



Northwest Commission on College and University (NWCCU)
Annual Update for WSQA
Academic Year 2010-2011

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Accreditation recommendations to the College and year of recommendation	Actions taken by the college to address recommendations	Improvement results
<p> <i>The Committee recommends the College review resources to adequately provide student financial assistance. The current physical location of the Financial Aid Office is in an open and unsecure area. This arrangement appears to be inadequate in addressing the needs of the office to provide a secure, confidential atmosphere for discussing financial aid matters. With the increase in student demand for financial aid services, the College has not yet increased the staffing to accommodate the additional demands. (Standards 3.A.4, 3.B.6)-- 2010</i> </p>	<p> Almost immediately upon receipt of this recommendation, the College formed a user group to explore the available options regarding the physical location and configuration of the Financial Aid Office. The user group was charged with developing options for making the space more appropriate for confidential discussions. In support of the project, the College identified local funds and secured the services of a local architect who is working with the user group to create a more appropriate space. The remodel project is scheduled for completion in March 2012. </p> <p> Despite a 14% reduction in state allocations due to the ongoing Washington State fiscal crisis, Lower Columbia College has recognized the need for more assistance in Financial Aid and has identified local funds to provide an additional full-time staff position in addition to remodeling the space. The College is currently in the process of finalizing the job description and anticipates hiring in the near future. </p>	<p> Although the physical remodel and staffing changes are still in process, substantial improvements made to Financial Aid processes, including development of a Financial Aid Student Portal to electronically facilitate the application and awarding processes, have greatly eased the wait time for students seeking assistance from front line staff at the Financial Aid Office. Student satisfaction with services is assessed annually in the spring. Data will be available in June 2012. </p>

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<p><i>The Committee recommends the College evaluate the effectiveness of the faculty advising program. While the College has an active faculty advising program, the student advising workload of each teaching faculty member, as well as the student advising preparation of each faculty member, appear inconsistent. (Standards 2.A.5, 2.C.5, 4.A.2)--2010</i></p>	<p>Due to the dramatic increase in our enrollment during the past several years, the advising workload of faculty has increased. The College's first response was to compensate faculty whose advising load exceeds the contractual limit of 30 students. During the fall of 2010, the college collaborated with full time faculty to identify adjunct faculty interested in advising students in certain high demand disciplines and programs. The adjunct faculty are trained and compensated to advise students. This has served to provide some workload relief to the full time faculty.</p> <p>An Advising Taskforce, composed of faculty and staff from Instruction and Student Services, has also been created. The taskforce is charged with developing a plan to improve communication between the faculty advisors and the education planners, provide additional training for faculty advisors, and to review the processes associated with the advising system.</p> <p>Last but not least, several members of the Advising Taskforce attended the recent NACADA Academic Advising Summer Institute in New Orleans, Louisiana. As a result of their work, LCC is working to define advising across the institution and identify outcomes, and to develop an Advising Council.</p>	<p>The changes are being implemented effective fall quarter 2011. A comprehensive student satisfaction survey is administered every spring quarter on campus, including questions about satisfaction with advising. Spring 2012 data should reflect improvements made to the advising program at LCC.</p>
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<p><i>The Committee recommends the College implement regular and systematic evaluation of all faculty on a continuing basis. Lower Columbia College has policies and procedures in place for both tenured and pre-tenured faculty, and the evaluation of pre-tenured faculty</i></p>	<p>Lower Columbia College has devoted significant effort over the past decade to ensure that it implements regular and systematic evaluation of faculty. The rigor of this process as it relates to the evaluation of pre-tenured faculty was noted by the committee in their recommendation.</p>	<p>Procedures for faculty evaluation, including recent changes intended to strengthen the process, are reflected in the LCC Faculty Contract, Article 800, which covers evaluation of academic employees.</p>

<p><i>appears to be consistent and constructive. The evaluation for tenured faculty and part-time faculty appears to be heavily reliant on student course evaluations. (Policy 4.1 and Standard 4.A.5)-- 2010</i></p>	<p>As a result of this recommendation, the College looked at all faculty evaluation processes but gave particular attention to post-tenure review consistency and administrative oversight, including oversight of the documentation which is securely maintained in the Office of Instruction. All changes noted here are already in effect or will be implemented at the beginning of the 2011-12 academic year.</p> <p>In order to strengthen evaluation of full-time tenured faculty, class observations by the dean and evaluations by peers will occur on an annual basis. Faculty will also meet with their dean on an annual basis to discuss workload and any issues, recommendations or actions needed for the coming year. Documentation of the discussions will be reviewed and signed by both the respective dean and the Vice President of Instruction in order to ensure consistency and encourage communication, and will be maintained in the permanent evaluation storage unit in the Office of Instruction where records have been stored for many years. All the forms used to document this process have been reviewed and updated.</p> <p>In order to strengthen evaluation of full-time temporary faculty, peer evaluations and meetings with the dean will occur on an annual basis. All forms used to document the process have been reviewed and updated, and will be reviewed and signed by both the dean and the Vice President for Instruction in order to ensure consistency and improve communication. Like pre-tenured and tenured faculty, evaluation materials for full-time temporary faculty are securely stored in the Office of Instruction.</p> <p>In order to strengthen evaluation of adjunct faculty, student evaluations will now occur the first two quarters of employment and annually after that. Evaluations will be typed in order to protect student anonymity, reviewed by the dean and shared with the adjunct faculty member. Evaluation materials for adjunct faculty will continue to be stored in the Office of Instruction.</p>	
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<p><i>The Committee recommends the College assess the effectiveness of its internal policies and procedures. A review and update of college policies and procedures may ensure that the authority, responsibilities, and relationship among and between administration, faculty, staff, and students are clearly defined. Clarity in the role of the faculty in governance, planning, budget, and policy development needs to be clear and public. All constituencies may participate in the planning and evaluation process, and results will influence resource allocation, program improvement, and evidence of institutional effectiveness. (Standards 6.A.1, 6.A.2, 6.A.3, 6.D) -- 2010</i></p>	<p>Christopher Bailey, formerly of Centralia College, took the helm as the President of Lower Columbia College on September 1st, 2011. President Bailey and the vice presidents will develop a process for assessing the effectiveness of the College's internal policies and procedures in fall quarter 2011.</p>	<p>Pending</p>
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<p><i>The Committee recommends the College maintain adequate financial reserves to meet fluctuations in operating revenue, expenses, and debt service. Lower Columbia College should develop a clear policy on reserve balances. The policy should clearly state the goal for reserve balance amounts, and outline appropriate use of said funds. (Standard 7.B.7) -- 2010</i></p>	<p>On February 16, 2011, the Lower Columbia College Board of Trustees unanimously approved Resolution #57 to establish an operating reserve policy to address risk for which funds may be unexpectedly required.</p>	<p>The College has established and maintained a reserve fund in compliance with Resolution #57.</p>

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<p><i>The Committee recommends the College construct and maintain facilities with regard for health, safety, and access by the physically disabled. Disabled students should be able to access all areas of campus. While the institution has clear plans to move the fitness center from an upstairs location in the gymnasium to an accessible area, the earliest this could happen is 2013. In the meantime, the institution should provide access to the fitness center. This could be accomplished with a stair lift, new elevator, or the relocation of the center. (Standard 8.A.5) -- 2010</i></p>	<p>Lower Columbia College received state funding unexpectedly for the Fitness Center remodel in summer 2011 through a state-matching funding source. These funds will be combined with student fees that have been accruing over the past six years (students voted to assess a quarterly fee towards improvement of the Fitness Center in 2006). In addition, the LCC Foundation is investigating fundraising opportunities to support the project. The remodel and expansion of the current facility will be in compliance with ADA regulations. Per guidelines attached to funding received from the state, the project must be complete by summer 2013. In the interim, students who wish to access fitness facilities are accommodated through Disability Services with a membership at the local YMCA.</p>	<p>Pending</p>