INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY FOLLOW-UP REPORT

FOCUS ON IMPROVEMENT

Submitted:
March 15, 2015

By:
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To:
Accrediting Commission for
Community and Junior
Colleges of the Western
Association of Schools and
Colleges
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CERTIFICATION OF FOLLOW-UP REPORT

Date: March 15, 2015

To: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges

From: Dr. Steven M. Kinsella, Superintendent/President
Gavilan Joint Community College
5055 Santa Teresa Boulevard, Gilroy, CA 95020

This Institutional Follow-Up Report is submitted to fulfill the requirements from the July 3, 2014 letter to the College President.

We certify that there were opportunities for broad participation by the campus community, and believe the report accurately reflects the progress made in responding to the recommendations of the March 2013 accreditation visiting team.

Walt Glines, President, Board of Trustees

Dr. Steven M. Kinsella, Superintendent/President

Dr. Kathleen Rose, Accreditation Liaison Officer

Bea Lawn, President, Academic Senate President
Statement of Report Preparation

On July 3, 2014, Gavilan College received a letter from the Commission reporting that the follow-up report submitted in March 2014 had been reviewed and that, due to unresolved recommendations, another follow-up report would be needed in March 2015. In this follow-up report, we have addressed the two remaining improvement recommendations noted in the Commission letter.

These are:

For Recommendation 1:
“the remaining issue is to have more participants engaged in the assessment and improvement of learning processes that already exist. More and deeper campus-wide involvement in the process would increase its effectiveness and ensure its sustainability.”

For Recommendation 2:
“the Commission notes that Gavilan College evaluates the success of its distance education students and the topic is widely discussed by faculty in several venues. Distance education is intentionally included in the overall College assessment process. Learning support services for distance education students have also been reviewed, and, in some cases, changes have been made. In order to increase effectiveness, the College should include the results of assessment information into the planning, decision-making, and resource allocation process.”

In the following report, we have re-stated the initial recommendation of the commission following the Accreditation Follow-Up report in 2014, the standards related to that recommendation, and the remaining concerns as described in the Commission Action Letter of July 2014. We then list the steps taken over the past year to address these concerns, followed by a discussion of the activities in relation to the standards. To further discuss the improvement recommendations, a small faculty group, including the three faculty liaisons met to discuss the initial recommendations and current activity on campus. This group continued to meet during the first stages of report preparation to frame the writing and identify key action items.
Response to the Commission Action Letter of July 3, 2014

2015 Follow-up Report

Recommendation 1 regarding 2013 Institutional Self-Study:
In order meet the standards, the team recommends that the College develop and substantially implement an effective, systematic, and comprehensive institutional strategy closely integrating student learning outcomes with all planning and decision-making efforts and resource allocations. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.B.4, II.C.2.) Specifically, this strategy should include:

- A more effective approach to assessing student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels on a regular, continuous and sustainable basis. This process must include outcome statements that clearly define learning expectations for students, define effective criteria for evaluating performance levels of students, utilize an effective means of documenting results, and the documentation of a robust dialogue that informs improvement of practices to promote and enhance student learning. (II.A.1.c)

- An approach that recognizes the central role of its faculty for establishing quality and improving instructional courses and programs. (II.A.2.a)

- Reliance on faculty expertise to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, and programs, including general and vocational education and degrees. (II.A.2.b)

- Use of documented assessment results to communicate matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies. (I.B.4)¹

- Engagement in the assessment of general education student learning outcomes. (II.A.3)²

The College should incorporate changes in the student learning outcomes assessment part of the institutional student learning outcomes cycle that currently includes an integrated planning process, and be expanded so that assessment data is used as a component of program planning processes already in place. As a major part of this strategy, a continuous, broad-based evaluative and improvement cycle must be prominent. All services, including instructional, student services, fiscal, technological, physical, and human resources should be considered and integrated.

Standard II A.1.c:
The institution identifies student learning outcomes for courses programs, certificates, and degrees; assesses student achievement of those outcomes; and uses assessment results to make improvements.
Standard II A.2.a
The institution uses established procedures to design, identify learning outcomes for, approve, administer, deliver, and evaluate courses and programs. The institution recognizes the central role of its faculty for establishing quality and improving instructional courses and programs.

Standard II A.2.b:
The institution relies on faculty expertise and the assistance of advisory committees when appropriate to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution regularly assesses student progress towards achieving those outcomes.

Standard 1.B.5
The institution uses documented assessment results to communicate matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies.

Standard II A.3:
The institution requires all academic and vocational degree programs a component of general education based on a carefully considered philosophy that is clearly stated in its catalog. The institution, relying on the expertise of its faculty, determines the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum by examining the stated learning outcomes for the course.

Standard II.C.2
The institution evaluates library and other learning support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.

Remaining concerns with Recommendation 1 as described in the July 3, 2014 Commission letter: Regarding Recommendation 1, “the remaining issue is to have more participants engaged in the assessment and improvement of learning processes that already exist. More and deeper campus-wide involvement in the process would increase its effectiveness and ensure its sustainability.

Specific actions taken to address remaining concerns with Recommendation 1 since the July 3, 2014 Commission letter:

1. Ongoing outcome work on Professional Development Day (01).
2. Discussion of Student Learning Outcomes at department meetings (02).
3. Student Learning Outcomes Committee, a subcommittee of the academic senate, has focused on actions for improvement (03).
4. Development of SLO active link on the Gavilan College home page that allows students to look up SLOs by course (04).
5. Faculty Liaison for Instructional Improvement meets with individual faculty and provides reports to the Academic Senate and other campus governance committees (05).
6. Faculty Liaison for Instructional Improvement attends department meetings and leads discussions on the integration of outcomes into instructional practice (06).
7. SLO/PLOs are a required component of the plans currently underway with the AB86 planning group, which includes collaborative partners from area K-12 districts in addition to Gavilan College credit and non-credit faculty (07).

Discussion:
As documented in the 2014 Follow-Up report, the College has been engaged in a philosophical shift from the reporting mechanics of SLO and PLO outcomes to an emphasis on *instructional improvement* at the course, program, and college level. This shift has driven engagement with, and increased breadth and depth of SLO work and improved integration with planning and resource allocation.

![Chart 1: Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycle](chart.png)

**CHART 1: Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycle**

Chart 1 illustrates the Student Learning Outcome (SLO) assessment cycle now in use. The College has SLOs for all courses, programs, and non-instructional departments. These SLOs are assessed, and the results used to inform changes to courses, programs, and institutional planning. SLO assessments are linked to the program review, planning, budgeting and curriculum review processes. Chart 2 shows the connection that now exists in using the SLO Assessment Cycle, shown in Chart 1, as an input methodology to drive program planning and associated resource requests, thereby connecting the results from SLO assessment to resource allocation.

This process is illustrated in the annual program planning process that takes place in the fall. Faculty reflect in the program plan narrative that they are using SLOs as the basis of their departmental budget requests as well as no-cost instructional improvements that are driven by SLO and PLO discussions during department meetings (08). One concern, however, is that funding constraints often limit the ability to implement improvements to on-going activities. For example, budget constraints limit the number of class sections...
CHART 2: Improvement Cycles

Since Fall 2013, at the beginning of most semesters, during the mandatory Professional Development Day, faculty participate in a structured exercise to build awareness and skill in the use of SLO assessments for instructional improvement (09). As a part of the calendared professional development day, all faculty, broken into small groups, review SLO and other data from the prior semester to reflect upon what was working in their courses and what improvements can be made at the course, program, and institutional levels to strengthen student learning (10). These discussions often result in specific ideas for improvement, which are then incorporated into departmental program plans. The rubric that we use for budget planning includes SLOs (11).

Other examples of increased engagement are evident at the academic and student services division level. Division meetings have been used to highlight SLO course level assessment. For example, the Language Arts and Sciences division had a lot of activity at the beginning of the semester as departments reviewed those classes without SLO assessment and located department members who were engaged in teaching those courses. Faculty were reminded that courses that are not updated through the curriculum committee to include updated SLOs would be suspended until that work was done. As most of these instructors were part time, full time faculty members were asked to team up with them to provide guidance in the Gavilan College assessment processes as practiced in the individual departments. These collaborations gave the assessors a context and techniques for assessment.

In the Student Services division, faculty have been involved in on-going discussions to reflect on how SLOs can be used to assess SSSP and Equity challenges. This on-going work will include addressing what types of data are needed, including the resources that
student services would need to address new initiative requirements. For example, in the CalWORKs program, a focus at their recent retreat was the review of last year’s SLO/PLO assessment results (12). The group also reflected on the accuracy of the assessment techniques in measuring stated PLOs. They determined that one of their stated outcomes really couldn’t be measured. As a result together they wrote goals for the CalWORKs program and then drafted new outcomes to help measure the goals. Later in the semester the CalWORKs Director met individually with other student services staff to review the “final” PLO (13).

Faculty in the non-credit instructional areas have also been actively engaged in SLO work (07, 14). As a part of the development of the AB86 service area plan, instructors from Gavilan College credit and non-credit, along with K-12 adult education partners, have been meeting together to discuss curriculum, assessment, and matriculation alignment. An important part of this work has been discussing how each area establishes, communicates, assesses, and utilizes SLOs (07). These discussions have prompted course SLO modifications and more training for non-credit faculty. Since non-credit classes do not have grades, and therefore do not necessarily have the same structure or activities as are found in credit classes, faculty have discussed different approaches to assessing student SLO achievement. To continue this work, the non-credit ESL assessment specialist has completed training to enhance the effectiveness of noncredit ESL assessment (48).

In the larger picture, the instructional deans have been continuously working with department chairs in discussing how assessment work mirrors standard instructional practice and how these efforts can be made more meaningful. Chairs are increasingly turning to this data as they make curriculum and program decisions, by referring to the SLO reporting site on the intranet. Ongoing dialogue at Dean’s Council, Administrative Council and the Learning Council Instructional Improvement FIG (Focused Inquiry Group) about the outcomes keeps this data at the forefront and is helping it to become accepted practice with faculty (15, 16).

The Gavilan College 2014 Accreditation Follow-up Report describes the following college processes:
- Program Planning - page 6 (17)
- Course and Program Curriculum Review - page 11 (18)
- SLO process - pages 5 and 11 (19)
- Program Review and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee - page 7 (20)
- Activities to communicate matters of quality assurance - page 15 (21)

Through the curriculum process, faculty proposing courses or course modifications are prompted to align each course, if appropriate, with the college’s GE student learning outcomes. As stated earlier, this is a continuous process and is driven by the instructional improvement discussions occurring at the department level.

The SLO Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Senate with membership drawn from the faculty, including the Professional Development Faculty Liaison, meets monthly
as a committee (22). The Faculty Liaison then meets with individual faculty members as needed (23). The current projects under discussion and/or development are:

1) Developing a more user-friendly web presence: The committee has devoted a substantial amount of time to the discussion and consideration of faculty needs for support of their SLO/PLO assessment work, and has planned the development of a website to serve as a hub for communication and information exchange (24).

The website will include five sections:
   1. ongoing faculty dialogue about assessment;
   2. best practices or guiding principles document(s);
   3. relevant/interesting articles;
   4. spotlight/personal profiles regarding faculty experiences (video interviews);
   5. part-timer issues and concerns with the SLO assessment process.

The site will be developed in conjunction with the College MIS department, and then curated by faculty. The goal is to create an engaging site with an interactive dialogue feature (24).

2) Encouraging faculty dialogue and engagement with SLOs: the committee has drafted an outline for a video featuring interviews with faculty members about their work with SLOs. The interviews will take place during Spring 2015, with the edited video ready to post on the SLO website by the end of the semester. Encouraging engagement will be an ongoing discussion item for the foreseeable future (24).

3) Addressing SLOs in the faculty contract: With the growing importance of SLO assessment data in resource allocation decisions and instructional improvement efforts, the committee has discussed whether, and in what way, this should be addressed contractually by the district and the GCFA (24).

4) Review of assessment reporting tool: the committee investigated a tool to replace the one currently in use that was developed in-house. They found that while it had a more “slick” and attractive appearance, it had less functionality, and was therefore not recommended (24).

5) Providing individual support to faculty members:
These have been numerous, on issues ranging from comprehensive SLO assessment guidance, to specific assessment techniques, to help with data analysis. Two specific instances are:

   A. Cosmetology 201: The Liaison guided faculty in their successful efforts to assess Cosmetology 201 providing comprehensive guidance. One faculty member was directed to the official SLOs for her course and offered support in determining assessment techniques for those SLOs, as well as instruction on changing the SLOs for her course if needed (24).
B. *Disability Resources* - Provided guidance on data analysis.

“(The instructor) came to me for advice because she was not happy with the results of her SLO assessment. Her assessments were based on surveys from students, where students were asked to classify how much they learned about their disability and the accommodations they need to be successful in classes. The students were asked to check a box stating how much they feel they learned. A “success” in reaching the outcome was based on a student selecting “some” or more, and a “failure” to reach the outcome was determined if the student selected “A little” or less. Under this methodology, (the instructor) determined that performance was getting slightly worse over time. I asked some questions, and pointed out that since the terms “some” and “a little” are subjective, and the students had not been educated about how to distinguish between the two, that the change she observed in the data could just be what statistician’s call “random noise”. Since the terms “some” and “a little” can be interpreted to mean the same thing, and since these values are totally subjective anyway, it would be more meaningful to define success in meeting the outcome to be any response indicating “a little” or more, and with this new definition, to review how that data have changed over time. Based on these adjustments, although there was some fluctuation in the data which could have been totally random, there was no indication of the problem she came to me with” (24).

The shift from completing the SLO/PLO assessment and reporting in a “mechanical” way to a more inclusive and meaning-centered way is an on-going process at Gavilan. Through the development of a searchable SLO webpage, with a direct link off the college homepage, students can now search for classes based upon their desired learning outcomes. Time will continue to be spent on instructional improvements efforts at the individual, departmental, and institutional level to ensure that engagement increases and deep dialogue occurs (25).
Recommendation 2 regarding 2013 Institutional Self-Study:

In order to assure the quality of its distance education program and to fully meet Standards, the team recommends that the College conduct research and analysis to ensure that learning support services for distance education are of comparable quality to those intended for students who attend the physical campus. (II.A.1.b, II.A.2.d, II.A.6, II.B.1, II.B.3.a)

Notes: ¹The fourth bullet, identified in the Commission letter as Standard I.B.4 seems to actually be Standard I.B.5, according to the text in the bullet point; ²there is no bullet point identified with the fifth citation above as II.C.2, so the discussion focuses on II.A.3, as cited in the fifth bullet point.

Standard II.A.1.b
The institution utilizes delivery systems and modes of instruction compatible with the objectives of the curriculum and appropriate to the current and future needs of its students.

Standard II A.2.d
The institution uses delivery modes and teaching methodologies that reflect the diverse needs and learning styles of its students.

Standard II A.6
The institution assures that students and prospective students receive clear and accurate information about educational courses and programs and transfer policies. The institution describes its degrees and certificates in terms of their purpose, content, course requirements, and expected student learning outcomes. In every class section students receive a course syllabus that specifies learning outcomes consistent with those in the institution’s officially approved course outline.

Standard II.B.1
The institution assures the quality of student support services and demonstrates that these services, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning and enhance achievement of the mission of the institution.

Standard II B.3.a
The institution assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate comprehensive and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method.

Remaining concerns with Recommendation 2: “the Commission notes that Gavilan College evaluates the success of its distance education students and the topic is widely discussed by faculty in several venues. Distance education is intentionally included in the overall college assessment process. Learning support services for distance education students have also been reviewed, and, in some cases, changes have been made. In order to increase effectiveness, the College
should include the results of assessment information into the planning, decision-making, and resource allocation process.”

Specific actions taken to address remaining concerns with Recommendation 2 since the July 3, 2014 letter:

1) Use of the integrated planning process at Gavilan, including program planning and review process to allocate funding and implement SmarThinking Online Tutoring Services to address need for online tutoring (26, 27).

2) Use of the integrated planning process at Gavilan, including program planning and review process to implement CCCApply to improved Admission and Records Student Learning Outcomes (28, 29, 30, 31).

3) Use of the integrated planning process at Gavilan, including program planning and review process to allocate funding and implement information competency modules to improve Library Student Learning Outcomes (32).

4) The Institutional Effectiveness Committee has changed procedures for final reports: IEC recommendations, including those for Distance Education, will now be presented directly to Academic Senate, Strategic Planning Committee, and Budget Committee (33, 34) as well as to the President’s Council and Board of Trustees. A “prompt” regarding distance education is now included in the IEC review form for all instructional departments.

Discussion:

A description of the overall development and improvement of Distance Education processes and procedures was included in the Gavilan College 2014 Accreditation Follow-up report.

It describes activities undertaken by the faculty, Distance Education Coordinator and Distance Education Committee to address Recommendation 2 and expand the dialogue about the assessment results, including:

- Development of a DE Master Plan and Best Practices document (35) as well as a student authentication policy and effective contact policy.
- Implementation of the Argos® data dashboard to compare the enrollment and success rates of DE vs. non-DE course sections (36).
- Reviewed reports detailing enrollment and success patterns in distance education offerings (37).
- Provided clear and accurate descriptions of SLOs for each online class in the syllabus and the course outline of record (38, 39).
- Creation of the Distance Education Faculty Handbook (40) with a protocol (implemented in fall 2014) ensuring that all students taking an online or hybrid course have received a copy of the course syllabus that includes SLOs. The protocol requires that the instructor open a portion of their online course to make the syllabus and course policies available up to 5 days prior to the beginning of the semester. The protocol then describes
how to make the syllabus viewing a check-in activity for the course, with the instructor pulling a report to make sure all students have completed this check in activity (41, 42, 43, 44, 45).

The Gavilan College 2014 Accreditation Follow-up report described in detail the 2013 study that was conducted to better understand the availability and effectiveness of distance support services. It included a Student Support Services review study and online focus groups, which supplemented the online student survey that is administered each term, and led to resource allocation to address findings.

The Student Support Services review study made clear that online students did not have access to the same level of tutoring service as in-person students. As discussed in the previous follow up report, the College worked to provide and evaluate additional tutoring services online. A pilot took place in Spring 2014 with in-house tutors using online tools. The Gavilan College Tutoring Center used CCCCONFER, paired with a white board to provide pilot online tutoring sessions. A small group of tutors were trained and several online tutoring sessions took place. The immediate qualitative feedback from both participants and tutors however, was that the experiences were not efficient or helpful to students. The in-house system was found to be too limited in scope and in time availability to be useful. Further research indicated that an online tutoring service from an outside vendor might be a better fit. Concurrently, it was determined that Distance Learning students were not the only ones who would benefit from increased tutoring availability outside the hours of the on-campus tutoring center.

The Student Equity Plan was developed through a two-year shared governance process and submitted to the Chancellor’s office of the California Community Colleges (46). Through the Gavilan College Equity Plan, objectives were developed to better support low-income students’ course success. One of the issues that was identified was the limited availability of in-person tutoring, both due to limited hours in the tutoring center, and lack of access for online and off-campus students. The Equity Plan therefore allocated funding for a professional and complete online tutoring service.

In Fall 2014, Gavilan College contacted over 20 other colleges to identify which products were in use and how accessible and helpful they were for students. SmarThinking online tutoring service offered by Pearson Education Inc., was selected. In Fall 2014, the contract was developed and the roll out was planned for a pilot in late Fall 2014 with a full roll out in Spring 2015. Online tutoring will now be available 24/7 for ALL Gavilan College students -- whether in-person, off-campus, or online. The service has a full complement of metrics available for tracking participation and evaluation of its success (47). Utilization and effectiveness will be monitored closely, and results reported and discussed broadly among faculty and the campus community through the shared governance process.

The Distance Education program, like all instruction and non-instructional programs, undergoes periodic program review. To additionally increase support service program accountability, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee now includes DE accessibility
and quality prompts on the review template for all support programs (34). This change ensures that support programs will be required to continually review and improve DE support services.

At their fall meeting the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) updated committee procedures to strengthen the link between program review and resource allocation process (33). Whereas IEC recommendations had previously been reported to the President’s Council, future IEC recommendations, including those for Distance Education, will be presented directly to Academic Senate, Strategic Planning Committee, and College Budget Committee. During the IEC program review process, assessment information, including SLO assessments, are reviewed and analyzed. These results form the basis of the IEC recommendations, which inform Program Plans. With the updated procedure, the IEC recommendations will also be presented directly to the Strategic Planning and College Budget committees, and the Academic Senate to inform their annual processes.
Gavilan College has addressed the outstanding concerns with Recommendation 2 through a focus on improvement that is fully integrated in the planning process, and has resulted in resource allocation to address the needs of students participating in Distance Education. This work has a solid foundation in shared governance, committee dialog, and integrated planning. The College will continue to use faculty engagement strategies to ensure that this work remains a part of the Gavilan College culture and instructional improvement goals.
Appendix 1

01. Professional Dev Day Agenda
02. SLO Discussion Stdt Svcs Division Mtg
03. SLO Discussion Academic Senate
04. SLO Link Website
05. SLO Discussion CTE Dept
06. SLO Committee Minutes and Dept Agenda
07. SLO Discussion AB86 Consortium
08. Digital Media Program Plan
09. Professional Dev Day Activity 8-23-13
10. Photos 8-23-13
11. Ranking Rubric
12. CalWORKs Retreat Agenda
13. CalWORKs Case Mgt Mtg Agenda
14. 4 - Non-Credit SLOs
15. Instructional FIG Minutes 11-11-14
16. Instructional FIG Dialogue – Learning Council
17. Page 6, 2014 Accred Follow-Up Rpt
18. Page 11, 2014 Accred Follow-Up Rpt
19. Page 5 and 11, 2014 Accred Follow-Up Rpt
22. SLO Committee Minutes 10-23-14
23. SLO Committee Minutes 9-25-14
24. SLO Progress Update 11-25-14
25. SLO Link Web Samples
26. Tutoring Program Plan
27. Academic Senate Online Tutoring Presentation
28. DRC Program Plan
29. Counseling Program Plan
30. Financial Aid Program Plan
31. Admissions and Records Program Plan
32. Library Program Plan
33. IEC Notice of Revised Instructions
34. IEC Institutional Program Template
35. Distance Ed Program Master Plan and Best Practices
36. Distance Ed Comparison Data
37. Distance Ed Update Fall 13
38. ANTH 3 Fall 12 Course Outline
39. ANTH 3 Fall 13 Course Outline
40. Distance Ed handbook
41. 3 - Sample Online Course Syllabi -
42. Distance Ed Committee Agenda
43. Check-in Activity

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44. CSIS 85 Spring 14 Course Outline
45. ENG 1A Fall 12 Course Outline
46. Student Equity Plan
47. SmarThinking
48. Beyond_Implementation_Certificate