

MID-CYCLE PEER-EVALUATION REPORT

TILLAMOOK BAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Tillamook, Oregon

October 19-20, 2016

**A confidential report of findings prepared for the
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities**

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ROSTER OF PEER EVALUATORS

Dr. Warren Brown (Chair)

President
North Seattle College
Seattle, Washington

Ms. Sally Jackson

Director of Planning, Institutional Effectiveness & Research
Spokane Falls Community College
Spokane, Washington

INTRODUCTION

Tillamook Bay Community College (TBCC) is a public two-year institution located in the northwest Oregon coast, which serves about 2,000 students (duplicated annual head count). The college was founded in 1981 after Clatsop Community College determined it would no longer offer classes in Tillamook County. From 1981 through 2014, TBCC operated under a contract for accreditation from Portland Community College (PCC). TBCC became fully accredited as an independent college in 2014. TBCC offers certificates and degrees in transfer and professional/technical fields, as well as ABE, GED, and ESOL programs across their various sites (Main Campus; North County Center; South County Center; Manufacturing and Industrial Technology Center). Currently TBCC employs 7 full-time faculty and 31 part-time faculty (per term).

From October 19-20, 2016, a two-person Peer-Evaluation Committee (hereafter, known as “Committee”) from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) conducted a Mid-Cycle Evaluation.

ASSESSMENT OF SELF-EVALUATION REPORT AND MATERIALS (PART I)

The Committee electronically received TBCC “Self-Evaluation Report” on September 13, 2016. The document provided a general narrative in response to each of the three elements of the Mid-Cycle Report. The Committee thought the on-campus visit was important to provide additional evidence to the “Self-Evaluation Report.” In particular, the Committee sought additional evidence of student learning outcomes, deeper analysis of the college’s two representative examples of its operationalized mission and core themes progressing from objectives to indicators to outcomes to mission fulfillment, and a review of how the college continues to address NWCCU’s prior Comprehensive Initial Accreditation report and recommendation. To further deepen the discussion during the on-campus visit, the Committee provided TBCC a copy of the NWCCU’s “Rubric for Evaluating Outcomes Assessment Plan and Progress” (see appendix).

Reviewing TBCC’s Self-Evaluation along with observations from the on-campus visit allowed the Committee to understand the college’s evolution of mission fulfillment and core themes. It is evident that the college’s leadership working with the Board of Trustees both develops and reviews aspects of planning, assessment and performance. Work towards TBCC “Strategic Framework 2020” plan and gaining independent accreditation aided in TBCC’s expression of their core themes. TBCC has framed mission fulfillment through six strategic goals that act as pillars across the three core themes. Through the discussions during the Committee’s visit, the college communicated a dedication to their core themes and their strategic goal framework yet stated that objectives and measures might be reassessed over-time.

NARRATIVE RESPONSE TO SELF-EVALUATION (PART II)

The following response is organized through NWCCU's "Rubric for Evaluating Outcomes Assessment Plan and Progress." The rubric includes four institutional developmental categories – from "initial", to "emerging", to "developed", and finally "highly developed." While the rubric uses the term "indicators" TBCC however uses the term "measures". In this report the two terms are used to indicate the same concept.

Assessment Planning

In the Mid-Cycle Report, a summary of objectives and indicators for each core theme was provided. Additionally, the "TBCC Mission Fulfillment & Institutional Effectiveness Report Sept. 6. 2016" included a five-year snapshot of historical data for most (but not all) measures. The two documents also included an "assessment key" for identifying outcome success for the varied measures. Since TBCC had previously provided data for multiple years for planning, this category received a score of "developed" due to the detail and ambitiousness of their plan. It is significant to note that PCC controlled the assessment planning process through 2014 since TBCC was then an assignee of PCC's accreditation. In a short period, TBCC reviewed PCC's plan and identified that it failed to address the unique local educational needs of their community and created their own plan. This profound cultural change provided agency to TBCC and their local community. With TBCC's focus on planning processes, it was articulated during the on-site visit that the review and reconstruction of PCC's learning outcomes remains as a needed task. Additionally, it was clear to the Committee that TBCC has baseline data. However, it was not evident to the Committee how TBCC has established benchmarks. For example, the assessment key is used primarily as a status key rather than a true assessment of the work or the objectives, which makes it difficult to establish benchmarks. For this category to become "highly developed" the plan would include several years of historical data for each indicator, assessable learning outcomes, stated baselines and clearly identifiable benchmarks over multiple years.

Assessable Outcomes

This category addresses the presence of demonstrated student learning outcomes in the assessment framework. Although currently not set, TBCC has a plan for the current year to review, reduce, and/or re-write course level outcomes and then move on to higher level learning outcomes over the next two or three years. TBCC faculty have a solid understanding of their course level outcomes needs. As provided in the Mid-Cycle Report, most of TBCC measures represent either inputs (e.g., number service learning classes) or outputs (e.g., number of basic skills/ESOL completions, number of associate degree completions, or number of licensing/certifications). Certainly, the inputs and outputs already included in the plan represent important aspects of maintaining a positive learning environment but are insufficient to provide assessable outcomes. The institutional measures, as presented, do not incorporate direct assessment of student learning. Thus, this category is seen as "Initial." We are encouraged that the faculty and administration understand and are prepared to engage in the large task of creating assessable outcomes rolling up into the institutional outcomes that support institutional effectiveness and mission fulfillment. A "highly developed" plan in this category would include multiple measures of direct student learning (in addition to inputs and outputs) with clear evidence that assessment results were being used to make improvements.

Assessment Implementation

Assessment implementation refers to collection of data and development of review criteria by relevant faculty. The Committee was encouraged to discover during the on-campus visit that the breadth of faculty engagement is deeper than what was evident in the college's self-report. The Committee saw this category to be "initial" based on the college's early stage implementation of their assessment processes, and that some but not the entire faculty are engaged in the review of the learning outcomes at all levels of the institution. Better integration of faculty-driven assessment of student learning outcomes within the institutional framework is needed in order to move this category forward. During the on-campus visit, the Committee noted that the Service Learning example showed a clear process, yet that process appeared ad-hoc and not systematically tied to assessment of institutional effectiveness. The absence of multi-leveled learning objectives makes it more difficult to have a meaningful implementation process. A "highly developed" category would include multiple sets of data using assessment criteria developed by faculty. In addition, when the Committee expressed some reservation if sufficient progress can be made in preparation for the year-7 visit, we were comforted that faculty and administration share that this is the most important task over the next few years.

Alignment

The impact of TBCC involvement with Achieving the Dream and movement toward establishing a culture of "personal, small, and a high-technology learning community for student success" is notable. In this sense, alignment between TBCC's 2020 plan, core themes, and outcomes is still growing. For example, work being done in TBCC's pre-college math reform is impressive, substantial, and offers great hope for students. Yet more alignment and clarity is needed on how the pre-college math initiative supports the college's core themes and objectives. This lack of clarity is exemplified by faculty's uncertainty if their work aligns solely to objective of "completion" or could this also be seen in objective of "achievement." The Committee could not find data of completion of math sequence linked to the awarding of certificates or degrees. Thus, "emerging" in this category is a reflection of the areas in which alignment has been established at TBCC. However, the category of "highly developed" would have included clear, direct and intentional alignment between curriculum, grading, support services, and outcomes for each of the relevant measures.

Valid Results

During our on-site visit, our Committee attempted to understand how the college conceptualized what was seen as valid and reliable data. As learned during the on-site visit, in some outcomes or core themes TBCC has a substantial need for qualitative data but the college expressed a level of uncertainty on how to accomplish that with valid results. This could be a good opportunity for Title III resources to provide professional development for faculty and administration to develop appropriate qualitative analytical skills and a general understanding on appropriate utilization of qualitative results. The lack of meaningful data collection (of any kind) raises concerns about the ability to establish validity of the assessment. As such, the concept of validity in the data was initially deemed "initial." The Committee had a discussion with TBCC regarding the generalization of the outcomes in the Service Learning example. The data collected did not support the generalized finding and use of it as evidence of mission fulfillment. A "highly developed" category would show multiple years of measures with established validity and quantitative and qualitative measures.

Reliable Results

Reliability in the data is a concept generally used to describe consistency between evaluators, sometimes referred to as inter-rater reliability. In the college setting, this refers specifically to faculty, who are the subject matter experts concerning evaluation of student learning. Since there are no related indicators in TBCC's current framework, this category was also seen as "initial." For example, during the on-site visit, the Service Learning faculty identified an interest in using the same instrument over all classes and over a period of several terms for meaningful institutional level evaluations to occur. This is a very good plan; as TBCC moves in this direction, higher levels of assessment of learning outcomes and institutional level outcomes can be achieved. A "highly developed" rating in this category would include multiple years of data with established consistency between evaluators of student learning.

Annual Feedback on Assessment Efforts

Clearly, course level assessments have strong support within the faculty for continuous improvement. As such, faculty engaged in this work regularly review (even within the duration of an academic term) and gather feedback on their course level assessments. It is clear that TBCC has established regular review protocols for some aspects of its institutional effectiveness framework, such as strategic planning. The "strategic framework 2020" includes information about the schedule for tracking course-learning outcomes. It is impressive that a cultural shift and a greater sense of agency has occurred now that TBCC has separated from PCCs accreditation. There is great promise, but the lack of clear learning outcomes hurts TBCC in having actionable results. Yet having a small faculty creates opportunities to make quick changes based on assessment results. However, there are areas in which the process is still under construction, such as with program review and non-instructional areas. For these reasons, the college is seen at the "emerging" stage for assessment and "developed" stage for strategic planning and reporting. For TBCC to reach the "highly developed" stage, the college would include an established annual feedback process for all program areas, demonstrated department use of the feedback, and clear links to the budget development process and institutional support.

Results are Used

This category represents a concept that is often referred to as "closing the feedback loop." Like the previous category, this concept received a status of "emerging." In some areas, such as measures related to retention and completion, which are tied to the college's Achieving the Dream efforts, the practice is established. The faculty are actively engaged in Oregon state groups that discuss methodologies to change Math and English outcomes. However, the process of using results is only as good as the data that is collected. Organizational planning and the relationship between the community has been ever present – which means student learning outcomes are not as developed as those of a college with a longer history could demonstrate. Thus, there is an absence in institutional history towards documenting the use of results. As noted in the "assessable outcomes" section, the college places a greater value in input and output data versus looking at outcomes. A "highly developed" institutional stage would include an established process of data collection, discussion and response for the purpose of improvement for all indicators.

Planning and Budgeting

The amount of effort that has gone into strategic planning, particularly since the establishment of TBCC's independent accreditation status, is profound. The ability of TBCC to build a sizable

reserve account is commendable. However, no information was provided in the Mid-Cycle report to show any connection between TBCC's strategic planning, objectives, and measures and how those outcomes relate to the budgeting process. In light of this, the college is seen as "Initial." The faculty expressed high levels of satisfaction on how Title III funds have been available for their professional development. Yet there needs additional examples of relationship between the core themes, the 2020 framework, and evidence of an integrated budgeting plan that provides resources (standard 2) to achieve mission fulfillment (standard 5). A "highly developed" level would include a planning and assessment process that is fully, systematically, and intentionally aligned.

FORMATIVE COMMENTS (PART III)

In light of your accreditation history and the continued evolution of TBCC, the Committee acknowledges the following as promising practices:

1. The successful achievement of their own accreditation and establishment of their own identity as a separate college was the culmination of successful committee work, leadership, and community involvement.
2. The college's relationship with the community is highly tangible to outsiders. The relationship is valuable and highly leveraged as a core value of the college. This led to impressive outcomes such as funding new scholarships and capital construction through community support.
3. The president and CAO have demonstrated strong leadership during the difficult work of gaining independent accreditation and are respected by the faculty. They have the credibility to harness the talent within the community and work towards the institutional goals. In turn, the leadership clearly respects the faculty's role and ability to accomplish the necessary curriculum work.
4. Evidence supports the clear ambition and willingness of faculty to take on the critical work of learning outcome revision.
5. TBCC has a healthy teaching and learning environment where part-time faculty are included, students are considered everyone's responsibility, and faculty and administration are creating a tangible culture of relationship.
6. TBCC embraces nimbleness as an institutional value and virtue. Though small in size with a flat organizational structure, they accomplish much. They embody this in their own words of "why not" when faced with challenges.

In preparation for the "Year Seven Review," the Committee encourages TBCC to focus on the following items:

1. Continued development of alignment between the strategic plan, core themes, and objectives, and refinement of measures. For example, both the Math alignment issue and the Service Learning data validity issue result from a lack clarity between the objectives and measures.
2. Review and document measures as they move from inputs and outputs to outcomes and clearly establish mission fulfillment.
3. Course-level learning outcomes: we have confidence that the institution is committed, ready, and has the resources to engage in course level learning outcome work. Yet, it is important to note that the college's small number of faculty are doing extensive work. Mapping course-learning objectives to institutional learning outcomes is very involved. Knowing that the college faces possible disruption, such as the imminent leadership change and the usual vagaries of an unknown future, which is typical to all colleges, the Committee is concerned that TBCC may not have a successful year-7 visit.
4. The accreditation focus on learning outcomes and resource alignment is a new process for many colleges. This concept might be a challenge in that TBCC needs to understand and have buy-in for the centrality of linking outcome plans and resources to accomplish mission fulfillment.

APPENDIX: NWCCU RUBRIC

Rubric for Evaluating Outcomes Assessment Plan and Progress

| Criterion | Initial | Emerging | Developed | Highly Developed |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Assessment Planning | No formal plan | Relies on short-term planning | Clear multi-year plan | Clear multi-year plan with several years of implementation |
| Assessable Outcomes | Non-specific outcomes. Do not state student learning outcomes | Most outcomes indicate how students demonstrate learning | Each outcome describes student demonstration of learning | Outcomes describe demonstration of student learning. Outcomes used for improvement. |
| Assessment Implementation | Not clear that assessment data is collected | Evidence collected Faculty have discussed relevant criteria for reviewing | Evidence is collected and faculty use relevant criteria | Evidence collected, criteria determined and faculty discuss multiple sets of data. Data is used. |
| Alignment | No clear relationship between outcomes and curriculum | Some alignment between curriculum and outcomes | Clear alignment between curriculum and outcomes | Curriculum, grading and support services are aligned with outcomes |
| Valid Results | Little to no evidence that measures are valid | Majority of measures are valid | Valid measures in regular use | Multi-year use of valid measures |
| Reliable Results | No process to check for inter-rater reliability | Faculty preparing inter-rater reliability | Faculty check for inter-rater reliability | Multi-year use of process and evidence of good inter-rater reliability |
| Annual Feedback on Assessment Efforts | No person or committee provides feedback to departments on quality of their assessment plan | Occasional feedback by person or committee | Annual feedback by person or committee. Departments use feedback. | Annual feedback, departmental use and clear institutional support. |
| Results are Used | Results for outcomes are collected but not discussed. | Results collected, discussed but not used. | Results collected, discussed and used. | Results collected, discussed, used and evidence to confirm that changes lead to improved learning |
| Planning and Budgeting | Outcomes not integrated into planning and budget | Attempts at aligning outcomes and planning and budget | Alignment of outcomes and planning and budget occurs informally | Alignment of outcomes and planning is systematic and intentional |