

Year Seven Comprehensive Evaluation

Green River College
12401 SE 320th Street
Auburn, WA 98092

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A confidential report of findings prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and
Universities

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INTRODUCTION

Green River College is in Auburn, Washington, a suburban city southeast of Seattle. College operations are conducted from a primary campus and several off-campus locations. The primary campus serves a traditional mix of

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Green River College exhibits strength in addressing major NWCCU Eligibility Requirements except for that for the Educational Program.

11. Educational Program

The institution provides one or more educational programs which include appropriate content and rigor consistent with its mission and core themes. The educational program(s) culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes and lead to collegiate level degree(s) with degree designation consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

Analysis:

While the institution made progress toward developing program and degree measures of achievement, these efforts are not yet fully realized. The team found that a leadership response to the previous Year Seven recommendation severely reduced faculty ability to respond. The new GRC president once again, empowered faculty to assume a leadership role over curriculum and assessment. Strong curriculum elements are in place and program evaluation components were found to actively lead to teaching and learning improvement. Faculty demonstrate a keen understanding of work necessary to fulfill outcome and assessment expectations. However, u

Section One (Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability)

Mission

In 2012/13 the college worked to create a new mission statement, along with accompanying mission and vision statements and core themes. The institution's mission statement underwent revision during a critical leadership transition period at the college. The board, college personnel, and community representatives engaged to create a mission statement that not only represents the purpose of GRC, but also denotes expectations and aspirations. During conversations with board members and members of the campus community, it was found that there is strong agreement that the current mission statement now more clearly guides college decisions and improvement efforts.

Section Two (Resources and Capacity)

Governance

The college is engaged in critical work to map GRC's current governance structure and engage in planning that will more clearly organize and define how governance at the college is conducted. At the time of this visit, GRC has in place 128 councils ~~on ites~~, some created in response to communication and leadership challenges that existed prior to 2016

Bargaining unit agreements at GRC are in place; the faculty contract is currently due for re-negotiation. As the college moves through a time of ~~crisis~~ reported there is consideration given to extending the current faculty contract for a specified period to have a more stable platform from which discussion can move forward.

Governing Board

GRC is led by a strong and well-informed governing board who are active in the community and serve as advocates at the state and national level. Based on interviews, the evaluation team found that board members are strategic in their thinking and invest time in understanding the performance of the college and associated needs for improvement. The board evaluates their own performance as well as the performance of the president, and examples of performance improvement that starts from both processes were provided during discussions with team members.

Leadership and Management

Based on interviews and a review of written documents, the institution's system of leadership is strong and capable. S4 (i)(na)4 (g)14 (e)8.TJ -0.00embe /TT1 1 Temesveeidhe ivaluateon ceam

Participating in several statewide consortia (ICRC, SBCTC, and WSAC), the college follows an effective transfer-

Green River employees are formally apprised of their conditions of employment upon hire., and related information is outlined in the respective negotiated agreements and college policies. All new hires attend HR's employee orientation which details benefits, health and safety, FERPA, and the college's mission, values, and core themes.

As verified through individual interviews, Human Resources staff maintain confidential employee records in locked cabinets accessible only through authorized access. GRC complies with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' Records Retention Schedule.

Institutional Integrity

The college worked diligently to ensure publication contents are clearly focused and comply with expectations for ethical and accurate content. Program and academic policy information is accurate and readily available to internal and external audiences.

Multiple individuals and groups attest to the honesty and ethical nature of dealings atf mai 7--4 (al)-u 0

include participation in division meetings, curriculum development and evaluation, course scheduling, program development, textbook selection, and adjunct faculty observations. There are numerous opportunities for faculty to serve on various committees. Faculty are encouraged to seek college funding for professional development opportunities that enhance teaching, learning, advising, research, service, and/or artistic creation in support of student success. Funding is allocated to the Faculty Development Committee.

Faculty are evaluated regularly per the negotiated contract. The evaluation process is designed to identify areas for improvement and to strengthen the effectiveness of teaching and student learning. Non-tenured (probationary) faculty can be reviewed for tenure after quarters of instruction and the contract outlines the timeline, criteria, and makeup of the tenure committee. Final tenure decisions are made by the GRC Board of Trustees. Tenured faculty are evaluated at least once every five years. A post-tenure committee conducts reviews which include peer observations and student evaluations. Contract provisions address concerns that arise between evaluation periods and provide for remediation if needed. Oversight of the review process for tenured faculty falls under the Vice President of Instruction, while the actual evaluation process is conducted by the various academic divisions.

Education Resources

The evaluation team finds that programs offered reflect appropriate content and rigor to meet the mission of the college. Student learning outcomes are consistently listed in course syllabi, and program outcomes lead to recognized content in specific fields of study. Interviews with faculty show a program improvement process that allows program review to occur in a periodic, constructive, meaningful way, targeted at program improvement. Students attest to the ready use of course and program outcomes that help them prepare for academic expectations, while also reporting that course and program evaluation results lead to improvement.

While no longer an explicit part of the NWCCU Standards, evaluators reviewed distance education practices considering the movement of multiple courses to solely online instruction. Evaluators found evidence the college responds to and generally satisfies expectations for distance education quality. In 2019, the college reorganized eLearning to be under the aegis of the Dean of the Library, eLearning, and Media Services to ensure online, hybrid, and face-to-face classes reflect academic quality in both design and delivery. The College hired full-time staff and has plans to further expand services and support for faculty teaching online curriculum. It is worthy to note the value of this enhanced support as the recent pandemic response shifted most instruction and services to online formats. Evidence notes the college supported faculty, staff, and students in the successful and effective online delivery of courses and services, accomplishing much of this work within a 12-month period.

Green River College provides each student with a unique ID number, PIN, and student email address. Students must authenticate their identity when accessing student account programs.

Interviews and documentation indicate that students are prepared for transfer and work in their technical fields of study. Evaluators found evidence that SDC courses, regardless of delivery modality, are consistent with its mission. Evaluators further verified student learning outcomes at the course and program levels represent evidence of course achievement leading to the appropriate college level degrees and certificates.

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Library faculty provide research assistance and reference help and are by department faculty to visit classrooms and regularly provide students with tours detailing services and spaces. In addition to providing comprehensive support to department faculty, the Holman Library assists eLearning with Canvas modules that support accessibility of learning resources, academic integrity, and citation help. The recent reorganization of the Dean of the Library, eLearning, and Media Services is a significant new responsibility for this area, and the department appears to be well situated for that challenge.

Evaluators found evidence the college grants credit for prior experiential learning in accordance with the guidelines of NWCCU Standards. Conversations with faculty verify that the processes for assessment, documentation, review, and transcription are consistent with the evidence presented in the report. The process and detail of such granting of credit is defined in college policy and the college catalog.

Based on evidence presented in the report, the college website, the catalog, the college follows statewide policies governing transfer of credit and reciprocity. Transfer credit accepted from other regionally accrediting institutions is based on a review of course descriptions, learning outcomes, and syllabi. There are easily accessible transfer guides and a guide to the institution's receipt of credits from other institutions.

Undergraduate Programs

The college's associates and Bachelor of Applied Science degrees require clearly defined general education courses integrating coursework in the humanities; fine arts; mathematical and natural science; and social sciences. There is evidence showing applied and certificate degree programs contain a recognizable body of instruction with appropriate outcomes in communication, computation, and human relations.

Evaluators found evidence the college demonstrates identifiable and assessable learning outcomes for both its baccalaureate and transferred programs. Applied degree and certificate programs have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that align with program goals and intended outcomes, mostly as standards and courses in related areas. The related education component of the applied degrees is overseen by the Related Instruction Committee and supported by advisory boards unique to each program.

Continuing Education and Non-Credit Programs

Evaluators found evidence the college's credit and non-credit continuing education and other special programs (workforce training, for instance) are compatible with the college mission and goals. Specifically, the college's corporate and continuing education units are active in developing various offerings in response to community and workforce need.

There is evidence indicating continuing education course development and delivery is executed by appropriately qualified instructors. Classes and programs are closely monitored for financial sustainability. Student

student achievement of identified learning outcomes. The college processes and credit equivalency awards are guided by the International Association of Continuing Education and Training and governed by Washington Administrative Code 18185-077.

Evaluators discovered a system of archiving records for course and learning information of continuing education courses, in part guided by state requirements for retention of records.

GRC maintains a Clery Compliance Committee which is tasked with ensuring that safety is the responsibility of all employees. The evaluation team viewed evidence that Green River follows the Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act of 1998 by posting campus crime data on its website. Through forums it was verified that both students and staff feel confident in the safety and security of the campus and its facilities. Many participants shared with the evaluation team that emergency p

- x The grading policy
- x Information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress and the frequency of course offerings
- x Names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full faculty
- x Rules, regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities; g) tuition, fees, and other program costs
- x Refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment
- x Opportunities and requirements for financial aid
- x The academic calendar

Green River makes eligibility for licensure and employment information accessible via individual program web pages. Examples reviewed by the evaluation committee include Phlebotomy, Occupational Therapy Assistant, and Aviation.

GRC adopted and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student

which is operated by a third party. Housing is available for up to 340 students. Housing staff provide a supportive learning and personal development environment.

Green River athletics is a member of the NWAC and adheres to its eligibility requirements. Athletics staff review students' academic records at least twice per quarter and solicit faculty

and accountability. Realistic budgeting enabled the budget deficit to be addressed without unnecessary expenditure reduction while increasing budget ownership and responsibility. The annual budget document has been enhanced to include histo

8. The Evaluation Team compliments GRC for a strong commitment to professional development and innovation that contributes to enhanced institutional creativity and strengthens opportunities for the college and its students. By dedicating funds for these purposes, GRC underscores the importance placed on support for all employee groups.

CONCERNS

1. The college is encouraged to continue a review and, as appropriate, revision of the current overly complex governing system. It is strongly suggested that the college move its governance structure forward as soon as current circumstances allow.
2. While faculty have made progress in all areas of assessment, there is work yet to be completed. With assessment once again clearly defined and authorized as faculty work, forward progress is necessary to fully develop assessment mechanisms.
3. The college has not identified learning outcomes that pertain to the General Education component of program instruction.

Section 3 (Planning and Implementation)
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Evaluators found evidence that the college uses various data (IPEDS, statewide transcript exchange programs, National Clearinghouse, and internal data dashboards) to inform core theme planning, and, when necessary, revisions

needs Instructional program reviews have been organized and documented, reflecting a 5-year cycle, with 712 programs participating each year. Ample evidence exists to attest to the effectiveness of this process.

Evaluators found evidence that the college documents through its comprehensive evaluation system, student achievement of course objectives. Moreover, there is evidence teaching faculty have defined responsibility for these student evaluations as referenced in the faculty contract. The college demonstrates evaluations at course and program levels that are consistent as8.29 0o 8.29 0om-6 (en)-4 (t)-6 ()t ch e

deserved resources to complete. The investment in faculty leadership of assessments has been especially important and fruitful, allowing for clearer roles, responsibility, and mentorship of the faculty as they work to develop meaningful assessments.

Assessment efforts are still developing and will require continued and focused attention, but under the current conditions, current progress shows great promise for completion of final, robust assessment structures. It was clear from meetings conducted during the visit that the Learning Outcomes Committee (LOC), and faculty chairs in particular, have done an impressive job of supporting faculty in the development of assessable outcomes, scaffolding courses into program outcomes. Faculty are empowered to identify the assessments within their programs that provide evidence for the outcomes. Faculty repeatedly expressed gratitude for the ability to capture work already being done as a way of making assessment something do-able and ownable by the faculty.

The LOC Chair Report for 2018/9 indicates increased faculty and program participation in assessment activities. (a)4 (l)-2 (e)-6ng (a)4g (e)4 (m)-2 (e)4 (nt)-2 n (e)-6 (e)4 (

CONCERN

While the college has in place effective course and program methods of achievement and evaluation, systematic and periodic college assessment is not yet fully developed or implemented.

Section 5 (Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation, and Sustainability)

GRC clearly defines mission fulfillment through the framework of fully developed performance indicators that tie directly to core themes. The GRC board adopted acceptable thresholds of performance that are tracked on a systematic and period basis and form the basis of an annual review process used to set future goals and expectations.

Evaluators found evidence that GRC evaluates the college's ability to sustain operations over time within the context of human, fiscal, and physical resources. Progress is evident in rebuilding employee trust, thereby further engaging employees in important work to improve student learning, retention, and progression. The college was able to retire \$300,000 in debt while maintaining fund balances available to meet unforeseen challenges. The college is successful in acquiring foundation-generated and state funds for maintenance, repair, and new construction of facilities.

The team found multiple examples of efforts to ensure sustainability at GRC. Full faculty engagement in assessment; robust student and IT support services; and a successful fund generation through the GRC Foundation and continuing and community education are examples of evidence related to sustainability.

Strong planning processes, evident through the work of the college as a whole and through unit engagement, serve to demonstrate responsiveness to identified areas of improvement. The planning process is clearly documented and understood by college personnel. Community members often engage with the college in planning efforts. Following the previous Year Seven visit, GRC made significant advances in their use of relevant and reliable data to inform decisions. Each of these elements speak to sustainability of operations.

The Evaluation Team expresses confidence that, even during times of challenge, GRC has in place the systems and structures to realize mission fulfillment and sustain operations over time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Evaluation Team recommends the college work to demonstrate and document an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Standard 2.A Governance (new Standard ~~2.A.3~~, 2.A.4)
2. The evaluation team recommends that the College move to fully implement an effective and comprehensive system of direct and authentic assessment that appraises student accomplishment of existing course, program, and college learning outcomes from which are derived meaningful results that provide clear direction for curricular and instructional improvement. Standards 4.A.3, 4.A.6, 4.B.1, 4.B.2 (new Standards 1.B.1, 1.C.3, 1.C.7, 1.D.3, and 1.D.4)

APPENDIX A:
Report on Department of Education Sanction

Introduction

On September 26, 2018, GRC was officially informed that the Department of Education imposed a sanction related to Clery Act non-compliance. The college was directed to make immediate improvements to annual campus security reporting and to correct the college's Title IV policies and procedures.