

# ACCJC NEWS

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Fall 2009

## *Integrated Planning to Implement College Quality Improvement*

**M**ember institutions have been seeking more explanation of the ACCJC's requirement for **Integrated Planning**. Standard I.B.3 requires that institutions "assess progress toward achieving stated goals and make decisions regarding the improvement of institutional effectiveness in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, **Integrated Planning**, resource allocation, implementation and re-evaluation." While many member colleges have developed sound means of evaluating institutional quality, some still lack the ability to make systemic plans for needed or desired changes, and keep the institution's work focused on implementing those planned changes.

At the simplest level, plans describe the pathway from a current institutional quality, condition, or outcome, to an envisioned quality, condition or outcome at some defined future date. Plans are the promise to change and to do something differently. They require institutional commitments of attention and resources if they are to be achieved. Beset by the requirements of various agencies (e.g., state systems, accreditors, bond or fundraising

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campaigns) for different kinds of plans (strategic planning, tactical planning, enrollment planning, budget planning), institutions often have multiple plans, each targeting some part of institutional behavior but lacking alignment and cohesion to the other plans the institution has developed. Sometimes, the groups of individuals that develop various institutional planning documents are not aware of how their plan will fit with institutional priorities, but are simply hoping the existence of a plan will stimulate the institutional commitment. The result is institution-wide confusion about priorities, competition for institutional resources, and

failure to achieve important changes that the institution has identified as needed or desirable. Another result can be a distain among college constituencies toward both evaluation and planning activities.

When integrating plans and planning processes, a college must have a point in its decision-making process whereby it considers all of its plans, determines how to align them and which ones it will commit to, determines the sequence in which they might best be achieved, sets priorities, and allocates resources and responsibilities to achieve the needed changes by determined dates. Not all change-oriented actions need to be taken at the institutional level - many plans for change can be carried out at a departmental or unit level. Nevertheless, the institution needs to know about and make necessary commitments of resources to all the plans for improvement it has decided to advance. (The example of a new college library that stood empty for years because the institution had not planned to equip it comes to mind here.)

Integrated planning is neither top-down nor bottom-up; it is an interactive process in which an institution, through its governance processes, thoughtfully uses its values and vision to set priorities and deploy its resources and energies to achieve institutional changes and improvements at various levels of the organization in response to current or anticipated conditions. When institutions take a holistic, integrated approach to planning, they can find opportunities to combine and leverage plans, maximize effective use of resources as well as create more effective sequences for making changes. They may also find contradictions that need resolution - sometimes by the re-formulation or abandonment of some of the plans that were made. Actions determined through integrated planning bring the purpose of program review and evaluation alive and enable an institution to improve educational quality. ♦

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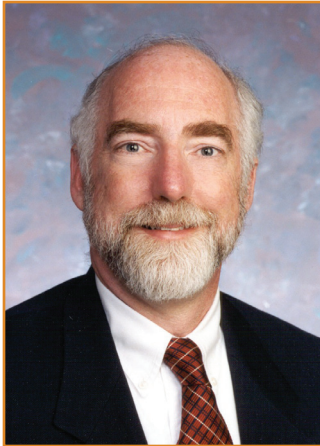
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## In Memory

### **Dr. Chris McCarthy 1952 - 2009**



The Commission sadly notes the passing of Dr. Chris McCarthy who has served on the Commission since July 1, 2007. Dr. McCarthy was the Superintendent/President of Napa Valley College. Chris, as he was known to most, served as an outstanding college president and as a leader on statewide education policy issues through his service on the Commission, on the Chief Executive Officers of the California Community Colleges Board, and coordinator of the Community College League-sponsored Vineyard Symposium which provides personal and professional development for college presidents. Beloved by colleagues, community leaders, and students, Chris was an avid poet and writer who rose from the ranks of faculty, dean, and vice president to become president at Napa Valley College in 2002. His passion for higher education and students, coupled with his gentle nature, good humor, and infectious smile will be deeply missed by all at Napa Valley College, the Commission, and educators throughout the Western Region. ♦

## Student Success and Institutional Assessment

More than 600 faculty, researchers and administrators attended the fourth annual Strengthening Student Success Conference, which was offered by the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group), in collaboration with the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, the ACCJC, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, with underwriting from the Hewlett Foundation and support from 3CMedia Solutions and Mt. San Antonio College. The Conference allows community college professionals to share ideas and practices that support student success, and focuses on using data on student achievement and student learning assessment results to identify effective institutional practices. The conference demonstrated, as do other data reported in this newsletter, that colleges are engaging actively and successfully in the work of assessing and improving student learning and student success.

One group that deserves special attention is the **Student Learning Outcomes Coordinators**. Many colleges have established this position, usually occupied by a faculty member, to provide leadership to college efforts to identify and assess learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels. The individuals occupying these positions face significant challenges as leaders of change in an emerging higher education practice: they have to become experts themselves, and promote greater expertise in assessment among their colleagues; they must often do their work with very limited resources, augmented by their own persuasiveness and passion; and they are tasked with bringing along individuals from diverse disciplinary backgrounds who have widely ranging professional ideas about intended student learning outcomes, assessment, and pedagogy. The RP Group held a recognition and awards ceremony for these important individuals, and has posted information about their successful and innovative practices on its web site at [www.rpgroup.org](http://www.rpgroup.org).

The ACCJC commends the work of the Student Learning Outcomes Coordinators, researchers, and faculty at all institutions that presented their good practices at the conference. Clearly, there is much work being done to advance educational effectiveness in the WASC region.

*The Student Success Conference is held each year in early October in California. Next year's conference will be held October 6-9, 2010 at the Hilton Orange County in Costa Mesa. ♦*

# Member Institutions Successfully Achieving SLOs



Each year, the Commission collects information on student achievement, student learning, and other required data within Annual Reports. One area of institutional reporting is the percentage of completeness on student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels. Information on the assessment of those learning outcomes is also reported.

Annual Reports identify institutional movement on student learning outcomes: initial analysis of these data, captured in this year's reports, shows ACCJC member institutions have made important progress since 2005. Specifically:

- In 2005, Ten percent of institutions had completed SLOs for 90 percent of their courses
- By 2008, 33 percent of institutions had completed SLOs for 90 percent of their courses
- In 2005, 63 percent of institutions had less than 50 percent of course level SLOs
- By 2008, only 11 percent of institutions had less than 50 percent of course level SLOs
- In 2005, 29 percent of institutions had completed 90 percent program level SLOs
- By 2008, 50 percent of institutions had completed 90 percent program level SLOs

- In 2005, 45 percent of institutions began developing SLOs for academic and student support programs
- By 2008, 50 percent of institutions had completed SLOs for 100 percent academic and student support programs.

Not surprising, almost all member institutions have defined student learning outcomes at the institutional level. Many have used general education learning outcomes as the basis for institutional outcomes.

The data demonstrate that faculty and others directly responsible for student learning are actively engaged in work in order to have their institutions meet the Standards on student learning outcomes. ACCJC has sponsored workshops on assessment throughout the year; more are scheduled through spring 2010 (see Training on Assessment for Faculty on page 6).

By fall 2012, the Commission requires institutions to have in place authentic assessment of student learning outcomes for courses, programs and degrees. It is also expected that there will be widespread institutional dialogue about the assessment results, and that results are being used for improvement and further alignment of institution-wide practices such as integrated planning and resource allocation. Descriptions of member institution assessment activities will be presented in future ACCJC Newsletters. ♦

## National Research on Learning Outcomes Assessment and Regional Accreditation

The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) has published results of a national survey on regional accreditation and student learning outcomes assessment. Entitled "More Than You Think, Less Than We Need: Learning Outcomes Assessment in American Higher Education", authors Stanley Ikenberry (University of Illinois) and George Kuh (Indiana University) describe what institutions are doing across the country in the area of outcomes assessment. The research also discusses the role of regional accreditors in "driving the assessment movement in higher education" and reports that the expectations of regional accreditors and specialized accreditors, along with the institutions' commitment to improvement, are the three most influential pressures on institutions.

At a meeting hosted by NILOA, ACCJC Chair Lurelean Gaines and President Barbara Beno met with the researchers, other regional accrediting organizations, and several national higher education agency representatives in Indianapolis on October 14 to discuss the findings. The research indicates that all regional accrediting commissions have set similar expectations that institutions assess learning and that institutions in all regions are at a similar advanced stage of defining intended learning outcomes. The group also discussed the challenges that remain in helping institutions assess learning and ensure students are learning what is intended. Key challenges include gaining faculty involvement and support; developing campus based assessment expertise, resources and tools; appropriately funding assessment activities; and keeping the higher education community's focus on learning outcomes assessment and improvement of learning.

A full copy of the report can be found at the NILOA web site, [www.learningoutcomeassessment.org](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org). ♦

# Student Achievement Data Easily Accessed and Analyzed A Major Boost to Program Review

Cal-PASS, the California Partnership for Achieving Student Success, has developed a free, web-based tool that gives staff and faculty at all 110 California Community Colleges easily accessible data on student achievement, success and failure rates, trends over time, and the results of pilot programs or other interventions. The Standardized Metrics for Analysis, Reporting, and Tracking (SMART) Tool makes comparative data readily available, allowing colleges to compile and examine both snapshot and longitudinal data on student achievement at the course, program, and institutional levels. The SMART Tool allows the examination and comparison of student subpopulations created by such variables as gender, age, ethnicity, or disability, full- or part-time status, and institutional variables such as day and evening classes, positive attendance and daily census, career-technical education, transfer and basic skills classes. The tool also allows institutions to analyze the impact of student support services and defined interventions on student achievement.

Public colleges in California submit required data to the state's Management Information System (MIS). The SMART Tool uses click and drag interface technology to pull relevant institutional or course data from the state's data warehouse and organize it for analysis. The tools preserve student privacy, yet also allow institutions to track their own students for up to six years. Cal-PASS will soon be releasing a tool that allows the tracking of students from high school as they move between sectors of higher education.

The SMART Tool was recently demonstrated to California Community Colleges chief executive officers, to the ACCJC staff, and to faculty and others attending the Student Success Conference. The tool should prove very helpful to all institutions still struggling with institutional research on student achievement. More information can be found at [www.calpass.org](http://www.calpass.org). ♦

## New Negotiated Rulemaking to Begin in November

The Department of Education has begun a new round of negotiated rulemaking (neg. reg.) sessions to deal with issues still unresolved in the Higher Education Opportunities Act passed in September 2008 as well as with the Department's needs to negotiate new regulations for higher education institutions and accreditors. The topics that will be negotiated are described as dealing with Program Integrity, and those that are relevant to accreditation include the following:

- Definition of a credit hour and related, definition of program length
- Ability to Benefit tests and college entrance requirements
- Definition of high school diploma for purposes of establishing eligibility for participation in Federal financial aid
- Gainful employment in a recognized occupation
- Incentive compensation for recruiters and advisors (private institutions)
- State authorization for licensure or operation
- Distance education, institutional attendance taking, and repayment of funds when students stop attending distance education courses
- Growth of distance education and verification of student identity
- Misrepresentation of information provided to students and prospective students
- Agreements between institutions of higher education

Recently, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) visited three

regional accrediting commissions to determine how they defined a "credit hour." The OIG did not find clear and consistent definitions. The higher education community has for years used the Carnegie Unit, but new forms of teaching and learning do not focus on seat time as the key measure of what is gained from a course. Thus there is an interesting tension inherent in the proposed discussion of the credit hour. The neg. reg. sessions are said to be part of the Department's attempts to prevent abuse; testimony before Congress on October 16, 2009 detailed some forms of abuse, particularly around ability to benefit issues.

As it did in negotiated rulemaking sessions concluded in June 2009, the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (CRAC) will be represented at the negotiations. Three sessions, one each in November, December and January, will produce regulations that will go into affect some time in 2010.

The ACCJC will keep member institutions informed of new regulations that apply to the accreditation process. ♦



# Training on Assessment for Faculty

The two postsecondary commissions of WASC (ACCJC and ACSCU) have been co-sponsoring Retreats on Student Learning and Assessment for faculty for a number of years. Many community colleges have found the workshops valuable. Two workshops were recently offered earlier this fall. Seventy-five individuals from 19 member institutions attended the Level I Retreat in September in Southern California, and 53 individuals from 18 member institutions attended the Level II Retreat in October in Northern California. Participants from outside the WASC region attended both retreats. The workshops were a blend of presentations from institutions and interactive exercises for institutional teams that attended. Future workshops are planned for spring 2010 (see below).

Assessment Level I - Level I retreats provide participants with presentations made by institutions that have begun assessment on their campuses. Topics include the following:

- ◆ assessing general education
- ◆ assessing the major
- ◆ assessing the co-curriculum
- ◆ analyzing student learning
- ◆ improving curriculum and pedagogy, and
- ◆ developing and applying rubrics

At the conclusion of the program, teams returned home with campus implementation plans.

Assessment Level II - January 28 - 30, 2010 Honolulu, HI  
Assessment Level I - February 4 - 5, 2010 Emeryville, CA

Assessment Level II - Level II retreats provide participants with presentations made by institutions with broad assessment systems in place that have successfully closed the loop based on assessment findings. Each participating team will share two promising practices from its own campus experience. Topics include the following:

- ◆ adapting the campus infrastructure to support the culture of evidence
- ◆ successful strategies for engaging faculty and other campus professionals in assessment
- ◆ a specific assessment study, including description of data collection, data analysis, and the impact of the study
- ◆ incorporating a culture of evidence into program reviews, and
- ◆ assuring the quality of campus assessment

## Retreats for Student Learning and Assessment will continue in Spring 2010

WASC (ACSCU and ACCJC) plans to continue this successful series by offering two retreats this spring.

Watch the ACCJC website ([www.accjc.org](http://www.accjc.org)) for announcements about these events and registration information. ◆

### ANNUAL ACCREDITATION EVENT:

## Academic Resource Conference

ACCJC is once again partnering with the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (ACSCU) of WASC to offer the Academic Resource Conference at the Westin Hotel in Long Beach, California April 21-23, 2010. The theme will be "Sustainability: A Vision for Higher Education." ACCJC will have a strand of informative workshops as part of the conference including a workshop for new college presidents on April 21 from 2:00 until 5:00 p.m. The ACCJC website will post announcements for the ARC with information for registration. ◆

# Future Comprehensive Visits

Under current U.S. Department of Education regulations, ACCJC must provide opportunity for third-party comment regarding the institutional qualifications for accreditation. The institutions noted below are scheduled to undergo comprehensive visits in the spring of 2010, the fall of 2010, and spring of 2011 and review by the Commission at its June 2010, January 2011, and June 2011 meetings. Third-party comment on these institutions should be made to the ACCJC President, Dr. Barbara A. Beno, at 10 Commercial Blvd. Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949. For consideration, such comment must be made in writing, signed, accompanied by return address and telephone number, and received no later than five weeks before the scheduled Commission meeting

## SPRING 2010

(for June 2010 Commission Review)

Allan Hancock College  
Chaffey College  
College of Micronesia - FSM  
College of the Siskiyous  
Glendale Community College  
MiraCosta College  
Monterey Peninsula College  
National Polytechnic College of Science  
Palau Community College  
Santa Monica College

## FALL 2010

(for January 2011 Commission Review)

Antelope Valley College  
College of Marin  
Evergreen Valley College  
Irvine Valley College  
Moorpark College  
Mt. San Antonio College  
Oxnard College  
Saddleback College  
San Diego City College  
San Diego Mesa College  
San Diego Miramar College  
San Jose City College  
Ventura College

## SPRING 2011

(for June 2011 Commission Review)

College of the Desert  
Cypress College  
Deep Springs College  
Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising  
Fullerton College  
Merced College  
Victor Valley College  
West Hills College Coalinga  
West Hills College Lemoore

# Changes in Commissioners

## Newly Selected Commissioners



**Dr. Steven Kinsella**  
Dr. Steven Kinsella, Superintendent/President of Gavilan College, has been appointed to fill the unexpired administrative term of Dr. Chris McCarthy Superintendent/President of Napa Valley College. Dr. Kinsella previously served as the Vice Chancellor of the West Valley-Mission Community College District from 2000 to 2002, the Vice President of

Administrative Services at Monterey Peninsula College from 1999 to 2000, and the Vice President of Administrative Services at Gavilan College from 1996 to 1998.

Dr. Kinsella has served as a team member on three comprehensive visits and chaired two additional teams. He has also served as team member and chair of numerous follow-up visits. Dr. Kinsella is a Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Internal Auditor with over fifteen years experience conducting financial and operational audits. Dr. Kinsella holds a Masters of Business Administration degree from Southern Illinois University and a Doctor of Business Administration degree from Golden Gate University. ♦

## Commissioner Retires

**Dr. Richard J. Scardamaglia** - Dr. Scardamaglia, a public member, has retired from the Commission. Dr. Scardamaglia was a teacher, principal and superintendent in several school districts in northern California and was the founder and partner of a company that evaluates charter schools. Dr. Scardamaglia's service on the Commission began in July 2008.

# Commissioners to be Selected

The Commission seeks applications to fill vacant positions on the Commission. Per ACCJC Bylaws, Commissioners are appointed for staggered three-year terms and are limited to two, three-year terms unless the person is elected as an officer for a term which extends beyond a sixth year.

A Selection Committee will meet in the spring to fill Commission vacancies that arise as Commissioners retire. New Commissioners are appointed by a Commissioner Selection Committee comprised of three Commissioners and four non-commissioners. The latter are appointed to the Committee by member college institutions. Application forms are available from the Commission Office. Watch for an announcement in late February, 2010. ♦



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