to the program review process [Evidence 16] to close the loop regarding resource allocation and program and department needs.

The effectiveness of the PRC has been enhanced significantly, and it is forging ahead with its new cycle and calendars. In conjunction with Institutional Research, the PRC plans trainings to share the new addendum and the new PRC templates with faculty, staff and students.

Integrated Planning Model (IPM): The college adopted a revised Integrated Planning Model in May 2010, which enabled the college to integrate major aspects of its organizational planning into a clear dynamic circular flow. This can be viewed in the Appendix and at [Evidence 17]

In the late spring and early fall of 2010, three of the Integrated Planning Functional Committees (IPFCs) - Technology, Facility, and Enrollment Management - completed their work on program review priorities. Over the summer, the Furniture and Equipment IPFC met to discuss its unassessed program review needs. As required by the process, the four IPFCs provided the Budget Planning Committee (BPC) with a set of rubric-assessed program review priorities for the college. Other program review information and data was forwarded to the Assessment Coordinator, Institutional Research and the Education Master Plan Committee [Evidence 18]. In Fall 2010, co-chairs from the four IPFCs met with the Vice President of Student Services and Programs, who is co-chair of the PRC and a member of the BPC, to note the strengths and

weaknesses from the previous academic year. The need for an assortment of improvements was revealed and shared with the various IPFCs, the PRC and the BPC to improve integrated planning process for the college.

Overall, the college has modified the IPM process based upon lessons learned from the 2009-2010 cycle. The college resolved multiple integrated planning components during the 2009-2010 academic year. For the first time, the PRC created an executive summary, forwarded a priority list from each IPFC, and created strong linkages between resource allocation and program review. The college looks forward to enacting the revised components and to completing a full cycle of integrated planning. A chart illustrating the latest revision of the IPM as of May 31, 2010, can be found at <http://inside.redwoods.edu/StrategicPlanning/integratedplanningmodel.asp>

An important feature of the IPM process was the development of internal operating agreements by four IPFC's [Evidence 19]. The operating agreements have helped in clarifying committee processes and enhancing trust. However, the college still lacks operating agreements on the IPM process and the overall governance process.

Budget Planning Committee: Formerly known as the Financial Advisory Committee, the BPC has recently revised its description, scope, charge, membership and planning priorities [Evidence 20]. In late summer and fall of 2010, for the first time, the BPC received various program review priorities from all IPFC's except Faculty Prioritization under the newly revised IPM process.

The BPC created a transparent process to review and evaluate program review priorities along with supplemental operational needs. A budget request form was created to standardize supplemental budget requests [Evidence 21]. These priorities were finalized in Fall 2010 and shared with the college community via the website <http://inside.redwoods.edu/BudgetPlanning/>. It is worthwhile pointing out that the Budget Planning Committee maintains the IPFC rankings while assigning district-wide priority—that is, project number two from the facilities IPFC will not be district-ranked above facilities project number one.

The BPC has been radically transformed in function, scope and charge, moving from misperceptions and unequal membership to a constituent based body engaged in a transparent process and open communication. During 2009-2010, the BPC has recently completed the task of ranking over 60 requests totaling over \$2.2 million [Evidence 22].

College Council: College Council is the apex governance body at College of the Redwoods. In Spring 2010, responding to constituent concerns, the College Council revised its operating agreement and scope, began improving the composition of the council by having all constituent groups represented, and created a Board Policies and Administrative Policies Matrix to plan revisions. Two student representatives, a Managers Council representative and two members from CSEA (California School Employees Association) were added to the Council [Evidence 23]. The Council's first policy revision was BP 5055, "Enrollment Priorities," which was approved on May 7, 2010. The college has set an ambitious agenda for multiple revisions and "sunsetting" other policies and procedures during the Fall 2010 academic term. The BP/AP

Revision Matrix outlines the list of policies up for review and can be seen at <http://inside.redwoods.edu/CollegeCouncil/PoliciesProceduresunderrevision.asp> [Evidence 24]

At the first two meetings in Fall 2010, College Council discussed the review process of both old and new BPs and APs. The Council adopted a constituent review process whereby when a policy is brand new or affects a large number of people, the review period would be 90 days to allow for adequate constituent review. For other policies, including minor revisions, the 30-day review period is deemed sufficient. The agenda for the September 1st meeting also contained a “sunset” list of policies scheduled to expire. The need for “sunsetting” was discovered during the matrix revision process because some of the existing BP/APs were contract-negotiable items and others have now become irrelevant [Evidence 25]. The agenda with this list may be seen at: <http://inside.redwoods.edu/CollegeCouncil/agendas.asp>. Board policies may be seen at: <http://www.redwoods.edu/district/board/New/index.asp>. A full list of the composition of College Council can be seen at <http://inside.redwoods.edu/CollegeCouncil/Members.asp> [Evidence 26]

The College Council’s roles, responsibilities, and composition have been strengthened and clarified. A more reasonable time line for the approval of BP and AP changes has been instituted, allowing more time for feedback and thereby reducing concerns about hasty decision-making.

There is concern among the faculty, as expressed during the Academic Senate meeting held on September 17, 2010 at which a draft of this follow-up report was presented, regarding the role of AMD in the BP and AP revisions made this summer. Members of the Senate expressed their dissatisfaction that the AMD group did not work in collaboration with faculty during the first attempt at revisions. This example demonstrates how and why potential for misunderstandings exists in the collegial consultation process. The BPs and APs reviewed and proposed revisions provided by the AMD group over the summer did not include “areas of primacy” as noted in reflected in BP 203. The AMD group did, however, begin work on “mutually agreed” policies and procedures, areas in which faculty and administration have equal voice.

Action V: Managers Council

During a series of meetings in Summer 2010 where the Administrators, Managers and Directors (AMD) engaged in development of strategic action plans and review of BP/APs, it became clear that the AMD group did not have a constituent role in institutional governance processes. Concern was expressed that the group did not have a voice as a constituent group in the college’s collegial consultation process. With the assistance of external consultant, Roger James, the AMD group evaluated the need for an organized managers’ group. AMD convened twice with Roger James to assess the value, need, benefits and risks of forming such a group, and they brainstormed possible scope, membership, functions and duties as a group and the value of representatives serving on various committees in the collegial consultation process. The AMD group met twice in August 2010 and formally voted to form the Managers Council. On September 10, 2010 the Managers Council approved its charter [Evidence 27] and began the process to nominate a President, Vice-President and Writing Officer of the Council. The Council considered the committees on which the Council would like representation in order to contribute to the collegial consultation process. Among them are the Extended Cabinet and College

Council. The Managers Council was formally recognized at the October Board of Trustees meeting and will continue its work as an established and recognized constituent group.

Section III: Improving Communication and Trust

The employee satisfaction survey brought to light significant discontent regarding communication within the college. Many believe that communication is heavily top-down, without sufficient or even safe routes for bottom-up communication. A significant number of employees, as indicated by both the survey and numerous interviews and conversations, believe that communication is one-sided and that many decisions are made in a directive manner which should have included constituent participation or collaboration. Similarly, interviews and conversations have continued to indicate lack of trust in the administration and respect between constituents.

Action I: Organizational Communications Sessions

The college continues to explore various means by which common understandings can be established and constructive behavior can be chosen when conflict exists. The clarification and strengthening of roles and responsibilities are central to making clear communication possible. In August, September and October of 2010, meetings were held allowing staff at the college an opportunity to understand newly clarified roles and responsibilities. Vice President for Instruction Utpal K. Goswami facilitated a meeting with classified staff on August 6 and on September 29 with faculty, at which roles and responsibilities were discussed [Evidence 28]. Vice President for Learning and Student Development Keith Snow-Flamer led meetings on August 12 and October 7 on the topic of integrated planning [Evidence 29]. President Jeff Marsee led meetings on August 18 and October 6, on the topic of budgeting [Evidence 30]. While all affected may not agree with the definitions of roles and responsibilities, or institutional processes, or the way internal decisions are made, the sessions were intended to help bridge the gap of understandings between constituents.

Action II: Improve Access to Information

A recurring theme in large organizations is employee concerns about the lack of information available to them on matters relating to governance. While unrealistic expectations cannot be ruled out, frequently the issue has more to do with two inherent flaws in representative governance: while members do not completely entrust the matter of representation to their elected (or appointed) representative, the representative in return does not always relay back pertinent information to constituents. In addition, information, though plentiful, can be very difficult to locate and access in a large organization.

The college has devoted significant staff resources to the creation of a single location (webpage) for constituents to access information on governance processes. By going to this webpage employees can access important videos and documents and review committee actions. In order to reduce the number of clicks, the home page of every committee has a summary of last important actions taken and a list of pending actions. Constituents no longer have to go through the cumbersome process of scrolling through agendas and minutes to get a sense of what is going on. While it will take some time for all committees to get accustomed to the imperative of posting relevant information, a review of the site will show that all major committees have started to post information.

During Convocation the college scheduled [Evidence 31] an informational session entitled “What’s Where?” to introduce the college community to <http://.inside.redwoods.edu> , the “one-stop shop” for committee and college planning information.

By encouraging a culture of defining committee roles, developing operating principles and posting detailed information, the college has taken a vital step in ensuring that governance information is available to all interested parties. At the same time, there is also dissatisfaction over communication about ultimate disposition of committee recommendations. Representatives from many committees indicate that they do not receive any feedback regarding the approval or non-approval of committee recommendations. Resolving the feedback issue is likely to enhance trust in the committee process.

Action III: Increased Communication from the President

President Jeff Marsee made a number of proactive innovations to enhance communication among the college’s constituents. For example, he publishes the President’s Newsletters quarterly, discussing recent developments and achievements District-wide. Copies of these newsletters can be seen at <http://www.redwoods.edu/district/president/newsletter.asp> .[Evidence 32] He continues to hold informal gatherings in his office known as the President’s Hour and anyone may drop in to discuss issues or to just have a cup of coffee. About once a month, he holds the President’s Broadcast, a live broadcast discussion at which he addresses various topics and takes questions submitted by email, phone or in person. Finally, the notes from the Cabinet meetings are now available through the President’s homepage, at <http://www.redwoods.edu/district/president/CabinetNotes.asp> [Evidence 33]

While the President continues to make a concerted effort to be available and share current and upcoming initiatives with the college, it is also apparent that the college community has struggled to adapt to President Marsee’s leadership style. Many view these communications as one-directional.

Action IV: Encourage Bottom-Up Communication

In order to engage instructional leaders who have not been afforded the opportunity to participate effectively in the existing operating structure, the Vice President of Instruction (VPI) has created an Instructional Council whose membership includes all Deans, Area Coordinators and Program Coordinators. This new Council’s goal is improving communication and strengthening the instructional coordination of the college. The Instructional Council is an advisory body to the Deans’ Council and the VPI. The Council reviews operational policies and procedures and provides feedback to the Deans’ Council and the VPI. The Instructional Council is also a place where instructional plans will be discussed before moving to the development/implementation phase. The Council will guide the VPI in evaluating, among other things, emerging issues/opportunities and operational aspects of instruction. Their first meeting was held on September 30, 2010 and the Council will meet monthly [Evidence 34a and 34b].

During Fall 2009 and Spring 2010, bi-weekly meetings were held including the Vice President of Instruction and the Academic Senate Co-Presidents. Later in the Fall 2009, President Jeff Marsee

was added to this group. The meetings continue to be held on the alternate weeks and continued into the Fall 2010 semester. The small size of this group has been helpful in fostering genuine, respectful discussion, rapport, and effective communication among those involved.

Adjunct faculty is an often overlooked employee group in educational institutions, and College of the Redwoods is no exception in needing to integrate them fully in the college community. Their contributions to the college are immense and, quite literally, the college would not be able to function without them. The college has created and filled the position of Associate Faculty Coordinator. The idea for this position came from the employee satisfaction survey and action plans created by the AMD group. The Associate Faculty Coordinator will oversee, among other things, the professional development needs of associate faculty [Evidence 35]. The Coordinator will also foster increased communication and inclusion in the college community.

Action V: Explore Processes for Conflict Resolution

Recognizing the need for better ways to deal constructively with conflict, the college brought two nationally known groups to conduct training sessions on effective communications and conflict resolution. Drs. Peter and Susan Glaser, experts in effective communication within organizations, were invited to present a keynote speech, “Be Quiet, Be Heard; the Paradox of Persuasion,” during Convocation on August 26, 2010. The college demonstrated its dedication to improving communication among employees by closing major college functions on that day until 1:00 PM so that all main campus employees could participate. Employees from various centers and sites around the district were provided the opportunity to participate in convocation activities with the assistance of travel funds. The Glasers also conducted a well-attended workshop, on “Breakthrough Conflict” [Evidence 36].

Based upon constituent interest, a team from Los Rios Community College District was invited to conduct a one-day seminar to provide training on the principles and processes of Interest-Based Problem Solving. Los Rios was chosen because their model has been successful at creating a supportive, problem-solving culture at Los Rios and at achieving cooperation. A group of 35 employees and one board member participated in this one-day workshop to learn processes for working through conflict and improve collegial decision-making processes [Evidence 37]. Although the college has not formally adopted this model, it has made a commitment to send a team of four individuals for the comprehensive three-day training in Interest-Based Problem Solving in November 2010. It should be noted that although the participants found the training very valuable and relevant, the concluding exercise also provided stark evidence that the college still has significant work to do in the matter of trust between constituents.

At the same time, there is also evidence that the college community is willing to work together. Faculty have stepped up to the plate to fully participate in the comprehensive self study process. The self study committees now also include staff tri-chairs and student representatives. The Academic Senate Co-Presidents and the Vice President of Instruction have made a commitment to apply interest-based problem solving principles to bring closure to the vexing faculty prioritization issue by October 2010.

The college has also invited Scott Lay, CEO, California Community College League, and Jane Patton, President of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, for a return visit (they came to College of the Redwoods in October 2009 on a technical assistance visit) on October 11-12, 2010 to help in identifying areas of improvement. Their recommendations from the 2009 visit included (college action in parenthesis) revising the composition of College Council (done), continuing to clarify roles related to AB 1725 (in progress as described in an earlier section), devoting efforts to “grow their own” administrators (AMD group met regularly in summer for training directed at grooming them for promotion; Managers Council established) and conducting annual review of governance process (proceeding in an ad hoc fashion).

The college is beginning to show signs of being able to work through conflicts. The manner in which the employee satisfaction survey was released brought to light significant discontent regarding communication within the college. This event ultimately resulted in a letter to the Board of Trustees in the April 2010 meeting [Evidence 38] signed by more than 160 faculty and staff. Subsequently, CSEA issued a vote of no confidence (relating to representation and budget assumption of freezing step increases for reduced summer workweek) in the Board of Trustees which still stands. In response President Marsee issued a call to “reverse this painful course.” In spite of this difficult time, the CSEA and the college were able to come to an agreement on a new three-year contract in an amicable manner [Evidence 39]. Similarly, Trustee George Truett and the Academic Senate were able to resolve Trustee Truett’s charge of violating the Brown Act in a professional and productive manner [Evidence 40].

Trust is an elusive quality or experience, harder to create or heal when it has suffered. Nor can it be ordered through a series of action plans. Its creation or improvement is assisted through taking active steps to define roles and expectations, increase communication, exploring creative problem solving, and modeling behaviors that indicate willingness to listen and enter into open and respectful dialogue on the part of all stakeholders as well as to involve constituents appropriately in decision-making. All of the activities and events mentioned in the sections regarding roles and responsibilities as well as communication are one part of the means by which trust is expected to be enhanced and respect increased. In the final analysis, trust must be earned and, by definition, must be mutual—which necessarily takes time. It will be important to sustain the initiatives through multiple cycles of success to bring credibility and consequently build up levels of trust.

Section IV: Conclusion

The narrative of the report and the evidence provided show that the college has taken the ACCJC recommendation seriously and enacted many initiatives to address the recommendation. In a short period of eight months the college has taken a number of actions to clarify roles and responsibilities. They include:

- Discussing the interpretation and implications for decision-making of AB 1725.
- Starting the process for creating new mission and vision statements for the college.
- Publishing revised and detailed organizational charts.
- Improving the Program Review and Integrated Planning Model.
- Improving processes for information to move into and out of the Budget Planning Committee.
- Creating the in-house website <http://inside.redwoods.edu>, which is a central location where many kinds of information can be found.
- Revising the description, scope, charge, membership and priorities of the Budget Planning Committee.
- Beginning the process of revising the board policies and administrative procedures with an increased review period for many of these new/revised policies and procedures.
- Organizational communication presentations by Vice Presidents Keith Snow-Flamer, Utpal K. Goswami and President Jeff Marsee, which have contributed to the clarification of roles and responsibilities.

A new or revised administrative and governance structure, by definition, realigns or shifts perceived or actual “balance of power.” That has clearly taken place at College of the Redwoods—where “administration” assumed (or perceived to have taken), consistent with AB 1725 and Education Code, ownership of certain operational roles and responsibilities. Though there is still disagreement, and perhaps displeasure with the new structure, the college believes that it has taken substantial actions to clarify roles and responsibilities.

Many factors can contribute to either the fostering or the damaging of mutual trust and respect. Times of change, unclear roles and responsibilities, modes of behavior, patterns of decision-making, and poorly defined communication channels, or even the lack of them, have contributed to a lack of trust in the college. With roles and responsibilities more clearly defined, “who” should be communicating “what” will be clearer, as well as “who” should be deciding “what.” Many tasks have been undertaken to assist constituents in resolving conflicts and encouraging bottom-up communication, including:

- A training that was presented in the use of the Interest-Based Problem Solving approach used in the Los Rios Community College District.
- Adopting a number of new ways for the President to communicate with the college community, with a number of new routes available for people to communicate with him.
- The creation of an advisory Instructional Council by the Vice President of Instruction.
- Paid work time to allow many employees to attend various sessions of Convocation.

- The creation of the Managers Council, with the assistance of an external consultant.
- Effective communication and conflict resolution sessions conducted during Convocation by external consultants Drs. Peter and Susan Glaser.

It is imperative that as a first step people begin to trust the institutional processes. While there may be debate whether they are sufficient, the college has undertaken a number of initiatives to set the stage for rebuilding trust in the processes. The expectation is that sustaining the initiatives through multiple cycles will allow gradual building of trust. The creation of a culture of trust, cooperation in decision-making, and free-flow of communication is a continual process. The process must be the object of persistent fine-tuning, innovation and encouragement. This report has indicated that the college still has work to do in the matter of enhancing trust. However, it can be said that the mechanisms in place in October 2010 are much better than those in October 2009. When dedicated and committed faculty, staff, administration, and students bring together their views and ideas with passion, decision-making and policy development processes will inevitably bring about struggle and disagreements. What is important is the ability of the college to work through such contention. The college is committed to appropriately engaging the entire college community in the decision-making process to guide the President and the Board of Trustees and to promoting a culture of respect and trust.