Progress Visit Report

Irvine Valley College
5500 Irvine Center Drive
Irvine, California 92618

A confidential Report Prepared for the Accrediting Commission For Community and Junior Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited

Irvine Valley College
On
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Introduction and Overview

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on January 11-13, 2006 reviewed the Progress Report submitted by Irvine Valley College and the report of the evaluation team which visited on Thursday, November 3, 2005. The Commission acted to accept the report with the requirement that the college complete a Progress Report by October 15, 2006, to be followed by a visit of Commission representatives. The Commission indicated the report should focus on providing evidence of progress addressing Recommendations 6, 7 and 8.

The IVC President and his staff, the Chancellor and his staff, the Board of Trustees, college faculty, staff, administrators and student leaders were very accommodating in establishing the interview and meeting schedule for the visit. The IVC team and Saddleback College team jointly conducted district office meetings, and the visit was concluded with each team conducting an exit meeting with their respective college president. The team appreciated the hospitality of the entire Irvine Valley College community.

The team commends the College for writing a thorough and candid progress report to the Commission, which details the College's ongoing efforts to demonstrate progress in addressing Recommendations 6, 7 and 8, and identifies the areas where further improvements are warranted. The team was impressed with the college climate that was even more relaxed, collegial, and positive than the team found during the prior Progress Report visit in October, 2005.

Irvine Valley College facilitated the team's work by providing several evidentiary documents electronically, in advance of the visit, and by providing hard copy documents in the team room. Evidence in support of the College's and District's progress in addressing Recommendations 6, 7, and 8 was provided on a CD-Rom in the form of letters between the Chancellor and the Academic Senate, Board agendas and Board meeting minutes, as well as, written excerpts from taped board meetings. The Chancellor also gave the team chair three DVD recordings of board meetings on October 30, 2006, November 20, 2006, and April 24, 2006. During the visit, the college staff, the Chancellor and district office staff provided additional documents as evidence of the College's and District's actions and progress since submission of the Progress Report.

The team met with the following groups and/or individuals: President of the college, Interim Vice President of Instruction, Vice President of Student Services, Dean's Council, Student Services Council, Academic Senate President, Academic Senate, Classified Senate, leaders of the Associated Students of IVC, President of the Board of Trustees and five board members, the Chancellor's Cabinet, the Board Policy and Administrative Regulations Council, and the Chancellor of the SOCCD.

The team report is based on: the team's findings in response to Irvine Valley College's Progress Report; review of College documents; interviews with faculty, staff, students, administrators and governance bodies of the college community, board members, district

office administrators, college and district councils and committees; and observations made during the visit to assess the College's and District's progress in addressing Recommendations 6, 7, and 8, as required by the Commission.

Irvine Valley College's Statement on Report Preparation

The College reported that on February 1, 2006 the college president and the Academic Senate president reviewed the Commission action letter. On February 2, 2006 the college president informed the campus community of the action taken by the Commission at its January, 2006 meeting; and the Academic Senate president informed the Academic Senate that the Commission action letter and team report were available on the college website. On February 24, 2006 the college president accepted the Academic Senate's recommendation that the faculty co-chair for the development of the College's 2005 Progress Report continue as the co-chair for the development of the 2006 Progress Report and serve on the Progress Report Oversight Committee. The College administration, Academic Senate and Classified Senate agreed upon a process for responding to the recommendations.

<u>Recommendation 6.</u> The Board of Trustees cease involvement in college and district operations, delegate all non-policy issues and policy implementation at the district and college level to the chancellor and presidents respectively. (Standards IVB, 1.e, j)

The College reported they are limited in their authority and/or ability to respond to this recommendation, as it pertains to the practices of the Board of Trustees. They reported that on February 13, 2006, the Chancellor distributed the January 31, 2006 Commission action letter to the members of the Board of Trustees. Members of the Board made comments in response to recommendation #6. The Progress Report provides excerpts of comments made by board members and the Chancellor at this meeting. Two board members acknowledged their awareness of problems with micromanaging behaviors by board members over the past ten years in District operations and non-policy issues. One board member stated that there is a need for the board to let administrators manage the day-to-day operations of the District; however no further actions were taken in response to the recommendation.

The College reported that at a regular meeting of the Board on March 27, 2006 the college presidents presented brief reports on the colleges' progress in response to recommendations #6, #7, and #8, and the chancellor provided an update on the District's progress. The Chancellor reported that the board of trustees is addressing the recommendations, and will continue to further address the issues at a retreat and board meetings. He also cautioned faculty and staff not to view micromanagement as taking place because they dislike the decisions of the Chancellor, college presidents or, in particular, the Board. He stated that only a couple of members of the Board micromanage, periodically. He asked faculty and staff not to invite micromanagement by going directly to the Board about college issues; and stated he did not know of any college to have lost its accreditation because of perceived micromanaging by the Board.

The following board resolution entitled, "Implementation of Accreditation Recommendations by the District and Board of Trustees" was presented and passed with an amendment to include additional language identified below in italics as follows:

"Whereas it is an accepted best practice that the Board delegate authority to the District Chancellor who provides overall leadership in the implementation of policy and direction, with the leadership of the College Presidents, rather than micromanage operations on non-policy issues; and Whereas the Board and the District are committed to clarifying the respective leadership roles and scopes of authority of College and District constituent groups and governance committees in meaningful, collegial decision-making processes and, *thereby avoiding micromanagement on the part of other constituent groups;*……."

Two examples of micromanagement by the Board were cited in the Progress Report. One was the Board's denial of approval of the colleges' institutional memberships in the American Library Association, for reasons stated by Board members that the college deemed reflective of personal and political views. The second example referred to an issue faced by Saddleback College regarding the approval of college speakers. A district administrative regulation requires board approval for all speakers on campus. The Progress Report indicated that the newly formed District Board Policy and Administrative Regulation Council recommended revisions to this administrative regulation (AR 6140); to require that college presidents receive notification of college speakers, rather than the requirement for board approval. The College reported that the Chancellor had taken the recommendation under advisement; however, no further action has been taken.

Findings and Evidence

At the time of the visit, the team heard consistent assessments among members of the college community of limited progress made by the Board of Trustees in addressing recommendation #6.

The team had not initially requested a meeting with student leaders; however, they asked the college president to be included in the team's meeting schedule. The team, therefore, accommodated their request. The student government leaders reported their observations of board meetings and expressed concern that the Board's actions do not reflect the students' values. They cited as examples the actions taken by the Board on the Study Abroad Programs, and the Board's involvement in operations rather than policy. The students also expressed concern that students are leaving the college because the courses they need to complete the transfer pattern for the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum are not offered on a timely basis, so they take needed courses at other colleges. They commented that they have great faith in the college president. They also expressed a perception that everything comes down to who supports the Chancellor. The team was impressed with the professional demeanor of the leaders of IVC's Associated Student Government, their organized presentation of concerns, and the

passionate manner in which they communicated their commitment to Irvine Valley College's success.

During the team's meeting with the Board of Trustees, the board members assessed their progress in addressing recommendation #6 as significant, yet with more progress to make. They expressed concerns that some of them do not leave their social beliefs at the door, and they are not always examples of good boardsmanship.

Members of the college community perceive that there is a disconnect at the level of the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees. In their view the Chancellor is involved in the day-to-day operations of the College, and the Board wants to direct what the colleges do under the guise of policy. The team chair reviewed the taped board meetings provided by the Chancellor and observed two examples of micromanaging behaviors. In one instance, a board member stated that a request had been made to the college presidents that they provide notices of college events. In a second instance, a board member made a disparaging comment about an administrator's failure to do what the board member believed he should have done. In both instances the board members inappropriately communicated their expectations and concerns directly to administrators rather than to the Chancellor.

Conclusions

The Board of Trustees' self- assessment of their progress in addressing recommendation #6 is more positive than the College's assessment. They view the extent of their continued involvement in micro-managing the college and district as less frequent, however, the College views their involvement as frequent and inappropriate. The Board expressed a desire to continue to make improvements in ceasing involvement in the day-to-day operations of the colleges and the District. However, the team found that the amendment they made to the resolution that referred to avoiding macro-management on the part of other constituency groups, diminished the College's governance groups' hopes and expectations for their progress in making meaningful and sustained changes in their behaviors. The College also views the Chancellor as engaging in micro-management of the College. Based upon these findings the while the Board and the Chancellor express no desire to micromanage, in the College's view, they continue to do so. Progress in addressing recommendation #6, was evident, however, continued progress is needed.

Recommendation 7. The Board of Trustees, District leadership and College leadership define, publish, adhere to, regularly evaluate, and continuously improve the respective leadership roles and scopes of authority of college and district constituent groups and governance committees in meaningful, collegial decision-making processes. (Standard IV. A.1,2,3,5)

As reported in the College's October 2005 Progress Report, the Chancellor and Board of Trustees, district leadership, and the college Academic Senates agreed to participate in a level one Technical Assistance workshop with Dr. Diane Woodruff, the Interim Executive Director of the Community College League of California, and Professor Ian

Walton, the State of California Community Colleges Academic Senate President. The level one presentation was related to the statutory and regulatory designations for roles and responsibilities of faculty and Boards and governance leaders. Subsequent to the previous progress report, it was also agreed by all parties to participate in a level three Technical Assistance presentation involving issue resolution.

The college reported that in preparation for the first Technical Assistance meeting, the Chancellor requested all participants to submit written statements outlining three constructive suggestions to address recommendations #7 and #8.The first Technical Assistance meeting convened on February 13, 2006 from 3:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m., and it included twenty-four participants comprised of all board members and the student trustee, the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor of Human Resources, Interim Vice Chancellor of Technology and Learning Services, the college presidents, the Academic Senate presidents, the Classified Senate presidents, the bargaining unit presidents, and the student government presidents. Following the presentation by the State Academic Senate President each constituent group was given five minutes to briefly present its recommendations. All participants had written recommendations, except the Board of Trustees.

The faculty suggested the Chancellor take a more effective and visible role in the education of board members about their appropriate roles as trustees and they comply with the statutory role and scope of authority granted to the senates and the faculty bargaining unit. Lastly, it was recommended by the Academic Senates that they and district leadership jointly agree upon a board policy that clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of all constituent groups, as well as, a collegial decision-making process. The Classified senates and union echoed those of the Academic Senates with an additional request for the district to allow sufficient time for the Classified Senate to seek input and guidance from their constituents.

On April 24, 2006, another Technical Assistance meeting was convened. It included the same presenters from CCLC and the State Academic Senate. The Chancellor and Board President also invited Dr. Barbara Beno, President of the Accrediting Commission. Dr. Beno presented an overview of accreditation, the purposes of accreditation and how the standards evolved. She reviewed the role of the Board in relation to Standard IV: Leadership and Governance, and discussed decision-making roles and processes, the appropriate role of the Board of Trustees, Chancellor and Presidents, in assuring quality and educational effectiveness. Dr. Beno also emphasized the ways institutional leaders create an environment for empowering staff, faculty, and students to take initiative in improving practices. She emphasized that the governing board establishes policy consistent with its mission. Following Dr. Beno's presentation, Dr. Woodruff and Professor Walton commented on the draft documents delineating the roles and scope of authority of each constituent group. The draft documents were used to develop three new proposed board policies on the role and authority of the Academic Senates, Classified employees participation in decision making, and the authority of the Board of Trustees.

At this meeting, the Board approved Board Policy 107 regarding the development and revision of board policies. In May 2006, the Chancellor approved a companion Administrative Regulation 107 that delineates the role of constituent groups. This resulted in the formation of the district Board Policy and Administrative Regulation Advisory Council comprised of representatives from all constituent groups. Subsequently, the Chancellor introduced a document, "District Decision Making Process", to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each constituent group.

Findings and Evidence

During the visit the Chancellor provided the team an organization chart for the District's governance bodies entitled, "District Level Decision Making", which is dated June 28, 2006. It depicts reporting relationships between: the Board and Chancellor and the Board and Chancellor and college Academic and Classified Senates and Associated Student Governments; the Chancellor and the bargaining units, and Chancellor's Executive Council; and the Chancellor and the following: Educational Services Coordinating Council, Chancellor's Coordinating Council, District Technology Council, Chancellor's Docket, Chancellor's Cabinet, Board Policy and Administrative Regulation Advisory Council, District Resource Allocation Council, and the ATEP (Advanced Technology Education Park) Advisory Council. For each Council identified, the document lists the members, purpose and meeting frequency.

The Classified Senate gave the team three documents. One document identified the Officers, Committee Members and Senators of the Classified Senate for 2006-2007. Another described the Classified hiring Priority List Development Process; and the third document described the College's Strategic Planning Process, Steering Teams and members of Focus Groups.

The team found college-wide, as well as district consensus in assessing the College, as well as the District, as making progress in addressing recommendation #7. The President and leaders of the Academic Senate and Classified Senate were proud of the work being done through the College's strategic planning process. Classified Senate members were also pleased with the progress the college had made by including them in the process of developing the classified hiring priority list.

The IVC and Saddleback College teams conducted a meeting with the Chancellor's Cabinet and the Board Policy and Administrative Regulations (BP & AR) Advisory Council; observed a brief matter of business conducted by the Deputy Chancellor with the BP & AR Advisory Council; and team received a binder that identified all board policies and administrative regulations that have been reviewed, revised, adopted or were in draft revision at the time of the visit. There was widespread agreement that the formation of the District Board Policy and Administrative Regulation Advisory Council has been a significant improvement in collegial decision-making and it is functioning well.

The team heard some sentiments expressed among college staff that there are too many District led governance Committees that takes time away from the College. In particular, it was felt that the Chancellor's Coordinating Council which coordinates educational programs and services among the local K-12 districts, IVC, SC and the local universities, could be more effective if the colleges were able to take the lead with their feeder K-12 schools.

Conclusions

There continues to be some disagreement among college governance leaders, and the Chancellor and Board of Trustees regarding roles and authority among them, and what constitutes non-policy operational matters. There continues to be blaming of responsibility for their failure to be in agreement, and lack of understanding between them. While continued progress is needed, the team commends the college leadership, district leadership and Board of Trustees for the actions they have taken to define leadership roles and scopes of authority in the governance of the colleges and the District, and to implement structures and processes to facilitate collegial decision-making. In spite of continued strained relationships between the college and the Chancellor and Board, the College's leadership and governance bodies, the Chancellor and District leadership, and the Board of Trustees are making progress in addressing recommendation #7.

<u>Recommendation 8</u>. The Board of Trustees, chancellor, presidents, administrators, managers, faculty senates and unions, classified senates and unions, and students come together and take measures to reduce the hostility, cynicism, despair, and fear that continue to plague the college. (Standard IV.A.1,2,2.a,2.b,3,5)

The college Progress Report describes this recommendation as the most challenging to resolve, since it has been an issue identified by the Commission since 1997. In the report, the College chose to address this recommendation by including the views and actions taken by each constituent group. The report indicates that progress within the district relative to recommendation # 8 is "mixed"; however, since the October 2005 Progress Report, all constituent groups have come together to discuss the commission recommendations.

The Progress Report indicates the faculty desire to be recognized for their college-level expertise in educational decision making, and requests the chancellor to be an advocate for the best interests of the College. They suggest the chancellor cease taking punitive measures against administrators and faculty who express views contrary to his, and that he encourage a free flow of ideas where "dissent and disagreement are respected". The faculty's assessment of progress in addressing recommendation #8 is concern that substantial problems still remain. From their perspective, words placed on paper in the revised board policies and administrative regulations do not connect with the public statements and actions of the "District".

The classified staff would like the Board to acknowledge that the classified unions and senates are partners in creating a positive working environment in support of faculty and

students. They offered several strategies to address this recommendation which include: the development of communication strategies; employee surveys to measure trends related to the level of hostility, cynicism, despair, and fear now, as compared to the past; and a review of the organizational structure. The classified staff's assessment is that progress has been made at the College, and by the District and the Board in addressing recommendation 8, as evidenced by increased opportunities for their participation in college and district governance, such as development of the classified hiring priority list and their representation on the district Board Policy and Administrative Regulation Advisory Council.

The college administrators' assessment of progress in addressing recommendation #8 is positive for the College. They report that progress is being made in defining roles and responsibilities of district governance groups.

The Progress Report refers to the March 27, 2006 board meeting and quotes remarks from the Chancellor to the Board related to recommendation #8. The Chancellor indicated he feels the Board of Trustees has supported the colleges in unprecedented ways. However, he states there is a lack of fair play and balance on the part of others.

Findings and Evidence

Members of the college community describe the climate at IVC as more relaxed with greatly diminished fear and hostility on the campus. They describe faculty and administrators, and student leaders and the college president working together effectively; and report more trusting relationships. Among classified staff it is important to note, however, that while they view things as going in the right direction and are very pleased with the increased involvement they have in college and district governance leadership and committees and councils, the reported that how well things are going depends upon who their supervisors are. They described one unit of the college in which in their view a hostile work environment still exists. This information was shared with the college president, so he could investigate their concerns.

The team observed many positive interactions among faculty, staff, students and administrators at the College; and members of the College community expressed an improved atmosphere on campus. The team also observed many positive interactions among the College's governance leaders, the college presidents, and district office executive administrators participating in district governance and operational meetings. A sense of pride was evident among these groups for their recent achievements as a new team of College and District leaders, particularly in the work they have done on the Board Policy and Administrative Regulation Council. The team met several new college and district executive administrators who were hired after the October 2005 Progress Report team visit, who along with the College leaders communicated optimism for their continued efforts to make progress as a team.

The Chancellor informed the team that neither he nor the Board have a desire to micro-manage the colleges. Members of the college community, however, perceive the Chancellor to be inappropriately involved in the day-to-day operations of the College. As reported in the findings and evidence for recommendation #6, the team observed taped board meetings and observed the Board members displaying inappropriate behaviors in their communications and directives to college administrators. In addition, the team observed a high degree of stress and anxiety among college administrators, and learned that in the current academic year, two college administrators have been placed on administrative leave.

Conclusions

The College has made significant progress in addressing recommendation #8. The faculty at Irvine Valley College view their working relationships with the college administration as progressing in a positive direction. There have also been District efforts to find ways to bring all groups together, however, communications between faculty leaders and the Chancellor and board minutes reveal ongoing disagreements and power struggles. While some progress has been made in addressing recommendation #8, there continues to be much work to be done by the Board of Trustees, the Chancellor and members of the college community to improve the climate of the district as a whole.