

Northwest Commission  
on Colleges and Universities

Five Year Interim  
Evaluation Report

Spokane Community College  
Spokane, Washington  
October 6-7, 2008

Prepared by

Dr. Gerald Beck, President  
College of Southern Idaho

and

Ms. Nancy C. Szofran, Director  
Research and Planning  
Mt. Hood Community College

*A confidential report prepared for  
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities  
that represents the views of the evaluators*

## **Introduction**

Spokane Community College (SCC) was officially established as part of Washington State's community college system in 1963 after having been a vocational training facility since 1916. By the mid 1960s, SCC was offering a full complement of liberal arts courses to support career and technical education students and those who wished to transfer to a baccalaureate degree granting institution.

Washington had 34 community and technical colleges that operate under the direction of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). Spokane Community College is one of two comprehensive community colleges and one institute within the Community Colleges of Spokane District.

Spokane Community College was accredited initially in 1967 and has had its accreditation reaffirmed since then. The last full scale visit in 2003 resulted in five recommendations and NWCCU requested a Focused Interim Report be completed in Spring 2005 to address Recommendations 1,3,4, and 5 of the evaluation report and a progress report in Spring 2006 to address Recommendation 2 of the evaluation report.

The Focused Interim Visit conducted in April 2005 was accepted in July with accreditation reaffirmed in December 2005. The progress report was completed in June 2006 with acceptance by NWCCU on August 3, 2006.

The purpose of the regular five-year interim evaluation is to allow the Commission to monitor institutional change, to evaluate the institution's ongoing compliance with NWCCU eligibility requirements, standards and policies, and to evaluate the extent to which the institution has adequately addressed the recommendation in the last full scale evaluation report. In preparing for the regular interim evaluation, the institution prepared reports including responses to these five (5) recommendations and responses to a series of questions about institutional changes. The report was concise, well written and helpful to the evaluators. Several appendices were included containing supplemental information. The evaluation was conducted in conformity with the Commission's suggested outline for the visit, and a series of individual and group meetings were held with Board members, administrators, and faculty members (Exhibit A). The College had prepared a table along with a CD with backup material and support information for each of the recommendations and standards.

The evaluators thank the Board, faculty, and staff of Spokane Community College for its preparation for and hospitality during the visit. All information requests was provided and all those interviewed were forthright and helpful.

# Table of Contents

---

## Part A

Recommendation 1: Strategic Plan	1
Recommendation 2: College wide Program Assessment	1
Recommendation 3: Linkages	1
Recommendation 4: Faculty Evaluation	2
Recommendation 5: Governance	3

## Part B

Standard 1: Institution Mission and Goals, Planning and Effectiveness	4
Standard 2: Educational Program and its Effectiveness	5
Standard 3: Students	6
Standard 4: Faculty	7
Standard 5: Library and Information Resources	7
Standard 6: Leadership and Management	7
Standard 7: Finance	8
Standard 8: Physical Facilities	8
Standard 9: Institutional Integrity	9
Commendations and Recommendations	10

## List of Exhibits

- A. Agenda showing meetings and individuals
- B. Service Agreement Between IEL and SCC

### **Recommendation 1:**

**It is recommended that the College continue to develop and implement a systematic institutional planning evaluation system. While the committee found evidence of prior strategic planning and evaluations process, current processes tend to be ad hoc, fragmented (i.e. department level) and not institutionalized (Standards 1.B.1, 1.B.3, 1.B.4, 1.B.6, 1.B.7, 1.B.8)**

The full scale accreditation visit in 2003 produced Recommendation 1. The College demonstrated progress in defining a three year planning and evaluation process by the 2005 Focused Interim Visit. The strategic plan, *Strategic Direction for 2005 and Beyond*, provided guidance for 2005-08. The College has updated that plan with the publication of the 2008-2011 strategic plan. The College has made commendable progress on developing planning processes, assessment and institutional effectiveness, and tying resource allocation to goals and objectives. Many faculty, staff and students have been involved in this process though there is a need for additional communication as to the total strategic plan implementation.

### **Recommendation 2:**

**It is recommended that the assessment of College-wide programs be integrated into the overall institutional effectiveness plan. Although the committee found evidence of assessment at the course and program level, it did not find institution wide evidence that assessment of educational programs is integrated into the overall institutional effectiveness plan (Standard 2.B.1)**

Program review is at the heart of the SCC comprehensive institutional effectiveness plan. These reviews produced the program “report card” that is still quite new in this third year. The report card triggered a standard or in depth review based on data analysis. If an in depth review is required, a review team is established. The outcomes of these review teams is to lead to changes in curriculum, enrollment, program equipment needs, etc. which is provided to faculty and administration for inclusion in the effectiveness plan, strategic planning and budget development as well as used to foster program improvement.

Due to the relative newness of this “report card” and the limited programs required to do in-depth review, it was not clear as to the overall consistency in improvement that is expected from program planning and effectiveness (2.B.3) as part of the *Institutional Effectiveness Plan*.

### **Recommendation 3:**

**It is recommended that the College demonstrate the linkages between the institution’s goals and objectives and its resource allocation to achieve these goals and objectives. Although the College has formed budget, program review, campus planning, and strategic planning committees, it is not clear that a linkage exists among these processes, nor that these**

**processes are understood or inclusive of appropriate constituencies. This linkage and the processes should be clearly defined, documented, and participatory with appropriate constituencies. Furthermore the strategic plan should address the needs of the College regarding technology and equipment across all units, and resources for upgrades acquisitions and replacements need to be developed and implemented (Standards 5.A.1, 5.D.6, 7.A.3, 8.B.1, 8.B.2).**

Institutional budgeting is now within the strategic planning process. Budget and planning worksheets that include personnel, operating expenses and equipment are developed and distributed to departments with instructions that clearly define the process to include revisions and schedule for budget development. Documentation of this process is a clearly identified linkage between goals and objectives and resource allocation. This is evidenced by the library/learning resources and laboratories that have been maintained to keep pace with the growth of instruction and program changes. Electronic resources represent the greatest growth in the library's resources. Significant reallocation of funds within the collection development budget and use of external grants provides access to several databases that support instructional programs. The print collection's holdings are relatively constant due to an aggressive weeding project. The collection development guidelines are currently under review. Planning and assessment activities guide the library's actions. The library made a number of facilities related changes, responding to safety concerns (carpeting) and students' expectations of changes and services they would like to see. In the area of staffing through planning, Media Technician Senior and Web Developer/Programmer (IT Specialist 2) positions were added to accommodate the increased demand for electronic services.

#### **Recommendation 4:**

**It is recommended that a process for all part time instructor evaluation using multiple indices be implemented. Although evidence was found that part time faculty are evaluated within a five year period, evidence was not found that multiple indices are being used to evaluate part time faculty (Policy 4.1.C).**

The evaluator found that current Board of Trustees policy states:

*3.4 Faculty will participate in formal evaluation and professional development planning using the processes, intervals and forms identified in the terms of the collective bargaining agreement.*

The evaluator found in questioning faculty evaluation policies that the faculty master contract is what most administrators and faculty state is the current practice, and it was stated by the administration that ratification of the master contract made it Board policy.

The current master contract reads:

*New adjunct academic employees will be evaluated in each of their first two quarters of employment, the evaluation information will be forwarded to the appropriate dean for certification of demonstrated and/or student service proficiency.*

*Adjunct academic employees shall receive student evaluation annually in each academic year in which the adjunct academic employee is contracted for two quarters or more. This evaluation information will be forwarded to the appropriate dean for review. The appropriate dean shall formally evaluate adjunct academic employees once every three combined years of contracted service, OR as determined necessary, by the dean. The formal evaluation will be completed on the appropriate format and an evaluation meeting, including the appropriate administrator, department chair and adjunct will be scheduled to discuss performance.*

*Article XIV Academic Employee Assessment shall not be applicable to adjunct academic employees except that they shall be evaluated on an informal basis as outlined above, which may include student evaluations, peer evaluations, and administrative evaluations as determined by the appropriate administrator. Associate faculty evaluations shall be to maintain quality instruction. These evaluations are one of the considerations for continued employment; however the lack of an assessment or the existence of a satisfactory assessment does not imply the right to continued employment.*

In reviewing randomly selected part-time faculty evaluations, the use of multiple indices was not consistent across the campus or evenly utilized by the administration in the continuing evaluation of part time faculty performance (Standard 1.A.5 Policy 4.1)

#### **Recommendation 5:**

**It is recommended that the College clarify its campus system of governance to facilitate the successful accomplishments of its mission and goals. While the individual departments have been functioning at a high level of success during a period of administrative transition, there is less evidence of this occurring at the institutional level. Important elements to be addressed are:**

- A. Administrators, faculty, staff and students understand and fulfill their respective roles in the campus governance system.**
- B. The system and processes are documented and widely disseminated.**
- C. The system of campus governance ensures that the authority, responsibilities, and relationships among and between the administrators, faculty, staff, and students are clearly described in a constitution, charter, bylaws or policy document.**
- D. The system of campus governance makes provision for the consideration of faculty, student, and staff views and judgments in those matters in which these constituencies have a direct and reasonable interest (Standards 6.A.1, 6.A.2, 6.A.3, 6.A.4).**

The full scale accreditation visit in 2003 resulted in Recommendation 5. The College demonstrated significant progress on clarifying its governance system by the 2005 Focused Interim Visit. The progress under President Hanson was furthered by President Dunlap who determined that a more inclusive model would ensure broader involvement and participation in decision making. The new model was introduced to the College during the 2008 Spring All College Meeting. Implementation of the SCC Governance Structure/Decision Making Model began in Fall 2008. The centerpiece of the model is the College Alliance with representatives from many existing councils and committees. The current councils and committees remain intact as advisory units. The College continues to make progress on clarifying its governance system. District governance systems remain occasionally confusing to administrators, faculty and students. The district's strategic plan identifies goals to communicate effectively and to operate efficiently as a district; progress continues to be made.

## **Part B**

### **Standard 1: Institutional Mission and Goals, Planning and Effectiveness**

Spokane Community College developed *Strategic Direction for 2005 and Beyond* in 2004 under then president, Steve Hanson. This plan introduced a planning process entailing a three year rolling cycle. The plan for the 2005-08 cycle was reviewed and revised resulting in a 2008-2011 plan. The 2008-2011 plan was introduced at the 2008 Spring Quarter All-College Meeting. Additionally, it was promoted by President Joe Dunlap at the all-college welcome Fall 2008.

Planning goals provide direction for activities at the college. Evidence of purposeful actions based upon the 2005-08 plan was demonstrated through resource allocations campus-wide. Deans from several areas confirmed that planning is not “top down” but rather is “mutual participation.” There continues to be “some angst or anxiety” on the part of faculty regarding strategic planning in general. This observation by the deans was confirmed through discussion with the faculty at a separate session. Examples of effective planning include collaborative efforts between departments such as Business and Horticulture/Agriculture. Strong evidence of planning and assessment exists, including planning activities transcending earlier timeframes such as the enrollment management plan developed by a task force in 2004-05 continuing through a State Board student achievement initiative. Strategic planning activities with the student services areas and student government resulted in the development of alternative funding for technology. The students support a “tax” or fee which is allocated to departments based upon an allocation process that is directed by the students. Budget requests regardless of funding source need to be tied to the strategic plan. The culture of assessment appears to be embedded not only in instruction but in student services as well. Assessment results

are incorporated into the plans that were reviewed and discussed. There is evidence that resource allocation reflects the goals of the institution.

The college continues to develop a culture of planning. Reorganization of committee and councils resulted in the College Alliance. Membership of the Alliance includes: one dean, selected by the Dean's Council; one member from the Council of Chairs (TBD, may be two members); Classified Staff Council (two members); the Enrollment Management/Instructional Council (elected by respective members); representatives from the former College and Finance Councils (appointed by the President); the College Director of Institutional Research; and CCS Budget Analyst for the College. The Associated Student Government (ASG) representative serves as an ex officio member. And, as needed, advisors from standing committees may be invited. The Alliance expects this reorganization to simplify the pathway of communication. The Alliance is discussing online applications to streamline the tracking and reporting of planning activities (SPOL is an example of such a tool). Some confusion about the relationship between the mission and goals of the district's plan and the mission and goals of the college plan surfaced in more than one meeting.

The model for institutional effectiveness includes a comprehensive planning and effectiveness schedule. Key indicators are reported with varying regularity. The indicators are presented in two levels: cabinet level and institution level. The cabinet level indicators, at the time of the Fall 2008 five year interim visit, are still under development. Program review for professional/technical programs has been a component of the model for three years. A similar process is under development for the Arts and Sciences division and is scheduled to be reviewed by administrators and faculty 2008-09. The committee expects the College to continue implementing the Institutional Effectiveness Plan.

## **Standard 2: Educational Program and its Effectiveness**

No college wide changes in graduation requirements have been made since the 2003 full scale evaluation. The Arts and Sciences Division continues to develop Direct Transfer Agreements. The College completed a review of career and technical programs and reduced the number of credit hours required for a degree by eliminating redundancies in course content. In response to industry demands, the college added five new programs in the health services industry cluster (Radiology Technology, Vascular Technology, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Massage Therapy, and Expanded Practice Dental Auxiliary).

The College developed an A-6 agreement with the Institute for Extended Learning (Exhibit B). Although used sparingly to date (Welding classes, Business Technology classes, and two Medical Secretary classes), the College expanded the offerings to include Office Assistant and Front Office Professional at Pine Lodge, a women's

correctional institution in 2007-08. Discussions for HVACR and Criminal Justice classes are under way. The committee is concerned that delivery of credit instruction leads to substantive change and suggests the college discuss the interpretation of the NWCCU Operational Policy A-2.

The college has adopted four college wide abilities that students in all disciplines are expected to achieve: responsibility, communications (oral and written), problem solving and global awareness. Faculty in different programs and departments assess these learning outcomes in various ways including focus groups and a graduate survey.

A variety of mid program assessments and end of program assessments are employed by faculty. Methodologies cover admission, graduation and employment or transfer data; rubrics, portfolios and common final exams (Math 99). Program review, especially in the professional/technical areas is an assessment method. It is not clear if the mid program assessment is consistent in all departments.

The Continuing Education programs are non-credit courses or programs and receive state-supported funding unless identified as “self supporting.” The majority of courses at the college are self support courses. The programs offered are consistent with the College’s mission to offer accessible and affordable educational opportunities to the constituents and community it serves.

The college offers six online degrees and five online certificate programs of 45 or more quarter credit hours. Participation in the online offerings continues to grow. The distance learning department incorporates assessments into planning activities and allocates resources to provide higher levels of services. The demand for e-learning opportunities is increasing.

### **Standard 3: Students**

Student enrollment has increased this past year after a few years of slight decline. Highlights of the past five years include a comprehensive enrollment management plan (EMP), multicultural student center, office of campus security and a separate office for admission and recruitment that will enhance services through the use of web services for admission, registration, and student support services. Additionally, Student Services has recently completed a year long review and evaluation. Recommendations from this review are in part focused on the strategic plan to reconfigure offices to include a one stop shop. Document imaging is fully implemented in Records and Financial Aid is moving toward imaging student records as well.

## **Standard 4: Faculty**

No significant changes have been made in policies regarding faculty. Retirement has had a significant effect on the level of experience in the Washington Association of Community Colleges as well as SCC. Salary level and benefits remain competitive with enhanced VEBA accounts, however, some voiced concern with the time it takes to go through the process of hiring new faculty. Faculty evaluation for tenure track and tenured faculty is in place. Adjunct/part-time faculty is not consistent across the campus as it relates to the use of multiple indices as reported in Section A Recommendation 4.

## **Standard 5: Library and Information Resources**

The library/learning resources and laboratories have been maintained to keep pace with the growth of instruction and program changes. Electronic resources represent the greatest growth in the library's resources. Significant reallocation of funds within the collection development budget and use of external grants provides access to several databases that support instructional programs. The print collection's holdings are relatively constant due to an aggressive weeding project. The collection development guidelines are currently under review. Planning and assessment activities guide the library's actions. The library made a number of facilities related changes responding to safety concerns (carpeting) and students expressions of changes and services they would like to see.

The library houses the Hagan Center for the Humanities. The purposeful planning for a series of speakers and events related to the humanities in a college where 70 percent of the students are in career and technical programs demonstrates a dedication to the values and mission of both the district and Spokane Community College. The College is commended for the Hagan Foundation Center for the Humanities. The Center is a place "where people and ideas connect", where a community of minds gather to explore various perspectives and ideas. The Center for the Humanities contributes to the community's cultural life.

## **Standard 6: Leadership and Management**

The 2005 Focused Interim Report noted that, "The College has made extensive progress clarifying its governance system in the last year and a half..." Then president Hanson continued to restructure the institution throughout the 2005-06 academic year. According to the staff revision to the 2003 governance model served the College well, but could still be improved upon.

Under the guidance of President Joe Dunlap, the college implemented a vision for an improved shared governance model developed through the collaborative efforts of current governance council members, the Council of Chairs and other constituent groups. Drafts of the model were presented and evaluated in various campus venues throughout 2007-08. President Dunlap and faculty member Bill Rambo communicated the model at the All College Meeting on April 29, 2008. The new model was being implemented Fall 2008. Some of the councils and committees had not yet had meetings during the accreditation visit. At the core of the new model is the College Alliance with the primary roles:

- Conduct strategic planning
- Address college wide issues
- Examine alternative courses of action
- Present final recommendations for actions to the College Cabinet

Existing councils and committees remain intact as advisory units with the College Alliance ensuring that each has an avenue to bring forward opportunities and issues with the expectations that a solution will be forthcoming.

Deliberation of issues will take into consideration the college's vision and goals, current research and data, available human fiscal resources, and overall impact to the institution. At least one meeting a month will be held jointly with the College Cabinet. At the time of the visit, the Alliance had met once.

## **Standard 7: Finance**

In recent years, the District made changes to the SCC budget that reflect the unique role and mission of the college. The disparity pointed out in the 2003 accreditation report was addressed by two structural changes. First, the state recognized that professional technical education cost more to deliver and awarded the District additional funding. Second, the District, in turn, recognized SCC served a much larger portion of professional technical students compared with academic and increased funding to the college based on the higher cost to deliver these program. The increase in student fees and additional funding for equipment has positioned the college for the future.

The Board of Trustees directed SCC to develop an unrestricted operation reserve of 5 percent which was achieved in the 2007-08 budget year.

## **Standard 8: Physical Facilities**

The newly formed (2004) Facilities Council replaced the Campus Planning Committee. Responsibilities of the Facilities Council include developing the master plan and capital

project requests. The college has received state funding and approval for two new instructional building renovations and minor capital improvements. The Facilities Council has involved students, staff, faculty, and community members in their planning process. A town hall meeting was held to gain input. The Facilities Council made a significant contribution to the SCC strategic planning process.

### **Standard 9: Institutional Integrity**

The District and the college have expressed clearly and publicly the values and guidelines that define the relationships with faculty students, staff and constituencies. For example, the District Board of Trustees expresses “The best interest of students guides all decisions”; “Value diverse life experiences and cultures; and “Promote collegiality based on a belief in human rights and the dignity of each individual.” The College promotes its values which include mutual respect and student success. The College abides by state and federal regulations and guidelines that ensure high ethical standards in the treatment of students, faculty and staff. More importantly, the College demonstrates its integrity and commitment to shared governance through a model that provides a centralized structure (College Alliance) that provides an avenue for students, faculty or staff to bring suggestions and issues with the expectation of resolution. The district office facilitates communication within the system by the chancellor meeting periodically with the campus presidents and district councils with representatives from each campus participating in decision-making. The district facilitates planning by performing surveys and other data collection and reporting the benefit of the district as a whole. Examples of the research are: The Weight of Change, Robinson Research Report, and community impact studies.

## **Commendations:**

1. The college is commended for the college's long-range facilities' master plan to include Hagan Foundation Center for the Humanities and the library. The Center is a place "where people and ideas connect", where a community of minds gather to explore various perspectives and ideas. The Center for Humanities contributes to the community's cultural life.
2. The college is commended for their commitment to the development of positive and effective working relationships with the business and industry communities.
3. The college is commended for establishing their financial stewardship that has resulted in reserves that are consistent with the Board of Trustees directions.

## **Recommendations:**

1. The committee recommends that through a participative process involving all constituencies that the college and district implement and disseminate their coordinated strategic planning process. (Standard 1.A.1)
2. The committee recommends the college clearly define part-time faculty evaluation by the use of multiple indices. Though progress has been made, there is an uneven practice across the campus. (Policy 4.1)
3. The committee recommends that the A-6 agreement/contractual relationship with extended learning (IEL) constitutes a substantive change. (Standard 2.G.2, Policies A-2 and A-6)