Progress Visit Team Report

for

Maui 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
Maui Community College

November 14, 2005

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Introduction

Maui 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 Maui 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 Maui Community College on November 14. 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 Maui Community College’s processes for examining programmatic quality and institutional quality, and to review the results or products of those assessments. The team is pleased
to note the college is making some significant progress in identifying and assessing student learning, starting with the vocational education programs.

The college was well prepared for the visit. The team met with the Chancellor and members of the Executive Committee, department chairs and program coordinators, individuals working on the strategic plan, the institutional researcher, the Assessment Coordinator, and members of the Applied Business and Information Technology (ABIT) department. The team wishes to thank the college leadership and staff for the helpful information and thoughtful comments they provided to the team.

The Executive Committee provided information on institutional priority setting and budget allocation based on the results of unit quality assessments. The discussion included the leadership of human resources, maintenance and operations, physical plant and business services, and student support services. In the past year, the college has developed a number of instruments, including a student satisfaction survey and a faculty survey, to help assess the quality of the administrative support services on campus. The Business Office did a comprehensive review of its operations last year and is working to make changes based on the results. Maui Community College has two committees that help to review programmatic assessments and to integrate the assessment results with the colleges’ budgeting, planning and decision-making processes. The Assessment of Student Learning (ASL) Committee measures student achievement, and the Campus-wide Assessment of Student Learning (CASTLE) Committee integrates the various types of assessment on campus.

In a discussion with the leadership of Student Support Services, the team learned the college has begun the process of identifying student learning outcomes and measures for its various service units. It has decided to adapt the quality standards promulgated by the Council for Achievement of Standards in Higher Education. The Council’s standards, written for Service Learning curriculum and co-curriculum, address student learning outcomes in detail (e.g., intellectual growth, effective communication, civic values, etc.) and also provide examples of achievement measures. Student Support Services has also adopted a five year comprehensive review cycle, with smaller annual reviews for most units, and has completed one set of annual reviews to date. Materials in the team room provided evidence that the college’s thirteen-part program reviews are completed or in process for Residential Life, Student Housing, Student Services, Student Life, and Administrative Services.

The institutional researcher at Maui Community College has developed and offered a course designed to help faculty better understand and use Program Health Indicators (the program-level data being used system-wide for program and annual reviews) so that they can use these to develop their own analyses and judgments about needed improvements in college instructional programs. The researcher also tries to introduce data and analyses at each management meeting, and has developed a format for written data reports and analysis, and conducts a five-minute data dialogue at each meeting. An example of such a data report was posted on the team room wall where it had previously been used to stimulate a dialogue. In the view of the institutional researcher, a critical factor in
building and sustaining faculty willingness to conduct and use program reviews is the degree to which the information gained is useful – relevant to faculty, and important enough to get administration to support faculty efforts at improvement. She is promoting a slogan across campus, “Data, Dialogue, Decisions” to promote greater consciousness about the need to use data, and dialogue about its meaning, as the framework and support for institutional decision-making. The slogan was posted in several places on campus.

Individual faculty Department Chairs reported to the team on the results of programmatic assessments. In the Business and Hospitality Program, six programs completed program reviews. The chair reported that one result is that the availability of data analysis promotes faculty leadership in that faculty have to stay “on top of” enrollments and other data trends.

In Mathematics, two persons were assigned to serve native Hawaiian students and help to boost their performance as a group to levels needed for overall for college success. The results of assessment prompted faculty to get funding to support professional development of faculty, curriculum development, and the purchase of new hardware that will allow the faculty to track the performance of high school grads in college mathematics. The college is working with high schools to advance the quality of mathematics learning so that students arrive better prepared, and has articulated algebra 1, geometry 1 and 2 to the college-level mathematics program so that students completing those courses are meeting the entry requirements for subsequent college level mathematics. Borrowing some ideas from the CalPASS Program (Southern California), the Maui College faculty is working with high schools to develop an academic tracking system for high school graduates who attend the college.

In the Allied Health Division, the Nursing Program has been examining the value added by course work to students’ performance on tests that assess communication skills and information retrieval skills – two skill sets vital for their ability to pass the nursing licensing examination. The results caused them to adjust some of the curriculum and pedagogy in the Nursing Program.

The ABIT Program has identified Student Learning Outcomes for General Education related to the program and graphed or mapped those outcomes to the courses in the program.

While the college has initiated some important work on assessment of learning, the individual responsible for leading that effort, the coordinator, is stepping down after several years of arduous work. The College reports it has not identified anyone who will assume that role.

The team asked College staff to discuss their thoughts about the sustainability of the college and system-wide focus on research data and analyses as a driver of decision-making. The College had several important challenges and concerns ahead, as noted:
(1) The colleges need the time and resources to “consolidate” their accomplishments to date in using data and analyses, and to move forward toward better and more widespread practices.
(2) Program coordinators work hard and they, as well as others, need some form of recognition from the college and its leadership, as well as from peer evaluators and accreditors.
(3) The college needs time for reflection – they are so busy producing (i.e., teaching and supporting students, doing institutional operations) that they don’t feel they have adequate time to pause and think about the things they are learning about college or programmatic quality.
(4) The college needs time to plan changes as a response to what it has found out about quality.

The college staff noted that there are still inaccuracies or problems with the system’s data. The new student information system, Banner, does not easily provide all of the reports that the colleges and faculty would like to receive in order to do more in-depth reviews of quality or inquiries about student performance. The MAPPS reports from the legacy data system are not as available as they once were; college staff was used to using MAPPS and would like to be able to access those reports again.

**Conclusions**

The team found that Maui Community College is actively engaged in a variety of assessment activities and has an established culture and practice of assessment and improvement. The decision to implement system-wide program review criteria should contribute to the already rich culture and practice of assessment and improvement at Maui Community College. 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 begun 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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