FOCUSED MIDTERM REPORT

Submitted By

Merritt College
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To

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

March 15, 2006

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FOCUSED MIDTERM REPORT

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STATEMENT ON REPORT PREPARATION

Merritt College’s Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), Vice President of Instruction Linda Berry-Camara, has provided leadership since 2003 in the College’s efforts to provide evidence to the Commission on progress toward more fully satisfying Accreditation standards. Four progress reports have been submitted to the Commission in response to Commission requests, and the creation of each progress report has been a collaborative effort among administrators, faculty, and staff.

ALO Berry-Camara convened the Accreditation Committee in fall 2005, and presented to the Committee the Evaluation Team recommendations and the College’s Planning Agenda that would be addressed in the College’s Midterm Report. Members of the Committee, College administrators and the College community accepted data collection assignments, and participated in drafting the Report. All drafts were submitted to the ALO for input and revision, and multiple drafts were presented to the Accreditation Committee and to the College governance committees for feedback on content and format.

Responses to the four District recommendations were written by Vista Community College President Judy Walters and Associate Vice Chancellor of Institutional Research Chuen Rong Chan. The responses were then sent to the college ALOs to draft their college responses.

Merritt College’s Midterm Report represents not only a collegial effort in compiling the report, but more importantly, it represents a campus-wide effort since 2003 to more fully address Accreditation standards. The benefit to the College has been a revitalization and reshaping of its governance structure and the creation of an integrated planning and budgeting process that is logical, transparent, and leads to resource allocation. The College is proud of the progress it has made in the last three years.

________________________________________
Dr. Evelyn C. Wesley
President, Merritt College
Response to District Recommendation 1

1. The team recommends that a District-wide plan and an implementation process should be created that is strategic and systematically integrates the educational, financial, physical and human resources of the District. All planning processes should be inclusive of the four colleges and communities served by the District. The plan should include identified institutional outcomes with criteria for evaluation on a periodic basis. It is recommended that the District wide plan integrate the educational master plans and program reviews of the colleges. The chancellor should ensure that the plan and ongoing planning processes are communicated throughout the district. (Standards 3.B.1, 3.B.3, 3.C.3, 10.C.1, 10, C.6, 1996 Standards of Accreditation)

Peralta Community College District, consisting of College of Alameda, Laney College, Merritt College, and Vista Community College, recognize that having an integrated strategic plan as recommended by the visiting team is critical to the success of our students and the future of our colleges. As such, the Board of Trustees, Chancellor, presidents, faculty members, and staff are all committed to ensuring that this plan is created, widely disseminated, and implemented.

The response that follows incorporates the material presented in the October 15, 2004 and October 15, 2005 Progress Report and the work that has been done through March 15, 2006.

BACKGROUND OF DISTRICT-WIDE STRATEGIC PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

In October 2004, the colleges and district responded to this recommendation with a proposed model that involved the Council on Instruction, Planning, and Development (CIPD). In that report, we indicated that the governance body at each college campus would review the model. Subsequently, in November of 2004, the steering group proposed that the colleges consolidate their recommendations through a consultative process to prepare for strategic planning that would begin in the spring of 2005. Through the consultative process it became apparent that the strategic planning process would need to encompass a larger and more representative shared-governance group than the CIPD.
In light of this finding, in January 2005 the chancellor of the Peralta Community College District called for the establishment of a Strategic Planning Steering Committee comprised of representatives from College of Alameda, Laney College, Merritt College, Vista Community College and staff from the district office (Appendix 1). An “interim” steering committee determined the specific membership of the official steering committee. This official committee includes 23 voting members and 17 nonvoting ex officio members. The membership represents the desire to have an effective cross section of the colleges representing all constituencies as well as to ensure that the strategic planning of the four colleges, based on educational master plans and program reviews, drives the actions developed from the strategic planning process. Critical to the effectiveness of the committee and the integrative planning process is inclusion of representatives from the various district office departments.

The initial charge of the steering committee was as follows:
1) to establish a strategic planning process;
2) to identify key issues (initiatives) for inclusion in the plan; and
3) to ensure that the planning process integrates well with the four colleges and the individual planning processes at each college.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE**

The initial interim steering committee, comprised of individuals from the four colleges and the district office, held their first planning session on January 13, 2005. Dr. Chuen-Rong Chan, associate vice chancellor for research and institutional development, and Alton Jelks, associate vice chancellor and special assistant to the Chancellor, facilitated the initial planning sessions. The group accepted the core charge of reviewing possible scenarios for strategic planning and for determining at what point the district would secure the services of an outside planning consultant/facilitator. The group also undertook the task of reviewing steering committee membership to ensure that it reflected the various constituencies of the colleges and that the appropriate constituencies appoint members to the steering committee (i.e., college administrators, district classified senate, and district academic senate). A shared governance committee creates “buy-in” from the various constituencies, as well as provides a vehicle for communication throughout the district.

From January to May 2005, the steering committee met twice a month to address these and other issues important to the long-term success of the planning process, which included the following:
1. Developing a common mission, vision, and values for the entire district. The individual mission, vision, and values statements from each college were reviewed to identify the common concepts and language that served well to integrate the colleges and the district.
2. Defining the planning process itself, which involved preparing various diagrams demonstrating how the process would flow and ensuring that
it would be a “bottom up” process, fully engaging the needs of the colleges.

3. Strategizing on how the decisions made during the planning process would impact the priorities of the processes and procedures of the district office so that they would enhance and support the educational mission of each college. The priority in planning was to insure that college planning would drive district planning and priorities, bringing the colleges together in a collaborative endeavor toward integrated planning that would define the district.

In March 2005, the steering committee and the chancellor launched a request for proposal for a planning consultant. In June 2005, following Board approval on June 14, the district contracted the firm of Moore, Iacofano, Goltzman Inc., (MIG, Berkeley) to facilitate the planning process. The RFP review process included representatives of the steering committee in concert with the chancellor. The committee reached consensus on the decision.

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee with the assistance of MIG accomplished the following:

1. A follow-up retreat for the board of trustees on June 24 and 25, 2005. (The initial retreat took place November 2004, at which time the board reviewed their role as a governing board.) At the June 2005 retreat, the board addressed overall issues and priorities of the district that provided guidance to the strategic planning process and produced 12 general goals for the district;

2. The strategic planning steering committee continued to meet with MIG facilitating. At planning sessions, the committee worked through consensus to reach a priority list of issues that the colleges and district office needed to address based on the 12 goals set by the Board and added a 13th goal, Human Resource Development;

3. Informational and feedback sessions were conducted at each of the four colleges during July/August 2005 to present the general district goals to the leadership team at each college, and to obtain college responses to these goals and ways in which the district goals also reflected the college goals and vice versa;

4. By late August, the steering committee developed a draft framework and strategic directions for the strategic plan and recombined some of the initial 13 goals into 7 broad district goals;

5. Town Hall planning meetings were scheduled at each of the four colleges in July and August 2005. During these meetings, members of the general college community provided wider input on the issues and priorities they felt necessitated addressing through the planning process in relation to the 7 general goals that had emerged from the June retreat with the board of trustees and which had been refined; and
6. On September 12, 2005, an initial draft framework and strategic directions for the strategic plan in relation to the seven broad district goals were developed for presentation and discussion with the board of trustees on September 27. An updated draft strategic plan framework was presented to the board of trustees on October 10. This draft incorporated input from the steering committee provided on September 12.

7. On October 11, 2005, the Board of Trustees approved Peralta’s draft strategic plan.

8. On October 19, 2005 flex day, at the direction of the chancellor, the entire district (faculty, classified staff, administrators and student leaders) was invited to assemble to review progress made to date on integrated strategic planning, and participants had the opportunity to provide input on the draft strategic plan. The day began with presentations in the Laney theatre by the chancellor and the various constituencies of the district including students and union representatives. The large group broke into smaller groups to review and provide input on the 7 strategic directions and the proposed initiatives relative to each. The work from the individual groups was recorded both to be reported out in a closing general session, and for use to finalize the strategic planning framework.

9. During the months of November and December 2005, prior to the winter holiday break, work was done to finalize the membership of the steering committees, one team for each of seven strategic directions.

10. After the three week holiday break and the start up of the spring semester, the steering committee met on January 23, 2006, to review the role and purpose of the planning teams. A special meeting was held with the Chancellor on February 1, 2006, to review with the Chancellor phase 2 of the planning process. A timeline of the implementation process is available in the documents. The co-chairs were identified in January 2006.

11. On February 9, 2006, a three-hour training session for the co-chairs of the seven planning teams was conducted with MIG facilitating. There was a specific charge for the co-chairs to refine the strategic initiatives to avoid duplication, provide greater clarity, as well as to make the initiatives realistic. The co-chairs were further charged with pulling their teams together for a first meeting. MIG will continue to provide expertise in each of the first couple of meetings of the planning teams.

12. On February 14, 2006, the board of trustees renewed the contract of MIG to facilitate phase 2 of the planning process. MIG will continue to work with the steering committee, the seven implementation teams, the board of trustees in their planning work sessions, assist in the compilation of data for an updated environmental scan report, and assist in the preparation of quarterly and annual reports on the progress of Peralta’s strategic planning.

13. The next steering committee meeting will be March 20, 2006, at which time there will be reports from the planning teams.
DISTRICT OFFICE INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAMS

Concurrent with the strategic planning process, a number of activities have been in place which reflects the district’s efforts to engage the colleges and to integrate the needs and concerns of each in the planning and decision making process. In many instances, existing committees will take on the action planning for one of the seven strategic directions.

1. The chancellor holds monthly meetings with a variety of groups to seek their input and direction:
   - Group of Advising Faculty (GAF);
   - Chancellor’s Policy Advisory Committee (CPAC);
   - President’s Council (with college presidents); and
   - Executive Cabinet (presidents and district office department heads).

   The agenda for all meetings includes the opportunity for participants to share ideas and concerns and to solicit discussion and advice in an open and free-flowing dialogue.

   The Chancellor's Policy Advisory Committee will address the strategic direction, “Improving Effectiveness and District-wide Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration.” This committee is comprised of the leadership of the various constituencies and makes it an ideal team to take on the planning for this strategic direction. As a District with four colleges, we felt that our communication, coordination, and collaboration are so critical that the chancellor himself will be chairing this team.

2. The chancellor and/or the district chief financial officer convene meetings to ensure integration of ideas and needs throughout the budget process, including the following:
   - Budget Advisory Committee, comprised of representatives from each college;
   - Monthly meetings the district chief financial officer holds with the colleges’ business managers; and
   - The Budget Allocation Formula Task Force.

   The Budget Allocation Task Force has met regularly to design an allocation funding formula to recommend to appropriate constituencies and to the chancellor. With the forwarding of the recommendation, this committee will have completed its charge. The continuing work on the budget, resource allocation, and the enhancement of resources will be undertaken by the Budget Advisory Committee.

   Because the Budget Allocation Task Force and the existing Budget Advisory Committee are shared governance committees that are addressing budget planning, these committees will undertake the full
breadth of strategic planning for the strategic direction “Enhancing Resources and Budget Processes.” The president of Merritt College, the vice president of instruction at the College of Alameda, and the district chief financial officer will co-chair this committee. One component of the action plan, beyond a budget allocation formula, is to work on a prop 39 bond measure for the June 2006 voter ballot. This bond seeks to address the facilities needs and plans of the four colleges, which are based on college educational planning, for which sufficient funding does not exist. The emphasis of the bond will be building renovation, furniture and equipment for instructional and student services needs. This bond also will be addressed in the initiative “Leveraging Information Technology” and the initiative “Creating Effective Learning and Working Environments,” since it is a collaborative effort. If the bond passes it also will have impact on strategic initiative “Enhancing Success and Student Success.”

3. The Council on Instruction, Planning, and Development (CIPD) has been in existence for over fifteen years. Each college has a curriculum committee per Education Code and Board Policy Guidelines that is the direct responsibility of the college academic senates. The CIPD, with representatives from each college and staff from the district, coordinates the curriculum on a district-wide basis, provides the information to the Board for final adoption, and submits paperwork to the State Chancellor’s Office. This committee has the current reputation of being a model district-wide committee that provides leadership and guidance and helps to facilitate college decisions. The vice chancellor of education facilitates this committee.

CIPD has a planning and development emphasis and therefore will provide the foundation for the strategic planning team, “Enhancing Access and Student Success.” The planning team also will include membership from the district matriculation committee and pertinent college committees (i.e., basic skills committees, learning lab committees, SLO/Assessment committees, etc.). The president of Vista and the district vice chancellor of educational services will co-chair this committee.

4. In spring 2005, the colleges/district established a Peralta Community College District Facilities Advisory Planning Committee. This group functions following the model of the Council of Instruction, Planning and Development (CIPD) and represents the college facilities committees and the district service center. The facilities advisory group has established their guidelines and purpose as well as areas of responsibility. The Laney College president and the district executive director of general services co-chair this committee, which contains five voting members from each college. The manager and staff from the district facilities department will staff this committee. This committee functions as a coordinating body of all the facilities projects and makes recommendations to the chancellor for
the trustees committee on facilities. The committee agreed at a meeting held September 20, 2005, that the criteria for projects would be the same criteria used by the State Chancellor’s Office and the college’s educational master plan.

College representatives from the district facilities advisory planning committee made a detailed presentation to the board of trustees at a December 3, 2005 board retreat. The presentation provided an extensive listing of facilities needs based on the colleges’ educational plans. The data from this presentation will provide the necessary information for developing a prop 39 bond measure.

Because of the role and responsibility of the district facilities advisory planning committee, this committee will be responsible for the strategic initiative “Creating Effective Learning and Working Environments.”

5. The district marketing department convenes monthly meetings with the public information officers from each college to develop coordinated marketing efforts, participation in community events, and general community outreach.

This district marketing department group has been expanded to include greater college representation and has been charged with planning for the strategic initiative “Enhancing Awareness and Visibility.” Initial work will focus on heightening awareness and visibility as the prop 39 bond moves forward. This committee also has been charged with action planning which will address underrepresented communities. This planning team is co-chaired by the vice president of instruction at Laney College and the district executive director of marketing.

6. The Information Technology department has a steering committee for the implementation of the new PeopleSoft system. This group meets at least twice a month (more often as needed) to help guide the migration to the new system, which will impact all the technology needs of the colleges, including finance, student services, business management, and so forth. Further, the district has established a “fit-gap” team, comprised of faculty and classified staff, to address the “fit” and the “gaps” in the PeopleSoft student administration system.

The existing steering committee for the PeopleSoft implementation and the “fit gap” team are not broad enough to address all technology needs throughout the district. As a result the strategic planning steering committee formed a new committee/planning team to provide planning and implementation of the strategic direction, “Leveraging Information Technology.” The team is comprised of representatives from the college technology committees and additional faculty who have significant
involvement with technology at the colleges. This planning team is co-chaired by the vice president of student services at the College of Alameda and the district chief information Officer.

7. The Human Resources (HR) department provides all the necessary support to the colleges and district in a variety of areas: recruitment, selection and performance evaluation of employees; risk management; safety policy; employee relations and employee benefits; safety and police services; and faculty and staff development. The interface between the district human resource department and the colleges has been quite good for the last several years.

The HR department has embarked on a systematic and integrated human resources planning process through the District HR Committee, addressing the strategic direction “Developing our Human Resources.” The co-chairs for planning in this area are the president of the College of Alameda, the acting district vice chancellor of human resources, and the district manager of human resources. The purpose of the committee is to address the areas of improvement that the Strategic Planning Steering Committee identified from their town-hall meetings at each of the four colleges.

One of the areas identified by the colleges is the need for training of managers. To implement one component of the strategic plan, the Human Resources Department is coordinating a managers’ training program on July 10, 2006 in conjunction with the other five District Service Centers. The chancellor will open the training with a review of the integrated strategic plan. He will also communicate his priorities for the managers in light of the integrated strategic plan. Each of the directors of the six District Service Centers will speak to how their respective Service Centers assist the four colleges. The district vice chancellor for finance (district chief financial officer) will also provide information regarding the budget allocation model. The presentations by the six Service Centers will be an opportunity to repeat, orally and in writing, the operational responsibilities and functions of the district and those of the colleges.

The training program will then be converted into a New Managers’ College, which will be conducted every February and July for new managers. Current managers may attend the trainings as a refresher course.

As a method of implementing the strategic plan and setting priorities district-wide, managers are currently evaluated based on the seven strategic directions established in the strategic plan. These evaluations will be concluded by March 15, 2006.
Our strategic plan integrates not only the educational, financial, physical and human resources of the district, but also marketing and information technology as well. They are important to the health and success of the colleges in attracting students and providing them with state of the art technology, thereby ensuring successful learning. From the very beginning when we started planning, the process has been inclusive of the four colleges and the communities served by the District. This is evident from the attendance, participation and membership of the various meetings. The plan integrates the educational master plans and program reviews of the colleges. In order to communicate this plan and ongoing planning processes throughout the district, town-hall meetings were conducted at each college, informational and focus group sessions conducted during flex days, meetings took place with college leadership teams, with a new planning Website under construction. These communications will continue on an on-going basis to ensure that we receive feedback to fine tune the process. The final plan will include institutional and district outcomes and will include criteria to evaluate them. Annual reports will be provided to the steering committee and the chancellor.

As reported in October 2005, every department of the district office undertakes a range of integrated activities and a report is available in the documents section. The shift to strategic planning teams for each of the seven strategic directions, for the most part, was built on already existing district-wide committees.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEES/TEAMS (APPENDIX 2)**

All seven strategic planning committees/teams have been presented above. For each planning team, the goal is to consider a range of issues and options and work toward decisions that are mutually agreeable to the colleges, district office representatives, as well as the other constituency and professional perspectives and the community. Each team will 1) provide college input to decisions with district wide impact; 2) report recommendations and decisions back to the colleges; 3) develop recommendations for the chancellor on key issues; and 4) follow up on decisions to assess implementation progress.

These planning teams serve as a venue for deliberation for all key stakeholders within a shared governance context. The committees have short term (2005-2007) and ongoing roles:

- **Short-term (2005-2007):** Implementing the strategic plan framework in a way that meets the needs of the colleges and the district service centers while addressing the needs of the communities the district serves.
- **Ongoing:** Serving as the standing bodies for district-wide deliberation for each of the seven strategic directions.
Each planning team will develop an annual schedule of activities for its strategic direction, focusing on milestones in the deliberative process such as college/district outreach, providing recommendations to the chancellor, reporting back to the colleges, etc. Each planning team will solicit their constituencies’ perspectives and report back results. A consensus approach is used to hear all views and arrive at mutually agreeable solutions. These planning teams in time will become a regular part of the district culture and over time will achieve even greater effectiveness.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Board of Trustees embraced the spirit of the recommendation addressing integrated strategic planning and convened three board planning sessions:

- March 4 and 5, 2005;
- June 24 and 25, 2005; and
- July 26, 2005.

At the special retreats, board members had the opportunity to engage in a dialogue about the benefits of strategic planning and to express their thoughts about what the District’s plan should include. The first planning meeting, which a member of the board and staff facilitated in March, laid the groundwork for a second planning session in June.

At the June retreat, with MIG facilitating, the trustees identified 12 strategic planning areas:

1. Integrated strategic plan;
2. Student success;
3. Increase enrollment;
4. Student support services;
5. Fiscal stability and sustainability;
6. Accountability systems;
7. Access;
8. Quality Programs;
9. Physical facilities and infrastructure;
10. Partnerships;
11. Board development; and
12. District image and identity.

(The strategic planning steering committee added a 13th strategic planning area, human resource development, which the Board accepted on July 26, 2005.)

Trustees agreed that “Tonight’s meeting was designed to take a first look in order for the district’s service centers to have a set of action plans and priorities
that would form the district integrated strategic plan and this would guide future budgeting decisions and priorities.”

The 13 planning areas were presented to the strategic planning steering committee for consideration when developing the district-wide integrated plan. A suggestion that the district reformulate the original 13 planning directions into seven strategic directions was proposed. In September 2005, the steering committee accepted the seven strategic directions. As previously mentioned, the seven strategic directions are as follows:

- Enhancing access and student success;
- Developing our human resources;
- Creating effective learning and working environments;
- Leveraging information technology;
- Enhancing resources and budget process;
- Enhancing awareness and visibility; and
- Improving the effectiveness of district-wide communication, coordination, and collaboration.

The strategic planning process will continue through 2006 and beyond. During this period, not only will strategic initiatives be continually refined, but also the processes and procedures of the district office will be adjusted and reshaped to meet more effectively the specific needs of the colleges as the seven planning teams formulate and implement action plans. Furthermore, the steering committee will develop criteria to evaluate progress made on the strategic plan. The budget process, as one example, has the goal of being as transparent as possible. The chancellor’s budget advisory committee is a major component of this “reshaping” of how the district develops the budget, and led by the vice chancellor for finance (district chief financial officer), the budget allocation task force, many of whose members also serve on the budget advisory committee, will continue to refine the budget process on an ongoing basis.

Overall, the members of the strategic planning steering committee, the chancellor, and the board of trustees have committed themselves to pursuing strategic planning as the foundation of change throughout the district. The core goal of full integration of the activities of the district office with the needs, missions, and educational plans of each college is well underway. The steering committee and the college constituencies are equally committed to the long-term development and implementation of strategic initiatives and action planning. In addition, ongoing evaluation and assessment are critical to integrated strategic planning.

Analysis of Results Achieved to Date:

- As reported on October 15, 2005, approximately 40 meetings occurred concerning strategic planning with the steering committee and/or each college community between January and October 2005. Meetings have
continued through and until the writing of this report, but were interrupted by the three-week winter holiday break and the beginning of the spring 2006 semester.

• The district retained a planning consultant who has the experience and expertise to provide excellent support for the planning process and the board of trustees on January 24, 2006 renewed the consultant’s contract for an additional 18 months;

• Meetings are planned through December 2006, and the district anticipates that a final strategic plan will be in place by May 2006. Strategic planning is an ongoing process. As this report is being written, the colleges are implementing their strategic plans and are at different levels in their processes. Further implementation of the district integrated plan will occur in fall 2006, with ongoing assessment, evaluation, refocusing, and redesigning.

• The district is developing a shared mission, vision, and values statement in conjunction with the four colleges;

• The district has renamed departments of the district office as “service centers,” and they have each identified steps and integrated activities undertaken during 2005 that involved and included the colleges in their work. Existing district-wide committees have been used to create planning teams for the seven strategic directions. The service centers have been paired with the initiatives in the following way:
  1. “Enhancing Access and Student Success - Educational Services
  2. “Creating Effective Learning Environments” - General Services
  3. “Enhancing Resources and Budget Processes” - Finance and Budget
  4. “Developing our Human Resources” - Human Resources
  5. “Enhancing Awareness and Visibility” - Marketing, Public Relations and Communications; International Affairs
  6. “Leveraging Information Technology” - Information Technology

• At least two, and in some cases, three integrated planning meetings occurred at each college.

• The district office prepared and updated planning binders that include all planning materials, notes, and background information for each member of the steering committee.

• The district integrated process has identified seven initiatives as the core of the strategic plan.

• Planning teams have been formed, the co-chairs have been trained in facilitating those teams, and initial meetings will occur by the end of February with plans to be completed by the end of May for implementation beginning in fall 2006; and

• The process will include ongoing reports to the board Standards and Management Committee, which will monitor the progress of strategic planning and implementation, and will schedule regular reports to the full board of trustees.
Action Plan

- Calendar of activities

The district-wide strategic plan steering committee (SPSC) has been meeting and will continue to meet once a month to hear reports from the seven implementation teams. The schedule since October 2005 is as follows:

Strategic Planning 2005

OCTOBER

Oct 10, 3-5pm District-wide Planning Meeting – Draft Strategic Plan
Oct 11, Strategic Planning Progress Report to Board for Action
Oct 19, Professional Development Day (Faculty & Staff) – Strategic Planning
Oct 24, 3-5pm District-wide Planning Meeting
Oct 28, Accreditation Team Visit

Summary of Activities
SPSC: Two meetings of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee were held. The topics were to finalize the Draft Strategic Plan, to prepare for the October 19 professional development day strategic planning input sessions, and to develop the implementation approach.

College Outreach: The Steering Committee organized and implemented an interactive segment of the October 19, 2005 professional development day on the Draft Strategic Plan. Committee members assisted in facilitating interactive break-out group discussions. The results were used to refine the Strategic Plan process and document.

Plan Document: The Board of Trustees reviewed and approved the Strategic Plan and the proposed implementation Team approach.

NOVEMBER

Nov 7, 3-5pm District-wide Planning Meeting
Nov 14, 1:30pm MIG, Chancellor, AVC Chan
Nov 21, 3-5pm District-wide Planning Meeting

Summary of Activities
SPSC: Two meetings of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee were held. Steering Committee members developed an implementation approach to engage an existing committee and a broad cross-section of district employees in developing detailed implementation strategies. The first meeting developed a methodology for creating the committees, and applied this methodology to the
Enhancing Awareness and Visibility strategic direction to develop the implementation team composition. The second meeting used the methodology to develop committee compositions for the remaining six strategic directions. The second meeting also served to conduct debriefing of the accreditation team visits and to discuss the process for linking the budget to the strategic plan. Products included implementation principles, team composition, and implementation roles and responsibilities.

DECEMBER

Dec 2, 9am Paul (MIG), Tom, Margaret, Chancellor, AVP Chan
Dec 5, 3-5pm District-wide Planning Meeting
Dec 16, 9-10:30 am MIG, College Representatives

Summary of Activities
SPSC: The Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee met once. The purpose was to make specific assignments to constituency groups to appoint representatives to the implementation committees. The committee also outlined an approach for conducting the January 11, 2006, Professional Development Day activities related to the strategic plan.

College Outreach: Representatives of the four colleges met with the strategic planning consultant to prepare the Professional Development Day presentation. Each college developed an approach for presenting the strategic planning process and directions during the college segments of the flex day activities.

Strategic Planning 2006

JANUARY 2006

Jan 11, College Flex Day – Strategic Planning Presentations
Jan 23, 3-5pm District-wide Planning Meeting
Jan 26, 1-2:30pm A1 Design: VC Haig, AVC Chan, DAS Bielanski, CFO Smith, MIG

Summary of Activities
SPSC: The Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee met once in January. The purpose was to assess the status of the implementation team formation process and to finalize the co-chairs of the implementation groups. Each team is co-chaired by a college and a district administrator to ensure balance and to model a collaborative approach to planning.

College Outreach: Each college presented an overview of the Strategic Plan and the implementation approach at the January 11, 2006, flex day.
Implementation Teams: Constituency organizations and existing committees appointed members to the teams.

FEBRUARY

Feb 1, 3:30-5pm Chancellors, Service Center Directors
Feb 6, 9:30am Alton Jelks, MIG, Chuen; 11am MIG Heyman
Implementation Teams formed
Feb 9, 1-4pm Training of the Implementation Team Co-Chairs
Feb 13, 3-5pm District-wide Planning Meeting
Implementation Team Meetings

Summary of Activities
SPSC: The Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee met once. The purpose was to discuss a process for implementing Strategy A1: developing a coordinating educational strategic approach across the four colleges. The committee discussed an approach that would build on: the district and college Strategic Plans; Program Review data; and the colleges Education Master Plans. A timeline was developed to involve college and district educational leadership in the developing a coordinated strategy that would highlight “signature programs” at each college and coordinate and/or re-orient programs of declining community need. The committee discussed how the results of Strategy A1 would be used as inputs to educational master plan updates and potential bond-funded facilities and equipment upgrades.

Implementation Teams: The team compositions were finalized. A facilitation and team process training was conducted for the team co-chairs. Co-chairs met to develop scheduling and other team organizational supports such as note-taking and scheduling.

MARCH

Implementation Team Meetings
Mar 14, 7pm Report to Board
Mar 15, Report to WASC
Mar 17 Brown Bag Series with Trustee Bill Withrow at College of Alameda
Mar 24 Brown Bag Series with Trustee Bill Withrow at Vista College
Mar 31, Apr 4 Brown Bag Series with Trustee Bill Withrow at Laney College, Merritt College

MARCH - DECEMBER 2006

There will be a brown bag lunch series at each college with trustee Bill Withrow, the chair of Board’s Standards and Management Committee. The purpose of this series is to discuss board roles and responsibilities with the college community.
Implementation meetings will be conducted by each of the teams. They will then report their status to the District-wide Planning Meetings, 3-5pm, on the following dates: March 20, April 24, May 22, June 19, July 24, August 21, September 25, October 23, November 20, and December 11.

Other planning activities that will be taking place are the Program Strategy Preparation Session with Vice Presidents, deans, faculty, and external people in April, Executive Team Retreat for Collaborative Program Strategy in May 5th and 6th, Board Retreat in June, and Professional Development Day in August 21st and 22nd.

COLLEGE RESPONSE

During fall 2003, faculty, staff, administrators and students participated in an appreciative inquiry planning process and identified the strengths of our programs and services, agreed upon commonly shared values, and created a vision for the future of the College. A task force was formed to develop the new mission, vision and values statements.

At the same time, the College initiated a process that ultimately created our newly defined participatory shared governance process structure. Councils and standing committees were established along with a description of the function of each body, its charge, and its bylaws. The work of these governance bodies has provided the leadership necessary to position the College to identify institutional priorities and the strategic directions of the College.

Participation in these processes thoroughly prepared our faculty, staff, students and administrators to become actively involved in the district-wide strategic planning process. Co-chairs and members of our councils and standing committees were appointed and have served as the Merritt representatives on the district committees. Participation in the district committees has provided an opportunity for our faculty, staff, students and administrators to work with their peers at our sister colleges. They have also become knowledgeable about the unique needs of each campus, as well as the special concerns and issues that district office staff must address.

Documents

1. Letter from Presidents to Planning Committee February 8, 2005
2. Planning process
3. Roster of steering committee
4. List of planning meetings
5. Shared mission, vision, and values statements
6. Reports by department of integrated actions during past year
7. Diagram of planning process
8. Minutes of board of trustee retreats
9. Strategic initiatives
10. Minutes from CIPD
11. Approved curriculum for 2004/05 sent to trustee
12. Draft of Guidelines for the District Wide Facilities Advisory Committee
13. Agendas and Minutes from Peralta Community College District Facilities Advisory Planning Committee
14. Timeline of Strategic Planning Process
15. Merritt College strategic planning document
16. Merritt College mission, vision, and values statement
17. Merritt College appreciative inquiry documents
18. Merritt College committee structure and by-laws
19. Merritt College’s institutional learning outcomes
20. Merritt College Integrated Planning & Budgeting Framework
21. Peralta Community College District Budget Model
Response to District Recommendation 2A

2A. The team recommends that the Board of Trustees adhere to its appropriate functions and policy orientation, and rely upon the district Chancellor for recommendations affecting the organization of the district as well as the hiring, retention, and termination of all categories of district and college staff. The team further recommends that the Board of Trustees ensure that the district is continuously led by a chancellor as its chief executive officer. Finally, the team recommends that the Board of Trustees clearly identify and widely disseminate the roles and responsibilities assigned to the district administration and those assigned to the college administration so that the appropriate responsibility and authority are specified and related accountability standards are established. (Standards 10.A.3, 10.A.4, 10.C.1, 10.C.3, 10.C.5, 1996 Standards of Accreditation)

Progress to Date

Since 2004, the board of trustees has continued to take steps to ensure that the board clearly understands its governance role. In May 2004, the vice chancellor for human resources conducted a special closed session in which she defined micro-managing, as it relates to the district, and discussed with the trustees their role and responsibilities as board members.

September 21, 2004, the district held a candidate’s night for the eight candidates who were running for the four Board seats. All college presidents and district service center personnel attended. They presented and discussed with the potential new trustees what their roles and responsibilities are and what the district/colleges roles are, including the role accreditation has.

In continuation of that effort, on December 7, 2004, Dr. David Viar, then executive director of the Community College League of California, conducted a workshop for the board of trustees, which included the four newly elected members. The meeting was open to the public and complied with the Brown Act. All board members were present. Dr. Viar discussed the district and college decision-making processes. He also specifically addressed board "micro-managing" and offered best practices on how board members can assure performance and hold the chancellor accountable without overstepping their role.

At a special retreat on strategic planning on March 3, 2005, the general counsel discussed with the board in closed session their role as well as legal requirements governing the activities of Board members in the context of several pending and potential lawsuits. The Brown Act pamphlet was provided to each Board member for reference.
The Board of Trustees also discussed its role in several board retreats held in 2005. At the March retreat, the board discussed strategic planning and the role of the board in moving planning forward. To that end, the board discussed the established goals of the board to ensure they provided clear direction to the college community. At the June 24-25, 2005 session, MIG consultants led the board through a discussion in which the board acknowledged that what is needed “is a concrete statement about the way in which the college plans drive the six district service centers.” The major part of the second day of the retreat focused on “the board’s role and responsibility in strategic planning and leadership of the district by focusing on policy issues and not micromanagement of the district and colleges.”

The Board understands its role in establishing broad institutional policies and delegating the responsibility of implementing these policies to the Chancellor. The Board Policy Review Committee separates the Board Policies from Administrative Procedures, so that the Board of Trustees only develops and reviews Board Policies. Administrative Procedures are delegated to the Chancellor and his staff to develop and revise. Such delegation has already occurred, as evidenced by the Board’s approval of several Board Policies in Chapter One of the Board Policy Manual on July 12, 2005. In addition to revisions and development of Board Policies relating to board meetings and Board Officers, the Policy Review Committee developed, and the Board approved, Board Policy 1.20 which delineates the Board’s role in the Chancellor selection and Board Policy 1.21 which dictates the roles and responsibilities of the Board Committees.

The Board has a long-standing process for establishing and reviewing policies. The Board Policy Review Committee meets once every month. Every policy developed goes to the Chancellor’s Policy Advisory Committee for review and advice. The Chancellor’s Policy Advisory Committee consists of the four College Presidents, representatives from the three labor unions, the District Academic Senate Executive Officers, and the District Classified Senate.

Pursuant to Board Policy 1.21, the Policy Review Committee, and the Audit and Finance Committee, developed committee charters that were approved by the full Board of Trustees. These charters delineate the role of the Board Committees.

One of the main goals of the Policy Review Committee was to make the Board Policy Manual more accessible to employees at the District. The Board Policy Manual can now be found on the District’s Web site, http://www.peralta.cc.ca.us/legal.

The Board specifically set up a Chancellor’s Evaluation Committee to develop performance standards for the Chancellor and annually evaluates the Chancellor based on those standards.
Analysis of Results Achieved to Date

1. Previously, the Board of Trustees approved “request to advertise” classified positions during open sessions of board meetings. Since July 12, 2005, the board no longer approves advertisement of classified positions. As long as there is a budget in place to fund classified positions, there is no reason for the board to involve itself in approving such requests. The board would ensure accountability from the institution through the budgetary process;

2. Previously, the board of trustees approved employment of classified employees in closed session and such appointments would thereafter be announced in open session. Since July 12, 2005, the board no longer approves the employment of classified employees in either open or closed session. The board has delegated such authorization authority to the chancellor; and

3. The board policy review committee is committed to separating the board policy from administrative procedures so that the board of trustees only develops and reviews board policies. The board has delegated administrative procedures to the chancellor and his staff to develop and revise. Such delegation has already occurred as evidenced by the board’s approval of several board policies in chapter one of the Board Policy Manual on July 12, 2005, as well as other policies on November 15, 2005 and February 14, 2006. In addition to revisions and development of board policies relating to board meetings and board officers, the policy review committee developed and the board approved Board Policy 1.20, a new policy that delineates the board’s role in the chancellor selection. On November 15, 2005, the board approved Board Policy 1.06, Board of Trustees Code of Ethics and Behavior.

4. As part of the strategic planning process, the board vice president will hold a series of town-hall style meetings at the four colleges to address the duties and responsibilities of the board. These meetings will take place on March 17, 24, 31st and April 4.

   It was the determination of the October, 2005 review team “that the Board of Trustees has made sufficient progress in adhering to its appropriate policy role and in establishing stable leadership in the district chancellor.”

College Response

Four new trustees were elected to the Peralta Board in November 2004. The board discussed the ACCJC recommendations at a December board orientation conducted by David Viar and at March and June board retreats. In all instances the board members have been supportive of Merritt College. The board voted on February 10, 2004, to approve Merritt’s new mission, vision and values statement.
Documents

1. Goals of the policy review committee 2005
2. Board meeting agenda; timed agenda; board meeting minutes; and handout from Dr. Viar
3. The Brown Act pamphlet
4. Last board meeting agenda with “Request to Advertise”; first board meeting agenda without “Request to Advertise”; and meeting minutes
5. Last board meeting agenda with “Employment”; first board meeting agenda without “Employment” in closed session; and meeting minutes; and
6. July 12, 2005 Board meeting agenda; July 12, 2005 Board meeting minutes; July 12, 2005 Board meeting materials; and Board Policy 1.20 (Chancellor Selection); November 15, 2005 Board meeting agenda; February 14, 2006 Board meeting agenda; Board Policy 1.06 (Board Code of Ethics and Behavior)
7. October 15, 2005 accreditation report
Response to District Recommendation 2B

2B. Finally, the team recommends that the Board of Trustees clearly identify and widely disseminate the roles and responsibilities assigned to the district administration and those assigned to the college administration so that the appropriate responsibility and authority are specified and related accountability standards are established. (Standards 10.A.3, 10.A.4, 10.C.1, 10.C.2, 10.C.3, 1996 Standards of Accreditation)

Following are descriptions of the roles and responsibilities assigned to the board of trustees and the district administrative offices. Also included are the roles and responsibilities of the college president, the vice president of instruction and the vice president of student services. This is followed by brief analyses from the colleges as to their roles and responsibilities.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Description: Peralta has a seven-member board with trustees elected from specific districts within the six-city area. The six cities are: Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, Piedmont, and Alameda. The roles and responsibilities of the board of trustees, per Board Policy 1.05 – Duties and Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, are to: appoint a chancellor as the district’s chief executive officer; establish the district’s educational priorities (see Board Policies 5.02 – 5.63 - Educational Services); establish policies for short and long-range planning; establish academic standards and policies for probation, dismissal, re-admission, graduation, student fees, and student conduct; establish policies for employment (Board Policies 3.03 - 3.91- Personnel), assignment, salaries and benefits for all personnel; determine operational (Board Policies 6.02 – 6.86 Business Services) and capital outlay budgets; determine the need for tax levies and bond measures; establish policies for administering gifts, grants, and scholarships; ensure district properties are managed efficiently; monitor the use of public resources; and address the needs and concerns of students, staff and the community.
Status:

The board has policies in place relating to the educational priorities of the district. This includes policies for short and long-range planning, academic standards, probation, dismissal, re-admission, student fees, graduation, student conduct, and other policy issues relating to the educational integrity of the district. The board understands its role as a policy maker for the district.

With the election of four new board members in November 2004, the new board has continuously addressed its policy role and its fiduciary responsibilities and that the chancellor is the chief executive officer and reports to them on implementation of board policies and status of district finances.
COLLEGE RESPONSE

The newly constituted board functions as a policy-making body reliant on the chancellor as the chief executive officer.

The colleges operate using shared governance. Leaders of constituency groups are representatives who serve on college-wide and district-wide committees where policies are recommended and acted upon. Contact with the board comes primarily through the chancellor, whose administrative interaction with Merritt College is primarily through the college president. The Merritt faculty senate presidents, by virtue of his membership in the chancellor’s Group of Advisory Faculty (GAF) meetings and the Chancellor’s Policy Advisory Committee (CPAC), is also able to voice faculty concerns directly to the chancellor. Board meetings have changed to being focused on policy with full realization that the chancellor will provide the follow through. The board has provided a regularly scheduled time on the agenda for the college student body presidents to speak. As a student trustee, Merritt’s student body president attends every board meeting and has the opportunity to update board members on the activities and concerns of Merritt students.

CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE

Description: The roles and responsibilities of the chancellor are to: direct the operation and administration of the district in conformity with board policies; formulate and recommend district policies to the board; implement board policies; serve as secretary to the board, attend all meetings of the board; prepare and submit to the board the annual budget for the district; control and administer the budget; recommend organizational structure of the district; maintain continuous review of educational programs with college presidents and recommend changes that will improve quality of the programs offered; provide leadership to the four colleges and the executive cabinet; establish accurate and complete record systems for all funds, student attendance, and inventories of equipments; represent the district at presidents’/principals’ meetings of colleges, universities, and high schools; establish and maintain programs for recruitment, selection, development, and retention of competent personnel; maintain an active program of research as it relates to the development of educational programs; build partnerships with businesses, industries and community-based organizations; meet with governmental and legislative leaders; make decisions on the development
and implementation of capital projects, and provide strong leadership to the district administrative staff.

Based upon board policy, the role of the district office is coordination among and the provision of support services to the four separately accredited colleges.

**Status:** A permanent chancellor, Elihu Harris, was hired by the board of trustees on April 28, 2004. The district operations are under his direction. Board Presidents since November 2004 have worked with the Chancellor to maintain his role as chief executive officer for the district and to avoid board micro-managing.

**COLLEGE RESPONSE**

Merritt College’s primary interaction with the chancellor’s office is through the college president. When decisions are made by the chancellor that affect Merritt, the president shares those, as appropriate, with the college community through shared governance meetings on campus.

**District-wide Strategic Planning Steering Committee**

**Description:** As reported in the October 15, 2005 Progress Report to ACCJC it “the chancellor of the Peralta Community College District in January 2005, called for the establishment of a strategic plan steering committee comprised of representatives from College of Alameda, Laney College, Merritt College, and Vista Community College and of staff from the district office” service centers. This official committee includes 23 voting members and 17 nonvoting ex officio members. The representation reflects the desire to have an effective cross section of the colleges representing all constituencies as well as to ensure that the needs of the four colleges drive the actions developed from the planning process. Critical to the effectiveness of the committee and the integrative planning process is inclusion of representatives from the various district office departments. This chancellor-appointed committee has the role and responsibility of coordinating the district-wide strategic planning and will meet monthly to monitor the planning process and implementation, as well as provide evaluation.

**Status:** This committee will continue to meet regularly and to follow through on the district-wide commitment to integrated strategic planning. This committee established the seven
strategic action planning teams and assured that not only was there adequate district and college representation, but also that all constituencies and areas were included. As noted, this committee reports to the chancellor.

**College Response**

This committee marks a cultural change in the Peralta Community College District. While some might interpret the work of this committee as being too slow, nevertheless within the district the realization is that this committee has moved the district forward in a new direction of operation. The work to date has facilitated better district-wide communication, better prioritization of goals and objectives, and will finally lead to district-wide action planning under the seven identified strategic initiatives.

**PRESIDENT’S OFFICE**

**Description:** The college president reports directly to the chancellor, and provides the necessary leadership to ensure that the college embodies its stated mission, vision and values and in so doing meets the needs of the community. The president is responsible for building a dynamic, productive administrative team and effectively delegating responsibilities and requiring appropriate accountability. The president is responsible for the ongoing strategic/master planning, implementation, and evaluation processes for the college. The president builds strong partnerships with the district office, business, industry, community organizations, local governments, and four year institutions. The president works in a shared-governance manner building a sense of trust and community that promotes appreciation of all segments of the internal college community. In short, a college president must be a team-builder, skillful manager, accessible leader, action-oriented leader, effective communicator, and a self-assured individual.

The college presidents meet monthly with the chancellor as the Presidents’ Council. Other interface between the presidents and the chancellor occurs monthly at the district Executive Cabinet meeting, where all the district managers meet with the college presidents. The college presidents also are part of the Chancellor’s Policy Advisory Committee (CPAC), which meets monthly. This committee recommends policy changes to the board of trustees. The college president can meet one-on-one with the chancellor at any time. The college presidents are actively involved in the
strategic planning steering committees for the district and will serve as co-chairs on the district-wide planning implementation teams. The ultimate responsibility for strategic planning, implementation and evaluation resides with the chancellor and the college presidents. The ultimate responsibility for college strategic planning, implementation and evaluation resides with the president.

**Status:**
The chancellor uses the District Executive Cabinet and Presidents’ Council meetings to disseminate information and collect ideas from the college presidents. The duties of the presidents have expanded with the decentralization of a number of responsibilities formerly handled by the senior vice chancellor for educational services. The college presidents, under the direction of the chancellor, will take a lead role in the finalization of a district-wide strategic planning, as well as implementation and evaluation.

**COLLEGE RESPONSE**

Merritt’s college community continues to see the role of the president as vital in the accomplishment of specific goals for the betterment of the college, such as establishing an integrated planning and budgeting model, and providing vision and leadership for the college. The current president sees the college’s most important goal as student learning and student success. The current president has been instrumental in leading a renewed planning process at the college which has culminated in new mission, vision, and values statements, as well as current strategic directions and preliminary institutional learning outcomes.

The Merritt president has a good working relationship with the Chancellor, district service center managers, her fellow-presidents, as well as a variety of district personnel. Good working relationships are essential to effective collaboration and representation of the college.

The chancellor meets with the president yearly to set goals and provide yearly evaluation. Presidents, as well as all district managers, are being evaluated through the use of the seven strategic initiatives to accent the critical importance of these strategic initiatives. The entire college community has the right to evaluate the president and to address the president’s skill in addressing the strategic directions of the college.

The Merritt College president has established a shared governance leadership council representative of all college constituencies which meets once a month. She meets weekly with her executive council (the Vice President of Instruction, Vice President of Student Services, and the Business Manager), and meets regularly with the faculty senate president, the classified senate leadership, and the student government president. [See Merritt College Organizational Chart]
College Vice Presidents

Vice President of Instruction

Description: The Vice President of Instruction is responsible to the President of the College for providing leadership, direction, general supervision and evaluation of the total instructional program. The Vice President functions as a Senior Administrator and works closely with the President, Vice President of Student Services, and the Business and Administrative Services Manager. Division deans report directly to the Vice President, who meets regularly with them to plan, implement, and evaluate the instructional program. While department chairs and instructional faculty report to their respective deans, they do have ready access to the Vice President of Instruction.

Status: Merritt’s vice president of instruction came to Merritt College from a divisional dean position at College of Alameda. The vice president is collaborative in leadership style and well-respected. One crucial initiative the vice president started three years ago was to have the faculty address student learning outcomes and assessment. The vice president is an active member on the district-wide integrated strategic planning steering committee, as well as a variety of other district-wide committees which focus on the instructional program throughout the district.

Yearly, the vice president is formally reviewed by the president in consultation with the college community. This year the vice president set goals that addressed the college’s and district’s strategic initiatives.

Vice President of Student Services

Description: The Vice President of Student Services is responsible to the President of the College for providing leadership in planning, developing, coordinating, and evaluating the College’s student services programs; functions as a Senior Administrator and works closely with the President, Vice President of Instruction, and the Business and Administrative Services Manager. The dean of student support services (primarily responsible for EOPS, financial aid, student support services, and other duties as assigned), non-
instructional faculty, and support staff report to the vice president.

**Status:**

Merritt College’s vice president of student services has been instrumental in providing leadership for the college’s integrated planning and budgeting process and facilitating college-wide input on institutional learning outcomes.

The vice president of student services is an active member on the district-wide integrated strategic planning steering committee, as well as a variety of district-wide committees that address student services and the needs at the four colleges. Yearly, the vice president is formally reviewed by the president in consultation with the college community. This year the vice president set goals that addressed the college's and district's strategic initiatives.
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Description: The roles and responsibilities of the Educational Services Division are to: provide leadership and assist colleges in providing high quality postsecondary education through curriculum development and program review; maintain and recommend changes in academic and student policies; provide high quality enrollment management services; provide process for tenure review and faculty evaluation; perform long-range planning for the district’s educational programs and services; provide research on demographics, educational, occupational and economic development trends to determine needs for institutional planning and change; coordinate all grants, contracts and special projects; assure that degree and certificate programs adequately prepare students to compete in a global market economy and transfer to four-year universities; maintain relations with schools and universities to encourage student access to education; provide leadership in student services programs; provide leadership for international affairs and international students programs; and oversee all admissions and records operations.

Status: A new district vice chancellor of educational services was hired at the beginning of the 2005-2006 academic year. The vice chancellor comes with years of experience in higher education administration which has made her a good fit for the position. She is collaborative in style and attentive to the roles and responsibilities of the colleges, approaching her position as a coordinator of activities which have district-wide implications. One of the first major areas she has been charged with reviewing and upgrading is the international students program, which crosses all four colleges. She has been actively involved in the district-wide strategic planning process. Per her role as district vice chancellor of educational services, she will co-chair with the Vista college president the “Enhancing Access and Student Success Committee,” and will assist in facilitating the development of actions for implementation of strategic initiatives in this area, as well as implementation and evaluation of the initiatives.

Tenure Review

Description: The staff assistants in the Educational Services Division are currently responsible for processing all the student evaluations of all tenure track faculty, part-time faculty, and
tenured faculty. The executive assistant to the vice chancellor for educational services controls the flow and handles information for all the tenure review committees. The district vice chancellor of educational services holds monthly meetings with the four college tenure review facilitators. There are two orientation sessions each fall and each spring. These include all the college tenure facilitators, the faculty union, the District Academic Senate (DAS), and Educational Services Division personnel. One of the important areas that require oversight from the presidents and vice presidents is the checking for consistency in the interpretation of the contract language as to the tenure track process.

**Status:**

The tenure review process has been in place for approximately 15 years. The vice chancellor provides a forum for regular connection of the four college tenure review facilitators and a way to address issues and concerns that are district-wide.

**COLLEGE RESPONSE**

The college performs tenure review following district guidelines, using tenured faculty and administrators to serve on committees. Merritt’s activities are facilitated by an on-site tenure review facilitator. Files are kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the vice president of instruction. Recommendations by the individual committees are made to the vice president of instruction who, along with the faculty senate president, either certifies or dissents from the committee recommendations. The president makes final recommendations to the chancellor, and the chancellor makes recommendations to the board.

**Program Review**

**Description:** Peralta has a common course numbering system. Therefore, program review by discipline occurs simultaneously at the four colleges. The current schedule for program review has been built out for five years to coincide with the accreditation cycle, with the sixth year devoted to preparation of the self-study. Currently, the district vice chancellor of educational services has created a subcommittee of the Council on Instruction, Planning and Development (CIPD) to do a thorough review of the program review format, schedule, and the role of the college versus the role of the district. With program review being the foundation for educational planning at the colleges, the district will provide support services to the colleges giving the colleges more latitude in...
the process. Data information is provided by the Office of Research and Institutional Development. Each semester, the Office of Research and Institutional Development staff members hold training sessions with the data and the guidelines. The current guidelines for the academic, vocational and student services programs are under review to bring program review in alignment with the new accreditation standards. If a vocational program is reviewed by an outside agency, the college program review builds on that.

**Status:**
The four vice presidents of instruction, working with the vice chancellor for educational services, verify the disciplines for which program reviews will be done each year. A master list for the next five years is available and must be updated annually. Student services program review area guidelines must be done for each semester/year and will be coordinated by the four vice presidents of student services working with the vice chancellor for educational services.

**COLLEGE RESPONSE**

Program reviews are conducted by faculty in the relevant departments, with assistance from the division dean. Documents then go to the vice president of instruction and the president for final recommendations. Summary results of these program reviews are presented to the Curriculum Committee once finished. Information from the self-study is utilized in educational planning and drives decisions regarding instructional equipment, instructional supplies, and faculty hiring requests.

**Accreditation**

**Description:** The colleges are responsible for responding to the specific recommendations pertaining to them and will coordinate responses with the each other regarding the two specific recommendations identified in the January 31, 2006 ACCJC letter and the other district recommendations identified in the comprehensive team visit of March 2003. The district and colleges are working in tandem to address district-wide strategic planning. Action plans under the seven strategic initiatives with be jointly developed by the colleges and the district service centers wherein the district service centers will support the colleges in their strategic efforts which are the basis for district planning.
Status: The board committed itself and the district to focus on the two recommendations specified in the ACCJC January 31, 2006 letter. That commitment is demonstrated in the board continuously addressing its role as a policy making body with fiduciary responsibilities and holding the chancellor responsible for running the district and the college presidents for running the colleges. That commitment is demonstrated in the board’s continuous interest in the progress of district-wide strategic planning through regular updates at board meetings. Further, the board has authorized the district to use the services of MIG to see the plan through to implementation and ongoing evaluation.

COLLEGE RESPONSE

Since spring 2003, Merritt College has prepared a comprehensive Self Study Report, four progress reports, and a focused mid-term report. Merritt College takes its accreditation and the inherent responsibilities quite seriously. The issues are woven into everyday college life—planning, budget transparency, health and safety, shared decision-making, assessing and improving student learning, measuring institutional effectiveness - as well as active involvement in district-wide strategic planning steering committee meetings and implementation team meetings. Progress on issues that relate to the district and board of trustees are affected through work by college personnel on shared governance committees, as well as administrative contact with district personnel.

Council on Instruction, Planning, and Development (CIPD)

Description: Since 40% of Peralta students take courses at more than one college in a semester, and since there is a common course numbering system, and since an accreditation recommendation addresses district-wide planning, CIPD continues to be a relevant shared governance group. CIPD functions as a district-wide curriculum council where all colleges agree regarding what is being proposed before curriculum and program changes go to the board and to the State Chancellor’s Office for final approval. CIPD meets eight times a year to review the work of the four college curriculum committees. An educational support services analyst at the district office is responsible for maintaining the course database, the Program and Course Approval Manual, and course reporting requirements required by the State Chancellor’s Office. She also prepares information for the board. CIPD membership includes faculty members appointed by the college faculty senates, articulation officers from each college, curriculum chairs from each college, and
two administrators from each college (one is usually the vice president of instruction.) There are also ad hoc members, including at least one vice president of student services and the District Academic Senate president. This group is involved in district-wide strategic planning with a specific focus on the strategic initiative: “Enhancing Access and Student Success”.

**Status:** The District vice chancellor of educational services is responsible for chairing and coordinating the work of CIPD.

**COLLEGE RESPONSE**

Merritt’s Curriculum and Instructional Council meets semi-weekly in the fall and spring semesters to review course and program proposals and changes. This committee also hears and discusses the results of program reviews. Actions of the Merritt Council are submitted to CIPD for review before approval by the board of trustees. Merritt’s Curriculum and Instructional Council is a shared governance committee of Merritt’s Faculty Senate.

**District Faculty and Staff Development Office**

**Description:** This is a faculty assignment as part of the PFT contract. There is an annual allocation of money (as part of the PFT contract) that is directly controlled by the individual college staff-development committees who meet on schedules determined by those committees. There is also a yearly budget line item in the Educational Services Division budget to fund flex day activities that occur district-wide.

**Status:** The district staff development officer reports to the district vice chancellor of educational services. The district staff development officer works with the four college staff development officers in order to coordinate the district staff development activities.

**COLLEGE RESPONSE**

Merritt has a staff development committee composed of three faculty members, one of whom is the elected chair, three classified staff, and two managers. The vice president serves in an advisory capacity. This committee meets monthly to consider requests for funds, make staff-development policy, and plan special events.
Workforce and Economic Development

Description: Workforce, economic development and tech prep are under the purview of the district vice chancellor of educational services.

The college VTEA reports are coordinated on a district-wide basis. A staff assistant at the district is responsible for fiscal monitoring and reporting for such categorical projects, including coordinating submittal of the four college plans to Sacramento.

Status: The hiring of a district manager for workforce and economic development is under discussion.

Admissions, Records, and Student Services

Description: The admissions and records function is managed by the associate vice chancellor for enrollment and student services, with staff members located at each college, and nine staff members at the district office. Student service functions at each of the colleges are led by a vice president and a number of deans.

Status: With the transition in technology from the current legacy system to PeopleSoft over the next few years, this centralized district office function will continue to change and improve. Currently, the student administration system has a scheduled “go live” date of November 2006 to be fully active for spring 2007.

COLLEGE RESPONSE

Merritt College has two staff members in its Admissions and Records Office. They are assigned by the district and report to the associate vice chancellor for enrollment and student services. Students are able to order transcripts and register for classes at any of the four colleges, through the district Admissions and Records Office, or online. The associate vice chancellor for enrollment and student services will serve on the strategic planning team that addresses the strategic initiative, “Enhancing Access and Student Success,” as well as the team addressing, “Leveraging Information Technology.”

The vice president of student services at Merritt reports to the president. There is also one dean of student support services at Merritt who reports to the
vice president. All student services are directed by these individuals, with the exception of Admissions and Records personnel. For a listing of all student services refer to the catalog and student handbook.

**Research and Institutional Development**

**Description:** This area is currently staffed by an associate vice chancellor, a support services analyst, a research data specialist in assessment, and a research data specialist in matriculation. There is also a categorically funded staff assistant and a staff services specialist who is funded with a combination of VTEA and general funds.

**Status:** This unit reports to the vice chancellor for educational services. Responsibility for all educational grants, contracts, and the monitoring of all categorically funded and specially funded monies falls to this group. This office will take the lead in providing all necessary data required by the seven strategic planning teams.

**COLLEGE RESPONSE**

Merritt College hired a full-time permanent research and planning officer in July of 2005, and has re-established its research committee to draft a research agenda for the college. The research and planning officer has utilized district data bases and internal data bases to provide student success data for the Title III Planning Grant and the Equity for All/Scorecard Project, and will have a pivotal role in providing data for program review and analysis of institutional effectiveness.

**Diversity Internship**

**Description:** The diversity internship program promotes the development of diverse faculty through internships at the colleges. The function is staffed by a reassigned faculty member who serves as the coordinator for the four colleges. She reports to the district vice chancellor of educational services.

**Status:** This program allows masters’ degree candidates who have completed more than half their coursework, to work as an interim with a master teacher. This allows the person to determine interest, experience community college teaching, and add to their resumes, as it brings diversity into Peralta’s teaching pool.
COLLEGE RESPONSE

A Merritt College faculty member serves as the coordinator for the district Diversity Internship Program. The college strongly supports this program, and has sponsored interns for as long as the program has been in existence. The hiring of diversity interns is coordinated through the diversity intern coordinator.

International Educational Services

Description: The district office of international education is charged with the recruitment of international students. The office coordinates the enrollment of international students at the four colleges and provides counseling, placement, 

Status: The associate vice chancellor reports to the vice chancellor for educational services. The program, at the direction of the board, is undergoing review for the purpose of strengthening and updating its services. A comprehensive report was presented at a board of trustees’ meeting on February 14, 2006.

COLLEGE RESPONSE

Merritt College supports the office of international education through a partnership that facilitates the College’s study abroad program. In summer 2005, a Merritt faculty member took over 60 participants on a study abroad tour of Jamaica. In summer 2006, this faculty member will lead study abroad tours to both Ghana and Jamaica. These tours and learning experiences are supported by the office of international education.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Description: The roles and responsibilities of the Human Resources division are to 1) plan, organize, and administer a comprehensive human resources management program for the district; 2) coordinate and execute policies, methods and procedures pertaining to employee recruitment, selection and performance evaluation; 3) assess professional development needs, classification, and compensation; 4) coordinate all activities of risk management, assisting colleges in providing a safe and healthful educational environment for students, and a safe and healthful working environment for employees, protecting the district against
the financial consequences of catastrophic losses and reducing the district’s cost of risk; 5) provide health and safety guidelines; 6) develop a district safety policy, safety manual, and loss procedure manual; 7) coordinate employee relations and employee benefits programs; 8) coordinate and provide information regarding affirmative action issues; 9) provide safety and police services; and 10) ensure equal opportunity in employment, programs, activities and educational environments.

**Status:**

The chancellor works with HR to maintain stability in administrative hires at the district office and with the college presidents to maintain stability in college administrators.

District human resources personnel have been instrumental in expediting the hiring process and handling personnel transactions. Working within the context of the various labor contracts, the district personnel office ensures that procedures are followed to allow for fair employment of qualified personnel.

There is an integrated strategic planning team, comprised of district HR personnel and college representatives, which will address and form an action plan for, “Developing Our Human Resources.” This planning team will create even greater support to the colleges from HR, as well as greater coordination between HR and the colleges. The co-chairs for planning in this area are the vice chancellor of human resources, the manager of human resources, and the president of the College of Alameda. The purpose of the committee is to address the areas of improvement that the Strategic Steering Committee identified from their town-hall meetings at each of the four colleges.

One of the areas identified by the colleges is the need for training of managers. To implement one component of the strategic plan, the Human Resources Department is coordinating a managers’ training program on July 10, 2006 in conjunction with the other five District Service Centers. The Chancellor will open the training with a review of the integrated strategic plan. He will also communicate his priorities for the managers in light of the integrated strategic plan. Each of the directors of the six District Service Centers will speak to how their respective Service Centers assist the four colleges. The district vice chancellor for finance (district chief financial officer) will also provide information regarding
the budget allocation model. The presentations by the six Service Centers will be an opportunity to repeat, orally and in writing, the operational responsibilities and functions of the district and those of the colleges.

The training program will then be converted into a New Managers’ College, which will be conducted every February and July for new managers. Current managers may attend the trainings as a refresher course.

As a method of implementing the strategic plan and setting priorities district-wide, managers are currently evaluated based on the seven strategic directions established in the strategic plan. These evaluations will be concluded by March 15, 2006.

COLLEGE RESPONSE

Merritt College works closely with the district office of Human Resources to advertise faculty and staff positions, and complete the selection and hiring processes. Human Resources staff provide orientations for selection committees, offer guidance on committee composition, and facilitate the entire hiring process to ensure that board policies are followed.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Description: The roles and responsibilities of the Information Technology Division are to 1) develop short- and long-term strategies to deliver services to meet defined user needs; 2) evaluate technical trends and select directions to effectively meet long-term information needs of users; 3) plan long-term hardware and software acquisitions; 4) plan the acquisition of information and office automation systems; 5) stay current on innovations, changes, trends, and directions in the industry; 6) disseminate pertinent information to staff; 7) identify and reduce system obsolescence; 8) coordinate migrations for minimum disruption to end-users; 9) direct general day-to-day operations, including problem resolutions, staff administration, systems implementation, staff and user training, hardware and proprietary software selection, acquisition, and installation; 10) plan, coordinate, and monitor communications with current and potential users to define needs in user training, systems, and software; 11) evaluate legislative activities and integrate information
relevant to information systems; and 12) select, train, delegate responsibility to, and evaluate staff.

**Status:**

The Chief Information Officer was hired June 2004 to assume responsibility for all matters related to technology. At the August 31, 2004 meeting, the board voted to allow the district to begin negotiating with PeopleSoft, Inc., for an integrated administrative software system which was purchased. The financial and human resources components are currently being utilized.

One of the district-wide integrated strategic planning initiative focuses on technology: “Leveraging Information Technology.” The Chief Information Officer, IT staff, the associate vice chancellor of enrollment and student services will work with various college appointees to address an action plan for this initiative. With the formulation of the strategic planning team, the district once again will have a district-wide information technology committee. This team/committee will have to address the entire technology needs of the district. This team is chaired by the Chief Information Officer and the vice president of student services/College of Alameda. Such input also will be included in the proposed Prop 39 bond slated for the June ballot.

**COLLEGE RESPONSE**

Planning for the technology in the renovation of Merritt’s Student Services building has been a collaborative effort between district personnel, college personnel, the administration, the faculty, and the architects.

The district began a migration to PeopleSoft with Human Resources and Finances (Accounting) being the first system put in place. The “go live” date was July 1, 2005. The district continues to work on customizing the system, providing additional training and troubleshooting end-user needs.

The college has two permanent full-time IT employees who report to the Vice President of Instruction and ultimately to the College President. In addition, two department IT coordinators report to division deans.

The district has purchased a new Web site service. A question that needs to be addressed is whether the colleges will be provided a Web master to maintain the college sites for maximize utility.
MARKETING, PUBLIC RELATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS

Description: The roles and responsibilities of the Marketing, Public Relations and Communications Division are to 1) develop a strategic marketing plan, integrating functions of public information, public relations with advertising, publications and news services; 2) develop marketing campaigns for fine arts performances, vocational programs, athletic activities, other special events, and high school recruitment in consultation with college administrators and the director of enrollment; 3) cover board of trustees meetings and district-wide meetings as the press information officer; 4) coordinate district-wide promotional activities; 5) develop internal and external newsletters; 6) supervise the publication of schedules, catalogs, brochures, Web sites, television and radio ads.; 7) coordinate the functioning of PCTV; 8) produce marketing materials; 9) provide public relations services; 10) provide communications district-wide; and 11) maintain Web services.

Status: The district executive director of marketing has been working with senior officers of the district and college public information officers (PIOs) mapping out an effective marketing plan to increase the awareness of various programs offered by Peralta’s four colleges. The district executive director of marketing meets regularly with the college public information officers to plan and strategize district-wide marketing.

The district-wide integrated strategic planning process has placed importance on action planning for “Enhancing Awareness and Visibility.” A planning team comprised of the executive director, select district staff, the college public information officers and additional college representatives will develop a district-wide plan that will be disseminated widely and address the need for the district marketing department to prioritize the marketing agenda with a specific focus on meeting the individual needs of our different colleges which serve differing communities. This committee is chaired by the district executive director of marketing, public relations, & communications and the vice presidents of instruction/Laney College.
COLLEGE RESPONSE

The College’s public information officer reports to the college president and is an integral part of the administrative team’s planning efforts, particularly through the development of processes that enhance the culture of communication within the campus community and the six cities we serve. Community outreach, civic involvement and media relations, performed by the public information officer and Outreach Committee, are improved by the development of an integrated marketing plan that is underway.

The college’s integrated marketing plan development, led by the public information officer, will integrate the college’s strategic directions and institutional priorities with the individual action plans. The action plans were developed by the instructional divisions, student services, business services, and administrative services units on campus. These action plans utilize a multidimensional approach to incorporate target and segmentation marketing initiatives to increase the public awareness of Merritt’s programs and services.

Merritt’s public information officer also serves on the district-wide “Enhancing Awareness and Visibility” committee that was formed by the district-wide integrated strategic planning process to develop a plan to increase public awareness of the Peralta Colleges’ programs and services.

FINANCE

Description: The roles and responsibilities of the Finance Division are 1) to assist the colleges and the district office in achieving their educational missions by providing fiscal stability and compliance with governmental mandates and funding requirements; 2) to implement financial policies and procedures; and 3) to provide leadership in financial services in the areas of purchasing, budgeting, payroll operations, and accounting. Purchasing services include approving requisitions and issuing purchase orders; supervising mailroom and duplication service operations; directing warehouse operations; maintaining inventory of stores, equipment, and fixed assets; and providing mail and supplies services.

Status: As reported in the response to recommendations on communications, the current district chief financial officer for the district has made serious inroads into better communication with college business officers, college presidents, and district administrators. There is a serious attempt to develop a budget allocation formula for the
district, which will move the district beyond its current historical model. Such meetings have been long, and in some sense arduous, as the move to a new budget allocation formula requires a shift in thinking, approach, and district culture. The district chief financial officer has devoted himself to seeing this process through, much like he committed himself to providing a workable resolution to the medical liability compliance need.

The district chief financial officer also is actively involved with the continued migration and implementation of PeopleSoft. In part, the move to PeopleSoft was a result of many external audits which faulted the district for various financial functions which could not be accurately audited. PeopleSoft is intended to resolve this.

District-wide integrated planning has identified the strategic initiative of “Enhancing Resources and Budget Processes.” District-wide action planning and implementation will be the role of the district budget allocation advisory task force (which will disband once a formula if recommended) and the district budget advisory committee have been changed with this area of planning in an attempt to use an existing committee and an already committed group of people. This committee is chaired by the district chief financial officer, the Merritt College president, and the vice president of instruction/College of Alameda.

**COLLEGE RESPONSE**

Merritt College continues to work with the Budget Allocation Advisory Task Force and the District Budget Advisory Committee to develop a transparent budget process and an equitable formula for district funding. The committees began in 2003 and have taken on new energy this academic year, sending a budget allocation formula to the academic senates, the district budget advisory committee, the chancellor, and the board of trustees.

The College Budget Committee (CBC) underwent a major change in 2004 in its composition, role, and procedures. It is now fully engaged in the process of reviewing the College’s allocations and expenditures for discretionary funds, supply and equipment funds, and VTEA funds. The CBC has representation on the Peralta Community College District Budget Advisory Committee, and is actively developing recommendations that reflect the interests of the college and that better integrate the college budget processes (see Appendix 3) with the
district processes in ways that will improve budgetary/financial communications between the district and the colleges.

**PHYSICAL PLANT**

**Description:** The roles and responsibilities of the Physical Plant Department, under the direction of the General Services Director, are to 1) provide a safe, operational, and desirable physical environment that supports the educational mission and administrative goals district-wide; 2) organize and implement long and short-range construction, improvement, maintenance and grounds programs; 3) develop five-year construction and deferred maintenance plans; 4) develop, negotiate, prepare for board approval, and administer construction contracts; 5) assist colleges in facilities planning; 6) provide management oversight for consultants, contractors, and project managers for district facilities programs and capital projects; 7) in conjunction with risk management, develop and implement preventive measures for the health and safety of all staff, students and the public in accordance with appropriate health code standards and the Office of Safety and Health Administration; 8) provide custodial services; 9) maintain and manage district real property inventory; 10) maintain landscapes; and 11) provide all engineering services.

**Status:** The Physical Plant Department has been totally renewed with the hiring of a permanent District director of general services. The current district director of general services has brought many needed changes to the operation of the physical plant and its various components. The current model of decentralized custodial services should be revisited as a means of addressing the impact of minimal human resources and disparate management styles on district-wide facility cleanliness.

The district director of general services has met with faculty and staff from the colleges and has taken the necessary steps to initiate various activities and construction projects. These include a new campus for Vista Community College, a new art building for Laney College, and extensive improvements to the physical environment of all four colleges. In this regard, the district director of general services has done a serious review of the spending of bond
monies for measures A, B, and E, and provides on going reports to the district and the board of trustees. In addition, the district director of general services is providing leadership in working with the colleges to develop a Prop 39 bond for the June 2006 ballot. The initial research for the proposed bond was presented in a December 2005 special board retreat. All four colleges presented their facilities, furniture and equipment needs based on their educational master planning. Current district funding in no way could fund these various needs and a bond measure is a realistic response to the need to provide our students with an effective learning environment.

While the district-wide strategic planning process identified the strategic initiative, “Creating Effective Learning Environments,” this initiative was already being addressed by a district-wide facilities committee co-chaired by the Laney college president and the district director of general services and a membership representative of the various constituencies at each college. This committee/team will continue to provide the necessary integration at the district level and the necessary prioritization of district needs.

COLLEGE RESPONSE

The physical plant department has been actively involved in the extensive renovation of Merritt College’s Student Services Building (Building R), which involved relocating food services, custodial services, campus storerooms, and creating alternative instructional space. Both the vice president of student services and the college business manager meet regularly with a physical plant representative to ensure that there is appropriate coordination between the on-site contractors and the physical plant department.

Documents

1. Peralta CCD and Merritt Organizational Charts
2. Program Reviews and District Program Review Schedule
5. CIPD Minutes for fall 2005
6. Fall 2005 Curriculum Book for Board of Trustees
7. Merritt College Curriculum Committee Minutes
8. Accreditation Self Study from Spring 2003
9. Merritt College Progress Reports
10. Curriculum Handbook
11. Flex Day Calendar of Events for 2005-2006

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12. Merritt Catalog 2005-07
13. Merritt Student Handbook
14. Peralta Facilities Plan
Response to District Recommendation #3

3. The team recommends that the Peralta Community College District should provide a detailed and concrete plan that clearly identifies the steps, timelines, and measurable actions that are being undertaken by the district to provide funding for the long-term liability posed by health care benefits. (Standard 9.C.1, 1996 Standards of Accreditation)

District Response incorporating materials from the October 2005 report:

In response to this team recommendation, the Chancellor directed the district chief financial officer to identify and take steps to locate funds for long-term medical liability benefits. In December 2005, Peralta Community College District sold a series of 2005 bonds that would provide funding for this long-term liability coverage of the districts retirees’ health care obligations.

Peralta Community College District covers full, lifetime retiree health care benefit coverage for employees hired before July 1, 2004. The actual cost of the contractually obligated benefits is paid directly to beneficiaries. On a pay-as-you-go basis, the district’s retiree health benefit payments are projected to increase from $5.32 million in fiscal 2006 to a peak $13.44 million in fiscal 2032, and then decline.

The proceeds of the series 2005 bonds will be placed in a Retiree Health Benefit Program (RHBP) Fund held by a trustee, which fund may be used only to pay or reimburse the district for payment of retiree health benefit costs. The district projects that the investment earnings on the fund will pay its retiree health care costs while the bonds are outstanding, assuming an annual return of 6%. By virtue of this transaction the district anticipates that it will maintain its retiree health care costs at a constant 6.7% of budget through the 2049 final maturity of the bonds as opposed to experiencing an increase in such costs to almost 9% of budget over the next 15 years.

GASB 45, which will require reporting and accounting for OPEBs, largely retiree health care, becomes effective for employers in fiscal years beginning after December 15, 2006. The statement generally requires that employers complete an actuarial valuation to determine their retiree health care liabilities and also calculate the annual required contribution (ARC) to pre-fund such liabilities. The difference between actual annual contributions to the plan and the ARC would be reported as a net OPEB obligation in the district’s financial statements. The district’s preliminary GASB 45 actuarial valuation reported the present value of benefits for retiree health care ranging from $132 million, at a 7% discount rate, to $196 million, at 4.5%. The district’s ARC for fiscal 2006 is projected at approximately $12 million compared with an estimated pay-as-you-go cost of about $5 million mentioned above.
The district believes that because amounts in the RHBP Fund, containing bond proceeds, could under certain circumstances be used to redeem bonds, and thus the fund assets are not irrevocably dedicated solely to paying plan benefits, it would not be deemed a qualifying trust for GASB 45 purposes. Therefore, the district expects to continue to report increasing, unfunded actuarial accrued retiree health care liabilities and net OPEB obligation. Because of the closed nature of the plan, both measures are projected to peak over the next 15-20 years and then decline. From a practical standpoint, these liabilities would be counterbalanced to a certain extent by the assets in the RHBP Fund.

Progress to Date

The district office has developed a planned approach to reducing the unfunded liability of the district with both short- and long-term actions as follows:

1. Engaged an actuarial study that resulted in a reduction of the liability from $150,000,000 to $115,000,000;
2. Negotiated a reduction in the costs of medical benefits by changing medical carriers and by requiring a medical co-pay;
3. Designed a plan to issue up to $250 million in medical benefits bonds to fund and pay for ongoing medical benefits for both current and retired employees. The necessary steps to accomplish this are as follows:
   - Enlist an actuary to quantify the district’s current and future OPEB (other post employment benefits) liability;
   - Establish dedicated OPEB trust and improve matching between OPEB assets and liability profile;
   - Have board of trustees adopt an OPEB investment policy;
   - Contract with ACERA or any institutional governmental asset manager to invest OPEB trust;
   - Validate obligation by filing a petition in California Superior Court. This gives the district the legal standing to issue the bonds;
   - Issue taxable OPEB bonds to fund the district’s OPEB obligation; and
   - Structure OPEB bonds such that debt service plus normal cost is less than the projected pay-as-you-go liability.

The District retained the actuarial firm of Bartel & Associates LLC on July 22, 2005. The Peralta Board of Trustees, on July 26, 2005, passed a resolution authorizing the district to issue up to $250 million in OPEB bonds. On August 12, 2005, the District filed in Superior Court a petition for bond validation which received a judicial validation judgment on November 7, 2005. The chancellor, the chairman of the board finance & audit committee, and the district’s district chief financial officer interviewed four investment banking firms in New York on September 8 and 9 and at the December 13, 2005, board of trustees' meeting, an Indenture of Trust between the Peralta Community College District and Deutsche Bank Trust Company Americas was approved. All OPEB bonds were sold by the end of December 2005.
The Peralta Community College District’s resolution to the unfunded medical liability issue to be in compliance with GASB has now been reported in the Chicago Herald Tribune and local newspapers.

The board of trustees is also in the process of revising its investment policy. Once they have completed this, the district will have a new investment policy in place that it will then utilize to guide the investment of the proceeds from the bond sales.

Analysis of Results Achieved to Date

- The district, as a result of negotiations with the unions, changed and implemented union contracts in July 2004. These contracts require a medical co-pay which has been implemented and is operational; District medical benefits end at age 65 for all employees hired after July 1, 2004; and 10 years is now required for vesting of all employees hired after July 1, 2004. Previously, the requirement for vesting of academic employees had been five years.
- The district replaced Blue Cross with Interplan, a network of physicians, and Core Source as administrator of services in September 2004. This action reduced administrative costs of our medical benefit program and also allows the district to qualify for rebates which also defray district costs; and
- On September 8 and 9, 2005, the chancellor, assistant vice chancellor for finance and budget, President of the Peralta Federation of Teachers (PFT), and chair of the board’s committee on audit and finance traveled to New York to interview perspective investment firms.
- On November 7, 2005, the district Finance Department received a judicial validation judgment from Alameda Superior Court allowing PCCD to sell OPED bonds.
- A full presentation was made to the board of Trustees on December 13, 2005.
- All bonds were sold by the end of December 2005.
- On January 10, 2006 the board of trustees approved contracting for brokerage and consultant services with PSW Benefits Resource of Burlingame as the district’s benefits broker.
- The board of trustees will revise its investment policy.

College Response

Merritt College acknowledges the importance of decisive action on this recommendation on the part of the district office in moving from the pay-as-you-go strategy to full disclosure by 2006-07, per the new GASB standards.
The change in union contracts incorporated the following: a co-pay program; the ending of district medical benefits at age 65 for those hired after July 1, 2004; and vesting time changed from five years up to ten years. All of these decisions have slowed the growth of liability. By far the most positive action taken is the proposal around the issuance of a medical benefits obligation bond. During Chancellor Harris’s tenure as Mayor of Oakland, the city successfully issued such bonds to deal with a similar situation. The hiring of Vice Chancellor of Finance Tom Smith on December 1, 2004, has added to the leadership in this investment/bond area. Also, the November 2004 election of Trustee Edward W. (Bill) Withrow, former Mayor of Alameda, has added to the expertise in this area.

**Action Plan**

- Finance Department will continue to monitor this effort.
- The board of trustees will move forward on a new investment policy.

**Documents:**

- Resolution of the board of trustees authorizing issuance of bond
- Superior Court petition for bond validation
- Superior Court judicial validation judgment
- Draft of board investment policy
- Union contracts
Response to District Recommendation #4

4. The team recommends that the Board of Trustees move expeditiously to appoint an interim chancellor and begin the process of recruiting a permanent chancellor. The team further recommends that the Board of Trustees direct the new chancellor to make stability of both college and district administrative personnel a priority. (10C.1, 10C.2)

DISTRICT RESPONSE

As acknowledged in prior accreditation team reports, the district has addressed the first part of this recommendation by appointing Mr. Elihu Harris, J.D., as permanent chancellor of the Peralta Community College District. Chancellor Harris was hired initially as interim chancellor on 3/15/03, and became the permanent chancellor on 4/28/04.

Analysis of Results to Date

Chancellor Harris remains the district chancellor, with a good working relationship with the board of trustees and the college presidents. The chancellor continually works to fill all vacant administrative positions as quickly as possible. As of February 2006, there are 50 district managers, 41 of whom are permanent and 9 of whom are interim/acting. These interim management positions are at various stages of the recruitment/selection process. The chancellor works with the college presidents to ensure stability in college administrations.

COLLEGE RESPONSE

Merritt College’s March 15, 2004, progress report addressed the second portion of the recommendation. Merritt’s administration has remained relatively stable: the college president has served since January 2001. The vice president of instruction has been at the college since July 2000, and the vice president of student services was hired July 2003. A recently hired instructional dean (July 2005) had previously served as a Peralta administrator at two other colleges, and the other instructional dean was hired from Holy Names College in 2005. The dean of student support services was hired as interim dean in January 2004, and was hired permanently into the position in September 2004. The interim college business officer has served in a variety of positions in Peralta over the last 30 years, from dean of student services to senior vice chancellor at the district office. The position will be permanently filled by May 2006.
EVALUATION TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MERRITT COLLEGE
COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION #1

Merritt College should engage in a deliberate, focused, concerted effort to identify the most effective way to insure that institutional research and evaluation processes, policies and practices are developed and implemented within a timely and efficient manner. (Standards 3.A.1, 3.A.2, 3.A.3, 3.A.4)

Introduction

Merritt College uses a wide variety of data to inform its decision-making: student demographic data generated by the Peralta District Office of Research, data collected as part of the Integrated Planning Process, and data collected and compiled through participation in such planning and research efforts as the Title III Planning Grant, the Equity for All-Scorecard Project, and the Dale Tillery Institute, among others. Since fall of 2004, the college has actively engaged in designing an integrated planning and budgeting process that includes a focus on student learning outcomes and an overarching goal of increasing institutional effectiveness.

The Vice President for Student Services was assigned responsibility for leading the development and implementation of the integrated planning and budgeting process and supporting systems. In June 2005, Merritt College hired a full-time Research and Planning Officer whose responsibility has been to gather, analyze, and interpret data for various college constituencies for program planning and grant planning purposes.

To date, the College Research and Planning Officer has met with many college constituencies, including the Administrative Leadership Council, the Integrated Planning Committee (IPC), the Title III planning group, the Equity for All-Scorecard Project group, the Dale Tillery Institute group, and others. The IPC, Research and Planning Officer and Vice President of Student Services designed the Annual Progress Report and Action Plan template, which has now been used by each college unit as a component of the annual planning process.

As the College implements its integrated planning process at the unit level through creation of action plans that address institutional priorities and strategic directions, the College Research and Planning Officer’s expertise will guide us in measuring progress toward achievement of our goals.

In the section below, we use the College’s engagement in the following concurrent planning and evaluation processes as evidence of the College’s commitment to institutional research and evaluation:

A) Integrated Planning and Budgeting Process;
B) Title III Planning Grant;
A. Integrated Planning and Budgeting Process

Progress to Date

The Task Force on Integrated Planning & Budgeting, under the auspices of the College Council, was created in September of 2004 as the initial planning body for recommending strategies to the College to integrate its planning and budgeting processes. The Task Force participated in facilitated work sessions to develop a shared understanding of planning processes, to create a planning agenda, and to clearly define the relationship between planning and budgeting. The Task Force membership included the College President, Vice Presidents of Instruction and Student Services, Deans of Instruction and Student Services, the Business Manager, three faculty representatives, three classified representatives, and one student representative. The Task Force developed the first Integrated Planning and Budgeting Model, which was approved by the College Council on April 20, 2005.

Upon approval of the new model, the Task Force was disbanded and the Integrated Planning Committee (IPC) was created. As a subcommittee of the College Council, the charge of the IPC is to 1) conduct a situational analysis; 2) recommend 3-5 Strategic Directions to shared governance groups; 3) recommend Annual Institutional Priorities; and 4) review, analyze and comment on annual Unit Action Plans. The IPC composition is as follows: two administrators (one from instruction, one from student services), three faculty, two classified staff, one of whom is the College Research and Planning Officer, and one student.

June and July, 2005

The IPC held a two-day retreat (June 28-29) to review documents and identify critical issues and future directions related to the following: teaching and learning; access, success, growth and diversity; workforce and economic development; facilities; technology; budget and budget process; and community engagement. The Title III/Scorecard Project Director was invited to participate in the IPC retreats as well. Documents reviewed included the Accreditation Self Study and ACCJC Responses; College Mission, Values, and Vision; Program Reviews; College Educational Plan; College Facilities Plan; Matriculation Plan; Title III documents; and Annual Program Plans from Categorical Programs. Four Strategic Directions for the next five years were drafted: 1. Student Learning Outcomes; 2. Culture of Communication; 3. Technology and Media Resources; 4. Human, Fiscal, and Physical Resources.
On July 15, 2005, the IPC held a half-day retreat, during which it drafted 2006-07 Institutional Priorities and refined the draft institutional effectiveness statement, which follows:

As an effective institution committed to its mission, Merritt College galvanizes and organizes its human, fiscal and physical resources to ensure that students attain knowledge, master skills, and develop the appreciation, attitudes and values needed to succeed and participate responsibly in a democratic society. In this spirit, College constituents remain committed to continually examining and utilizing data as the basis for collegial dialogue and institutional decision-making.

The week of July 18, the IPC endorsed the draft 2005-06 Institutional Priorities as necessary precursors to the 2006-07 Institutional Priorities.

August 2005

The draft Strategic Directions and Institutional Priorities were sent to the Academic Senate, Classified Senate, Associated Students of Merritt College, and Administrative Leadership Council for review and feedback from their respective Senates/Council. Based on the draft, each college executive administrator developed goals for his/her respective division (i.e. President’s Office, Instruction, Student Services, and Business Services).

Campus Summit #1 was held on August 11, 2005 to obtain campus feedback on the proposed Strategic Directions and Institutional Priorities. (Target audience: Student Services, Business Services, President’s Office Staff, non-teaching personnel in Instruction). Campus Summit #2 was held on the August 16th Professional Day to obtain campus feedback from instructional faculty on the proposed Strategic Directions and Institutional Priorities.

On August 31, 2005, the College Council received IPC’s draft Strategic Directions and Institutional Priorities as well as feedback from the three Senates, Administrative Leadership Council, and the two Campus Summits. College Council modified and endorsed the 2005-2010 Strategic Directions as well as the 2005/06 and 2006/07 Institutional Priorities. At that meeting, the College Council also reviewed the draft definition of Institutional Effectiveness and agreed that the College should continue dialogue on the definition in an effort to arrive at a campus-wide shared understanding of how institutional effectiveness is defined and measured. (Appendix 4)

October 2005

Each unit developed annual Unit Action Plans for 2006-07 that support the approved Strategic Directions, identify needed resources, and list performance indicators based on the planned activities.
November 2005

Each College Executive Administrator synthesized Unit Action Plans and developed an Administrative Review, Analysis and Recommendation (A.R.A.R.) for each Action Plan.

December 2005-March 2006

The Integrated Planning Committee held three retreats and three meetings to review Action Plans (December 9, January 13, January 20, February 7, February 16 and March 9), and identified general themes and observations that arose from the review (Appendix 6). On February 22, 2006, the Action Plan Review Progress Report was submitted to College Council, all governance committees, and the Academic, Classified and Student Senates. A final report will be submitted to College Council in April 2006.

Next Steps

- IPC forwards summary and analysis to Academic Senate, Classified Senate, ASMC, and the Administrative Leadership Council for review at respective constituency meetings, and also to College Council
- College Council receives feedback and modifies (as needed) and endorses College Action Plan.
- College Council forwards recommended Unit Action Plans to the College Budget Committee for financial analysis.
- College Council forwards recommended Action Plans to the College President.
- Presidential Approval. The College President will act on recommended Action Plans in accordance with the College Council By-Laws and availability of funding.

B. Title III Planning Grant

Progress to Date

Merritt College was awarded a Title III Planning Grant, and the Title III Task Force has made substantial progress in its planning efforts. The Task Force is comprised of 7 faculty, 3 classified staff, one of whom is the College Research and Planning Officer, 3 administrators, 1 student, and a consultant grant writer. The Task Force has spearheaded an intensive campus-wide research and planning effort that has generated survey information and data that informs Title III planning for a Comprehensive Development Grant application, as well as the college’s ongoing strategic planning effort.

December 2004-April 2005

Two college/community forums were held to collect information from campus staff and community members on potential priority areas for a grant application,
and an informal student survey was conducted. The Task Force conducted an extensive review and discussion of existing planning information and research data available to the college. These data have come from four sources: 1) planning information from Merritt’s recent accreditation self-study and ongoing strategic planning process; 2) student demographic outcomes measures data collected by the District’s Institutional Research Office; 3) relevant data and ideas from outside sources and projects, including other successful Title III projects; and 4) Scorecard Project data.

Data analysis provided statistical evidence for some of the anecdotal evidence collected from community stakeholders early on during the Title III planning process. In addition, Task Force members reviewed ideas and “best practices” from other funded Title III projects, as well as reports on emerging concepts in the educational field, such as K-16 articulation, student learning outcomes, learning communities, 21st century core competencies, adult learning theory, community college institutional effectiveness, and models for developmental education—all areas in which Merritt faculty and administrators have voiced a strong interest.

December 2005-February 2006

In December, the College was visited by the Title III Strengthening Institutions, Part A Program Officer from Washington, D.C. He reviewed the planning process and progress on the grant application, and commended the College for its efforts. A campus-wide update outlining a proposed comprehensive development grant activity was presented during the college’s January 2006 Professional Development program.

The grant application is currently being developed by the Title III Task Force using institutional and student data as evidence to support the existence of an institutional problem that can be addressed through the Title III Plan. The Title III Task Force collaborated with the entire college leadership team and met in an all-day retreat on February 3 to design implementation strategies related to the focus of the grant.

Next Steps

- On March 1, 2006, an update on the Title III grant application was presented to the campus community.
- The Title III Task Force will continue to meet to outline a five-year plan that will address a significant institutional problem and delineate specific grant objectives and performance indicators.
- The Title III grant application will be submitted in Spring 2006.
- Merritt College’s Title III Strengthening Institutions Planning Grant, Part A, final report will be submitted in September 2006.
C. **Student Learning Outcomes / Institutional Learning Outcomes**

**Progress to Date**

**Student Learning Outcomes in Instruction**

**2003-2004**

With the integration of learning outcomes into the new accreditation standards in 2002, it became clear that all college programs, services, and the institution itself were required to reflectively identify and articulate the benefits students were expected to receive at completion of their journey through a course, program, certificate, degree and student services at the institution. In 2003, the Vice President of Instruction began working on student learning outcomes as a pilot project with faculty in Landscape Horticulture and Child Development.

**Fall 2004-Fall 2005**

In 2004-05, the Vice Presidents of Instruction and Student Services worked with programs in their areas to facilitate the identification and articulation of student learning outcomes for courses and services.

During fall of 2004, the Vice President of Instruction selected science programs with which to work. In November 2004, the Vice President convened faculty in Biology, Geology, Chemistry, and Environmental Sciences to move forward with identifying outcomes for one course and drafting assessments to measure students’ ability to demonstrate those outcomes. In fall of 2005, the Integrated Planning Committee identified Student Learning Outcomes as one of the four strategic directions for 2006-07. Consequently, all College units have been asked to create planning activities in their Unit Action Plans for 2006-07 that relate to this strategic direction. On March 1, 2006, faculty and the Vice President of Instruction presented a workshop for faculty on designing assessment tools to measure student learning outcomes.

One of the College goals for 2005-06 is to identify Institutional Learning Outcomes. The College is undergoing a shared process for this work, and has conducted two college forums for exploration of this topic. The College continued describing and drafting institutional learning outcomes at a professional day workshop on March 1, 2006.

**Next Steps**

- The modified program review process requires identification of student learning outcomes in the program review self-study.
- Division Deans will facilitate identification of student learning outcomes for courses as well as for programs.
- Student learning outcomes will be articulated on all new course outlines.
Student Learning Outcomes in Student Services

In Fall 2004, the Vice President of Student Services initiated a process to address student learning outcomes within the Student Services Division. Student Services Departments have been divided into four clusters.

- Cluster I: DSPS, EOPS, Financial Aid and Student Activities. This cluster has developed mission statements, identified 3 SLO’s, and begun the process of implementation and assessment.
- Cluster II: Counseling, Health Services, and the Transfer Center. These departments/programs have developed mission statements and 5 SLO’s.
- Cluster III: Puente, Assessment, Orientation, and CalWORKS. These departments/programs are in the process of developing 5 SLO’s.
- Cluster IV: Athletics, Job Placement, and Veterans’ Services. They will begin their work in 2006-07.

Nearly all of the Student Services departments and programs have developed mission statements and student learning outcomes during the last 12 months.

Next Steps

- Collaborate with the Dean of Student Support Services in providing leadership to Cluster I to develop an additional two learning outcomes (total of five per department).
- Collaborate with the Dean of Student Support Services in providing leadership to Cluster II to develop assessment components and implement the 5 SLO’s.
- Collaborate with the Dean of Student Support Services in providing leadership to Cluster III to develop 5 SLO’s and assessment components.

Institutional Learning Outcomes

The Vice President of Student Services and the College Research and Planning Officer collaborated with the College President and presidents of the Academic, Classified and Student Senates to initiate a college-wide dialogue on Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO’s). A series of three college forums have been held (December 8, February 1 and March 1) to draft a preliminary list of Institutional Learning Outcomes. ILO’s are defined as

The knowledge, skills, abilities or attitudes that students have attained by the end of their total college experience.*

ILO’s describe an integrated set of foundational knowledge, skills, and attitudes that prepare the student for future academic and career success. These are basic competencies enabling a lifetime of self-directed learning, effective communication, and responsible citizenship.**
A student learning outcome is what program faculty or staff intend for a student to be able to think, know, do or accomplish. ILO’s are College-wide outcomes that are broadly stated and occur within the entire learning environment of the college. All degree recipients will achieve measurable learning in the College’s core areas.***

* Adapted from Cabrillo College Factbook
** Adapted from Highline Community College
*** Adapted from Tacoma Community College

A preliminary list of Merritt ILO’s has been drafted and is being reviewed by a committee to ensure that it has accurately captured all input.

NEXT STEPS

- When a draft has been completed, ILOs will be posted on the Merritt shared governance website to solicit campus-wide feedback.
- ILOs will be sent to college governance groups for feedback.
- ILOs will be submitted to College Council for endorsement by May 2006.

D. Equity for All-Scorecard Project

Progress to Date

Merritt College has been selected to participate in the Equity for All Project (Scorecard Project), a year-long partnership between The Center for Urban Education, Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California, the Lumina Foundation for Education, and the California Community College Chancellor’s Office.

The Scorecard Project seeks to identify and then close gaps in educational outcomes among minority and low-income students. Most traditional measures that guide postsecondary institutions focus on issues such as access and retention. However, these measures often focus on the student body as a whole. The Equity for All-Scorecard Project also focuses on access and outcomes, but looks at these measurements by ethnicity and gender.

The Scorecard Project approach to institutional change is based on a participatory action research model. According to this Scorecard Project model, “… in order to bring about institutional change, individuals must see on their own, and as clearly as possible, the magnitude of inequities. They must analyze and integrate the meaning of the inequities, so that they are moved to act upon them.” In essence, the Scorecard Project requires a team of administrators, instructional faculty, and counselors to work through a participatory process to analyze diverse performance data. Ultimately, the team will identify inequities and use the information to inform decision making.
At its conclusion, the project will measure outcomes produced by four perspectives for all ethnic groups. The goal, over the course of the project, is to examine Merritt’s baseline data in order to establish measures and improvement targets relating to these four perspectives: 1) Academic Pathways; 2) Retention and Persistence; 3) Transfer Readiness; and 4) Excellence.

To date, Merritt College team members have met six times. Research associates from the Center for Urban Education participate in meetings in person or via telephone conferencing to collaborate with Merritt's team in achieving project goals and objectives. The meetings have been well attended by instructional faculty, counselors, staff, and administrators. The data gathered have been very insightful and used to inform the Title III grant planning process and the college's integrated strategic planning. Merritt's Scorecard team also responded to a request from the Center for Urban Education to use its dataset of how to present institutional data as a model for other teams to follow. The team completed its first Interim Report to the President on Perspective One--Academic Pathways-- and presented findings to the college community during the March 1, 2006, Professional Day Staff Development program.

Next Steps

- By May 2006, Merritt’s Scorecard Team will complete its analysis and interpretation of vital signs institutional data on Perspective Two, Retention and Persistence; Perspective Three, Transfer Readiness; and Perspective Four, Excellence.
- In May of 2006, the President’s report will be finalized, and the findings disseminated according to the action plan.
- During academic year 2006-07, the College will establish measures for each perspective and recommend targets as benchmarks for improvement in specific outcomes by student groups. This data will be integrated with other campus research activities such as the Dale Tillery Institute student equity plan. There will be on-going dissemination and communication of Scorecard findings to the campus community via college shared governance processes.

E. Dale Tillery Institute

Progress to Date

In August of 2005, several Merritt faculty, administrators, and the College Research and Planning Officer attended the First Annual Dale Tillery Summer Institute for Community College Leadership and Innovation at UC Berkeley. The intent of the Institute was to provide a forum for discussing issues of equity in
higher education, and to facilitate the drafting of college equity plans by the college teams.

Presentations included 1) research findings on the college experiences and perspectives of diverse students from community colleges throughout the state; 2) research on student involvement in activities such as research and mentoring that lead to greater self-efficacy; and 3) research that reveals ways in which community colleges are more fully engaging students to promote learning and achievement of educational goals.

While preparing to make a presentation on accomplishments and challenges at the college, the Merritt College Team discovered that college data does not provide complete, disaggregated information on our instructional and student service programs. For example, when citing the tremendous rise in the NCLEX pass rates for the Associate Degree Nursing program, we were unable to ascertain how the changes that increased excellence in the nursing program affected equity in terms of access for all students, opportunity and support, and service to the community. A review of recent licensure accreditation documents does not shed light on this issue.

The College Team was prompted to consider issues of equal access to programs, equal opportunities to succeed, equal treatment inside programs, equal outcomes, and adequate resources for all. We realized that the articulation of our accomplishments raises questions about equity, and that we need to devise ways to promote equity in all our planning processes on campus. The college’s participation in the Dale Tillery Institute has brought awareness that the college is at the initial data gathering stage of the inquiry process as we seek to evaluate access, success, and equity issues in our instructional programs.

Next Steps

- Review college student success data generated for the Title III planning effort and the Equity for All/Scorecard Project.
- The College Research and Planning Officer will collect and analyze admissions and matriculation data for licensure programs, both for successful and unsuccessful applicants.
- Review and analyze profile of successful and unsuccessful students.
- Involve program faculty in drafting a plan to address inequities in access and success.
- Participate in the Second Annual Dale Tillery Summer Institute and report findings.
College Commitment to Research and Evaluation

Research

In 2004, Merritt College was awarded a Title III Planning Grant to explore through surveys, retention rates, and course completion data areas in which a comprehensive 5-year grant could facilitate student success. To assist with this effort, President Wesley allocated funds to hire a consultant grant writer through the term of the Planning Grant. In addition, the President made a commitment to permanently fund a full-time Research and Planning Officer.

College faculty, staff, and administrators have participated in several conferences related to research and planning in order to more fully support college efforts to improve effectiveness in these areas. In March 2005, President Wesley sent faculty and staff with the Vice President of Student Services to the 2nd annual conference on Developing Planning Models for Institutional Effectiveness in Miami, Florida. Conference participants were presented the foundations of strategic planning, and were introduced to strategies that link the College mission, vision, environmental scans and budgeting processes into a sound plan for institutional effectiveness and community building. The College’s Task Force on Integrated Planning and Budgeting (and later the Integrated Planning Committee) used these strategies as they engaged in the process of linking planning and budgeting, and drafting strategic directions for the college.

In May 2005, a college team traveled to the University of Southern California in Los Angeles to participate in the Equity for All-Scorecard Project. The President’s promise to expand research and planning efforts and to ensure equity in college plans afforded faculty, staff, and administrators the time to become involved in these data-based initiatives that will eventually lead to data-driven program review and curriculum revision.

Finally, in August of 2005, the College sent a team of five to the Dale Tillery Institute at the University of California, Berkeley, with the objective of examining ways to ensure that social justice and equity are considered when implementing curricula and student success strategies.

Program Evaluation

Merritt College has, over the years, used formal program review as well as informal program evaluation to request additional resource allocation and to effect programmatic change intended to lead to greater student success. For example, Landscape Horticulture voluntarily underwent a program review process to support its argument that program facilities are in dire need of expansion and modification. The report was submitted to the Board of Trustees with a request for additional funding and higher prioritization. Although the Landscape Horticulture project is not as high on the list as they had hoped, the
program has been allocated 3.4 million dollars for facility reconstruction that will afford them the ability to expand instruction and services to students.

Some programs have addressed the need to increase retention through curricular changes. For example, Math department faculty created a series of unit-based supplemental math courses that students are strongly encouraged to enroll in concurrently with the traditional algebra and statistics classes. Anecdotally, these additional classes have improved retention in math classes. The College Research and Planning Officer can provide retention data to ascertain if this is a model that should be followed for other programs with high attrition, such as chemistry.

Merritt College’s licensure programs, such as Nursing and Radiological Technology, regularly use student success rates to inform curricular revision. For example, the NCLEX pass rate for Merritt’s Associate Degree (AD) Nursing program had been steadily declining over the past several years to a low of about 50%. Last year, the AD Nursing Program Director, in collaboration with faculty, implemented several practices to improve student success. The following are strategies they employed in 2003-2005 that have led to greater retention, program completion, and higher NCLEX pass rates.

1. **INCREASE IN PROGRAM PASS RATE.** Program faculty researched and assessed success rates and program criteria of comparable AD Nursing programs throughout the state. It was discovered the Merritt’s AD Nursing programs had one of the lowest program pass rates, and certainly one of the lowest performance rates on the NCLEX. The program pass rate was raised from 70% to 75% to align with comparable programs.

2. **ATI IMPLEMENTATION DURING THE FIRST TERM AND THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM.** The ATI is a Web-based battery of tests that provides baseline data on a student’s strengths and weaknesses in critical thinking, basic math, sciences, English, and reading. The student’s performance is measured against other associate degree nursing students nationwide.

3. **ACADEMIC ADVISING BASED ON ATI RESULTS.** Students exhibiting weaknesses in one or more of the critical areas above are provided academic support and/or academic options by nursing faculty.

4. **MENTORING/REMEDICATION.** Students whose overall performance in first-semester theory classes is between 70-75% (with 75% the minimum standard) are mentored and provided remediation opportunities to achieve the 75% minimum pass rate.

5. **MOCK NCLEX.** During the last semester of this two-year program, students are required to take a mock NCLEX exam as preparation for taking their Board exam after graduation.
6. **BOOT CAMP.** After graduation, students exhibiting weakness in one or more areas were strongly encouraged to enroll in workshops that specifically dealt with those areas.

The strategies above greatly increased the student success rate on the NCLEX (which is taken post-graduation). One hundred percent of the graduating class of 2005 took the NCLEX and passed on the first attempt. This pilot project in AD Nursing will be showcased as a model for Merritt College licensure programs that need to improve success rates.

The College’s Radiological Technology program has historically had excellent pass rates on the licensure exam. However, there have been concerns regarding their attrition rate. In 2004-05, the program instituted a peer-tutoring/mentoring strategy to improve program retention rates. Results thus far are promising, but final attrition rates can only be calculated at the end of the two-year program, in June of 2006.

**SUMMARY**

In the coming year, Merritt College will continue to work on the mosaic of research and planning efforts to achieve an integrated picture in which each process informs the other and leads to implementation efforts. For example, the Annual Progress Report and Unit Action Plans have already informed the Educational Plan update, as well as planning efforts for a $380 million district bond measure to be put on the ballot in June 2006.

The Title III planning efforts are intended to lead to a 5-year grant application which, if funded, will 1) provide monies to address a college need identified through data collection, and 2) provide the impetus to institutionalize the grant efforts in order to achieve sustainability. The Scorecard Project is concentrated on data collection of student success based on ethnicity and gender, but the purpose of this data collection is to improve learning and academic success for all student populations at Merritt College. These data will assist us in shaping the Title III grant application as well as the college equity plan to be submitted to the Second Annual Dale Tillery Institute (August 2006) as part of the college’s commitment to Institute goals.

What has evolved from these various data collection and planning efforts is a realization of the importance of developing an integrated research agenda as part of the planning feedback loop. The establishment of a College Research Office with a full-time College Research and Planning Officer provides a critical resource for the college to identify research priorities for the institution, analyze data, and link those results to future planning and program improvement. To this
end, the College Research Committee has been revived, with its main charge to
draft a research and implementation agenda by the end of the academic year.

In addition, a preliminary technology plan will be drafted in Spring 2006 using
surveys, needs assessments, and Unit Action Plans. The strategic directions,
institutional priorities, and unit action plans will intersect with program review,
identification of student learning outcomes, and drafting of the research and
technology plans. When finally compiled, all data collection and planning efforts
should lead to the development of a college educational master plan that can be
used as the main reference document for resource allocation.

Documents
1. 2003 Accreditation Self-Study and Evaluation Team Report
2. Equity for All - Scoreboard Project report
3. Annual Program Plans from Categorical Programs
5. College Educational Plan
6. College Facilities Plan
7. College Mission, Values, and Vision
8. Dale Tillery Institute Student Equity Plan
9. Integrated Planning Process and Budgeting process
10. Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
11. IPC Two-day Retreat 2005 Summary
12. 2006-07 Institutional Priorities
13. Matriculation Plan
14. Program Reviews/Evaluation
15. Strategic Directions & Institutional Priorities for next five years
16. Student Demographic data
17. Student Learning Outcomes
18. Title III summary/documents
COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION #2

Merritt College should evaluate its current policies, processes and practices for all levels of the institutional planning to streamline planning processes and assure broad-based understanding and participation in those processes. (Standards 3B.1, 3B.2, 3B.3 and 10B.1, 10B.5, 10B.6, 10B.9)

Introduction

Since being apprised of its Accreditation Warning status in June of 2003, the College has been engaged in addressing its deficiencies. In a Progress Report dated October 15, 2003, the College identified the issues that needed to be addressed and articulated initial actions that could be taken, such as designating a central repository for all College planning documents and committing to streamline the College planning processes. Progress to Date on Recommendation #2 has been divided into progress on Governance and progress on Planning.

Progress to Date

A. Governance

The College completed development of its new shared governance system in 2004. The Academic Senate, Classified Senate, and Associated Students of Merritt College endorsed by-laws for the following governance bodies: College Council, College Budget Committee, College Facilities Committee, Council of Department Chairs and Program Directors, Curriculum and Instructional Council, and the College Technology Committee. All by-laws were approved by the College Council.

In addition, the College identified the 11 standing committees that are part of the new governance system. The charge and membership of each of the following standing committees were endorsed by the Academic Senate, Classified Senate, and Associated Students of Merritt College and approved by the College Council: Accreditation Committee, Financial Aid Petition Committee, Graduation Committee, Health and Safety Committee, Matriculation Committee, Scholarships and Awards Committee, Shared Governance Committee, Staff Development Committee, Student Due Process Committee, Student Grievance Committee, and Student Outreach Committee. As part of the Fall 2004 Professional Day activities, the new College governance system was presented to the campus community with accompanying sign-up sheets for faculty and staff to indicate on which committees they would like to serve. This information was used by the Academic and Classified Senate Presidents to select faculty and staff for governance bodies and standing committees. The college has

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developed a consolidated meeting calendar for all governance bodies and standing committees.

B. Planning

The College Budget Committee (CBC) underwent a major change in 2004 in its composition, role, and procedures. It is now fully engaged in the process of reviewing the College’s allocations and expenditures for discretionary funds, supply and equipment funds, and VTEA funds. The CBC has representation on the Peralta Community College District Budget Advisory Committee, and is actively developing recommendations that reflect the interests of the college and that better integrate the college budget processes with the district processes in ways that will improve budgetary/financial communications between the district and the colleges.

In September 2004, the College Council approved the creation of a Task Force on Integrated Planning and Budgeting (under the auspices of the College Council) that served as the initial planning body to define strategies the college would use to integrate its planning and budgeting processes. The role of the Task Force included participation in training or facilitated work sessions to develop a shared understanding of planning processes, create a planning agenda, identify expected outcomes and measures of assessment, and clearly define the relationship between planning and budgeting. The Task Force membership included the College President, Vice Presidents of Instruction and Student Services, Deans of Instruction and Student Services, the Business Manager, three faculty representatives, three classified representatives, and one student representative. The Task Force developed the first Integrated Planning and Budgeting Model, which was approved by the College Council on April 20, 2005.

Upon approval of the new model, the Task Force was disbanded and the Integrated Planning Committee (IPC) was created. As a subcommittee of the College Council, the charge of the IPC was to 1) conduct a situational analysis; 2) recommend 3-5 Strategic Directions to shared governance groups; 3) recommend Annual Institutional Priorities; and 4) review, analyze and comment on annual Unit Action Plans. The IPC composition is as follows: two administrators (one from instruction, one from student services), three faculty, two classified staff, one of whom is the College Research and Planning Officer, and one student.

On August 31, 2005, the College Council received IPC’s draft Strategic Directions and Institutional Priorities, as well as feedback from the three Senates, Administrative Leadership Council, and the two Campus Summits. College Council modified and endorsed the 2005-2010 Strategic Directions as well as the 2005/06 and 2006/07 Institutional Priorities (Appendix 4). At that meeting, the
College Council also reviewed the draft definition of Institutional Effectiveness and agreed that the College should continue dialogue on the definition in an effort to arrive at a campus-wide shared understanding of how institutional effectiveness is defined and measured.

To date, two college-wide forums have been held to develop Institutional Learning Outcomes. On the March 1 Professional Day, a report was given on the outcomes of those two forums.

Each College unit was charged with developing an annual Action Plan that included the following: the Unit’s Mission; identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and limitations; activities related to the College’s Strategic Directions; resources needed to accomplish those activities; and measurable performance indicators for the activities. The Action Plans were reviewed by Executive Administrators and submitted to the Integrated Planning Committee for review and identification of general themes. A preliminary report was submitted to College Council on February 22, and a final report will be submitted on March 22 for endorsement.

A revised Educational Plan format was created and submitted to various College constituencies for feedback. A major change in the Educational Plan format was incorporating components of the Unit Action Plan – the Mission statement; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, limitations; and identification of needed resources – and eliminating course listings, which helped tremendously to streamline the document. Instructional units were requested to submit their Educational Plan updates by March 1, 2006.

The College Technology Committee is currently drafting a preliminary Technology Plan to present to College Council before the end of the Spring term which will incorporate technology needs identified in the Unit Action Plans. In addition, the College was asked to respond to a District request for identification of facility, furniture and equipment needs in preparation for a $380 million dollar bond measure to be put on the June ballot. Faculty and staff were solicited for input for this document, and the Educational Plans as well as Unit Action Plans were consulted for details to be included.

The Instructional Program Review template has been streamlined, and asks program faculty to respond to questions on curriculum, instruction, student success, staffing and resources, and community outreach and articulation. The modified template will be presented to the District Council on Instruction, Planning and Development (CIPD) for approval.
Next Steps

- IPC will refer Unit Action Plans to the shared governance committees as needed for specialized input and refinement. College Council will forward recommended Unit Action Plans to the College Budget Committee for financial analysis and to the College President, who will act on recommended Action Plans in accordance with the College Council By-Laws and availability of funding.
- The Educational Plans will be compiled into one document - the College Educational Master Plan -- and will be disseminated to the College community at the end of May.
- The preliminary College Technology Plan will be distributed to College governance committees for review and input by the end of Spring 2006.
- When approved by CIPD, the revised Instructional Program Review template will be disseminated to all instructional programs, and a new timeline created for submission of discipline program reviews to the College Curriculum Committee, the College President, and CIPD.
- Complete the process of identifying Institutional Learning Outcomes.

Documents
1. College Technology Plan
2. Unit Action Plans
3. Student Learning Outcomes
COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION #3

Merritt College should take the necessary steps to insure that all plans, program services and courses contain clear outcome measures that will be used to effectively evaluate the achievement of the institutional mission, goals and objectives and communicate those achievements to your public. (Standards 3C.1, 3C.2, 3C.3)

Introduction

Since September of 2004, the College has actively engaged in designing an integrated planning and budgeting process that includes a focus on student learning outcomes and an overarching goal of increasing institutional effectiveness. The Vice President for Student Services was assigned responsibility for leading the development and implementation of the integrated planning and budgeting process and supporting systems, and completed this assignment through the work of a Task Force on Integrated Planning and Budgeting. Upon approval of the new model, the Task Force was disbanded and the Integrated Planning Committee (IPC) was created. As a subcommittee of the College Council, the charge of the IPC was to 1) conduct a situational analysis; 2) recommend 3-5 Strategic Directions to shared governance groups; and 3) recommend Annual Institutional Priorities.

Progress to Date

In Fall of 2005, the IPC drafted four Strategic Directions for the College which were endorsed by the College Council. One of those Strategic Directions, detailed below, is a focus on student learning outcomes and institutional learning outcomes. Each College unit was charged to respond to this strategic direction in its annual Unit Action Plan with activities, resource needs, and performance indicators (Appendix 5).

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2005-2010 and
INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES 2005/06 & 2006/07

STRATEGIC DIRECTION I: STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning at Merritt College through the development and implementation of student learning outcomes for both instruction and support services.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

As reflected in our mission statement, Merritt College is committed to helping students attain knowledge, master skills, and develop the appreciation, attitudes and values needed to succeed and participate responsibly in a democratic society. Towards this end, the College will:
a) identify expected outcomes as to what students should know and/or be able to do as a consequence of completing a course program or utilizing a support service;
b) systematically and routinely measure the attainment of those outcomes;
c) effectively communicate the results of this assessment; and
d) utilize the measurement/assessment data to revamp/refine courses and support services and to inform allocation of human, fiscal and physical resources.

2005-06 INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITY
Develop agreed-upon institutional Student Learning Outcomes.

2006-07 INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITY
Each unit will identify expected outcomes as to what students should know and/or be able to do as a consequence of completing a course program or utilizing a support service AND develop related tools and processes for assessment of same.

Instructional and Student Services Units began a formal process of drafting student learning outcomes for programs and services.

A. Student Learning Outcomes in Instruction

With the integration of learning outcomes into the new accreditation standards in 2002, it became clear that all college programs, services, and the institution itself were required to reflectively identify and articulate the benefits students were expected to receive at completion of their journey through a course, program, certificate, degree and student services at the institution. In 2003, the Vice President of Instruction began working on student learning outcomes as a pilot project with faculty in Landscape Horticulture and Child Development.

In 2004-05, the Vice Presidents of Instruction and Student Services worked with programs in their areas to facilitate the identification and articulation of student learning outcomes for courses and services. During Fall 2004, the Vice President of Instruction convened faculty in Biology, Geology, Chemistry, and Environmental Sciences to move forward with identifying outcomes for one course and drafting assessments to measure students’ ability to demonstrate those outcomes.

A district-wide workshop on student learning outcomes was presented on the April 7, 2005, Professional Day by Vice Presidents Linda Berry-Camara (Merritt College) and Jannett Jackson (College of Alameda). The objective of the workshop was to present the concept of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) to a wider audience district-wide, and to prepare instructional faculty for a Ruth Stiehl workshop during the August 2005 professional days. The April workshop was well-attended by over 40 faculty from all 4 Peralta Colleges. Eight instructional programs, 2 per college, were chosen to participate in the interactive workshop.
with Dr. Stiehl during the August and October 2005 professional days. The programs selected by Merritt College were Real Estate and African-American Studies.

Dr. Stiehl was invited as the Keynote Speaker for the district-wide convocation on August 15, and then as the workshop presenter on SLOs in partnership with Linda Berry-Camara, Vice President of Instruction at Merritt College. Eight instructional programs across the District have now identified learning outcomes, mapped their programs according to Ruth Stiehl’s model, and drafted assessment tools to measure inside the classroom the ability to demonstrate those outcomes outside the classroom.

On the March 1, 2006 Professional Day, the Vice President of Instruction collaborated with faculty to present a workshop on assessment of student learning outcomes. To date, the majority of faculty at Merritt College have drafted student learning outcomes for their programs and documented those outcomes in their revised Educational Plans.

Next Steps

- During Spring 2006, assessment tools for student learning outcomes in instruction will be pilot-tested.
- Beginning Fall 2006, student learning outcomes will be integrated into course outlines and program reviews.

B. Student Learning Outcomes in Student Services

In Fall 2004, the Vice President of Student Services initiated a process to address student learning outcomes within the Student Services Division. Student Services Departments have been divided into four clusters.

- Cluster I: DSPS, EOPS, Financial Aid and Student Activities. This cluster has developed mission statements, identified 3 SLO’s, and begun the process of implementation and assessment.
- Cluster II: Counseling, Health Services, and the Transfer Center. These departments/programs have developed mission statements and 5 SLO’s.
- Cluster III: Puente, Assessment, Orientation, and CalWORKS. These departments/programs are in the process of developing 5 SLO’s.
- Cluster IV: Athletics, Job Placement, and Veterans’ Services. They will begin their work in 2006-07.

Nearly all of the Student Services departments and programs have developed mission statements during the last 12 months.
Next Steps

- Collaborate with the Dean of Student Support Services in providing leadership to Cluster I to develop an additional two learning outcomes (total of five per department).
- Collaborate with the Dean of Student Support Services in providing leadership to Cluster II to develop assessment components and implement the 5 SLO’s.
- Collaborate with the Dean of Student Support Services in providing leadership to Cluster III to develop 5 SLO’s and assessment components.

Documents
  1. Student Learning Outcomes
  2. Institutional Learning Outcomes
COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION #5
The College should develop and implement a plan for Student Services that focuses on broad participation of Student Services faculty, staff, and students; utilizing the Program Review Process; and ensuring that the plan is integrated into the college’s Educational Plan. (Standards 5.4, 5.10)

Introduction

Student Services has used a four-pronged approach for this recommendation: development of Student Learning Outcomes; development of a framework for the redesign of college-wide student support services; reconfiguration of the physical layout of Students Services, and updating the Educational Master Plan.

Progress to Date

1. **Student Learning Outcomes**: In Fall 2004, the Vice President of Student Services initiated a process to address student learning outcomes within the Student Services Division. Student Services Departments have been divided into four clusters.
   - Cluster I: DSPS, EOPS, Financial Aid and Student Activities. This cluster has developed mission statements, identified 3 SLO’s, and begun the process of implementation and assessment.
   - Cluster II: Counseling, Health Services, and the Transfer Center. These departments/programs have developed mission statements and 5 SLO’s.
   - Cluster III: Puente, Assessment, Orientation, and CalWORKS. These departments/programs are in the process of developing 5 SLO’s.
   - Cluster IV: Athletics, Job Placement, and Veterans’ Services. They will begin their work in 2006-07.

   Nearly all of the Student Services departments and programs have developed mission statements and student learning outcomes during the last 12 months.

2. **Title III**: Through the Title III grant application process, we have identified new strategies to integrate student support services, regardless of whether they are provided by Student Services, Instruction, or Business Services.

3. Student Services will be consolidated in a totally remodeled Student Services Building (R Building) that will facilitate collaboration and integration of services. There was wide college participation in the planning and design of the R Building.

4. Student Services Educational Plans were revised in February of 2006 by program/department heads and currently are under review by the Vice President of Student Services.
Next Steps

- Cluster I will develop an additional 2 student learning outcomes (total of five per department).
- Cluster II will develop assessment components and implement the 5 SLO’s.
- Cluster III will develop 5 SLO’s and assessment components.
- Cluster IV will develop mission statements and identify five SLO’s.

The Title III Grant proposal will be submitted in Spring 2006. If funded, the strategies for reengineering student support services will commence in 2006-07.

Student Services Building: The renovation project will be completed in Fall of 2006, with occupation of the facility scheduled for December 2006.

Documents
1. Unit mission statements
2. Student Learning Outcomes
3. Institutional Learning Outcomes
COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION #6

The College should implement a plan to ensure that current information is available to students and faculty by providing consistent, stable funding from the beginning of each fiscal year for library materials, both periodicals and books. Outdated print materials need replacing to properly serve the instructional programs. (Standards 4A.4, 4B.1, and 6.5)

Introduction

Allocations for the new book collection have varied over the years depending on budget constraints. Allocations of general fund monies have ranged from a low of $12,000 to a high of over $30,000, depending on various funding requests. While there is not yet a defined budget line in the College budget for Library books, it has been a College priority to ensure that instructional equipment funds, bookstore commission funds, and salary savings are awarded every year to the Library to improve the new book collection.

Progress to Date

In academic year 2004-05, the Library was allocated over $42,000 for new books and subscriptions in general fund monies by the College.

In 2005-06, the College allocated $25,000 for new Library books, and the District Chancellor allocated an additional $22,500 to every campus for collection development.

Next Steps

The College’s newly integrated planning and budgeting process provides an opportunity for the Collection Librarian to place a line item in the budget to replace and enhance the collection. Requests for additional funds will be reviewed by the College Budget Committee, and funding priorities will be recommended to the College President. The Associated Students of Merritt College are active participants on governance committees, and they are strong advocates for enhanced Library services.

Documents

1. Minutes of College Budget Committee
COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION #7
The College must comply with the District’s policies and procedures by implementing timely and systematic evaluation of all administrators, faculty and staff. (Standards 7B.1, 7B.2, 7B.3)

Introduction

Merritt College follows district policies and procedures when evaluating administrators, faculty, and staff. Procedures for evaluation of administrators are found in Board Policy 3.65. The Faculty Evaluation Policies and Procedures Handbook (revised August 2005) presents the policies and procedures for evaluation of all faculty in the Peralta Community College District: tenure track, tenured, part-time, and long-term substitutes. For classified staff, employee evaluation procedures are delineated in the union contracts.

Progress to Date

All newly-hired faculty must have a Tenure Review Committee in place before the hiring process is considered complete. The college performs tenure review following district guidelines, using tenured faculty and administrators to serve on committees. Merritt's activities are facilitated by an on-site tenure review facilitator, and files are kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the vice president of instruction. Recommendations by the individual committees are made to the vice president of instruction who, along with the faculty senate president, either certifies or dissents from the committee recommendations. The president makes recommendations to the vice chancellor of educational services, who then submits a recommendation report to the chancellor on all tenure review decisions. The chancellor makes final recommendations to the Board of Trustees prior to March 15th in accordance with provisions of Education Code Section 87610.

The Faculty Evaluation Policies and Procedures Handbook (revised August 2005) also contains policies and procedures for evaluation of tenured and adjunct faculty. The procedure for tenured faculty mandates that every tenured faculty member shall be evaluated once every three years. The College Academic Senate President, a union representative, and the Vice President of Instruction must meet within the first five weeks of the fall term to establish Instructional Improvement Clusters (IIC) of 10-15 faculty. Evaluation teams can choose among four models within which to conduct the evaluation: 1) Standard Classroom Observation Model; 2) Partnership Model; 3) Videotape Model; 4) Custom Model.

Evaluation of adjunct (part-time) faculty is a four-part process that includes self-evaluation, peer evaluation, administrative evaluation, and student evaluation. Department Chairs and Division Deans make a valiant effort to evaluate newly-hired part-time faculty.
The College is currently engaged in conducting the evaluation process for administrators and managers per Board Policy 3.65. The College community is invited to participate in evaluation processes for administrators.

Next Steps

- In order to fulfill the contractual agreement to evaluate tenured faculty every three years, a plan will be submitted to the Council of Department Chairs and Program Directors in May 2006 that more closely involves chairs and program directors in initiating and facilitating the process.
- The District is currently negotiating with the faculty union on a part-time faculty preferential hiring pool. If implemented, this policy will necessitate evaluation of part-time faculty who have taught in the district a specified number of semesters. It is expected that the policy will be completed and approved by the Board before May 2006.
- The College will advertise the position of tenure review facilitator to all tenured faculty on campus.

Documents
1. The Faculty Evaluation Policies and Procedures Handbook
COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION #8

The College should establish selection, evaluation and retention practices that reduce the level of administrative turnover in order to ensure the College’s stability, to preserve the College’s collective memory, and to promote continuity of programs and initiatives. (Standard 7A.1)

Introduction

The permanent Executive administrators at Merritt College have been in their positions from 3-5 ½ years, and have been responsible for facilitating most of the changes that have resulted in Merritt College’s compliance with Accreditation standards.

Progress to Date

The College requested Human Resources to review and revise Board Policy 3.65 governing the evaluation process for administrators and managers to ensure consistency between practice and policy. The administrative team consults to ensure that implementation procedures are consistent in each evaluation process.

The College is currently engaged in conducting the evaluation process for administrators and managers per Board Policy 3.65. The College community is invited to participate in evaluation processes for administrators.

The Vice President of Instruction meets weekly with instructional deans on matters of enrollment management, schedule development, and budget development. These sessions are training sessions in that the deans are kept apprised of college procedures and district policies.

Next Steps

- To increase administrative retention, the President will encourage administrators to participate in training workshops on topics such as enrollment management and budget management that will contribute to their effectiveness in managing their units.
- The College will request the District Office to schedule ongoing training for administrative staff district-wide.
- The Business Manager will present budget workshops on campus that will facilitate administrative understanding of the budget processes.

Documents

1. Board Policy 3.65 regarding evaluation process
COMMUNITY UNIVERSITY #10
The team recommends that the College develop, publish, and institute clearly-defined institutional guidelines and processes for financial planning, budget development, and facilities priorities that are driven by inclusive planning processes in support of the educational objectives of the College and are linked to other institutional planning efforts and include realistic assessments of resource availability and expenditure requirements. (Standards 3B.1, 8.5, 9A.2, 9A.3, 9A.4, 9A.5)

Progress to Date

Integrated Planning and Budgeting Process

The Task Force on Integrated Planning & Budgeting, under the auspices of the College Council, was created in September of 2004 to serve as the initial planning body to recommend strategies for the college to use to integrate its planning and budgeting processes. The role of the Task Force included participation in facilitated work sessions to develop a shared understanding of planning processes, create a planning agenda, and clearly define the relationship between planning and budgeting. The Task Force membership included the College President, Vice Presidents of Instruction and Student Services, Deans of Instruction and Student Services, the Business Manager, three faculty representatives, three classified representatives, and one student representative.

The Task Force on Integrated Planning and Budgeting developed the first Integrated Planning and Budgeting Model. The model was approved by the College Council on April 20, 2005.

Upon approval of the new model, the Task Force was disbanded and the Integrated Planning Committee (IPC) was created. As a subcommittee of the College Council, the charge of the IPC is to 1) conduct a situational analysis; 2) recommend 3-5 Strategic Directions to shared governance groups; 3) recommend Annual Institutional Priorities; and 4) review, analyze and comment on unit Annual Action Plans. The IPC composition is as follows: two administrators (one from instruction, one from student services), three faculty, two classified staff, one of whom is the College Research and Planning Officer, and one student.

June and July, 2005
The IPC held a two-day retreat (June 28-29) to review documents and identify critical issues and future directions related to the following: teaching and learning; access, success, growth and diversity; workforce and economic development; facilities; technology; budget and budget process; and community engagement. The Title III/Scorecard Project Director was invited to participate in the IPC retreats as well. Documents reviewed included the Accreditation Self Study and ACCJC Responses; College Mission, Values, and Vision; Program
Reviews; College Educational Plan; College Facilities Plan; Matriculation Plan; Title III documents; and Annual Program Plans from Categorical Programs. Four Strategic Directions for the next five years were drafted: 1. Student Learning Outcomes; 2. Culture of Communication; 3. Technology and Media Resources; 4. Human, Fiscal, and Physical Resources.

On July 15, 2005, the IPC held a half-day retreat, during which it drafted 2006-07 Institutional Priorities and refined the draft institutional effectiveness statement, which follows:

As an effective institution committed to its mission, Merritt College galvanizes and organizes its human, fiscal and physical resources to ensure that students attain knowledge, master skills, and develop the appreciation, attitudes and values needed to succeed and participate responsibly in a democratic society. In this spirit, College constituents remain committed to continually examining and utilizing data as the basis for collegial dialogue and institutional decision-making.

The week of July 18, the IPC endorsed the draft 2005-06 Institutional Priorities as necessary precursors to the 2006-07 Institutional Priorities.

August 2005

- The Draft Strategic Directions and Institutional Priorities were sent to the Academic Senate, Classified Senate, Associated Students of Merritt College, and Administrative Leadership Council for review and feedback from their respective Senates/Council. (Week of August 1st)

- Based on the draft Strategic Directions & Institutional Priorities, each college executive administrator developed goals for his/her respective division (i.e. President’s Office, Instruction, Student Services, and Business Services).

- Campus Summit #1 was held on August 11, 2005 to obtain campus feedback on Strategic Directions and Institutional Priorities. (Target audience: Student Services, Business Services, President’s Office Staff, non-teaching personnel in Instruction).

- Campus Summit #2/Professional Day was held on August 16, 2005 to obtain campus feedback on Strategic Directions and Institutional Priorities. (Target audience: instructional faculty).

- On August 31, 2005, the College Council received IPC’s Draft Strategic Directions and Institutional Priorities as well as feedback from the three Senates, Administrative Leadership Council and the two Campus Summits. College Council modified and endorsed the 2005-2010 Strategic Directions as well as the 2005/06 and 2006/07 Institutional Priorities.

- On August 31, 2005, the College Council reviewed the draft definition of Institutional Effectiveness and agreed that we should continue dialogue on
the definition in an effort to arrive at a campus-wide shared understanding of how institutional effectiveness is defined and measured.

October 2005
Each unit developed annual Unit Action Plans for 2006-07 that support the approved Strategic Directions, identify needed resources, and list performance indicators based on the planned activities.

November 2005
Each College Executive Administrator synthesized Unit Action Plans and developed an Administrative Review, Analysis and Recommendation (A.R.A.R.) for each Action Plan.

December 2005-March 2006
The Integrated Planning Committee held three retreats and three meetings to review Action Plans (December 9, January 13, January 20, February 7, February 16 and March 9), and identified general themes and observations that arose from the review (Appendix 6). On February 22, 2006, the Action Plan Review Progress Report was submitted to College Council, all governance committees, and the Academic, Classified and Student Senates. A final report will be submitted to College Council in April 2006.

Next Steps

- IPC forwards summary and analysis to Academic Senate, Classified Senate, ASMC, and the Administrative Leadership Council for review at respective constituency meetings, and also to College Council
- College Council receives feedback and modifies (as needed) and endorses College Action Plan.
- College Council forwards recommended Unit Action Plans to the College Budget Committee for financial analysis.
- College Council forwards recommended Action Plans to the College President.
- Presidential Approval. The College President will act on recommended Action Plans in accordance with the College Council By-Laws and availability of funding.

Documents
1. College Mission, Values, and Vision
2. Dale Tillery Institute data
3. Integrated Planning & Budgeting process
4. Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO)
5. IPC Two-day retreat 2005 summary
6. 2006-07 Institutional Priorities
7. Program Reviews/Evaluation
8. Strategic Directions & Institutional Priorities for next five years
9. Student Demographic data
10. Student Learning Outcomes
11. Title III summary/documents
12. Unit Action Plans
COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION #11

The College must further define its governance structures by incorporating agreed upon decision-making processes, including budgetary ones, and publish the results to ensure that the structures and processes are understood by all constituent groups. (Standards 10B.5, 10B.6, 10B.9, 10B.10)

Introduction

The College’s engagement in revising its governance structures and decision-making processes has been transformative. Faculty and staff are fully engaged in the College’s restructured governance and standing committees, and have worked to create a planning and budgeting process that is structured and timely.

Progress to Date

In December 2003, a revised Mission, Vision, and Values statement was drafted and endorsed by the College community, College Council, and adopted by the Board of Trustees on February 10, 2004. A subcommittee of the College Council was commissioned to draft by-laws for all governance and functional committees in order to achieve a standard format and consistent operating principles across all committees.

The college has completed development of its new shared governance system, and has published two versions of its Shared Governance Manual, 2004-2005 and 2005-2006. The Academic Senate, Classified Senate and Associated Students of Merritt College endorsed by-laws for all governance bodies: College Council, College Budget Committee, College Facilities Committee, Council of Department Chairs, Curriculum and Instructional Council, and Merritt Technology Committee. All by-laws have been approved by the College Council. In addition, governance committees adopted the use of a uniform template for committee minutes, which are distributed via email to committee members and archived in the College Library.

The college identified the 11 standing committees that are part of the new governance system. The charge and membership of each of the following standing committees were endorsed by the Academic Senate, Classified Senate, and Associated Students of Merritt College and approved by the College Council: Accreditation Committee, Financial Aid Petition Committee, Graduation Committee, Health and Safety Committee, Matriculation Committee, Scholarships and Awards Committee, Shared Governance Committee, Staff Development Committee, Student Due Process Committee, Student Grievance Committee, and Student Outreach Committee. The college has developed a consolidated committee meeting calendar for all governance bodies and standing committees.
As part of the Fall 2004 Professional Day activities, the new college governance system was presented to the campus community with accompanying sign-up sheets for faculty and staff to indicate on which committees they would like to serve. This information was used by the Academic and Classified Senate Presidents to select faculty and staff for governance bodies and standing committees.

The College Budget Committee (CBC) has undergone a major change in its composition, role and functioning. It is fully engaged in the process of reviewing the college’s departmental allocations and expenditures for discretionary funds. The CBC now has representation on the Peralta Community College District Budget Advisory Committee. The CBC is actively developing recommendations that reflect the interests of the college, and that better integrate the college budget processes with the district processes in ways that will improve budgetary/financial communications between the district and the colleges.

In Spring 2005, an Integrated Planning and Budgeting Cycle for 2005-06 was presented to the College community for review and approval (Appendix 3). The Cycle includes the following activities:
- Drafting of Strategic Directions and Institutional Priorities by the Integrated Planning Committee (IPC);
- Solicitation of feedback on Strategic Directions and Institutional Priorities;
- Endorsement by College Council of Strategic Directions and Institutional Priorities;
- Development of Administrative Division goals by Executive Administrators;
- Development of Annual Action Plans by each unit that support Institutional Priorities and Division goals;
- Administrative review, analysis, and recommendation for each action plan;
- Review and summary of Unit Action Plans by the IPC;
- Endorsement of College annual action plan (based on unit action plans);
- Presidential approval of recommended College action plan.

**Next Steps**
- The summary report on Unit Action Plans will be submitted to College Council on April 19.
- The College Action Plan will be submitted to the College Budget Committee for financial analysis prior to the end of the 2005-06 academic year.
- The approved College budget will be disseminated to the College community.

**Documents**
2. List of College Committees
COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION #12
The College must ensure adequate and stable administrative support in all areas of the college operations and functions and adhere to district policy in the hiring, evaluation, and termination of administrative officers. (Standards 10B.3, 10B.4)

Introduction

Merritt College's administrative team is committed to providing strong administrative support for college operations and functions. The relatively new governance structure provides a venue for faculty and staff to request needed resources.

Progress to Date

Merritt College's March 15, 2004, progress report addressed the second portion of the recommendation. Merritt's administration has remained relatively stable: the college president has served in her role since January 2001. The vice president of instruction has served in her position since July 2000, and the vice president of student services was hired July 2003. A recently hired instructional dean (July 2005) had previously served as a Peralta administrator at two other colleges, and the other instructional dean was hired from Holy Names College in 2005. The dean of student support services was hired as interim dean in January 2004, and was hired permanently into the position in September 2004. The interim college business officer has served in a variety of positions in Peralta over the last 30 years, from dean of student services to senior vice chancellor at the district office. The position will be permanently filled by May 2006.

College administrators are evaluated per the district policies and procedures.

Next Steps

- Fill the position of permanent Business and Administrative Services Manager prior to the beginning of the next fiscal year.
- Fill the position of permanent division dean of Sciences and Technology by July 1, 2006.

Documents
1. Board Policy 3.65
PLANNING AGENDA for MERRITT COLLEGE
[2003 SELF STUDY]
PROGRESS TO DATE

Each of the Standard sections of the 2003 Self-Study except Standard Five suggested a planning agenda for the College. Major themes in this planning agenda included increased dissemination of information, improvement in the evaluation of faculty, and improvement of the college planning model.

STANDARD ONE: INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

1.1 Create a concise mission statement representing the vision of Merritt College, the many communities it serves, and its reflection of the mission of the Peralta District, through the Educational Master Plan review and revision process which includes representatives of the campus constituent groups.

Institutional planning and decision-making should be guided by the mission statement. In 2003, the College President formed a committee comprised of faculty and staff to redefine and expand the Mission statement such that the College’s purpose is clear, and the College’s Core Values and Vision will guide reflective decision-making at all levels of governance. The revision was completed in December of 2003, endorsed by the College community, and adopted by the Board of Trustees on February 10, 2004. (See Appendix…)

Documents
1. Mission, Vision, Values Statement

STANDARD TWO: INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

2.1 Include a statement on academic freedom in future revisions of the Faculty Handbook.

In February 2006, the Academic Senate discussed the need for an updated Faculty Handbook. The Senate agreed to refer the matter to the Staff Development Committee as the appropriate body to assume the task of updating the current Faculty Handbook to include information for full-time and part-time faculty, including a statement on academic freedom.

2.2 Ensure that each class offered has a course syllabus on file in the appropriate division dean’s office.

Division secretaries currently collect course syllabi from full-time and part-time faculty. By Fall 2006, they will have created binders of sample syllabi for each course and to send them to the Library and Counseling offices for students to have additional information on course requirements. Sample syllabi will also be posted online as the College creates department and discipline web pages.
By Fall of 2007, all instructional departments will have web pages that have sample syllabi posted for access by students.

2.3 Evaluate all part-time, tenured, and non-tenured faculty on a regular basis.

The Peralta Federation of Teachers is currently in contract negotiations with the District to establish a part-time faculty preferential hiring pool. This pool, if approved, will require contract faculty and division deans to complete the evaluation process of part-time faculty who have served at the College for a specified number of semesters. In addition, it has been standard practice for deans and contract faculty to evaluate newly-hired part-time faculty. This process will become more formalized in order for there to be sufficient documentation when considering the addition of instructors to the preferential hiring pool.

All newly-hired tenure-track faculty must have established tenure-review committees before the hiring process is considered to be complete, and members of the selection committees are expected to serve on tenure review committees. The tenure-review process is a four-year process for probationary faculty. The evaluation of tenured faculty is a contractual issue as well as an accreditation issue; however, the completion of tenured faculty evaluations has been spotty due to the frequent turnover in division deans at the College. By Fall 2006, a plan will be in place that relies on Department Chairs to initiate the evaluation cycle for tenured faculty. The process will be monitored by the Vice President of Instruction.

2.4 Involve the college’s Curriculum and Instructional Council in the Program Review process.

Over the past two years, the College and District have been engaged in revitalizing planning processes. In Fall of 2005, the District Vice Chancellor of Educational Services appointed Merritt College’s Vice President of Instruction to lead a subcommittee of the Curriculum, Instruction, Planning, and Development Committee (CIPD) in a review and modification of the program review process. The subcommittee completed its work and proposed to adapt a sister college’s modification of program review. This model was presented to the College’s Curriculum and Instructional Council (CIC) for comment.

The modified program review continues to rely on data and on faculty expertise in the discipline, and completed program reviews will be formally presented to the Curriculum and Instructional Council for review and comment. The next step is to present the modified program review process to CIPD, and to pilot the process this Spring with Merritt College programs such as Real Estate, Business, and Geology.
2.5 Hire a full-time or part-time athletics secretary to assist in the paperwork, eligibility, and filing of forms necessary for athletes.

This need was identified in the Merritt Athletic Program Review and the Bay Valley Conference Program Review. The College plans to explore the feasibility of creating a 10-hour-per-week permanent part-time position.

Documents
1. Board Policy on faculty evaluation
2. Revised program review format
3. Program review schedule

STANDARD THREE: INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

3.1 Hire a full-time permanent Research and Planning Officer as soon as possible.

In June 2005, Merritt College hired a full-time Research and Planning Officer whose responsibility has been to gather, analyze, and interpret data for various college constituencies for program planning and grant planning purposes.

To date, the college Research and Planning Officer has met with many College constituencies, including the Administrative Leadership Council, the Integrated Planning Committee (IPC), the Title III Task Force, the Equity for All-Scorecard Project group, the Dale Tillery Institute group, and others. The IPC, Research and Planning Officer, and Vice President of Student Services designed the proposed Annual Progress Report and Action Plan. As the College implements its integrated planning process at the unit level through creation of action plans that address institutional priorities and strategic directions, the College Research and Planning Officer’s expertise will guide us in measuring progress toward achievement of our goals.

3.2 Prepare and disseminate an annual update that describes improvements and accomplishments that have been made as a result of research and program evaluation.

Several preliminary reports have been disseminated to the College community.

- Since Fall 2004, the Title III Task Force has gathered data on student success, solicited college input on proposed pathways to address needed improvements in retention, persistence, and successful course completion, and reported back to the College community at governance meetings and Professional Day workshops. This work will culminate in a
Title III Grant Application, to be widely disseminated on campus and submitted by April.

- The Integrated Planning Committee (IPC) created a template for Unit Action Plans that 1) identifies activities for 2006-07 tied to the College Strategic Directions; 2) identifies needed resources; and 3) identifies performance indicators. Administrators and the IPC have reviewed all plans and drafted a report for the College community that captures general themes and observations that will assist in the next planning process.

- The Equity-for-All/Scorecard Project seeks to identify and then close gaps in educational outcomes among minority and low-income students. The Project also focuses on access and outcomes, and looks at these measurements by ethnicity and gender. Merritt College has partnered with USC’s Center for Urban Education and the Lumina Foundation on this year-long project. The first interim report was submitted to the President and the College community on the March 1, 2006, Professional Day.

3.3 Publish a list of committees, their purposes, and the criteria for appointment or membership to the full campus community.

A list of committees, their membership, and their by-laws was compiled and published in the first Merritt College Shared Governance Manual 2004-05. The list was updated and republished for the 2005-06 version of the Manual.

3.4 Prepare and distribute to all college personnel a master list of all publications and reports, and their locations.

The Archivist in the College Library has established a governance section for College publications and reports. As the College completes this year of generating data-based reports (2005-06) and unit action plans, a master list of these documents and locations will be created, distributed, and posted on the College website.

3.5 Adopt a more integrated planning model.

The Task Force on Integrated Planning & Budgeting, under the auspices of the College Council, was created in September of 2004 to serve as the initial planning body to recommend strategies for the college to use for integration of its planning and budgeting processes. The role of the Task Force included participation in facilitated work sessions in order to develop a shared understanding of planning processes, create a planning agenda, and clearly define the relationship between planning and budgeting.

The Task Force developed the first Integrated Planning and Budgeting Model, which was approved by the College Council on April 20, 2005.
Upon approval of the new model, the Task Force was disbanded and the Integrated Planning Committee (IPC) was created. As a subcommittee of the College Council, the charge of the IPC was to 1) conduct a situational analysis; 2) recommend 3-5 Strategic Directions to shared governance groups; 3) recommend Annual Institutional Priorities; and 4) review, analyze and comment on unit Annual Action Plans, to be submitted by each unit at the College. All of these tasks have been completed, and a preliminary report has been submitted to the College Council. Resource requests from the unit action plans will be referred to the College Budget Committee for review.

3.6  Update on a regular basis the college’s planning documents, such as the Educational Plan, Facilities Plan, Technology Plan, and Student Equity Plan.

- The Educational Plan format was revised, and updated Educational Plans were submitted March 1, 2006.
- The reconstituted Technology Committee is in the process of drafting a preliminary Technology Plan for review by governance groups and the College Council by May, 2006.
- The College has identified and submitted updated facility modernization requests to the District Bond Measure Planning Group as it prepares to put a bond measure on the June 2006 ballot. There are several campus subcommittees of the Facility Committee that are currently working to coordinate planning efforts for building modernization.
- An updated Student Equity Plan was submitted to the State Chancellor’s Office in December, 2005.

3.7  Better publicize the college’s Mission Statement by having it prominently displayed on campus and on the Merritt website.

The revised Mission, Vision, and Values statement adopted in December 2003 is posted on the new Merritt College website.

3.8  Improve continuity and success in planning through better orientation and mentoring of new staff.

Each term, the Staff Development Committee organizes an orientation session for all newly-hired faculty, full and part time. In August of 2005, due to the unusually large number of new tenure-track faculty hired, the Academic Senate arranged an all-day orientation session. New faculty were encouraged to seek mentors outside of their tenure-review committees. The Staff Development Committee is considering mentoring as a theme for 2006-07.

Documents
1. Report on student success in basic skills classes
2. Title III meeting agenda and minutes
3. IPC summaries
4. Equity for All/Scorecard Report
5. Merritt College Shared Governance Manual
6. College Council minutes re. Task Force on Integrated Planning & Budgeting
7. Task Force planning documents
8. Integrated Planning & Budgeting model
9. College Council minutes re. Integrated Planning Committee (IPC)
10. IPC charge
11. IPC Unit Action Plan document
12. IPC Preliminary Report
13. Revised Educational Plan format
14. College Educational Plan
15. Facilities Plan
16. Technology Plan
17. Bond Measure documents
18. Student Equity Plan
19. August 2005 New Faculty Orientation agenda

**STANDARD FOUR: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

4.1 *Facilitate approval process of short-term courses for retraining or enhancement of skills.*

Currently, there is a process in place to facilitate approval for short-term or experimental courses. These courses are considered to be selected topics, and they are given an experimental course number until they have been offered three times to assess student demand for the courses. They are then submitted to the Curriculum and Instructional Council and to the District Council on Instruction, Planning and Development for permanent numbers.

4.2 *Establish stronger links with industry and other teaching institutions to keep current with changes in the industry and include appropriate counselors on Program Advisory Committees.*

Merritt College’s Strategic Direction 4 – Human, Fiscal, and Physical Resources – articulates the intent to “pursue business partnerships that effectively link our curriculum with industry needs as well as service learning opportunities for students.”

The College’s Allied Health Programs currently have formal partnerships with area hospitals – Alta Bates Summit, Highland Hospital, Kaiser, Mt. Diablo- John Muir – and with community health clinics such as La Clinica de la Raza, Asian Health, Native American Health, and Tiburcio Vazquez. The College is one of the partners in a grant awarded to the Spanish Speaking Unity Council that
creates entry-level career pathways in Medical Assisting, Medical Interpreter, and Dental Assisting. Three additional grants in Associate Degree Nursing were just submitted on March 1, 2006, and if funded will expect the ADN Program to partner with an area hospital on space expansion and renovation in order to increase student capacity and enrollment in the program.

Merritt College’s Child Development Program has a long-standing affiliation with First Five of Alameda County and Head Start. This last year the Program was awarded a $30,000 grant by First Five to create an Emergent Teacher Program to provide a supportive system of educational opportunities for early childhood English Language Learners who have achieved nine Child Development credits or more toward a Teacher Level on the California Child Development Permit Matrix and/or an AA degree in Child Development.

The College’s Real Estate Program has expanded dramatically in response to changes in licensure requirements for real estate brokers. The program chair and faculty consult and partner with industry by bringing in guest speakers to classes and arranging forums on campus that include industry presenters.

The latest partnership is a Public Safety initiative involving Merritt College, Oakland Fire and Police, and Oakland Emergency Medical Services. The long-term goal is to create a Regional Training Center at Merritt or an alternate site in Oakland that provides public safety training through Merritt College. District administrators plan to apply to the federal government for Homeland Security funds.

4.3 Adopt the inclusion of “Critical Analysis and Logical Thinking Across the Curriculum” in each course outline and support the education of faculty in the teaching methodology of critical analysis and logical thinking.

College faculty have begun discussions this past year on writing and critical thinking across the curriculum, and are approaching this issue through the identification of course and program student learning outcomes. A professional development workshop on writing across the curriculum was well attended on the March 1, 2006, Professional Development day, and faculty have submitted a proposal for a workshop on critical thinking across the curriculum for the April 27 Professional Development day.

4.4 Ensure that all classes have clear course syllabi which reflect the content as it appears in the course outline.

Course outlines are disseminated to new faculty upon hiring so that course syllabi will reflect the official, approved course content, and division secretaries collect syllabi from faculty each term.
4.5 Implement uniformity among English faculty for the establishment of measurable proficiency standards in students’ writing and critical thinking skills.

English faculty across the District are in the process of reviewing and revising the English curriculum to achieve greater student proficiency in writing and critical thinking skills. The first step has been to separate English 201A and 201B such that they will not be offered concurrently, but are established as sequenced separate courses that are preparatory for college-level composition. This change will take place in Spring 2007 in the schedule of classes.

Documents
1. Experimental course approval process
2. Strategic Direction #4
3. Partnership agreements/MOUs
4. Agenda for March 1, 2006, Professional Day
5. Workshop handouts for March 1, 2006, Professional Development Day
6. Workshop proposal request for April 27, 2006, Professional Development Day
7. Sample course syllabi
8. Minutes of the district-wide English Department meeting

STANDARD SIX: INFORMATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES

6.1 Fulfill the library staffing needs in accordance with the Merritt College Educational Plan, 2001-2017.

Upon reviewing the Educational Plan, it is apparent that the recommendations for its self-study need reconsideration. Several of the recommendations were based on presumptions that are not consistent with the state economy, system supports, and perceived campus needs.

In order to reduce its administrative costs, the campus has determined that a staffing model utilized by medium and large campuses is not cost-effective for Merritt College. The Library prefers to benchmark its staffing based on a consistent measure that compares staffing with that of peer institutions, preferably in the nine county Bay Area region, and utilizing data from the National Center for Education Statistics. Currently the Library has 3.0 FTEF Librarians and 3.0 FTE Library Technicians.

6.2 Increase the base book budget for library materials, and supplement with grant money or other special funding to begin replacing obsolete volumes in the circulating collection.

Allocations for the new book collection have varied over the years depending on budget constraints. The allocations of general fund monies range from a low
of $12,000 to a high of over $30,000. While there is not yet a line item in the College budget for Library books, it has been a College priority to ensure that instructional equipment funds and salary savings are awarded every year to the Library to improve the new book collection. The Library’s request for a budget line item will be submitted to the College Budget Committee for review by May 2006. This past year, the Chancellor allocated an additional $22,500 to every campus Library for collection development.

6.3 **Assign a Librarian Liaison to every instructional division who would work with faculty to add appropriate materials to the collection.**

The Collection Development Librarian, in consultation with library colleagues, will develop a plan to consult with Department Chairs and Program Directors on collection development that addresses discipline-specific needs for new courses/certificates/majors, special requirements for programs, and common campus needs for print or digital collections.

6.4 **Create a dedicated instructional computer lab in the library for courses in information competency.**

The master plan for the Library included a Library computer lab to facilitate orientations and provide instruction in information competence. The lab was never built due to physical facility constraints such as lack of air conditioning and sufficient power and cabling. The L Building, which houses the Library, is on the Measure E facilities list for building modification, and the priorities are to upgrade the HVAC system with air conditioning and to provide sufficient power and ports for additional student computers and a dedicated computer lab in the Library.

6.5.1 **Hire an Information Competency and Instructional Services Librarian, who would develop and launch an information competency program and coordinate the teaching of regular courses and as-needed workshops for students and faculty.**

One of Merritt College’s current Librarians is a strong advocate of information competency for students. He has been awarded a sabbatical leave for Fall 2006 to take courses in this area of Library specialization that will assist him in developing curricula to meet student needs.

**Documents**
1. Budget request and allocation documents for Library
2. Memo re. Chancellor’s budget allocation to Library
3. Emails from Collections Librarian to Faculty re. collection development
4. Measure E documents re. Library upgrades
STANDARD SEVEN: FACULTY AND STAFF

7.1 Ensure that full-time faculty are evaluated every three years after they are tenured.

In order to fulfill the contractual agreement to evaluate tenured faculty every three years, a plan will be submitted to the Council of Department Chairs and Program Directors in May 2006 that more closely involves chairs and program directors in initiating and facilitating the process.

7.2 Complete the revision of the part-time faculty evaluation process and communicate these procedures to the campus.

The District is currently negotiating with the faculty union on a part-time faculty preferential hiring pool. If implemented, this policy will necessitate evaluation of part-time faculty who have taught in the district a specified number of semesters. It is expected that the policy will be completed and approved by the Board before May 2006.

7.3.1 Evaluate all hourly faculty within the first year of their employment and every two years after their first year.

Part-time faculty are generally evaluated informally during the first term of their employment by their program peers and division dean. This process will of necessity become formalized upon the approval of the part-time faculty preferential hiring pool policy.

Documents
1. Plan for completing evaluation of tenured faculty
2. Draft of part-time faculty preferential hiring pool document

STANDARD EIGHT: PHYSICAL RESOURCES

8.1 Increase awareness of disaster and emergency procedures for staff and students through workshops and written procedures.

Over the past several years, the District and College have utilized the SEMS model for disaster planning. This month the District just hired a new Risk Manager who will lead the colleges in disaster planning and emergency procedures.

8.2 Replace inside water pipes as funding becomes available.

Merritt College buildings are over 30 years old. Plumbing in the Science Building has been problematical for several years. This building, Building D, is
scheduled to be renovated next with Measure E funds, and the water pipe issue will be addressed in the renovation. All other campus buildings have been scheduled for renovation within the next five years. Currently 30 million has been allocated for these renovations. If the June 2006 bond measure is passed, additional monies will be allocated to complete the renovations.

8.3 Establish process for redistribution/allocation of old computer equipment.

Since there is currently no technology plan in place, the 2005-06 process for redistribution of instructional computer equipment became the responsibility of the Academic Senate President and Vice President of Instruction. The Technology Committee is drafting a preliminary Technology Plan, and a redistribution process will be included in the Plan.

8.4 Create a full-time technical training position to provide faculty and staff with training on computer equipment and applications.

The College lacks funds at this time to create a full-time technical training position. However, one of the recurring themes in the Unit Action Plans was the need for technology training. The college presidents are currently negotiating to hire campus-based Webmasters to assist with campus training needs.

8.5 Commit a percentage of discretionary funds to the repair of equipment.

The College has an established budget allocation process that enables faculty and staff to identify equipment repair needs to advocate for funds to meet these needs in the next budget cycle. In the 2005-06 budget, funds were allocated for equipment repair in Biology and Physical Education.

8.6 Utilize the College Council to review recommendations from the Facilities Committee to ensure broader campus participation in the decision-making process.

Chairs of all governance committees are members of the College Council and make monthly reports at College Council meetings. Recommendations from the Facilities Committee are submitted to the College Council, which then makes a recommendation to the College President.

Documents
1. D Building Subcommittee agendas and minutes
2. L Building Subcommittee agendas and minutes
3. List of faculty who received redistributed computers
4. Budget requests for equipment repairs
5. College Council meeting agendas and minutes
STANDARD NINE: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

9.1 The college must review its budgetary priorities to ensure that budget expenditures are consistent with the mission statement of the college and comply with the State’s budgetary regulations.

Budget requests are submitted to the College Budget Committee (CBC) from governance committees such as the Council of Department Chairs and Program Directors (CDCPD). Upon submission to the CBC, the requests are reviewed in light of the College mission and compliance with state guidelines for allocation of state funds. In 2005-06, each unit submitted Unit Action Plans with resource requests. The College Budget Committee will review Unit Action Plans as well as revised Educational Plans to ensure that budget requests align with unit planning.

9.2 The college should provide orientations to disseminate information about campus budgetary operational procedures.

The College has presented several workshops over the last three years on the College budget, from how funds are allocated by the state to the purchasing process on campus. In 2005-06, the College Budget Committee has requested administrators to make presentations to Committee members on the details of their unit budgets.

The recent transition of the financial system to PeopleSoft has resulted in several training sessions for faculty and staff on campus and at the District Office. College employees are eager to learn the new system in order to effectively manage their budgets.

9.3 Staff should be trained in emergency procedures.

During the last three years, College administrators and staff have been trained in emergency procedures. With the advent of the new District Risk Manager, it is expected that additional mandatory trainings will be provided at the District Office, and then replicated at the College.

Documents
1. Budget committee by-laws
2. Budget request and allocation process
3. Budget Committee workshop announcements
4. Training announcements and agendas
STANDARD TEN: GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

10.1 Establish a procedure for the College Budget Committee to review budget proposals.

The by-laws of the College Budget Committee (CBC) specify that the CBC will review all budget requests for general funds, instructional equipment and supply funds, and VTEA funds. Requests for categorical funds are exempt from this process.

Documents
1. Budget Committee by-laws
Appendix 1

Peralta Community College District
Strategic Plan Steering Committee

FACULTY (Voting)

Faculty Senate President (Alameda) - Gary Perkins
Faculty Senate President (Laney) - Evelyn Lord
Faculty Senate President (Merritt) - Tom Branca
Faculty Senate President (Vista) – Dr. Joseph Bielanski, Jr.
DAS President – Dr. Joseph Bielanski, Jr.
Faculty At-Large – Inger Stark
Faculty At-Large - Anita Black
PFT President - Michael Mills

CLASSIFIED (Voting)

Classified Senate President (Alameda) – Muriel Montague
Classified Senate President (Laney) - Wandra Williams
Classified Senate President (Merritt) – Tony Hampton
Classified Senate President (Vista) - Nancy Cayton
Classified Senate President (District Office) - Sheryl Queen
Local 790 Rep – Diana Lara
Local 39 Rep

ADMINISTRATION (Voting)

Vice President, Student Services - Carmen Jordan-Cox (Merritt)
Vice President, Student Services - Kerry Compton (Alameda)
Vice President, Instruction - Linda Berry-Camara (Merritt)
Vice President, Instruction – Dr. Elnora Webb (Laney)
College President - Dr. Cecilia Cervantes (Alameda)
College Business Manager - Shirley Slaughter (Vista)
District vice chancellor of educational services – Dr. Margaret Haig (District)

STUDENT (Voting)

Student Trustee - Lisa Watkins-Tanner (Laney)
Student Trustee – Rashad Andrews (Merritt)
Appendix 1

Peralta Community College District
Strategic Plan Steering Committee

EX OFFICIO (Non-voting)

Chancellor - Elihu Harris, JD
College President - Dr. Judy Walters (Vista)
College President - Odell Johnson (Laney)
College President - Dr. Evelyn Wesley (Merritt)
Vice President, Instruction - Dr. Wise Allen (Alameda)
Vice President, Instruction - Craig Hadden (Vista)
Vice President, Student Services - Dr. Mario Rivas (Vista)
Vice President, Student Services - Carlos McLean (Laney)
College Researcher (Laney) - Dr. Connie Portero
College Researcher (Alameda) - Greg Golebieski
College Researcher (Merritt) - Anika Toussant-Jackson
College Researcher (Vista)
Associated Student Government President (Alameda) - De’Borah Willis
Associated Student Government President (Laney) - Melvin Haywood
Associated Student Government President (Merritt) – Rashad Andrews
Associated Student Government President (Vista) - Hamed Kazemi
Dean - Linda Sanford

DISTRICT OFFICE (Non-voting)

Chancellor’s Office - Alton Jelks
Finance - Tom Smith
General Services - Sadiq Ikharo
Human Resources/Legal – Thuy Nguyen, JD
Information Technology - Andy DiGirolamo
International Education - Jacob Ng
Marketing - Jeff Heyman
Admissions & Records – Howard Perdue
Research & Institutional Development - Dr. Chuen Chan

Note: 23 voting members, 17 non-voting members, 9 district staff members
Appendix 2

Composition of Strategic Planning Committees
Peralta Community College District – 2006

A. Enhancing Access and Student Success

Co-Chairs: Dr. Margaret Haig (District vice chancellor of educational services); Dr. Judy Walters (President, Vista)

Staff: Pat Jameson, Executive Assistant

Members: (6 CIPD-3 faculty, 3 admin, 1 DAS, 8 Matric-2 faculty, 4 classified, 2 admin, 4 students)

Cheli Fossum (CIPD, Faculty, Laney)
Kim Thoman (CIPD, Faculty, Merritt)
Cleavon Smith (CIPD, Faculty, Vista)
Dr. Joseph Bielanski (DAS President, Faculty, Vista)
Margaret Traylor (DAS Rep., Faculty, Laney)
Inger Stark (Faculty, Laney)
Trulie Thompson (Matriculation, Faculty, Alameda)
Leslie Scurry (Matriculation, Faculty, Merritt)
Pat Denoncourt (Matriculation, Classified, Alameda)
Blanca Montesdeoca (Matriculation, Classified, Laney)
Courtney Loder (Matriculation, Classified, Merritt)
Tamicia Ward (Matriculation, Classified, District)
Matt Kritscher (Matriculation, Admin, Laney)
Dr. Mario Rivas (Matriculation, Admin, Student Services, Vista)
Howard Perdue (Matriculation, Admin, District)
Anika Toussant-Jackson (Classified, Researcher, Merritt)
Lisa Watkins-Tanner (Student Trustee, Laney)
Herb Kitchen (Marketing, District)
Linda Berry Camara (Vice President Instruction, Merritt)
### Appendix 2

**Composition of Strategic Planning Committees**  
Peralta Community College District – 2006

#### B. Developing our Human Resources

**Co-Chairs:** Wyman Fong, (Manager, Human Resources);  
Dr. Cecilia Cervantes (President, COA);  
Thuy Thi Nguyen, JD (Vice Chancellor of Human Resources)

**Staff:** Lakshmi Kerner, Executive Assistant

**Members: (3 admin, 6 faculty, 2 classified, 2 students, 3 district staff)**

- Peter Simon (Dean, Vocational, COA)
- Dr. Ed Wright (Dean, Student Services, Laney)
- Karen Ulrich (Director, Employee Relations, District)
- Patricia Dudley (Faculty, Staff Development Officer, COA)
- Celia Correa (Faculty, Staff Development Officer, Laney)
- Tim Hackett (Faculty, Staff Development Officer, Merritt)
- Joan Berezin (Faculty, Staff Development Officer, Vista)
- Dr. Joseph Bielanski (President, DAS)
- Dr. Connie Porter (Researcher)
- Dr. Carmen Jordan Cox (Vice President, Student Services, Merritt)
- Brenda Johnson (Director, EOPS, COA)
- Dr. Gloria Vogt (Dean, Vocational, Vista)
- Dr. Elaine Chen-Ramirez (Division Dean, Laney)
Appendix 2

Composition of Strategic Planning Committees
Peralta Community College District – 2006

C. Creating Effective Learning and Working Environments

Co-Chairs: Sadiq Ikharo (District executive district director of general services);
Odell Johnson (Chair, President, Laney)

Members: (district-wide facilities committee, 4 faculty, 1 DAS, 4 classified, 4 students,
5 other)

DWFAC Membership:

- Five voting members from each college:
  - College President, College business manager, one faculty member, one
classified staff member
  - the fifth member will be appointed by the College President or according to the
  Campus Governance process
- the District director of general services (Sadiq Ikharo)
- Ex-officio members will include:
  - the President of Associated Students from each campus
  - President of the District Academic Senate or their designees
  - a staff member from the Department of General Services

Dr. Cecilia Cervantes (President, Alameda)
Dr. Evelyn Wesley (President, Merritt)
Dr. Judy Walters (President, Vista)
Connie Willis (Business Manager, Alameda)
John al-Amin (Business Manager, Laney)
Dr. George Herring (Business Manager, Merritt)
Shirley Slaughter (Business Manager, Vista)
Shirley Coaston (Faculty, Laney)
Teresa Williams (Faculty, Merritt)
Dr. Joseph Bielanski (Faculty, Vista, DAS President)
Gary Perkins (Faculty, Alameda)
Robin Freeman (Faculty, Sustainability Coordinator, Merritt)
Laverne Stewart ( Classified, Laney)
Diamond Pope (Classified, Merritt)
Janet Barnett ( Classified, Alameda)
Linda Sanford (Dean, Co-chair Facilities Committee/Laney)
Tom Branca (Instructor, Merritt)
Vladeta Djukich (Faculty Vista)
Atheria Smith (Consultant, General Services)
## D. Leveraging Information Technology

**Co-Chairs:** Andy DiGiralamo (Chief Information Officer); Dr. Kerry Compton (Vice President, Student Services)

**Members:** (5 faculty, 4 classified, 3 admin, 3 district staff)

- David Sparks (Faculty, COA)
- John Drinon (English Faculty, Merritt)
- Ron Moore (Faculty, Laney)
- Dr. Fabian Banga (Faculty, Dept Chair, Vista)
- Gary Perkins (Faculty Senate President, Alameda)
- Maurice Jones (Admin, Dean, COA)
- Dr. Chuen Chan (Admin, Research)
- Anita Black (Faculty, Staff Development, Distance Education, Business Dept)
- Joe Doyle (Media Media Chair, Vista)
- David Mullen (Project Bridge, Chair of Instructional Task Force, Laney)
- Howard Perdue (Admin, District)
- David Betts (HR Rep)
- Walter Johnson (Learning Lab., Merritt)
- Dr. Evelyn Wesley (President, Merritt)
- Student Services Administrator
- Classified Staff
- Finance Rep
- Student
Appendix 2

Composition of Strategic Planning Committees
Peralta Community College District – 2006

E. Enhancing Resources and Budget Processes

Co-Chairs: Tom Smith (Vice Chancellor of Budget and Finance); Dr. Evelyn Wesley (President, Merritt); Dr. Wise Allen (Vice President of Instruction, COA)

Members:

Budget Allocation Committee: (29) Tom Smith, Anita Black, Calire Chapin, Connie Willis, Dr. Craig Hadden, Dr. George Herring, Evelyn Lord, Helena Lengel, Helene Maxwell, Howard Perdue, Dr. Gloria Vogt, Joan Berezin, John Al-Amin, Dr. Elnora Webb, Dr. Joseph Bielanski, Dr. Kerry Compton, Linda Berry Camara, Loretta Hernandez, Dr. Mario Rivas, Maureen Knightly, Michael Mills, Paula Coil, Sheryl Queen, Shirley Coaston, Shirley Slaughter, Dr. Tae-Soon Pak, Alton Jelks, Jeffrey Heyman, Dr. Margaret Haig

Budget Rules Subcommittee: (8) Tom Smith, Sheryl Queen, Dr. George Herring, Dr. Elnora Webb, Dr. Kerry Compton, Dr. Mario Rivas, Evelyn Lord, Dettie Del Rosario.

Vista Growth Subcommittee: (6) Dr. Margaret Haig (Chair), Dr. Elnora Webb, Helene Maxwell, Dr. Judy Walters, Maureen Knightly, Dettie Del Rosario.

Productivity Subcommittee (8) Howard Perdue (Chair), John Al Amin, Helena Lengel, Dr. Craig Hadden, Linda Berry Camara, Michael Mills, Claire Chapin, David Simon.

Claire Chapin (Faculty, Merritt)
Anita Black (Faculty, Merritt)
David Simon (Faculty, Laney)
Evelyn Lord (Faculty, Laney)
Helene Maxwell (Faculty, COA)
Dr. Joseph Bielanski (Faculty, Vista)
Peter Simon (Vocational Dean, COA)
Peter Crabtree (Vocational Dean, Laney)
Student
Appendix 2

Composition of Strategic Planning Committees
Peralta Community College District – 2006

F. Enhancing Awareness and Visibility

**Co-Chairs:** Jeff Heyman (District executive director of marketing, Public Relations & Communications);
Dr. Elnora Web (Vice President of Instruction, Laney)

**Members:** (4 pio, 4 outreach chair, 2 instruct admin, 2 stud services admin, 2 dist staff, student)

- Shirleen Schermerhorn (Public information officers, COA)
- Toni Alexander (Public information officers, Laney)
- Rona Young (Public information officers, Merritt)
- Shirley Fogarino (Public information officers, Vista)
- Lilia Celhay (Outreach Chair, COA)
- Carlos McLean (Outreach Chair, Vice President of Student Services, Laney)
- Anthony Powell (Outreach Chair, Dean, Merritt)
- Dr. Mario Rivas (Outreach Chair, Vice President of Student Services, Vista)
- Herbert Kitchen (Marketing Department Staff)
- Michelle Lee (PCTV Staff)
- Dr. Connie Portero (Researcher)
- Manual Acala (Laney)
- Joe Doyle (Vocational, Vista)
- Hector Cordova (Dean, Merritt)

Faculty
Student
Appendix 2

Composition of Strategic Planning Committees
Peralta Community College District – 2006

G. Improving the Effectiveness of District wide Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration

Chair: Chancellor Elihu Harris, JD

Members: CPAC (18) and Service Center Managers (6)

(CPAC Members: Elihu Harris JD, Alton Jelks, Dr. Cecilia Cervantes, Evelyn Lord, Dr. Evelyn Wesley, Howard Perdue, James Rickman, Dr. Joseph Bielanski, Dr. Judy Walters, Mark Greenside, Gary Perkins, Michael Mills, Odell Johnson, Sadiq Ikharo, Sheryl Queen, Thomas Branca, Thuy Nguyen JD, Rich Rojo)

Elihu Harris, JD (Chancellor)
Dr. Margaret Haig (District vice chancellor of educational services)
Thuy Thi Nguyen, JD (Vice Chancellor of Human Resources)
Tom Smith (Vice Chancellor of Budget and Finance)
Sadiq Ikharo (District executive district director of general services)
Jeff Heyman (District executive director of marketing, Public Relations & Communications)
Andy DiGiralamo (Chief Information Officer)
Dr. Cecilia Cervantes (President, COA)
Odell Johnson (President, Laney)
Dr. Evelyn Wesley (President, Merritt)
Dr. Judy Walters (President, Vista)
Gary Perkins (Faculty Senate President, Alameda)
Evelyn Lord (Faculty Senate President, Laney)
Tom Branca (Faculty Senate President, Merritt)
Dr. Joseph Bielanski, Jr. (DAS & Faculty Senate President, Vista)
Michael Mills (PFT President)
Dr. Chuen Chan (Admin, Research)
Appendix 2

Co-Chairs of Strategic Planning Committees
Peralta Community College District – 2006

A. Enhancing Access and Student Success
Co-Chairs:  Dr. Margaret Haig (District vice chancellor of educational services)
Dr. Judy Walters (President, Vista)

B. Developing our Human Resources
Co-Chairs:  Wyman Fong, (Manager, HR)
Dr. Cecilia Cervantes (President, College of Alameda)
Thuy Thi Nguyen, JD (Vice Chancellor of Human Resources)

C. Creating Effective Learning and Working Environments
Co-Chairs:  Sadiq Ikharo (District executive district director of general services)
Odell Johnson (President, Laney)

D. Leveraging Information Technology
Co-Chairs:  Andy DiGiralamo (Chief Information Officer)
Dr. Kerry Compton (Vice President, Student Services)

E. Enhancing Resources and Budget Processes
Co-Chairs:  Tom Smith (Vice Chancellor of Budget and Finance)
Dr. Evelyn Wesley (President, Merritt)
Dr. Wise Allen (Vice President of Instruction, COA)

F. Enhancing Awareness and Visibility
Co-Chairs:  Jeff Heyman (Exe Director of Marketing, Public Relations & Communications)
Dr. Elnora Web (Vice President of Instruction, Laney)

G. Improving the Effectiveness of District wide Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration
Chair:  Elihu Harris, JD (Chancellor)