

**VALENCIA
Community College**

ANNUAL REPORT

College Planning Council

2001-02

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2001-02 Annual Report – College Planning Council

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The 2001-02 College year was one of tremendous transformational change at Valencia. Several of those changes were at the center of the work of the College Planning Council (CPC) in its first year of operation. The new governing council structure of which the CPC is part gave a significantly strengthened voice to authentic collaborative decision-making deep in the organization. The Strategic Learning Plan was finalized and presented to the District Board of Trustees for approval. Efforts in 2000-01 to open the budget preparation process were accelerated in 2001-02 to ensure a meaningful learning-centered budgeting process and end product. These and other challenges and opportunities made 2001-02 a historic year in the College's ongoing quest to be an extraordinary learning community.

The following is a review of the challenges and opportunities faced by the CPC in its first year of operation and the Council's actions and reactions to those issues.

Role and Scope of the College Planning Council: A significant portion of the first CPC meeting was an orientation for members to the evolution of the Learning-Centered Initiative, the role and scope of the responsibilities of the Council in that structure, and the framework of the new governing council structure.

It was noted that the new governing council structure for internal governance and effective coordination is based on the following design principles:

1. Collaboration in decisions affecting the college, especially in academic matters, will be reflected in the responsibilities, membership, and operating procedures of each Council.
2. Clear areas of responsibility will be described for each Council, minimizing duplication of effort and confusion of roles.
3. Efficiency in decision-making will be enhanced by assuring that the Councils are not responsible to one another, i.e. no decision need be made serially by more than one Council and each Council will have full authority to act in its area of responsibility subject to the discretion of the President and the Board of Trustees.

4. Councils are designed primarily to act in an executive capacity on recommendations from other working groups.
5. Each Council will develop habits and procedures based on the “primus principle” for making decisions.
6. Council meetings will normally be open and the agendas and meeting summaries will be made available to the college faculty and staff.

Additional discussions related to the refinement of the CPC’s role and scope took place in subsequent meetings. The Co-Chairs further clarified the Council’s charge in a memorandum to the Council in November (Attachment 1).

Recommendation of Strategic Learning Plan (SLP): In September, the CPC reviewed the near final draft of the Strategic Learning Plan and made several changes based on input generated by an e-mail to the College community from the President. The Council recommended to the President that the proposed draft Strategic Learning Plan which was collaboratively created and widely circulated for review be adopted. The SLP (Attachment 2) was adopted by the District Board of Trustees in November.

The Council endorsed the concept of a primus (“first among equals”) or primuses for each action agenda item and a “work plan” format that the primus(es) will be asked to use in shepherding the item to conclusion. Additional information about the role of the primus and the interrelationship between the primus and the governing council responsible for the action agenda item was further explored at a “Primus Meeting” in January.

Indicators of Progress for Strategic Learning Plan: The Council appointed a work team of faculty and staff to develop proposed Indicators of Progress for the Strategic Learning Plan. The Council reviewed the work of that team as its work progressed and offered suggestions for incorporation into the final work product. The Indicators of Progress document was recommended to the President. The District Board of Trustees adopted the Indicators of Progress in November (This document is contained within Attachment 2).

Implementation of Strategic Learning Plan: Following adoption of the Strategic Learning Plan (SLP) by the Board of Trustees, the CPC approved a Goal Teams Concept to provide ongoing comprehensive oversight and evaluation of the College’s infusion of learning throughout the institution. The CPC, the governing council responsible for oversight of implementation and revision of the SLP, took this action in order to ensure that a collegewide assessment and evaluation component would help inform the College

of the outcomes associated with the multiplicity of actions envisioned in the SLP. All seven goal teams will be systematically reporting to the Board and the College community before the end of the 2002 calendar year. (The goal team reports are significant elements of a comprehensive review of the Strategic Learning Plan that will be presented to the Board of Trustees in December 2002.)

Goal Team 2 Report: The CPC was provided with a copy of the report prepared by Goal Team 2: Start Right. After discussing the findings and recommendations contained in the report, the Council members expressed appreciation of both the Team's hard work and production of such a solid document in a limited amount of time.

Goal Team 4 Report: The Council discussed the report of findings submitted by Goal Team 4: Learning by Design. There was agreement that the report provides an excellent snapshot of progress to date on action agenda items and includes important baseline data. A concern was expressed regarding the level of collaboration in some discipline areas relative to core competency integration.

Goal Team 6 Report: Co-Chairs Geraldine Thompson and Penny Villegas summarized the report of findings by Goal Team 6: Diversity Works. Council members were asked to review the report and provide any feedback to the Co-Chairs before the July 4th holiday. There was a lengthy discussion of the significance of the Indicators of Progress data. The Goal Team will report to the Board of Trustees in July.

Goal Team 7 Report: Lisa Armour, Co-Chair of Goal Team 7, shared with the Council a rough draft copy of the report of findings by Goal Team 7: Learning Works. The Goal Team will report to the Board of Trustees in September. Council members were asked to review the rough draft of the report and provide any feedback to Goal Team Co-Chairs Lisa Armour or Bill Gombash.

Action Agenda Item Oversight by College Planning Council: As a governing council, in addition to overall responsibility for the oversight of the strategic planning process, the CPC has specific responsibility for a number of Action Agenda Items in the Strategic Learning Plan. The following is a summary of reports submitted and feedback provided by the Council during 2001-02.

Strategic Goal 1, Action Agenda Item 7: "Adopt a new College district facilities strategy." Though the governing council for this item is the District Board of Trustees, the CPC was informed of the work plan progress to date and the timetable for completion of the process. A final draft of a facilities strategy document was presented to the District Board of Trustees by the President.

Strategic Goal 1, Action Agenda Item 8: “Implement a governance structure promoting collaborative decision making and a sharper focus on learning through a new council structure.” A new Governing Council Structure has been implemented and a draft set of principles for shared governance has been developed. Ongoing refinement of the model is anticipated.

Strategic Goal 1, Action Agenda Item 10: “Create and oversee an ongoing process to evaluate progress toward infusion of learning as the chief value and design principle at the College.” [The work plan was primarily a report on work accomplished on this action item and detailed elsewhere in this annual report. However, brainstorming generated additional communications-related initiatives that may be explored further.]

Strategic Goal 2, Action Agenda Item 1: “Continue to increase the percentage of college prep and foundation course sections taught by full-time career (tenured/tenure-track) faculty.” The work plan was approved with the addition of the words “and retention” to the first principle – “Student learning and retention ...”

Strategic Learning Goal 6, Action Agenda Item 2: “Provide effective learning opportunities in diversity to staff, faculty, and students, with an emphasis on the impact of diversity on our learning mission.” The work plan was approved.

Strategic Learning Goal 6, Action Agenda Item 4: “Provide clear goals for hiring a diverse workforce and report regularly on progress throughout the College.” A work plan was submitted to the CPC by the primus. Some suggestions were made for clarification of the document and a revised work plan will be submitted to the Council.

Strategic Learning Goal 6, Action Agenda Item 10: “Provide effective programs and support to include under-represented populations in the College’s programs.” There was a lengthy discussion of the need for the work plan to among other things expand the scope of the proposed work and provide more explicit outcomes. A subcommittee of the CPC met with the primus to edit the work plan for resubmission to the Council.

Planning and Budgeting Process: Throughout the year, the CPC was updated on the challenging financial picture as it developed in Tallahassee. A Budget and Financial Advisory Group, a work team of more than 20 faculty, professional, and career staff, were appointed to review information, suggest other ideas, and formulate recommendations for consideration by the Council.

After collaboration over several months with the Budget and Financial Advisory Group, the Council recommended to the President 2002-03 “Budget Principles and Priorities” and “Financial Beliefs and Assumptions,” as well as general “Principles for Budget Reductions.” (Those principles were given voice in the College’s budget reductions during Term 1.)

2002-03 Strategic Budget Initiatives: The College Planning Council in conjunction with the Budget and Financial Advisory Group designed a process for soliciting, evaluating, and ranking 2002-03 Strategic Budget Initiatives based on points generated using learning-centered, principles-driven criteria. Using that process, the Budget and Financial Advisory Group proposed to the Council a rank order of the submitted initiatives based on the previously developed learning-centered criteria. The Council endorsed the work of the advisory group and recommended that the summary sheet (Attachment 3) be forwarded to the President for consideration. [The Council discussed possible enhancements to the process for 2003-04. It was agreed that a budget calendar for the year would be helpful as would opening the invitation to everyone at the College earlier in the year. Consideration will be given to building in a “notice to apply” which might encourage collaborative efforts and minimize the possibility of duplications.]

2002-03 College Operating Budget Draft: The Council was given a detailed briefing on the 2002-03 operating budget in its final stage of development and then engaged in a lengthy conversation on the budget process and product. The discussion centered around two broad themes and the following were the Council’s key findings and suggestions.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCESS

- The College honored its budget principles and priorities.
- Discussions were initiated relative to multi-year budgeting and should be continued.
- Budget related processes are becoming increasingly collaborative.
- The College Planning Council, in its SACS oversight role, considers it important that funding be identified to support the Strategic Budget Initiative on Core Competency Integration. (That initiative is first on the list of ranked unfunded proposals.)

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- A Comprehensive Release/Reassigned Time (Workload) Review is needed. The review team should not be heavily staffed by the "usual suspects" and/or individuals that are perceived as having a major vested interest in the outcome.
- An "Opportunity Fund" is needed within the budget to support faculty and staff with learning-centered innovations that may not necessitate the level of funding and staffing of a Strategic Budget Initiative.
- An annual budget timeline would be helpful in furthering collaboration and encouraging process efficiency.
- A process should be developed to deal with budgeting for multi-year projects while basing continuation funding on annual performance.

SACS Alternative Self-Study: A standing agenda item for each CPC meeting has been an update on Valencia's reaffirmation of accreditation process through the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) based on the "alternative" self-study model. (In this context an institution prepares and submits two distinct reports: (1) a Compliance Audit Report and (2) Strategic Topic Report (*Becoming a More Learning-Centered College: A Systems Approach to Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of Institutional Change Strategies*). Status reports were continuously provided and periodic discussions held within Council meetings on the ongoing work related to Compliance Audit and Strategic Topics work.

SACS Alternative Self Study Questions for Consultants: The CPC had a lengthy discussion that resulted in final editing of a one page draft overview requested by SACS describing the objectives of Valencia's Alternative Self-Study. Also requested by SACS were questions on our overall planning process and the three strategic topics for submission to the SACS Alternative Self-Study Consultants to help focus their review on the areas of greatest interest and concern to the College. Questions drafted by Council Staff were reviewed and numerous suggestions for refinement were made. A task force of Council and Council Staff members agreed to take the suggestions offered and finalize the questions. The Council Co-Chairs forwarded the resulting one page overview (Attachment 4) and the overall and topic specific questions (Attachment 5) to SACS.

Dialogue with the President: The President shared his perspectives with the CPC on the current status of the legislative process at the state level and on the role of the College Planning Council in institutional governance.

He reiterated the importance of all of the governing councils to collaborative decision-making and reminded Council members of their unique strategic role in the process. A key element of the Council's work is oversight of the implementation and ongoing renewal of the Strategic Learning Plan. Related to that work is to develop and implement systems that position the College to strategically use discretionary dollars for learning-centered principles. In addition, early in the budget cycle the Council is looked to by the College to develop budget principles and answer the critical question: "What is the budget supposed to mean?" He suggested that the Council may also want to establish a learning-centered review process to revisit areas of existing expenditures.

"Learning-Centered Opportunities for Improvement:" The CPC solicited from throughout the College suggestions on "Learning-Centered Opportunities for Improvement." Each suggestion was forwarded to a governing council or appropriate individual(s) for reaction. (A document listing all suggestions and responses will be published before the beginning of Term 1, 2002.) Within that process, the Council developed a response for each suggestion forwarded to it for reaction.

Review of Collegewide Standing Committees: The President directed that a learning-centered review of collegewide standing committees be undertaken and charged the CPC with making a recommendation to him. The Council designated the Communications and Shared Decision-Making Action Team as an advisory committee to it for the review. A preliminary report was reviewed by the Council and submitted to the College community for feedback. The final report (Attachment 6) was endorsed by the Council and submitted to the President. The President's subsequent memorandum of implementation (Attachment 7) was disseminated.

Long-Range District Facilities Strategic Plan: A PowerPoint presentation on the Long-Range District Facilities Strategic Plan was presented and CPC members asked several questions and offered general feedback on the implications of the findings. The PowerPoint slides were provided to members electronically.

College Planning Days: A work team was appointed by the CPC to further develop a framework for the two 2001 College Planning Days. The framework recommended by the work team was amended by the Council and recommended to the President. The President approved the recommendation.

Following the Planning Days, campus representatives and individual Council members shared observations about College Planning Day 1 (collegewide) and College Planning Day 2 (campus-based). Feedback from the collegewide event was discussed and campus representatives provided reports on the results of the campus-based events.

Vanguard Site Visit Agenda/Responsibilities: The site visit draft presented by the College's liaison to the Vanguard Learning College Project was reviewed and approved.

Hiring Impact on Diversity: The "Learning Leaders Class of 2001-02" report was shared with the CPC. The report documented that the new faculty hires by the College were diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, and work experience.

Draft Nomination Narrative: Council members were asked to review and offer suggestions to the Resource Development Staff on the draft Nomination Narrative for Institutions of Excellence in the First Year College.

Reflections: The CPC scheduled time at the end of each meeting and/or afterward electronically to reflect on the Council meetings. Toward the end of the year the focus shifted to more "real time" reflection within the meeting as it progressed.

At the end of its first year of operation, the Council officially celebrated the contributions of those who were transitioning from membership. In addition, the group undertook a reflective and prospective evaluation of the Council (Attachment 8).

ATTACHMENTS REFERRED TO IN THIS REPORT CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING BILL CASTELLANO (bcastellano@valencia.cc.fl.us).