Progress Visit Team Report

For

Leeward Community College

A Report Prepared for
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the
Progress Visit Team that visited
Leeward Community College

November 15, 2005

Dr. Barbara Beno, Chair
Mr. Joseph Richey, Member
Introduction

Leeward Community College was included in a Commission action taken in January, 2005, to place some of the Hawai‘i Community Colleges on warning until they were able to demonstrate both individually and collectively that they had addressed the need to develop and implement a comprehensive assessment, planning and improvement process, and that the results of assessment and of improvement be reported to and supported by the governance structure of the UH CC System. The College submitted a Progress Report in April 2005. This report, as well as a report by the UH CC System, was considered by the Commission at its June 2005 Commission meeting. The Commission acted to remove Leeward Community College from Warning, but to require that the College and System submit progress reports by October 15, 2005, on the three recommendations given to the system, with particular emphasis on Recommendation 2 at the College level:

**Recommendation 2.** The team recommends that the University of Hawaii Community Colleges develop policies and procedures to ensure:

- That the community colleges engage in regular assessment of institutional effectiveness, including program review;
- That the community college system as well as each college set priorities for implementing plans for improvement that are based in analysis of research data;
- That the colleges and the UH CC System incorporate these priorities into resource distribution processes and decisions;
- That the colleges and the UH CC System develop and employ a methodology for assessing overall institutional effectiveness and progress toward meeting goals expressed through plans for improvement; and
- That the colleges and the UH CC System report regularly to internal constituencies and the Board on this progress (Standards I.B, II.A.1 and 2, II.B.3, II.B.4, II.C.1.e, II.C.2, III.A.6, III.C.1, III.C.2, III.D.1.a, IV.B.2.b, and the Preamble to the Standards).

This report represents the findings of the team that visited Leeward Community College on November 15. The report of the team that visited the UH CC System is appended to this report. The team prepared for the progress visit by reading the reports submitted by the College and the UH CC System, as well as reading the previous College and Team reports submitted to the Commission on the same matters. The College Progress Report submitted on October 15, 2005, described the college’s participation in resolving the three system-wide recommendations. The purpose of the team visit was to examine Leeward Community College’s processes for examining programmatic quality and institutional quality, and to review the results or products of those assessments. The College provided an excellent update on college progress in developing and institutionalizing an ongoing system of assessment, planning, decision-making and
improvement in its Progress Report, and provided excellent documentation and demonstration of its progress during the team visit.

The College prepared for the visit by compiling supporting documentation in the team room and arranging meetings for the team with the Chancellor, the Assessment Team of the college (including division chairs and the organizer of Curriculum Central), the Program Review Coordinator, the Course Assessment Coordinator, members of the Administrative Team, including the institutional research staff and deans. The team wishes to thank the college staff and leadership for their open and candid discussions and demonstrations. The team reviewed the college’s exemplary electronic curriculum maintenance and review system – Curriculum Central.

**Findings**

According to the college’s Progress Report, the college has done the following in the period since the last report to the Commission:

- Academic Senate approval of the college’s Program Review Policy
- Adoption of the UH CC System’s Program and Annual Review protocols
- Formalize the college’s Assessment Team and develop a standardized assessment template used to summarize and present findings as well as timelines for changes and budget recommendations that come from assessment.
- Modification of the on-line curriculum repository, Curriculum Central, to include information obtained via assessment of all courses.
- Training for faculty on the use of the new functions or modules in Curriculum Central.
- Staff development for all faculty on assessment of learning outcomes.
- Development of a planning and budgeting process that includes results of assessment in instructional programs, support areas, and all courses.

The college Progress Report indicates that its method for making the budget decisions for the 2005-6 academic year (current year) was found unsatisfactory because it was based mostly on action plans to address the UH CC System’s five strategic priorities. The college decided to revise its process for the coming fiscal year to include the results of program reviews (four-year assessments) and annual assessments that occur within academic divisions as well as other support areas of the college. The new process, done through the college’s on-line template, promises to be a “planning and budgeting tool, a program review tool and an accreditation tool.”

The Standardized Assessment Template created for divisional “program reviews” provides for consistency in data collection and analysis across institutional programs, and allows all participating to see the completed program reviews that are stored and viewed online. The system’s electronic links to longitudinal data reports make it relatively easy for college faculty and staff to “pull” the data student information data necessary for assessment as well as insert information about intended student learning outcomes, assessment measures and assessment results. The template includes “suggested questions” for the programmatic staff to answer using their analyses of data on student performance; the questions are tied to accreditation standards. The template requires each Program Review to consider the program’s alignment with mission, strengths and weaknesses based on analysis of data, evidence of quality, evidence of student
learning, resource sufficiency, and recommendations for improving student achievement and student learning.

The team’s review of the questions found them to be well conceived and rather comprehensive. They should prove to be an excellent guide to thoughtful analysis of programmatic data as well as effective decisions about making needed changes.

The Chancellor has now changed policy to require program review data and analyses to be used to inform budget requests, offering the carrot of additional allocations only to those programs that engage in the annual and five-year reviews. The deadlines for activities associated with assessment, accreditation and program review are printed in the College’s annual calendar that includes information about all other institutional deadlines and important dates of significance to faculty, staff and students. It provides specific dates for all stages of program assessment each fall and spring, and lists all of the programs that are required to conduct their annual review during the year.

Leeward Community College is actively engaged in the identification and assessment of student learning outcomes. The College presented the team with a Course Assessment Progress Report (Nov. 14, 2005) which indicated the number of courses in each instructional division scheduled for assessment, the percentage of total courses that have demonstrated they have assessment information in the course outline of record, and the percentages of course assessments that are at phase 1, (describe assessment tools, data collection, results of assessment, identified needs for change) or phase 2, (describe changes that were made, the results of those changes, what will be done for the next course assessment).

In the 2004-5 academic year, 52.6% of programs in instructional areas, academic services units, administrative services units, and student services units were scheduled to implement assessment. In the 2005-6 academic year, that percentage will rise to 89.5%.

Conclusions

The team found that Leeward Community College is actively engaged in a variety of assessment activities and has an established culture and practice of assessment and improvement. The College’s decision to maximize use of electronic media for collection, analysis and presentation of information is extremely innovative. The team believes those engaged in the design have a good understanding of the elements of an effective institutional assessment process, and that the electronic format may actually assist faculty to do the work necessary. The conceptualization is excellent; what remains to be seen is how well faculty and staff ultimately implement it.

The system-wide program review process has been established, a system-wide strategy for funding institutional improvements has been initiated in a budget request to the Legislature, and the College has plans to now extend program review to all academic, administrative support and student support areas of the college. This recommendation is well on the way to being addressed in an exemplary manner.

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