Organization for the Self Study

Merritt College is pleased to submit this institutional Self Study as part of its application for reaffirmation of accreditation.

Overview

Merritt College completed its last Self Study for Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2003. This was the first time Merritt College and the other three colleges in the Peralta Community College District were simultaneously accredited. We welcome this process that allows us to examine ourselves in the context of standards of excellence and expectations of continuous improvement.

Initial Planning and Organization

Merritt College’s planning for the 2009 Self Study for Reaffirmation of Accreditation began in fall 2007. Led by Dr. Linda Berry, Vice President of Instruction and Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), faculty member and Department Chair Dr. Stacy Thompson, and Staff Assistant Dera Williams, a planning meeting was convened with the goal of recruiting participants from a cross-section of the campus community, including faculty, staff and administrators. The first Accreditation Steering Committee planning meeting was held in September 2007.

The ACCJC held orientation training at College of the Marin, Indian Valley Campus in February 2007. Several Merritt staff attended including Dr. Linda Berry (Vice President of Instruction), Tom Branca (Faculty Senate President), Dr. Rebecca Kenney (Division II Dean), Anita Black (faculty), Jennifer Yates (faculty), and Dera Williams (Accreditation Co-chair/classified staff). The focus of the training was Evidence/Documentation and themes in the Standards.

The Accreditation Institute under the auspices of the State Academic Senate held Accreditation Institute training in Pasadena at the Pasadena Hilton from January 25-27, 2008. This training session focused on Institutional Mission and Leadership and the importance of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Merritt College representatives were Dr. Stacy Thompson (Accreditation Steering Committee Chair), Dera Williams (Accreditation co-chair/classified), Anika Toussaint-Jackson (Research and Planning Officer), and Ann Elliott (SLO Coordinator).

Reorganization

In spring 2008, changes in the composition of standard committees temporarily delayed final submissions of standard drafts. However, these standards were able to submit their final drafts to the ALO in preparation for the Self Study editing process. Due to the retirement of Dr. Hector Cordova, Division I Dean, Dr. Stacy
Thompson was appointed as Interim Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences. Dr. Siri Brown, African American Studies faculty, assumed the role of chair of the Accreditation Steering Committee.

Communication with the College Community

The Accreditation co-chairs and the ALO, along with the Research and Planning Officer met on a regular basis throughout the academic year 2007-08 to monitor gathering of data, design of surveys, and writing of the Self Study. Additionally, the standard committee members reported on the challenges and successes in gathering of evidence and writing of their respective standards. The majority of the standards were completed were completed by May 2008 with the outstanding drafts completed in July 2008.

In spring 2008, the Accreditation Steering Committee co-chairs and committee members disseminated information about the Accreditation process through interviews, focus groups, and dialogue. A first draft was posted on the college’s website in November 2008, and feedback was solicited from the college community. Presentations were made to both the Academic and Classified Senates in December.

Jon Drinnon, English faculty, began the process of reviewing and editing the document for consistency, accuracy, and validity in the summer of 2008. Siri Brown, African American Studies faculty, provided supplemental documentation and final editing in consultation with the ALO. The final document was sent to the Peralta Community College District Board in December 2008 for approval and recommendation to the Accrediting Commission for Colleges and Junior Colleges (ACCJC).
ACCREDITATION TIMELINE

SPRING 2007
- Training begins
- Develop budget

FALL 2007
- Recruited Standard co-chairs and form Accreditation Steering Committee
- Stipends made available for standard co-chairs
- Recruited Standard committee members
- Accreditation Steering Committee co-chairs met weekly
- Accreditation Steering Committee met with ALO and researcher bi-weekly
- Timeline developed
- Training on standards provided by research and planning officer and ALO
- Survey developed and piloted
- On-campus surveys and interviews conducted by committee members

SPRING 2008
- Reorganization of the Self-Study Steering Committee
- Survey completed and summarized
- On-campus and district interviews conducted by committee members
- Progress report on Staff Development Day
- Hosted web cast training
- Initial drafts submitted to ALO

SUMMER 2008
- Initial editing

FALL 2008
- Recruit readers
- Update to campus community on Staff Development Day
- On going communication with campus community
- Website posting of drafts
- Campus approvals with revisions; Academic Senate and College Council
- Final editing
- Organizing of evidence
- Review of the self-study by PCCD board with approval
- Publication of self-study and mailing to ACCJC

SPRING 2009
- Preparation of college for site visit
- Final update of website
- Site visit March 2009