Follow-Up Evaluation Report
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Foothill College

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A Confidential Report Prepared for the Accrediting Commission
for Community and Junior Colleges

This report represents the findings of the follow-up evaluation team
that visited Foothill College on October 24, 2012.

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ACCREDITATION EVALUATION FOLLOW-UP REPORT

INSTITUTION: Foothill College

DATE OF VISIT: October 24, 2012

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Introduction and Overview

A comprehensive visit was conducted for Foothill College in October 2011. At its meeting of January 10-12, 2012, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) reviewed the institutional Self Study Report and the report of the evaluation team that visited Foothill College on October 24-27, 2011. The Commission took action to reaffirm accreditation, with a requirement that the College complete a Follow-Up Report (due October 15, 2012) to be followed by a visit by Commission representatives.

The Commission's letter to Foothill College President dated February 1, 2012, outlined its findings and deficiencies to be addressed by October 2012, specifically related to four recommendations regarding integrated planning, student learning outcomes (SLOs), comparable support services, and SLOs in faculty evaluation.

On October 12, 2012, Foothill College submitted a Follow-Up Report pursuant to the direction of the ACCJC letter.

On Wednesday, October 24, 2012, a three-person evaluation team visited Foothill College. The purpose of the visit was to verify that the Follow-Up Report prepared by the College was accurate and to determine if sustained, continuous, and positive improvements had been made with regard to the four recommendations from the Commission. This report captures the findings of this Follow-Up Evaluation Visit.

Overall, the evaluation team found that the College prepared well for the visit by arranging for meetings with the individuals and groups requested by the evaluation team. Further, the College assembled appropriate documents in the meeting room and provided easy access to College intranet sites to access additional evidence. The evaluation team validated that the College had enlisted broad engagement of campus and district constituencies and governance groups in developing and reviewing the Follow-up Report, including faculty, classified staff, students, administrators, and the Board of Trustees.

During the visit, the evaluation team met with seven groups comprised of more than 40 individuals, including the District Chancellor, College President, Accreditation Liaison Officer,

President's Cabinet members, Academic Senate President, Classified Senate President, Associated Students President, and members of the faculty and staff leadership. The team met with the Planning & Resource Council (PaRC), which serves as the primary body for participatory governance, as well as with representatives from the Operations and Planning Committee, Core Work Groups, Faculty Association, program review committees, and student services offices at Foothill and Middlefield Campuses.

Based on its review of the Follow-Up Report and observations and discussions during the visit, the evaluation team concluded that Foothill College has successfully resolved the deficiencies to address all four recommendations made by the comprehensive evaluation team. Following is a summary of the evaluation team's findings regarding each recommendation.

Recommendation 1: Institutionalize Integrated Planning

To fully meet the standards, the team recommends that the College institutionalize its new integrated planning model through a systematic cycle of evaluation, planning, resource allocation, implementation and re-evaluation. Evaluations should be informed by quantitative and qualitative data analysis in both instructional and non-instructional areas. Particular attention should be paid to communication and dialogue about both the process and its results throughout the College. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, IV.A.3, IV.A.5)

Findings and Evidence:

The College has made significant strides in institutionalizing its integrated planning model by strengthening multiple features of its integrated planning and allocation system since the comprehensive visit in fall 2011. In particular, the College solidified linkages between its program review, planning, and allocation process and enhanced awareness of the Planning & Resource Council (PaRC) as the nexus for critical campus decisions.

Established Cycles of Improvement and Integration

Over this last academic year, the College underwent its first full iteration of an allocation cycle linked to the comprehensive planning process. Broadly outlined, all budget requests are incorporated into the program review process, tied to the core missions and institutional-level student learning outcomes, and are reviewed by area deans, vice presidents and the Operations and Planning Committee. The resulting rankings and allocations are presented to the PaRC, where they are evaluated for approval. The process was confirmed to be robust, informed by data, transparent, and conducted through shared governance.

Some significant issues, such as faculty stipend allocations and new faculty hiring, seemed to have accelerated the importance and recognition of the program review and budget allocation processes. Central to the integrated planning and budget model are the three core mission workgroups, which identify objectives and prioritize funding in support of objectives set annually. These have completed several cycles of objective setting, allocation, implementation

and evaluation, which have proven their value in advancing College improvements in targeted and transparent ways.

While integration of the progress has been substantial, the College recognizes the need for ongoing attention to continually refine and improve its practices to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. Several significant modifications to the integrated planning system, such as the allocation ranking and changes in the schedule of program review, call for further review after several cycles are completed. The College expresses a firm commitment to evaluate the system's ongoing feasibility and utility.

Improved Quality and Use of Program Review Data

Improvements in the program review process are worth particular recognition. In 2011-12, a new comprehensive annual program review template and process was implemented–at the College, division, department, and course levels—and all instructional, student services and administrative units participated. A new cross-disciplinary Program Review Committee was launched in May 2012 to evaluate the outcomes of the comprehensive program reviews and make recommendations to PaRC to improve the evaluation process and inform planning and allocation decisions.

Considerable improvements in generating and presenting data through the program review process (including student learning outcomes, service area outcomes, and administrative unit outcomes) are showing evidence of deepening dialogue, strengthening evaluations, and improving recommendations for program improvement and use of resources. As one faculty member commented, "We're developing a culture of inquisitiveness and stewardship."

Enhanced Communication

The College has made a concerted effort to promote communication about and involvement in the integrated planning process. Numerous public meetings, distribution of meetings minutes, and presentations generated significant conversation about the elements of the integrated planning process. The Integrated Planning and Budget Task Force (IP&B), in particular, led an active dialogue around the improvement of the elements of the integrated planning and allocation process. Although future evaluations could benefit from larger sampling of viewpoints, current interviews and survey data indicate the College community has significantly increased its understanding and commitment to the integrated budget/planning processes.

Conclusion:

The College provided evidence that it has strengthened its integrated planning and allocation processes, improved the incorporation of data into these processes, and expanded the awareness and involvement of the College community. The College seems to have institutionalized its

processes, while undergoing continuous improvement, which suggests it's at the sustainable level of Program Review and Planning. Therefore, the evaluation team believes that the College has fully met the expectations of the above recommendation.

Recommendation 2: Student Learning Outcomes

In order to meet the Commission's 2012 expectation for meeting student learning outcomes standards that require the identification and assessment of appropriate and sufficient student learning outcomes, and the use of assessment data to plan and implement improvements to educational quality, the team recommends that the College accelerate the assessment of program-level student learning outcomes, service area outcomes and administrative unit outcomes, and use the results to make improvements. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.B.4, II.C.2)

Findings and Evidence:

In the year since the 2011 external evaluation visit, the College has made significant progress in accelerating the development and assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in instructional and non-instructional areas, referred to as Service Area Outcomes (SA-SLOs) in Student Services and Administrative Unit Outcomes (AU-SLOs) in other non-instructional areas (e.g., Library, Marketing and Communications).

The College established its own planning agendas devoted to this goal in its Self Study Report (formalizing and institutionalizing the assessment cycle and developing a research agenda to support assessment of ILOs and program review), and made notable advancements with implementation of new tracking software (TracDat) in fall 2011as well as with the continuation of its quarterly cycle of course-level SLOs and yearly cycle of program-level SLOs, AU-SLOs, and SA-SLOs.

In the instructional area, the College added workshops and trainings for faculty, embedded SLO assessment findings in program reviews, increased dialogue about the results, and adopted the Foothill College institutional-level student learning outcomes – Communication, Computation, Creative Thinking and Community/Global Consciousness & Citizenship (the 4Cs)– as its general education SLOs. The new TracDat system prompts all faculty and staff to reflect on the connection between their course, program or service area SLOs and the 4Cs, further strengthening the focus at all levels on student learning.

Assessment of program-level SLOs rose to 94% completion of the 2011-12 cycle, and efforts toward sustainability at this level was strengthened by identification of an SLO coordinator for each academic division. Evidence of improvements related to program-level assessments were underscored in 2012 PaRC resource allocation decisions related to faculty reassigned time—a first for the institution. This progress represents a commendable effort by the College and its instructional division.

For the past three years, seven administrative units have assessed their progress toward goal attainment via an annual survey, the results of which have been integrated into annual program review and resource allocation processes. Ongoing AU-SLO improvements include a revision of the annual survey to move beyond measures of satisfaction to more meaningful feedback to inform program evaluation and expansion of the AU-SLO process to include Division offices, the Krause Center for Innovation, and the International Programs Office.

In the Student Services Division, significant progress was made in the SA-SLO process. At the time of the follow-up visit, 100% of student services areas had identified SA-SLOs, and 95% had fully completed the 2011-12 assessment cycle. Like instruction and administrative units, assessment of SA-SLOs has been integrated within the program review process. Additional improvements include establishment of an SA-SLO core team of vice presidents and staff from the Offices of Instruction and Student Services, development of an SLO Handbook, and offering of workshops and trainings, including individualized assistance as needed. As in the instruction and administrative units, Student Services has demonstrated use of SA-SLO results to inform improvements and resource allocation.

Conclusion:

The College has implemented a number of strategies to accelerate its efforts to meet Proficiency in outcomes assessment at the program (PL-SLO), administrative unit (AU-SLO), and service area (SA-SLO) levels. This includes implementing the new tracking software, expanding and deepening engagement in College-wide support for student learning, and strengthening the focus on learning in non-instructional assessment processes. Additionally, the College has provided evidence demonstrating how results of student learning assessment are used to facilitate improvements and to inform resource allocation. The team believes that the College has fully met the expectations of the recommendation.

Recommendation 3: Comparable Support Services

To fully meet the standard, the College must ensure equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable student and learning support services regardless of location or delivery method. (II.B.3, II.B.3.a, II.B.4, II.C.1.c)

Findings and Evidence:

At the time of the 2011 external evaluation visit, the team noted a number of core support services being offered at the Middlefield campus and was impressed by the campus' creative use of resources and facilities, as well as online services. However, the team noted an absence of appropriate, comprehensive and reliable support services in a few key areas including disability support, health services, and tutoring.

In the three areas identified by the team, the College has made notable progress bringing comprehensive support services to the Middlefield Campus. Health services are now offered at Middlefield, including over-the-counter medications, first-aid supplies, flu shots, chair massage, health information and referrals. As always, Middlefield students can access the full array of services on the main campus.

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is working closely with the main campus to provide a comparable level of disability support to Middlefield students. Testing accommodations are provided on site in the Middlefield student services area known as "the Hub." Additionally, one day a week, a DRC counselor is present at Middlefield to provide services. DRC staff and faculty respond to additional students' needs on-site at Middlefield upon request.

Tutorial Services are offered at Middlefield depending on courses offered during the term. Additional tutoring is available through OpenStudy, a free online tutorial system that offers peer-to-peer assistance in a variety of subjects on a 24/7 around-the-clock basis.

Conclusion:

Appropriate services have been added to the Middlefield campus to include disability support, health services, and tutoring. The team believes that the College has fully met the expectations of this recommendation.

Recommendation 4: Student Learning Outcomes & Faculty Evaluation

In order to meet the Commission's 2012 expectation for meeting student learning outcomes standards, the team recommends that the College and the faculty association work together to incorporate student learning outcomes into the faculty evaluation process. (III.A.1.c)

Findings and Evidence:

The District and the Faculty Association renegotiated the faculty evaluation process to include faculty participation in the evaluation of SLOs, effective Fall Quarter 2012. Section IB of the newly negotiated evaluation form for faculty provides language that applies to all faculty in the professional contributions section:
"Participates in special assignments, committees, projects, SLO/SAO processes, research and development as needed in the discipline/department/district."

Discussions with faculty association and administration representatives indicate that any prior dispute regarding the setting of clear expectations regarding the role of faculty in supporting the use of SLOs to support student success has been resolved and accepted by faculty members. A recent Faculty Association survey sent to all faculty members received no concerns regarding changes in the faculty evaluation process related to SLOs.

Conclusion:

The team believes that the College has fully met the expectations of this recommendation.