Follow Up Visit

Los Medanos College

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This Report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited

Contra Costa Community College District on November 4, 2015, and
Los Medanos College on November 5, 2015

Submitted to:
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

Submitted by:

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November 19, 2015

TO: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

FROM: Irene M. Malmgren, Ed.D.

SUBJECT: Report of Follow-Up Visit Team to Los Medanos College, November 5, 2015

Introduction:
An external evaluation team visit was conducted at Los Medanos College on October 6-9, 2014, as part of the Contra Community College District evaluation visit. At the meeting of January 7-9, 2015, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges reviewed the Institutional Self Evaluation Report and the Report of the External Evaluation Team (2014). Action was taken to reaffirm accreditation and require the College to submit a Follow-Up Report in October, 2015.

The District evaluation team, Sylvia Thomas, Don Warkentin, and Dr. Irene Malmgren conducted the Follow-Up site visit to the Contra Costa District Office on November 4, 2015. Dr. Irene Malmgren and Jennifer Langrell, conducted the site visit to Los Medanos College on November 5, 2015. The purpose of the visit was to verify that the Follow-Up Report prepared by Los Medanos College is accurate and supported by evidence to the extent that the responses to the Recommendations can be sustained and represent positive improvements.

Los Medanos College was well prepared for the visit. Meetings were scheduled as requested by visiting team members. Evidence was well organized, provided prior to the visit, and questions were answered clearly and directly. When additional evidence was requested, it was provided in a timely and cooperative manner.

The visit began on November 4, 2015, with meetings with District leadership and United Faculty leadership.   Discussion focused on College/District Recommendation 1.   Questions were answered, supporting documents provided, and process clarifications provided.

The next day, Jenny Langrell received a tour of the Brentwood Center, met with staff from the Computer Lab/Media support team, Counseling, Library, Math Lab, and Science Lab. On the Los Medanos College campus, Dr. Malmgren met with the Vice President/Accreditation Liaison Officer, Human Resources representatives, Instructional and Non-Instructional Deans, the Business Services Director, the College Recommendation #2 Response Team, Shared Governance Council, Academic Senate leadership, and the Planning Committee.

The Follow-Up Report and Visit were expected to document resolution of the following recommendations:

College Recommendation 1: With specific reference to the Brentwood Center, in order to meet the Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards, the team recommends that the College ensures it is meeting identified needs of students at the Brentwood Center including the quality and availability of student services, technology, facilities, and library support services. In addition, it must demonstrate that these services and resources, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning and enhance student achievement, fulfilling the mission of the institution. (Standards II.B.1, II.B.3.a, II.B.4; II.C.1, II.C.1.c, II.C.2; III.B.1; and Eligibility Requirements 14 and 16)

College/District Recommendation 1: To meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District and the College include, as a required component of the formal evaluations of faculty and others directly responsible for student progress towards achieving stated student-learning outcomes, a means to evaluate the effectiveness of that responsibility. (Standard III.A.1.c)

College Recommendation 2: In order to improve the effectiveness of its resource allocation process, the team recommends that the College close the loop by systematically assessing the effective use of financial resources allocated through the Resource Allocation Process, and use the results of the assessment as the basis for institutional improvement. (Standards III.D.1.a; III.D.4)

Team Analysis of College Responses to the 2010 Evaluation Team Recommendations

College/District Recommendation 1: To meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District and the College include, as a required component of the formal evaluations of faculty and others directly responsible for student progress towards achieving stated student-learning outcomes, a means to evaluate the effectiveness of that responsibility. (Standard III.A.1.c)

Findings and Evidence: The district team met with District administrators and faculty union representatives to verify the progress made on the inclusion of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) into the evaluation process and instruments. At the time of the visit, the District had concluded negotiations with the United Faculty (UF) faculty union and had engaged in a meet and confer process with the Management Council Executive Board (MCEB). The president and vice president of the UF confirmed that the negotiated process had resulted in the inclusion of SLOs into the faculty evaluation process. The revised process and instruments were ratified by union members on October 6, 2015, followed by Board approval on October 7, 2015. The team was able to review sample evaluation instruments including the forms for planning, classroom observation, self-evaluation, and other forms that verify the inclusion of SLOs into the evaluation process.

The Executive Vice Chancellor of Administrative Services, who is the District's chief negotiator, also verified the evaluation process for academic administrators had been revised to include SLOs. The District Governing Board approved changes to the MCEB evaluation process and

forms to include SLOs as a component of academic administrators' evaluations at its meeting on September 9, 2015. The revised process utilizes two components: Goals and Objectives Form and a Behavioral Skills Survey.

The revised evaluation process for faculty, with the new forms, is being piloted in fall 2015 with full implementation scheduled to take place in spring 2016. The new evaluation for administrators began in fall 2015 with the setting of goals and objectives. The inclusion of SLOs will be evident in spring 2016 when the process concludes.

Conclusion: The changes that have been made to the evaluation process for both faculty and administrators who have direct responsibility for student progress toward achieving student learning outcomes have resulted in the integration of SLOs into the evaluation process for both groups and ensure compliance with the Standard. The team finds the colleges and District have met the expectations of the recommendation and have fully addressed the recommendation, corrected the deficiencies, and now meet the Commission's Standard.

College Recommendation 1: **With specific reference to the Brentwood Center, in order to meet the Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards, the team recommends that the College ensures it is meeting identified needs of students at the Brentwood Center including the quality and availability of student services, technology, facilities, and library support services. In addition, it must demonstrate that these services and resources, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning and enhance student achievement, fulfilling the mission of the institution. (Standards II.B.1, II.B.3.a, II.B.4; II.C.1, II.C.1.c, II.C.2; III.B.1; and Eligibility Requirements 14 and 16)**

Findings and Evidence: The College has taken huge strides, since the team visit in October, 2014, to ensure that students at the Brentwood Center have equitable access to quality support services. In the Follow-Up Report, the College indicated that a taskforce with all stakeholders was created to assess the areas of concern raised in this recommendation. The College indicated that it used data to assess student need, use, and satisfaction of its services, with a specific emphasis on the Brentwood Center, which the team was able to confirm. In conjunction with the data obtained from the District Research Office, The Brentwood Center Student Survey was conducted in March, 2015, to help evaluate the needs and provide feedback regarding the support services provided. The College has also used the responses to the survey to improve a variety of services in student services, technology, and library support services.

Assessment Center - In summer 2015, a full-time Assessment Center Coordinator was hired to focus on the changes in assessment that have been identified in the Student Success and Support Plan (SSSP). The College was able to increase this position from a part-time position, due to an increase in funding from SSSP. The coordinator is responsible for the assessment activities at both sites.

Bookstore - In the Brentwood Center Student Survey, students expressed the need to expand the Bookstore hours at the Center. In response to this request, the Bookstore has expanded its on-site services to include the third week of each semester, beginning in fall 2015. In addition, beginning spring 2015 the Bookstore was at the Center for two days and students were able to sell back their textbooks during finals week. However, due to the lack of physical space at the current Center location, the Bookstore is unable to have a full-time store at this time.

CalWORKS and EOPS - Effective fall 2015, CalWORKS and EOPS have regularly scheduled hours at the Brentwood Center. These services will be monitored to see if the staffing should be increased. In the survey, students indicated a need for additional counseling hours in these areas.

Student Labs - The Computer Lab at the Brentwood Center hired a Student Assistant in fall 2015 to enhance and improve the services provided in the lab. The Assistant is currently scheduled Monday and Wednesdays from 11:30 am – 2:30 pm; this level of staffing mirrors the staffing level at the Pittsburg campus. Also, the Assistant will help support faculty when possible.

In fall 2015, a permanent, half-time Math Lab Coordinator was hired, which allowed the Math Lab to extend operating hours to include additional afternoons and evening hours. The extended hours are Monday-Thursday, 8 am – 8 pm and Friday, 8 am to 3 pm. In addition, with the extra funding, student tutors are now available in some classes, which helps support the student at the point of need.

A full-time Science Lab Coordinator was hired to support the new science lab which opened in 2014 at the Brentwood Center. In addition, the Science Lab hired three Student Assistants for the Biology program and one Student Assistant for the Physics program to mirror the staffing at the Pittsburg Campus.

Counseling - Counseling saw a need for an additional counselor at the Brentwood Center, went through the full-time faculty hiring prioritization process, and received approval for a new counseling position. The position began fall 2015, exclusively at the Brentwood Center, and provides the following counseling services: general, DSPS, and Veteran counseling. Prior to hiring the new full-time counselor, Counseling was able to add 14 DSPS counseling hours to the Brentwood Center counseling schedule, effective in fall 2014 and spring 2015. Additional part-time hours are planned for general, foster youth, Student Success Reengagement and Vets counseling services at the Center. In addition, Counseling submitted an additional request for an ESL counselor which would have been shared between the Pittsburg Campus and the Brentwood Center; however, this request was not approved, but will remain as an ongoing goal.

The College is also investigating online counseling vendors with the goal of implementing e-Counseling by the spring of 2016. This service will provide online counseling and advising to

both online and face-to-face students. Counseling is in the process of developing online tutorials to help students and will be launched concurrently with e-Counseling.

Financial Aid - The College has added a full-time Financial Aid Assistant I for the Brentwood Center to begin fall 2015, which will significantly increase the number of hours per week available for financial aid assistance. In addition, to increase the availability of scholarship information at the Center Financial Aid Office, in addition to the recent hiring of a full-time Financial Aid I position at the Brentwood Center, a representative from the Pittsburg Campus will have scheduled hours at the Brentwood Center during the scholarship application season and will include offering workshops assisting with scholarship applications.

IT & Media Support - The Instructional Technology & Services (IT&S) Department has implemented a new staffing schedule to provide increased support for technology at the Brentwood Center. This new schedule has allowed a more timely response to technology needs. In addition, IT&S submitted a Resource Allocation Proposal (RAP), which was approved spring 2015; the funding has allowed IT&S to purchase a new "smart cart" and purchase new document cameras for the Center. The new equipment has been requested and will be available for use by spring 2016. IT&S has developed a new way to request media. The Media Equipment Request Tool (MERT) is available online and has helped streamline the process for requesting media equipment. IT&S has also implemented the use of *TeamViewer,* software that provides remote support, and through the use of this product, response time has decreased for technology issues.

Library - The College's librarians have worked to increase awareness of the services available at the Brentwood Center as well as increase the services provided at the Center. One of their marketing strategies to increase awareness has been to leverage the existing systems the students are currently using, such as the InSite portal, Desire2Learn (D2L) online course management system, and in-class presentations**.** The librarians have increased the number of workshops offered, and in fall 2015, began offering specialized information literacy workshops, library orientation workshops, and scheduled drop-in reference assistance. To further expand the library's presence at the Center, the librarians have submitted a proposal for a full-time librarian, which will be at the Brentwood Center. The position was approved and will start in fall 2016. Due to lack of space at the current Center, this position will be assigned fifty percent of the time at the Center until the new permanent Brentwood Center is operational in fall 2019.

Parking and Facilities - The College administration considered several options to expand the Brentwood Center and parking facilities to meet growing needs of the student population. Many options were explored with the City of Brentwood, the owner of the open space behind the Center, local business owners, and possible additional leasing options. The viability of these expansion projects were explored, but in light of total construction costs, possible lease cost, and the length of time the expanded facilities would be used, it was determined that expanding the Brentwood Center at this time would not be fiscally prudent in light of the new permanent Brentwood Center that will open in fall 2019. Specifically in regard to parking issues, the

students at the Brentwood Center were very vocal, and felt that extending the parking across Brentwood Boulevard, due to high traffic volume, would create safety concerns, and the College agreed.

Student Services - Student Services recently created a Student Success & Retention Team, which will focus on the needs of at-risk students. They have started working with student populations on probation or with a dismissal status. The team provides services to all students enrolled at the College, and currently has workshops on Reinstatement, Probation, and Retention scheduled at both the Brentwood Center and the Pittsburg Campus. In addition, the College has purchased *Starfish,* retention software that helps support students at risk; there will be a pilot in spring 2016, with a full rollout in fall 2016. Starfish will help increase the number of contacts a student has with the College, specifically with counseling.

The College is also exploring *Student Lingo*, software to provide interactive online workshops for the students, which would provide a variety of support services to all students 24/7. The offerings include such topics as career exploration, study skills, time management, financial literacy, and learning skills. Also, the district has a new online orientation, which is available 24/7 for students.

The students at the Brentwood Center have indicated in the last two Brentwood Center Student Surveys that many students were unaware of the services and activities available at the Brentwood Center. To help increase student awareness of the services and activities available at the Center, a large television monitor has been purchased and will be installed at the entrance of the Brentwood Center.

Soft Space for Students - A space at the rear of the Brentwood facility has been used to provide students an area for lounging and breaks. The space includes outdoor seating and the Wi-Fi network will be expanded to include this space. To provide easy access to the space, a rear door is now unlocked during business hours. An unintended benefit from adding the outdoor space and unlocking the door is that more students are now parking behind the center due to the direct access to the Brentwood Center through the door adjacent to the break area.

Transfer & Career Services - A full-time Director of Transfer & Career Services was hired in summer 2015 to enhance and direct the transfer and career services at the Brentwood Center and the Pittsburg Campus. This position is responsible for coordinating classroom presentations and scheduling career advisement services at both locations.

Tutoring and Reading/Writing Consultants - Tutoring Services submitted a request for additional funding to increase tutoring hours at the Brentwood Center. The request went through RAP and was approved for an additional 20 hours of tutoring per week; this increase has doubled the number tutoring hours available. An additional RAP was submitted for two additional computers for the Reading/Writing Center, which was also approved and implemented.

Conclusion: The team found evidence to support the availability of appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to all students. The team finds the college has met the expectations of the recommendation, and has fully addressed the recommendation, corrected the deficiencies, and now meets the Commission's Standards and Eligibility Requirements.

College Recommendation 2: In order to improve the effectiveness of its resource allocation process, the team recommends that the College close the loop by systematically assessing the effective use of financial resources allocated through the Resource Allocation Process, and use the results of the assessment as the basis for institutional improvement. (Standards III.D.1.a; III.D.4)

Findings and Evidence: The College mustered a strong and immediate response to this recommendation.   Immediately upon receiving the recommendation, the "College Recommendation 2 Response Team" was formed to provide leadership and coordination of process changes. The team consisted of representatives from multiple constituencies and areas of the college. The Academic Senate reported that planning changes were discussed at Senate meetings and supported by faculty.

Currently, areas write annual program reviews and follow with a Resource Allocation Proposal (RAP) if funding is being requested. RAPs address three types of needs: program maintenance, program improvement, and permanent classified staff requests. The Shared Governance Council reviews program improvement and permanent classified staff requests and forwards funding recommendations to the President. Cabinet reviews program maintenance requests and forwards funding recommendations to the President. The President is thus provided with a comprehensive picture of the RAP requests, allowing him to determine the effective distribution of financial resources.

In response to this recommendation, a three-year "look-back" process was also implemented. Currently in its first cycle, programs that received funding two fiscal years ago have been asked to assess and report on the impact of the funding received. Data is being increasingly incorporated, with efforts made to allow SGC and Cabinet to use the data to assess the effective use of financial resources, which in turn informs their recommendations to improve the campus-wide RAP process. The Cabinet has reviewed the program maintenance self-assessment reports and made recommendations to the President, thus "closing the loop" within that category.

The College is consistently assessing the resource allocation process by identifying critical junctures, process improvements, and involving multiple committees in the discussions. As part of this effort, the Planning Committee, which advises Institutional Effectiveness, finalized the Integrated Planning Model for the College. Strategic Plan directions are also incorporated into Program Review summaries, which become a part of the Institutional Effectiveness Report. This integration had the impact of aligning potentially divergent goals across campus to the Strategic Plan by focusing individual Program Reviews on College strategic directions.

Conclusion: The changes made to the planning process have effectively "closed the loop" by providing regular assessment of the effective use of financial resources allocated through the Resource Allocation Process and using the results of the assessments for institutional improvement, evidenced in the Institutional Effectiveness Report. The team finds that the College has fully addressed the recommendation, corrected the deficiencies, and now meets the Commission's Standards.