

Standard III.D.3

The institution systematically assesses the effective use of financial resources and uses the results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement.

Descriptive Summary

In response to the recommendations from the Accreditation Commission in 2002, 2006, and 2007, Cuesta College has been diligent in refining its instructional, student services and administrative services program planning processes, as well as linking those processes to a comprehensive budgeting cycle (Doc. 1). Specifically, the Planning and Budget Committee, in collaboration with the Academic Senate, the Shared Governance Council, and managerial representatives from the Student Services and Administrative Units, have participated in collegial, self-reflective dialogue as to how to refine existing program planning and review processes, while creating systematic feedback loops tying those processes to a complete budgeting cycle (Doc. 5). Highlights from the most recent dialogue include:

- Refinement of comprehensive program plan and review processes for Instructional Services, Student Services, and Administrative Services.
- Development and/or refinement and implementation of Annual Program Planning Worksheets for Instruction, Student Services, and Administrative Service Programs. This includes a process for completing the budget allocation process cycle and including how allocations, or lack thereof, impact program success.
- Development and implementation of a Budget and Planning Calendar Cycle.

In fall 2007, the Program Review Planning Taskforce (PRPTF) continued to work with the academic units to provide technical assistance and assurance that the program planning and review process was data driven and followed-through. Recently, in recognition of the vital role it plays in the dialogue regarding program planning, program review, and budgeting processes (February 2008), the Program Review Planning Taskforce was tentatively approved by the Academic Senate and the Shared Governance Council. It was pending final approval in the Academic Senate minutes and final endorsement from the Shared Governance Council to become institutionalized as a standing college committee: the Program Planning and Review Committee.

Additionally, the Academic Deans and the Planning and Budget Committee worked collaboratively with the non-academic units in the program planning and review process, with the goal of consistency of process and templates, and the utilization of data as evidence for planning across the college campus. Additionally, these two groups also supported the non-academic unit and cluster planning processes.

In support of the Program Plan and Review process, and to ensure consistent development of student learning outcomes, the Academic Senate recently (February 2008) supported the reinstatement of the Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Liaison position, which was discontinued at the end of the 2007 academic year. The local Senate, in alignment with the Statewide Academic Senate, recognizes the vital role the liaison/coordinator position plays in the successful completion of SLOs and their assessment. Furthermore, the local Senate recognizes what should be clear distinctions in

responsibility between the SLOA Liaison and newly created Director of Professional Development position.

During spring 2008, the Planning and Budget Committee revised both the unit and cluster planning processes to ensure consistency with Program Plan and Review across all campus units, academic and non-academic. Additionally, reporting refinements to the Annual Program Planning Worksheet were implemented to close the loop between program planning, district allocation of monies, and the impact of distribution on program success.

As revisions to the Program Planning and Review process were occurring, in the 2006-2007 academic year, the Planning and Budget Committee moved the program planning and review process to be completed during the fall 2007 semester to ensure program recommendations and needs were then incorporated into the divisional unit and subsequent cluster and budgetary plans.

What follows is a detailed description of the Program Planning and Review process, followed by how the processes are clearly linked to budget allocations:

Instructional Program Planning and Review

The ongoing Instructional Program Planning and Review (PPR) process contains annual and comprehensive components (two-year cycles for Career Technical Educational programs and five-year cycles for transfer programs) that involve an on-going, systematic review of the relevance, appropriateness, and achievement of stated learning outcomes. The revisions to this process occurred under the leadership of the Academic Senate and in response to the 2002 Self-Study and subsequent ACCJC response to the self-study. In addition, components of the PPR include documentation of prevalence and future course and program needs and plans. Program data, from Institutional Research, is used to assess program relevance, prevalence, and student achievement. For example, the annual plan includes commentary on the following requirements: program outcomes, anticipated scheduling changes, facility changes, assessment plans, program development/forecasting, staffing projections, budget, and other program projections.

Additionally, the comprehensive review includes all the elements of the annual review, with the additional components: history of the program, program goals, contributions and connections of program to the mission and values of the institution and the institutional outcomes of the college; and a data analysis including enrollment, retention, success, FTES/FTEF, and degree and certificate completions. The narrative also sites the programs' intended student learning outcomes and identifies the connection to broad program goals; it also describes the assessment of SLOs and recommends changes and updates.

Furthermore, the comprehensive review process includes a complete curriculum review of pre-requisites/co-requisites/advisories validations, identification and revision of appropriate Student Learning Outcomes for each course, and a description of the assessments of SLOs and the connection of the course SLOs to program SLOs.

The annual and comprehensive review processes are key components that the college utilizes not only to assess learning outcomes and the prevalence of program offerings, but to ensure that program planning for future and continuing needs is clearly tied to the budget allocation process (Doc. 22, 23, 24).

Student Services and Administrative Program Planning and Review

Paralleling the Instructional Program Planning and Review, the Student Services and Administrative Services Program Planning and Review processes contain annual and comprehensive components in various stages of development and implementation. Both processes are data driven and involve an on-going systematic review of the relevance, appropriateness, and achievement of stated outcomes.

Student Services

The current Annual Program Planning Worksheet for Student Services is modeled after the instructional APPW format and includes commentary on the following requirements: department description (role within the college), stated program outcomes, methods of assessment, anticipated service changes/challenges, program development/forecasting, staffing projections and budget implications, as well as the identification of priority request items funded and not funded during the last budget cycle.

Since the late 1980s/early 1990s, Student Services has been involved in designing and implementing program reviews. The review criteria established have, over the years, undergone revision and individual department interpretation. Most recently, Student Services has turned to the established instructional model as a guide, with modifications as deemed appropriate to each service area. Additionally, embedded into the comprehensive review process are components of categorical program reviews that some Student Service Programs need to complete for outside agencies. For example, CalWorks, Matriculation, EOPS, and DSPS have all completed the Chancellor's Office Student Service Program Reviews. These reviews are data driven and must support stated program and learning outcomes.

The next step in the development of the Student Services Comprehensive Program Planning and Review Process is to customize the existing instructional format to better suit Student Services, combining elements of the outside agency reports with current department planning and assessment, and to address Student Learning Outcomes in order to create one consistently used comprehensive planning and review process.

Administrative Services

In 2006-2007, the Administrative Services Units conducted their first-ever comprehensive program review. The Comprehensive Program Planning and Review developed by Administrative Services is consistent with both the Student Services and Instructional processes. The elements include: department description (role within the college, current staff, productivity, current budget), an executive summary (customer relations, quality of service, department/ program outcomes and resources needed), self-evaluation (staff, quality of service, institutional support, Accreditation recommendation) and department/program forecasting (goals for improvement, trends and mission/ matrix educational facilities).

The Administrative Services Annual Program Plan and Review Worksheet is yet to be completed and implemented at the unit level. (Doc. 25)

Budget Allocation Cycle Tied to Program Planning

The budget allocation process begins at the instructional/non-instructional unit level, via the unit plan. The unit planning templates utilize program planning and review justifications to create a context for allocation decisions. The unit plan is written within the scope of the College goals and mission. Additionally, unit needs are identified as immediate, intermediate, or long-term. Then, they are categorized into personnel, instructional, non-instructional, operational, or equipment. Finally, they are justified by the Program Planning and Review, Technology Plan, Educational and Facilities Master Plan and/or other college planning documents.

Based on either the Annual Program Planning Worksheet or the Comprehensive Program Review, the Unit Plan covers the following elements:

- A listing of the programs/services covered by the unit plan.
- A listing of those participating in the unit planning process.
- Proposed measurable unit goals for the planning year that must support the Board approved goals and priorities for that year.
- A restatement of the College Mission Statement and a listing of Board Approved Priorities and Goals are included.
- A listing, in priority order, of the following budget categories including the discipline, site, cost, new or replacement, and justification (e.g. Program Plan and Review Data, the Technology Plan).

The first step in the unit process is to prioritize within each category. For example, all the personnel needs are prioritized against each other, then all the operational needs, etc., noting the site of each need.

The Unit Plan also includes a copy of each program's completed Annual Planning Worksheet. The worksheet not only outlines the planning agenda for the program for the year based on its current Program Review, it also describes how the previous year's budget (both general fund and categorical funding) affected the progress of its planning agenda.

Unit plans are utilized by each cluster and cluster administrator as the foundation for the development of cluster plans. Cluster plans are presented at Planning and Budget, along with a Cluster Annual Program Planning Worksheet. The Cluster Annual Program Planning Worksheet is a compilation of all unit goals, driven by the college mission and Board Goals and budgetary priorities as evidenced by college planning processes. Cluster plans are used to identify and prioritize college allocation expenditures.

Based on unit goals and priorities, the Cluster Plans include:

- A listing of the programs/services covered by the Cluster Plan.
- Identification of Cluster prioritized goals for the planning year. The goals may be summaries of major Unit Plan goals as well as additional Cluster goals. The goals and priorities must be measurable and support the District's Goals and Priorities.
- An alignment with college goals is underscored with the College Mission Statement and a listing of Board Approved Priorities and Goals.

- A listing of the Cluster's overall immediate priorities by categories, including site.
- Also included in the Cluster Plan are the overall priorities of each unit. These are used in the decision-making process carried by Cabinet and other college groups such as the College's Foundation.

Additionally, each cluster administrator submits a Cluster Annual Planning Worksheet. This worksheet is a compilation of the units' Annual Planning Worksheets and provides a direct foundation for creating the College Plan publication.

All cluster plans are submitted to the Planning and Budget Committee and posted to the college website by the end of March. In April, the Cluster leaders are each given an opportunity to make presentations to the Planning and Budget Committee to emphasize and clarify cluster needs.

Planning and Budget, after reviewing the written plans and the presentations, then makes a recommendation to the Board of Trustees as to the planning and budget priorities for the upcoming planning year. The Board then reviews, edits, and approves the planning and budget priorities for the college for the planning year.

Based on the approved Planning and Budget priorities, Cabinet makes specific spending decisions for all categories except full-time faculty hiring. Spending decisions are then communicated from Cabinet back to the Planning and Budget Committee, which then communicates decisions to the Clusters and the Units. An overall master list of stated unit needs is compiled for the College's Foundation.

Full-time faculty hiring decisions are elicited through the Program Plan and Review Process and are noted on unit plans. However, final decisions for the hiring of full-time faculty are made by the Shared Governance Council. The Planning and Budget Committee informs the Shared Governance Council as to how many full-time faculty can be funded within a given academic year. The Shared Governance Council then considers all instructional faculty needs and prioritizes them based on the specific objective and subjective criteria. These criteria are embedded in the instructional/student service comprehensive and/or annual program planning and review processes. The criteria are first used by the Clusters to establish their faculty priorities; then, those priorities are sent to the Shared Governance Council to be prioritized against other clusters' needs. The criteria used for prioritizing are as follows:

- Full-time hours to part-time hours. The part-time hours will include all overloads taught by full-time faculty.
- Replacement versus new position/program (documentation justifying new programs).
- Growth potential.
- Full-time faculty workload.
- How the position supports the mission of the College.
- Evidence of demand of courses taught by the position.
- Evidence of difficulty in hiring part-time faculty.
- Evidence of unique staffing needs.
- Critical effect on the overall program if the position is not filled.
- Cluster ranking.

Utilizing these criteria, full-time faculty decisions are finalized at the Shared Governance Council. Currently, further clarification of funding allocations made by the Planning and Budget Committee are needed.

The college recognizes that the requested refinement to linking the Program Planning and Review Process to budget allocation and systematic assessment of the effective use of financial resources is warranted. In response, Cuesta College has strengthened the Program Plan and Review and unit planning processes, is proceeding in emphasizing student learning outcomes, and is continuing the process of systematically incorporating research data that aligns with college goals and uses consistent reporting format. The college has taken what it hopes will be appropriate actions to assure the direct tie-in of program planning and review to the budget and faculty prioritization setting processes. It will continue the on-going dialogue that results in further refinements, which result in continuous improvement.

Self-Evaluation

The college meets this standard. The processes for tying Program Planning and Review to a systematic, cyclical budget process are being solidified, even though some refinement is necessary (i.e. clarification of how part-time faculty allocations are linked to program planning and unit/cluster priorities). However, clarification, refinement, and development of new processes may be stymied by pending budget cuts from the State and the need for the Planning and Budget Committee to first respond to a crisis of budgetary resources.

Planning Agenda

None.

Additions to Sources for Standard III.D

Continued from III.D

- Doc. 22 Unit Plan and Directions and Templates
- Doc. 23 Cluster Plan and Directions and Templates
- Doc. 24 Samples of Comprehensive Program Plan and Reviews
- Doc. 25 Annual Program Planning Worksheets