



# Merritt College



## **Institutional Progress Report**

**Submitted by  
Merritt College  
12500 Campus Drive \* Oakland, California 94619**

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

**October 15, 2003**

**Dr. Evelyn Wesley, President  
Linda Berry-Camara, Vice President, Instruction  
and Accreditation Liaison Officer**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Merritt College has responded aggressively and with great community energy and commitment in response to the Warning issued to the College on June 30, 2003 by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. All groups within the College community have participated in what has been an extraordinarily honest self-examination.

Before proceeding to examine the recommendations listed in the Warning letter, the community took time to reaffirm our belief that the academic programs of the College, our local outreach efforts, and our commitment to serving students are, as noted by the Commission, strong and enduring. The College is proud of these achievements and thanks the Commission for acknowledging our success in these vital areas. The College also appreciates the Commission's positive statements concerning the direction the College is moving under its current leadership. However, the College is not satisfied with progress made to date and acknowledges that much more needs to be done in the areas of administration and governance identified in the Commission's recommendations.

Since receiving the Commission's Warning, the College has held numerous College-wide task force and small group meetings at which all campus communities participated in review and analysis of the College governance, planning, financial planning, institutional research and evaluation processes, and developed a consensus on many of the issues that relate to our performance in these areas. The College has also developed a consensus on a coordinated approach to resolving these issues, most of which are closely interrelated. This approach is not to address individual issues in a piecemeal fashion but rather to embark on a comprehensive restructuring. Although this comprehensive approach will take time to implement, we strongly believe that the outcome will be a robust system of policies, practices and procedures that will provide an enduring basis for the College to effectively address the Commission's concerns far into the future.

The major actions that the College is committed to take include:

- A total restructuring of our shared Governance structure. Governance will be centered on a reformulated College Council and a small number of Governance Committees including a College Budget Advisory Committee. Functional committees will be reduced in number and size and task forces will replace committees where the need is for a study or planning activity that does not need to be continuous in nature.
- A bottom-to-top restructuring of our planning and budget development and management processes. The process will be founded in annual Educational Master Plan or unit plan updates together with linked budget requests from disciplines or departments. Specific criteria and a peer review process will be developed to enable these inputs to be prioritized and molded into a College Master Plan and budget.
- Development of a comprehensive documentation system for planning and governance activities including standardized templates and document formats, a

- central archive, and dissemination processes to include but not be limited to posting all relevant documents on the College web site.
- Development of measurable outcomes for all programs, plans and activities together with processes and criteria by which these outcomes can be measured and assessed.
  - Commitment to using data to guide and support College governance, planning and evaluation and to developing mechanisms by which appropriate data is provided in usable form for decision making at all levels within the College.

The College recognizes that, in the long-term, our planning must be focused by a College Master Plan. However, it was determined that development of a complete and robust College Master Plan would take time and demand resources that we must use to address other areas described in this response. Therefore, the College will begin development of a College Master Plan as soon as possible. The College will also seek alternative sources of funding to help accelerate full completion of this action plan.

## INTRODUCTION – A PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT

After extensive analysis of the evaluation report and the stipulations of the Accrediting Commission's Letter of Warning, Merritt's administrative team developed an action plan to guide the campus in addressing the team's recommendations. The stipulation that a Progress Report must be submitted on October 15, 2003 required immediate and deliberate action. The team decided that in order to provide evidence of significant progress on the recommendations it was critical to engage the entire college community in focused dialogue and action to:

- Create a shared understanding of each recommendation.
- Develop agreed upon action plans and timelines for achieving each recommendation.
- Identify the evidence that will be provided to demonstrate that each recommendation has been achieved.

Plans were made to use the College Professional Day to lead the campus in a detailed review of the recommendations and the Commission's requirements. Leaders and members of each constituent group agreed to assist in facilitating the review and initiation of the response process. The President met individually with the Presidents of each constituent group and discussed their shared interest in creating an environment that would draw on the initiative and resourcefulness of people throughout the College to build a stronger culture of collaboration and collective problem solving.

After receiving an overview of the Accrediting team's recommendations and the criteria that the Commission uses for issuing a warning, faculty and staff were divided into discussion groups to further review each recommendation.

The discussion groups were co-facilitated by a team that included a member of the faculty, staff and administration. They led the group in responding to the following questions:

- What is the issue?
- What are some options for addressing the issue?
- What are the pros and cons of each option?
- Who should be involved in addressing the issue?

After reporting back to the larger body, task teams were formed and an Accreditation Recommendations Follow-up Workshop was scheduled for September 10, 2003. This workshop was planned to continue our work. It also provided Student Services faculty and staff who normally work registration on Professional Day with an opportunity to learn about and participate in the accreditation processes. The September 10 session resulted in the formation of Accreditation Task Force Teams. The decision was also made to proceed with our previous decision to revise the mission statement of the College. To this end, an additional task team was formed and charged with that responsibility. Each team developed a meeting schedule, a planning agenda and began the work of drafting action plans for responding to their specific recommendation.

The President has also convened meetings with the Chancellor and District Office administrative staff in Educational Services, Marketing, and Business Services to identify the resources that these offices will provide to achieve the action items. The Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Instructional Planning, District Executive Director of Marketing, and College Public Information Officer have each begun to participate in the planning processes. A list of meetings and documents that describe activities that have occurred at the District level is attached as an appendix.

The Progress Report that follows describes the results of the campus activities that have occurred to date. The report represents only the beginning of a lengthy process. Many issues are already identified and actions have been identified to address these issues. However, there will, no doubt, be other issues identified and other actions needed as we proceed along this road of improvement. It should be noted that we have set ambitious timelines for many of the actions we have committed ourselves to taking in this report. Some will change, but we are committed to proceeding as fast as we can while making sure the entire campus community can participate and contribute to our plans.

This Progress Report and our current accomplishments are an indication of our collective desire, willingness and intention to achieve Commission standards of excellence. We have begun by reaching deeply into our shared values to fulfill our mission and promise of providing a quality educational experience for our students and the communities that we strive to serve.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

*The College (must) engage in a deliberate, focused and concerted effort to identify the most effective ways it can assure that its institutional research and evaluation processes, policies and practices are developed and implemented within a timely and efficient manner. (3A.1, 3A.2, 3A.3, 3A.4)*

In response to Recommendation 1, the College has begun seeking input from all campus constituencies concerning how the College may best identify institutional outcomes, which can be validated by objective evidence. Participation by all relevant campus constituencies has to promote and foster a climate of shared governance as we seek to respond to developing institutional outcomes assessment. Institutional planning and decision-making should be guided by the mission statement; therefore, the College will be afforded an opportunity to review several drafts of the mission statement prior to its adoption.

A committee has been formed to clarify and redefine the mission statement, so that it not only identifies a set of broad-based educational purposes, but also creates a model for outcomes assessments for purposes of planning. Program review at the College is not yet supported by college-level institutional research data nor linked to budget, educational planning or enrollment management. In response to this area, the College has created a management committee that will seek to clarify the ways in which the District Office of Research & Institutional Development can support the College to accomplish this initiative.

### **Issues Identified**

- The College needs to provide the necessary resources to enable effective research and evaluation to be performed.
- The College mission statement should guide institutional planning and decision-making.
- The College needs to develop and implement the means to evaluate how well, and in what ways, it accomplishes its mission and purposes.
- The College needs to provide evidence that its programs and evaluations lead to improvement of programs and services.
- The College must document and publish its planning processes and involve appropriate segments of the College community in the development of institutional plans. The College needs to define and integrate its evaluation and planning process to identify priorities for improvement.
- The College should engage in systematic and integrated planning to improve or continue programs and services to ameliorate the impact of diminishing human and fiscal resources.
- The College must regularly evaluate and revise its policies and practices to ensure specific outcomes assessment.
- The institution needs to document through data that established outcomes are testable and measured.

## **Initial Actions**

- Review and revise the current mission statement to reflect specific commitments. Establish a process for the mission statement to be evaluated and revisions scheduled on a regular basis. – Spring 2004
- Incorporate the revised mission statement in the College planning processes and determine what factors inhibit the ability of the College to fulfill its mission. – Spring 2005
- Conduct regular committee meetings with participation of all relevant College constituencies to regularly evaluate and revise institutional policies, and practices. – Spring 2004
- Develop strategies and processes to obtain data based information to disseminate to those involved in planning and evaluation. – Spring 2005
- Systematically and periodically evaluate how effectively the institution meets the stated goals and objectives defined in the mission statement. – Spring 2005
- Integrate program review into planning and resource allocation processes. – Fall 2004
- Develop an integrated planning model to be utilized by the College that is clearly defined and published by the College. – Fall 2004
- Develop a process and criteria for prioritization of resource requests. – Spring 2004
- Identify a means to develop, publish, and distribute an annual report that tracks departmental, divisional and institutional data useful for institutional evaluation. – Spring 2005
- Increase communication between the College and the District Office of Research & Institutional Development to facilitate the production of reports that can be utilized for systematic outcomes assessment. – Fall 2003

## RECOMMENDATION 2

*The College (must) evaluate its current policies, procedures and practices for all levels of institutional planning in order to streamline its planning processes and assure a broad-based understanding of and participation in those processes. (3B.1, 3B.2, 3B.3, 10B.1, 10B.5, 10B.6, 10B.9)*

In response to this Recommendation, the College has begun an in-depth review and analysis of its planning processes. Institutional planning in a College operating under the shared governance principle is a collaborative process that must function at different levels at the College. It depends on the successful functioning of many planning groups and processes ranging from the individual department or discipline to the highest level of the College governance that, in Merritt's case, is centered around the College Council. Our in-depth review and analysis began with the observation that, although Merritt did have all of the essential elements of institutional planning and shared governance in place, some elements were either operating less effectively than required or were not communicating adequately. Several reasons for this were identified, including

- a lack of adequate documentation of structure, processes and procedures;
- a community-wide lack of adequate understanding of campus planning processes, in part related to the lack of documentation; and
- a failure to update planning processes to incorporate recently developed data and information technologies to allow streamlining the planning process; to improve community knowledge and understanding of the process and, thereby, increase participation; and to provide a stronger foundation for data-based planning.

### **Issues Identified**

- The College needs to document its planning processes in a clear and succinct manner so that each process can be clearly understood by all members of the campus community. The documentation should identify those points in the process at which various College communities must be involved for planning to properly address the campus mission, and so that plans reflect a consensus of the campus community as to how that mission can best be carried out.
- The campus needs to create a single repository for all documents related to planning at all levels within the College. This repository must be organized so that the preserved history of the planning process is readily available for all to review. This resource should be used as a training tool so that continuity of planning can be ensured as changes in campus personnel, especially administrators, take place.
- The College needs to re-integrate its various planning committees, task forces and processes, as several links in the pre-existing planning process have ceased to function effectively. Some functions have been neglected because the number and size of committees has grown such that effective participation by all relevant communities has become impossible, especially as individual work loads have increased due to increased student enrollments and declining budgets.

- The College needs to increase the level of involvement of students in the planning processes by addressing the problems of lack of awareness by students of how they can be involved in the process, lack of effective measures to encourage students to participate, and a need to more effectively demonstrate to students not only the value they bring to the planning process, but also the ways in which they directly benefit.
- The College needs to streamline its planning processes. The number of standing committees needs to be reduced and the size of most committees, especially the functional committees, needs to be as small as possible, while still assuring input and participation of all campus communities. The detailed work of planning needs to be done wherever possible by subcommittees or task forces. Full committees should normally only review, revise, and approve the results of this work.
- The College needs to educate the campus community on the importance of individual participation in the planning process. The College must also ensure that those who do participate are fully informed of the value of their participation and feel their participation is appreciated, valued, and effective.
- The College needs to establish a one-year and five-year planning calendar that identifies when each step in the various planning processes will occur and how the results of each step will then be used. For example, the sequences of updating the College Master Plan, the College Educational Plan, Program Reviews and budget development plans must be delineated.
- The College needs to clearly identify the nodes of intersection between the College planning process and the District planning process. The College planning process must ensure timely response to the District planning process needs. The College needs to identify, with appropriate timelines, the inputs that the District must provide and the actions that the District must take if the College planning process is to be successful. These items must be discussed with the District in the appropriate forums.

### **Initial Actions**

- Establish and initiate the process of routinely posting minutes of all planning group meetings and all relevant work products of these planning groups on the College web site. – Spring 2004
- Establish a task force to review and analyze planning processes used by other Community Colleges in California. Review the product of this task force through appropriate Governance committees and establish recommendations for adopting or adapting structures, processes or procedures used at other colleges that would enhance the effectiveness of the College's planning. – Spring 2004
- Develop templates for all planning activity reporting documents and examples of completed reports to help ensure consistent documentation and reporting, and to facilitate consistent communication of the results of planning activities to the campus community. – Fall 2003
- Establish a central repository for all College planning documents. The repository will be responsible for posting planning activity minutes and other documents on

the College web site and for maintaining a hard copy and electronic archive of all documents. – Fall 2003

- Establish a requirement that each committee, work group or task force that has responsibility for any part of the planning process should produce an annual summary of its activities and resulting products/actions during the previous year. These summary reports will be published on the College web site and widely disseminated by other means. – Spring 2004
- Reorganize the College governance structure to reduce the number of committees, reduce the size of committees where appropriate, update and document the membership and bylaws or procedures of each committee. (Discussed in more detail in response to recommendation 10). – Spring 2004
- Once the revised governance structure is in place, each committee, subcommittee and task force will establish measurable, outcome-based objectives and the means to measure progress made toward satisfying those objectives. – Spring 2004
- Develop a planning calendar that identifies, for example, timelines for annual updates of the Educational Master Plan, proposed unit budgets, review and consolidation of budget proposals at the campus level, and periodic program review. – Spring 2004
- Develop and maintain a College Master Plan. – Fall 2005
- Develop specific agreed-upon criteria for evaluating proposed plans and associated budgets produced at the discipline or department level such that the relative merits of these proposals with respect to meeting the College mission and goals can be clearly identified as these proposals are merged into the overall College planning process. – Spring 2005
- Develop a small-group peer review process established jointly by the governance groups and the Administration that will review proposed plans and budgets produced at the discipline or department level and assess these plans according to the established evaluation criteria. – Fall 2004
- Develop and offer a District-wide for-credit course on student leadership. Establish a leadership program for students that actively identifies students with an interest in participating in the shared governance planning process and provides training and mentoring for these students that will facilitate their participation. – Fall 2005.

The initial actions identified above will be followed and/or paralleled by a series of other actions, some of which are now known but some of which will only be identified as we continue our in-depth review of our planning processes and begin to reform those processes to address the issues already identified. For example, to be most effective in the long-term, our planning must be focused by a College Master Plan. Consideration was given to developing a College Master Plan before embarking on planning at other levels in the campus community. This would have the potential advantage that our planning might be more effectively matched to the long-term mission and goals of the College. However, it was determined that development of a complete and robust College Master Plan would take a substantial amount of time. We also determined that our planning processes in general could not be improved in parallel with a major effort to expeditiously write a new College Master Plan as resources, especially individual time,

are very limited in the current budget and staffing environment. Therefore, the College will begin development of a College Master Plan as soon as possible after we have improved our documentation and information communication processes such that College community participation in development of the Master Plan can be more efficient and effective.

The College understands that effective institutional planning is a dynamic process and that it must incorporate in its planning calendar provisions for periodic review and revision of the planning process itself.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

*The College (must) take the necessary steps to assure that all plans, programs, 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 the public. (3C.1, 3C.2, 3C.3)*

In response to Recommendation 3, the College is beginning a campus-wide process aimed at developing outcome measures in order to assess the effectiveness of programs and services. College staff have requested training in designing outcome measures for instructional and student service units. Once trained, they will develop specific outcomes, which will then be incorporated in the Educational Master Plan and presented to the College Council. As soon as possible after measurable outcomes are in place, data will be collected and analyzed to assess whether these outcome measures are appropriate and can be used to effectively measure success. Subsequently, outcome measures will be applied and updated regularly to reflect changes in the College mission and goals.

#### **Issues Identified**

- The College needs to develop measurable objectives in every instructional, student service, and administrative unit that collectively address the College's goals listed in the College Catalog and Educational Master Plan.
- The College needs to ensure that these objectives are the product of College planning as embodied in the College's primary planning document, the Educational Master Plan.
- The College needs to incorporate in all phases of its planning process strategies and action plans that effectively address these objectives and include measures with which to evaluate progress toward or success in achievement of these objectives.
- The College needs to ensure that appropriate data are collected and analyzed so that the established outcomes associated with each objective are measured, and the results disseminated to the College community and to the public.

#### **Initial Actions**

- Present to College governance groups a revised Educational Master Plan format for approval. – Fall 2003
- Present to College governance groups a template for designing program objectives and measurable outcomes reflective of the College mission statement and goals. Disseminate approved template to program units. – Spring 2004
- Present to College governance groups a template for creating strategies through which to accomplish objectives and measurable outcomes. Disseminate approved template to program units. – Spring 2004
- Review and revise the College mission statement. Present draft of revised statement to College community for approval, and to the Board for final approval. – Spring 2004

- Establish a Planning and Research task force to identify success indicators for evaluating progress towards College goals and objectives. – Spring 2004
- Create a timeline to incorporate program outcomes into Program Review, following the program review schedule. – Fall 2003
- Send faculty to Student Learning Outcomes workshops for training. – Spring 2004
- Conduct workshops to develop outcome measures for programs undergoing Program Review. – Spring 2004
- Revise the Educational Master Plan to incorporate unit plan objectives and strategies. – Fall 2004
- Use College web site to communicate more effectively with the College community and the public. – Fall 2003
- Develop an assessment tool to measure the degree to which College committees have fulfilled their charge and achieved their goals. – Spring 2005

As the initial actions identified above are implemented, documented, and publicized, additional actions will be developed through the continuation of College planning and the research activities that will continue in parallel. The College understands that planning, research and evaluation must be integrated for outcome measures to be useful.

## RECOMMENDATION 8

*The College (must) establish selection, evaluation and retention practices that reduce the level of administrative turn over in order to ensure the College's stability, to preserve the College's collective memory and to promote continuity of programs and initiatives.*  
(7A.1)

In response to Recommendation 8, the College formed a task force composed of faculty and classified staff to examine the history of administrative stability at Merritt College. The task force's first observation was that it acknowledged the dedication of the administrative leadership that has historically supported the mission of Merritt College.

District policies developed by Human Resources and adopted by the Board of Trustees guide the implementation of administrative hiring and evaluation. However, what brings administrative applicants to Merritt College is its strength of character, diversity, and collegiality that faculty and staff uphold as our personal and professional responsibility to our students and one another.

Merritt administrators join this urban District with knowledge that this College provides them with significant opportunity to impact the community on and off campus. While administrative stability is what we endeavor to achieve, we continue to build an environment that is collegial, lending itself not only to students' academic development but also to the professional growth and development of the administration. The process of professional growth and development by its very nature is the greatest contributing factor to administrative attrition. As the College embarks on the extensive restructuring of its governance, budgeting, planning, research, and evaluation structures and processes, we believe that one of the most important outcomes of this process will be to establish a "heritage" system that will serve the College well into the future even as administrative turnover occurs.

Since 1999, under the leadership of a new chancellor, the Board was committed to restructuring the management team. With this new direction, many administrators District-wide were summarily dismissed or offered retreat rights. This resulted in some instability and loss of institutional memory. Despite this restructuring, all administrative positions at Merritt reflect a normal rate of attrition except for the Business Office Manager position. The average length of tenure of administrators at Merritt in the past twelve years is as follows:

President	2 ½ years
Vice Presidents	3 years (Instruction and Student Services)
Deans	3 years
Business Manager	1 year

## **Issues Identified**

- The College must establish selection policies for administrators that parallel those of the District.
- The College must implement and fully apply District approved evaluation procedures for administrators.
- The College must establish retention practices that reduce the level of administrative turnover.

## **Initial Actions**

- Place copies of Board Policy 3.60 (Administrative and Executive Positions and Personnel), the selection process for hiring academic administrators/managers and classified administrators/managers, in the planning document repository. – Fall 2004
- Adhere to evaluation process for academic administrators/managers and classified administrators/managers (Board Policy 3.65, Evaluation of Administrative/Manager Personnel, College Manager below the level of President) – Fall 2003
- Request that Human Resources review and revise Board Policy 3.65 to ensure consistency between practice and policy. – Fall 2003
- Articulate the history of administrative stability. Develop a chronology of administrators from 1991 to present in order to establish a coherent view of the administrative structure and stability. – Fall 2003
- Develop training procedures and manuals that may include:
  - a. institutional history of the college
  - b. shared governance structure
  - c. union contract and grievance procedures
  - d. budgetary and operational procedures
  - e. details of day-to-day operations of the offices of instruction, student services and counseling, and business services.
  - f. details of day-to-day operations of the student government
  - g. details of student grievance policies and procedures
  - h. a mentoring process for each new administrator, faculty or classified staff member who could be another administrator, faculty or a classified staff member. – Fall 2004

## RECOMMENDATION 10

*The College (must) 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. (3B.1, 8.5, 9A.1, 9A.2, 9A.3, 9A.4, 9A.5)*

In response to Recommendation 10, an in-depth review and analysis of the College financial planning and budget development process has begun. The review addresses the following major areas of concern:

- Lack of adequate coordination between the financial planning process and the College's institutional planning process.
- Lack of functional processes and procedures to proactively identify and prioritize budget needs from the discipline or department level up.
- Lack of adequate documentation of the College's budgetary procedures and processes.
- Need for a clearly defined and effective role for the Budget Advisory Committee.
- Lack of regular and adequate financial reporting and communications with departments.
- Inadequate coordination and communications with the District Office on facilities, budgetary and fiscal matters.

### Issues Identified

- The planning process should drive the College budget process. A primary objective of the College's financial planning process should be to address the recommendations of the institutional planning process by making an effort to provide the resources necessary to fulfill its objectives in the short or long term. The two processes should be integrated, with allocation of resources being made in response to established priorities.
- Each discipline or department of the College should develop and maintain a financial plan that complements and supports its Educational Master Plan. The financial plans should allow for alternatives for different levels of funding so that the department can adapt quickly and effectively to mandated budgetary changes.
- The College needs to establish criteria and a process whereby budget requests from individual disciplines or departments are evaluated and prioritized.
- The College's budgetary process should be clearly documented and understood. Documentation and communications need to be improved significantly to achieve this objective.
- The Budget Advisory Committee must play a central role in the budget development process. Its activities should include the following:
  - Advise the College President in making budgetary allocation decisions.

- Interact with the College Council and ensure that budgetary decisions are synchronized effectively with other planning processes and actions.
- Adequately represent campus constituency groups.
- Play a key role in defining and monitoring the College's budgetary processes.
- The College community has a need for clear, informative and timely budgetary reporting. This is essential to the effectiveness of the budgetary and financial management processes.
- There is a need for clear communications and interactions between the College and the District Office. This is essential to the effectiveness of the College's budget process because 1) the College's overall budgetary allocation comes from the District, and 2) the District is the primary route of communication with the State and other agencies on budgetary matters.

### **Initial Actions**

- Review how the budget process should articulate with the planning process and develop a chart showing the relationship and interactions. Present the results of this review as a recommendation to the Budget Advisory Committee and the College Council. – Spring 2004
- Develop a standardized format and approach for developing unit financial plans that respond to the College mission and goals. Require that each academic department develop a financial plan that articulates with its Educational Master Plan. – Fall 2004
- Develop sets of criteria by which unit and academic department plans can be evaluated and prioritized for inclusion in the College budget plan. Develop a peer review process by which unit/academic departmental budget plans can be evaluated according to these criteria. – Spring 2004
- Develop a comprehensive Budget Manual that documents the budget processes. – Fall 2004
- Prepare a Budget Calendar that identifies important dates in the Budget process. – Spring 2004
- Review and update the mission, membership, procedures and responsibilities of the Budget Advisory Committee. – Fall 2003
- Develop a plan to provide adequate funding for Educational Master Plan development. – Spring 2004
- Perform an in-depth study of financial/budgetary communications and interactions between the College and the District Office. Identify shortcomings and prepare recommendations for improvements. Share the initial draft of the report with the other colleges in the District and seek consensus on the issues. Present the findings to the District. – Spring 2005

## 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. (10B.5, 10B.6, 10B.9, 10B.10)*

In response to Recommendation 11, the College has begun an extensive review of its governance structure to ensure clarity and to facilitate the widest possible campus participation in decision-making. Revised College Council By-Laws are in draft stage and are under review and discussion in all campus constituency groups. The draft revision identifies the key governance committees of the College, expands the membership of the College Council to include the Chairs of those committees, and clarifies Council-operating procedures. Broad input will be solicited from the College community during Fall 2003 with the objective of having an agreed-upon revised governance structure by the end of the semester. The College will then refine the membership, roles, responsibilities and relationships of other College committees and will implement procedures to ensure that all members of the College community are fully informed about the governance structure, decision-making processes, and outcomes of governance processes.

### Issues Identified

- The College needs to further define its governance structures through agreed upon decision-making processes.
- All constituent groups should understand College governance structures and decision-making processes.
- The College needs to ensure that governance decisions are published and accessible.
- The College needs to clarify budgetary processes by clearly defining the role and membership of the Budget Advisory Committee (discussed in more detail in response to Recommendation 10).

### Initial Actions

- Review and revise the College's governance structure, and fully define and document the membership, role, responsibilities, procedures, and decision-making processes of the College governance committees. Ensure broad constituency participation in this review. – Spring 2004
- Publish and distribute a list of all governance committees. Governance committees are defined as those that have ongoing core responsibilities for campus shared governance. All other necessary standing committees will be designated as functional committees. Task forces will be used for studies/activities that are of finite duration. – Spring 2004

- Conduct staff development workshops and activities to inform College constituencies about the College's governance structure and decision-making processes. – Fall 2004
- Incorporate the College's governance structure documents into faculty, staff and student handbooks. – Fall 2004
- Develop a presentation on the College's governance structure that will be used routinely during the orientation of new faculty, staff and administrators. – Fall 2004
- Create a concise template for College governance bodies to use for meeting minutes. – Spring 2004
- Encourage constituent representatives to report the results of governance processes to their representative groups and provide them with meeting minutes to facilitate this process. – Fall 2003
- Post governance meeting agendas and minutes on the Merritt web site and on major College bulletin boards in Buildings D, P, Q and R. – Spring 2004.
- Publish regular updates of governance activities in the "Spotlight on Merritt," a bi-weekly campus publication. – Spring 2004
- Establish a central repository for all College governance documents, including by-laws, agendas, minutes, and reports. The repository will be responsible for posting minutes and other documents on the College web site and for maintaining a hard copy and electronic archive of all documents. – Fall 2003
- Create methods for informing College constituents of the results of recommendations submitted for District and Board Approval. – Fall 2004
- Clarify the roles, responsibilities and memberships of all functional committees. Define the relationship of these committees to the central governance structure and assess options for combining committees, reducing committee sizes, and/or replacing some committees with task forces that would meet on an as-needed basis for a limited period of time. – Spring 2004
- Create a sign-up process for faculty, staff and students who are interested in serving on College committees. – Spring 2004

# APPENDICES