

**Commission on Colleges  
Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges**

**A Full-Scale  
Evaluation Committee Report**

**Highline Community College  
Des Moines, Washington**

**April 28-30, 2003**

*A Confidential Report Prepared for the Commission on Colleges that Represents  
The Views of the Evaluator*

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## Evaluation Committee

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## **Introduction**

Highline Community College opened in 1961. In 1964, the College became a candidate for accreditation, and was granted initial accreditation in 1965. Since then, the College has enjoyed substantial growth and currently serves approximately 10,000 credit students each quarter. Faculty members number 140 full-time and about 250 part-time faculty.

Highline Community College is located midway between Seattle and Tacoma, Washington. Its beautiful location overlooks Puget Sound and is in sight of the Olympic Mountains. It is an impressive campus with dozens of permanent structures and attractive spaces.

An eleven member committee from the Northwest Association of Colleges and Universities visited the College from April 28 to April 30, 2003 for the purpose of a full- scale evaluation. The report that follows is presented to both Highline Community College as well as to the Commission as a summary of the committee's findings, commendations, and recommendations. It is hoped that the College finds the report helpful as it looks ahead and plans its directions for the future. Equally, it is hoped that the Commission finds the report of substantive value in deciding the future accreditation standing of Highline Community College.

The evaluation committee expresses its appreciation for the courtesies extended us during the visit. The Trustees, President Patricia Bell, members of administration, staff, faculty and students were generous with their time. Further, they received members of our committee with openness and collegiality, which was of great assistance to the purpose of our visit. Additional thanks are due to the College for the hospitality extended to the evaluation committee. The cordial atmosphere we experienced helped to make our work proceed smoothly and professionally.

## **The Self Study Report**

The committee found the self-study to be extensive and filled with material. Some committee members expressed feeling overwhelmed by the amount of description and disappointed by the relative dearth of analysis and evidence.

The glossary was also seen as helpful to the committee, but it was noted that the self-study was clearly not written in one voice. For example, graphs, normally a helpful inclusion, often were presented in inconsistent formats, occasionally causing confusion to the reader.

Finally, the College did an excellent job involving the broad College community in the self-study. Administrators, full and part-time faculty, students and staff all appear to have participated. Overall, the self-study afforded the evaluation committee a set of thoughtful insights into the Highline Community College community.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

A concern arose involving the Eligibility Requirements. A new revised set of Eligibility Requirements was approved by the Commission in December, 2000, yet the Highline Community College self-study used the old Eligibility Requirements instead of those that had been available for nearly two and a half years

prior to the evaluation visit. The College had received a set of the 1999 ER's sent by the Commission office in 2001 and consequently used the 1999 Requirements in completing their Self Study. Nevertheless, Highline Community College meets the Eligibility Requirements for Candidates for Accreditation and Accredited Institutions for Higher Education as presented.

## **Standard One – Institutional Mission and Goals, Planning and Effectiveness**

### **Institutional Mission and Goals**

The institution's mission and goals are widely understood by the Highline Community College campus community. The board has adopted the mission and goals and periodically examines them for revision or change. A mission statement for Highline Community College appears in the college catalogue. One concern that arose involving the mission statement in the catalogue is that it differs from the 2001 version of the mission statement listed in the self-study; the Board of Trustees did not pass the current mission statement until after the college catalogue was published, explaining the discrepancy. The catalogue contains *an earlier version of the mission statement*, what seems to be an abbreviation of the current mission statement. It is important that all statements of the mission of the institution to be consistent.

Progress in accomplishing the institution's mission and goals is documented and made public. Each quarter the president updates the Board of Trustees concerning one of the institution's four strategic initiatives and provides an extensive annual update on all four of the strategic initiatives. The institutional effectiveness plan is derived directly from the strategic plan, and the institutional effectiveness report, most recently published for academic year 2001 to 2002, which provides a complete analysis of progress on each of the objectives under the college's goals, serves as a public document concerning goal and mission achievement.

Goals are determined consistent with the institution's mission and its resources. The goals themselves have been derived through a process of extensive participation from all elements of the college community. Additionally, the institution's mission and goals do give direction to educational activities, admission policies, faculty selection, allocation of resources, as well as to planning. It is further clear that public service conducted by Highline Community College is consistent with the educational mission and goals of the institution. Finally, evidence exists that the college does review with the Commission changes that could be interpreted as substantive changes. Documentation to this effect exists in terms of applications that Highline Community College has made to the Commission in the past several years regarding contemplated changes

### **Planning and Effectiveness**

Highline Community College seems to have taken seriously the past recommendation of a Commission evaluation committee to improve the planning process. Implementation of the institution's first formal strategic planning process resulted in the 1996 Strategic Plan which was described in the 1998 interim evaluation as a good first start. More recently, the College engaged in a 2001 strategic planning process. The 2001 Plan, which was formally accepted by the Board of Trustees, articulated four key initiatives or goals. The Plan outlines procedures to measure each of these goals, often in laudatory detail. The planning process is structured to be participatory, with faculty, staff, students, and administration involved in a series of task forces and surveys. Full use of the web was employed with minutes, documents, drafts, and other information available. The College also made efforts to collect community input.

Each strategic initiative developed through the 2001 Strategic Plan is translated into an action plan-like Institutional Effectiveness Plan, which indicates the specific measures used for each indicator, the frequency of the measure, and the personnel responsible and involved in each case. The obvious

connection between the Strategic Plan and the Institutional Effectiveness Plan are impressive and appear to have identified priorities for present and future focuses.

It is clear that Highline Community College is beginning to use the results of its systematic evaluation activities and ongoing planning processes to influence resource allocation to the improvement of instructional programs, services, and activities. Some describe the institutional Strategic Plan as the basis of resource allocation and the foundation for the support of institutional initiatives. An example given concerned the application of faculty for sabbatical leaves, wherein several faculty were asked to provide further explication as to how their requests aligned with the strategic initiatives for the College. Resources are provided for the effective evaluation and planning process. Perhaps the best example of this is the institution's commitment to continue the position of the Institutional Research Officer which initially was funded through a Title III grant (see below.) There is absolutely no question that the institution's research is integrated with and supportive of institutional evaluation and planning. At this point, in fact, it seems that virtually the entire function of the Institutional Research Office is devoted to these efforts. Evaluation of the Strategic Plan and institutional research efforts occurs through the communication of achievement of goals and periodic conversations with decision makers in various institutional areas to ensure that measures used to achieve the goals are effective in doing so. Because the strategic plan and the institutional effectiveness plan themselves are relatively new, further time is necessary to determine the continuing success of these efforts and whether the data used continue to be useful to the institution. That is a key element in the ultimate evaluation of these efforts.

With the help of a United States Department of Education Title III grant, the College in 2000 established a comprehensive Institutional Research Office, a clear indication of its provision of resources for effective planning and institutional evaluation. Institutional research also helps with disseminating information regarding the College's progress toward its goals and does so over the Internet as well as by way of quarterly fact sheets to the campus and the community. In addition, the College publishes an annual report to the community which explicitly documents progress towards its goals.

It appears that Highline Community College has made very good progress in its planning and effectiveness efforts. It is suggested that the College continue to support those efforts. Time and results could develop an exemplary program in this area for the institution.

## **Standard Two – Educational Program & Its Effectiveness**

**Accounting, International Business, General Business, Hotel and Tourism, Interior Design, Medical Assisting/Paralegal, Business Information Technology, Travel and Transportation**

### **Business Administration Division**

Highline Community College offers Applied Associate in Arts and Science Degrees (AAS) with and without specializations and Certificates of Completion (CC) in:

- Accounting (AAS), and Paraprofessional Accounting Specializing in Not-for-Profit and Government (CC).
- Business (AAS), with specializations in E-Commerce, Marketing and Selling, Retailing, and Small Business Entrepreneurship, also Small Business Entrepreneurship (CC), International Business (CC) and Customer Service (CC).
- International Business (AAS), with specializations in E-Commerce, and Import/Export Business Management, also International Business (CC).
- Administrative Assistant (AAS) and (CC) with areas of emphasis in Legal, Medical, International Business, E-commerce, or General Administrative Assistant.
- Office Management (AAS) with areas of emphasis in Legal, Medical, International Business, E-commerce, or General Administrative.

- Assistant Legal Secretary (AAS) and (CC), and Bookkeeping (CC)
- Hotel and Tourism Management (AAS) and (CC).
- Interior Design (AAS), and (AA).
- Medical Assistant (AAS), Medical Receptionist (CC), Medical Transcriptionist (CC), and Patient Account Specialist (CC).
- Travel and Transportation (AAS) and (CC).
- Paralegal (AAS), Paralegal NLSO (AAS), and Paralegal Plus Certificate.

Most Instructional facilities and equipment are shared between the Accounting, Business (General and International), Business Information Technology, Medical Assistant, Hotel and Tourism, Travel and Transportation, and the Paralegal Programs/Departments (the one exception being the Interior Design Program). The addition of the new college computer facility has improved program access to students in, but not limited to, the Professional Technical Division and its program related areas. The new college-wide computer facilities and its classrooms are extremely well equipped and maintained. It is impressive that the Computer facility has state of the art equipment in fourteen instructional classrooms and four open labs with over 520 new computers. The library also has many computers for student use. In addition to these labs there are a few smaller labs in separate departments for student classroom use. It is evident that there has been thoughtful planning of the new computer facility.

Most faculty of the Accounting, Business and International Business, Business Information Technology, and Medical Assistant, Interior Design, Hotel and Tourism, Travel and Transportation, and Paralegal Programs/Departments were interviewed. They have expressed high satisfaction with the new computer facility and computer classroom equipment. Most computer labs have been moved to the new facility; however, it may better serve some programs like Interior Design to be able to have a stationary computer access to the Internet from the program's existing classroom for student research and demonstrations. Regular classrooms on campus are adequate for classroom lecture, lab assignments, and discussions. Faculty have a major role and responsibility in the design, integrity, and implementation of the curriculum. The department faculty works with their advisory committees, and in some instances works closely with professional groups to offer training for special industry approval, such as the Paralegal Program with its approved program status by the American Bar Association.

The strengths of programs rest on dedicated faculty that teach within the programs. Many instructors have made significant contributions to the college and their students such as:

- The Accounting Department Faculty working with students to prepare and file electronically tax returns for low-income families. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program.
- The Business Department Faculty (including International) participate in the USAID Grant program that sends faculty to Africa to work on entrepreneurship activities, and Business Math Tutorials that have been developed for students to use at home.
- The Business Information Technology Department Faculty who continue to articulate with local high schools on Tech Prep course work for college credit.
- The Interior Design Department Faculty's development of slides that enhance the student's visual experiences with in the classroom.
- The Medical Assistant Department Faculty who redesigned programs within the department to an open entry/open exit modules to improve access to students.
- The Travel and Transportation Department that has developed articulation agreements to improve student transfer to university systems.
- The Paralegal Department Faculty who continue to maintain the approved status of the Paralegal Program through the American Bar Association.

According to students they are pleased with the instruction they are receiving at Highline Community College and believe that the college is a better place because of the college's emphasis on diversity. Students said their instructors were for the most part very good and willing to help them when they need help both in and out of class. Students indicate they prefer to be advised by faculty in the program rather than by advisors who have no vested interest or connection to their program of study. One concern that many students expressed was the issue of safety on the campus. Students feel uncomfortable, especially

the women, of walking to their vehicles at night. Both students and faculty feel the campus needs better lighting to and from all parking lots especially to the Midway lot. A number of students indicated they had problems using the library due to excessive noise. Perhaps better signage of quiet areas would help define usage of space.

Most faculty within this division are not aware of or do not care about having copies of their department's operating budget. They get the equipment, materials and supplies, and professional development funds to make their programs operate smoothly. The budget is maintained at the division level and they feel satisfied with the arrangement.

The departments have developed course outlines and syllabi to reflect a student centered approach that focuses on student learning. These outlines and syllabi along with faculty interviews indicate the use of library, and in particular, use of the Internet for research in course assignments.

To build linkages with local employers, each program within the departments utilizes advisory committees for continuous curricular updating. These committees help faculty determine where programs should be heading. The Advisory committees appear to have active members participating in curriculum decisions and sharing their insight as to where businesses and industry are heading. The advisory committees have active members and meet at least twice per year and more when advice is needed.

Part-Time Faculty and the Eight/Nineth's Faculty are valued within the departments. The faculty coordinators are involved in selection, mentoring and evaluating adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty are included in department meetings if their time permits. Faculty appear to appreciate the diversity and experience that adjunct faculty bring to their programs. Many of these individuals have been teaching at Highline for many years.

Full-Time Faculty carry full workloads and are to be commended on the positive manner in which they work with their students. Faculty advise students in their program areas. There seem to be no specifics as to the limit of advisees a faculty member is required to advise; therefore, the numbers widely vary (up to 125) and could be overwhelming.

Students from all the departments were interviewed and consistently felt that the faculty were very supportive and bend over backwards to help them. These students looked at other community colleges when making their selection on which college to attend. They stated that Highline has a reputation in the community for a commitment to diversity, integrity in their programs, and excellent faculty and staff that care about the students.

It should be noted that the faculty within these departments take time to develop the relationships with their local high schools. These relationships go a long way in developing articulation agreements between the high schools and Highline.

The Business Department (General and International) should be commended for their work on department and program assessment. The department's study reflected outcomes assessment that analyzed strengths and weaknesses within the program and plans for future improvement.

## **Administration of Justice, Anthropology/Sociology/Behavioral Science, Economics/Political Science, History/Geography, Psychology, Human Services**

### **Technology, Culture, Gender and Global Studies –**

#### **Standard 2: Educational Programs and Its Effectiveness**

##### **Social Science Division**

The Social Science Division includes the academic departments of Anthropology/Sociology/History/Geography, Psychology/Behavioral Science, Economics/Political

Science, Culture Gender and Global Studies and applied social science programs in Administration of Justice and Human Service Technology. Pre-college studies programs administratively placed within this division are addressed elsewhere in this report.

Although linked administratively into departments, discipline areas are programmatically distinct. Anthropology/Sociology/History/Geography, Psychology/Behavioral Science, Economics/Political Science, Culture Gender and Global Studies departments provide course work that supports the distribution requirements within the Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degree programs, and prepare students for transfer into social science majors at baccalaureate level colleges, while simultaneously meeting the individual department missions of increasing knowledge and awareness of the discipline specific content and processes. Students report a smooth transition into baccalaureate level social science majors at Washington four year institutions.

The social science division is made up of well qualified faculty in all division disciplines. Faculty resources are adequate to deliver courses in all the social science disciplines. Several faculty members are shared across disciplines. All fulltime and part-time adjunct faculty members hold appropriate academic credentials in the areas they teach. Faculty members are to be commended for the strong collaboration and support across disciplines that is evident within the division. Faculty members are the designers and developers of courses within each discipline. Policies and processes for course development, approval, and revision, are in place and functioning at the department, division and college wide level.

Departments/disciplines within the Social Science Division demonstrate a limited understanding and use of outcomes based assessment to evaluate and improve program effectiveness and student achievement. Department objectives and student learning outcomes have been published in a document entitled *Student Learning Outcomes, Department Mission and Objectives and Assessment Practices*. However there was no evidence these department and program level outcomes guide program planning, nor are measured in any manner. Linkage of course level student learning outcomes to departments/disciplines outcomes is not documented. Evaluation methods for course level student learning outcomes are clearly described in course approval documents and course syllabi. However evidence of summary analysis or use of this information beyond grade determination was not available. Program assessment in these departments needs further development to demonstrate the relationship of program/discipline outcomes to college-wide student outcomes, the level to which student learning outcomes and program outcomes are being achieved and that assessment information is being used to direct program improvement. Consistently strong student course evaluations provide one indicator of program quality and student satisfaction with their learning.

Course syllabi, faculty member and student reports provide evidence information literacy skills, ensuring that students develop the skills to research information and facilitate their own learning, are integrated into the course work at multiple points in each discipline. Evidence this learning outcome is assessed and monitored was lacking.

Student course evaluations and student reports indicate a high level of satisfaction with the content and quality of courses taught by the social science division.

Faculty members within the social science division are actively involved in academic advising. As students are allowed to self select an advisor, the advising load varies across disciplines and individual faculty members. Students report a high degree of satisfaction with faculty advisors and indicate more complete information about requirements for transfer in received from this source, than from educational planning services.

### **Anthropology and Sociology**

Anthropology faculty members and self-study documents report some limitations with the adequacy of facilities, equipment and instructional materials. Although secure classroom storage for discipline specific instructional materials is available, quarterly schedules indicate classroom scheduling does not always place anthropology classes in the classroom where materials are stored.

Enrollment statistics evidence increased delivery and demand for some Anthropology and Sociology courses with a corresponding decline in delivery other courses in Anthropology. Sociology enrollment has increased incrementally over the last several years. Although this would appear to indicate accessible scheduling, both faculty and students noted a need for more evening courses.

### **History and Geography**

With the recent purchase of discipline specific instructional materials for geography and history the department now indicates instructional materials are adequate. Current instruction would be enhanced by increased availability of computers or computers on wheels (COWS) in the classrooms.

Enrollment statistics evidence increased delivery and demand for Geography courses while enrollment in History courses has remained stable. There is evidence that planned curriculum changes in history offerings are in response to program assessment information.

### **Economics and Political Science**

Enrollment statistics evidence the delivery and demand for Economics and Political Science courses is stable. Facilities and instructional equipment are adequate to support instruction. Library materials are adequate to support the curriculum being offered in this discipline.

### **Psychology and Behavioral Science**

Enrollment statistics evidence the delivery and demand for Psychology and Behavioral Science courses is stable. Facilities and instructional equipment although adequate are in need of updating and enhancement. Library materials are adequate to support the curriculum, yet students report that additional access to journals would benefit their learning.

Evidence exists that the Psychology Department has begun the task of defining the content and process of a comprehensive program assessment system.

### **Culture, Gender and Global Studies (CGG)**

The Culture, Gender and Global Studies Department consists of faculty who are enthusiastic about this interdisciplinary delivery of courses and committed to the Highline initiative of "enhancing a climate that values diversity and global perspectives." This department involves faculty from a variety of disciplines and has developed a broad array of courses that meet the Diversity and Globalism Requirement within the Associate of Arts Degree. Enrollment statistics evidence both increased delivery and demand for CGG courses. In addition the CGG department provides workshops and non-credit offerings to the campus community.

Evidence exists that the CGG department has begun the task of defining the content and process of a comprehensive program assessment system.

### **Administration of Justice**

The Administration of Justice program offers an Associate of Applied Science Degree designed to prepare students for entry into careers in law enforcement and/or related justice positions. The degree program contains a substantial and coherent body of courses in the administration of justice area. Plans to revise and enhance this curriculum with input from the advisory committee are underway. Enrollment information coupled with reports of faculty and advisory committee members provides evidence of a shift in the reasons students enroll in Administration of Justice courses and degree program. This evidence supports the curriculum revisions to move away from a purely practical "how to" orientation to a more theoretical orientation that includes "what and why."

The program has an active advisory committee made up of law enforcement practitioners from the region. Advisory committee members report the program to be responsive to their input regarding curriculum and potential expansion or enhancements of the program. The program may benefit by membership that reflects a broader representation of justice related careers such as corrections and court officers.

Both graduate surveys and advisory committee member reports provide evidence that program graduates are successful in obtaining employment, although frequently employment is delayed for 2-3 years following graduation due to employer age requirements.

Efforts to pursue articulation with baccalaureate programs are noted as a goal that will enhance the existing program.

### **Human Service Technology**

The Department of Human Service Technology offers an Associate of Applied Science degree and course work for a Human Service emphasis within the Associate of Arts Degree. Both degree programs prepare students for entry-level employment in the Human Service field or transfer into baccalaureate level Human Service programs.

The Human Service Technology Program experienced a vacant position during 2001 resulting in discontinuity and disruption to students and the program. This position has since been filled, yet the program manager reports the program to still be recovering from this interruption.

Enrollment statistics evidence increased delivery and demand for Human Service courses following a decline related to the lack of a fulltime program manager. In addition the number of program graduates have more than doubled (5 -12) from 2002 to 2003.

The degree program contains a substantial and coherent body of courses in the human services area. Plans to revise and enhance this curriculum with input from the advisory committee area employers are underway. Advisory committee members report support for this activity. Currently courses in the area of chemical dependency that are offered by the Center for Extended Learning can be applied toward degree requirements in the AAS degree. These courses go through the same academic approval process as other human service courses but are not included in the college catalog. The accreditation review committee expresses concern that this practice may create confusion for students and suggests a review of this separation of information and coordination of courses that are accepted toward human service degree requirements

The program has a moderately active advisory committee made up of practitioners from both state and non-profit agencies in the region. Some advisory committee members report the program to be responsive to their input regarding curriculum and potential expansion or enhancements of the program. The program may benefit from more consistent participation from its membership.

Graduate follow-up surveys, conducted by the Dean of Professional Technical Programs, currently provide little evidence regarding program effectiveness and employment patterns of program completers, due to a limited number of graduates and low survey return rate. However advisory board members who have hired graduates report them to be well qualified for the positions they have entered. Graduates also report the ability to transfer into baccalaureate level programs in human services.

### **Mathematics and Natural Sciences (Life Sciences, Computer Science/CIS, Engineering, Mathematics, Physical Sciences) -**

#### **Standard Two, Instructional Area: Pure & Applied Sciences Division**

The Pure & Applied Sciences division consists of life sciences, computer science, engineering, mathematics, and physical science. There are thirty-two full-time faculty – four in life sciences, five in computer science, four in engineering, thirteen in mathematics, and six in physical science. Faculty in all departments are well qualified for their teaching assignments. Except for engineering, all departments rely heavily on adjunct faculty (over 40 in the division) for which recruiting has been somewhat problematic due to the concentration of other community colleges in the area and the lack of a competitive salary scale. Utilization of the faculty internship program has resulted in the acquisition of

new faculty in the areas of engineering and math. In many cases, these faculty have continued on into a tenure-track position.

The Pure & Applied Sciences Division offers collegiate level programs leading to the confirmation of degrees and certificates in recognized fields. These departments provide a tremendous array of courses that (1) meet the general education distribution requirements for the Associates of Arts and the Associates of Science degrees in the Science List (2.C.1;2;3), (2) satisfy lower division requirements for a variety of baccalaureate degrees, (3) culminate in five Professional/ Technical programs, and (4) provide prerequisite service courses for technical programs such as Nursing and Respiratory Care. Course syllabi, course offerings, and certificate programs reflect the mission of the college (2.A.2;3;4).

Physical resources for classrooms are adequate and for offices are barely adequate (as many as nine adjunct faculty sometime share a desk). Classrooms dedicated as laboratories are spacious, well lit, and well equipped. Biology labs have been recently renovated and construction of new facilities for the physical science department and engineering will be underway soon. In the meantime, their laboratories are safe and adequate. Most faculty in the division make use of technology at some level in their classrooms and many require student research in the library. High praise was given to staff support, media availability, technology, and library support (2.A.1). Faculty do not perceive that they are limited at all in what they can do in their courses because of a lack of this type of support.

Curriculum content and course changes are faculty driven, and their role in design and implementation of curriculum is clear (2.A.7). The recent addition of the A.S. degree is an excellent example of the level of involvement and the influence of the faculty. Policies are in place which facilitate course evaluations resulting in the retention of needed or the elimination of unneeded courses. New courses can be offered as a pilot and then added to the catalog after an appropriate procedure has been followed. Course descriptions are submitted to the department coordinator before being approved first by the department and then by the division before moving on to the faculty senate. Faculty do have the opportunity to participate in decisions regarding the library and information resources (2.A.8) and the institution's curriculum is well planned (2.A.9). Policies and procedures for changing courses and program content have been recently reviewed and updated (2.A.11).

The faculty of both science and mathematics departments are to be commended for their commitment to the success of the Highline Community College students as is evidenced by their willingness to "self-examine" and make modifications that improve programming. Examples of this can be seen in the Biology, Computer Information Systems, Engineering, Geology, and Mathematics departments. This commitment is also apparent in the extent of student advising which is done.

All departments have done program reviews. As part of the self-study process, each department in the division stated specific goals and, in light of those, expected student outcomes. For the most part, these outcomes are being assessed through typical classroom evaluations (quizzes and exams, reports, student projects). This division is urged to continue on the path begun to utilize external measuring tools allowing an even better assessment of the defined student learning outcomes (2.B.1;2;3). They are also urged to continue the endeavor of defining and then measuring broad general education science and math outcomes.

Anecdotal feedback from four year institutions has affirmed that Highline transfer students in specific areas are well prepared and succeed at their institutions. GPA information from transfer institutions has been available for years and has generally shown Highline students to be competitive, but recently, the office of Institutional Research has worked to tie this GPA information to specific areas of study. Results show that Highline alumni experience an initial drop in their GPA's but recover to be at least as successful as their peers.

A remarkable feature of this division is the congeniality and mutual respect faculty have for one another as well as the sense that they are part of a team whose goal is to provide a better education for all Highline students. As a result of their team concept and spirit of cooperation, they have made

tremendous strides in (1) identifying problem areas for students either in being successful in a course (e.g. math, writing, or reading) and (2) identifying problems in the sequencing of courses. The entire division is to be commended for responding to intra-divisional analyses by utilizing such programs as the Gateway program, and the Mathematics Department is commended for its great example of “closing the loop” of assessment when it found a way to simplify the college math pre-requisite requirements.

In spite of recent changes in the manner in which professional development moneys are made available, faculty reported no difficulty in getting support for attending the meetings or conferences that were important to them. In fact, there is a high rate of participation in conferences, workshops, and summer courses. Faculty appear to make every effort to stay current in their own disciplines. This is particularly evident in the Computer Information Systems department.

The Pure and Applied Science division is a forward thinking group of professionals intent on accomplishing the mission of the institution through all available avenues including both personnel and technological resources. They are to be commended for their efforts in coming to terms with who they are, where they are going, and how best to get where they are going.

### **Education, Nursing, Parent Education, Physical Education, Respiratory Care -**

#### **Standard Two, Instructional Area: Education**

The Education Department provides high quality Parent/Family Education, Early Childhood Education, Para-Education, and Education Transfer Programs. Certificate and Degree offerings in Child Care Provider, Early Childhood Education, and Paraeducator have clear and concise objectives that are appropriate for higher education in both level and quality. Faculty has a major role and responsibility in the design, integrity, and implementation of curriculum in the Education Department.

A recent institutional restructure placed the Parent Education program in the Education Department. This transition has provided the Education Department with an opportunity for in-depth program review and planning. The program review allowed for further planning and integration of outcome assessment measures into program and course curriculum. The assessment of course and program outcomes is evident at all levels. The College diversity initiative is furthered by the Education Department, specifically in pre-employment programs designed for ESL students who want careers working with children. In addition, five short-term (i.e., 16-18 credit) certificates are in the development phase for the para-education program.

The Education Department has identified the need to further expand partnerships with Public Schools and four-year institutions. Articulation meetings with four-year colleges are in progress to further strengthen the transfer process for AAS degree students. This is important work, given that 60% of all Education Degree seeking students self-identify as transfer majors. Advising loads are a challenge for the four faculty members (i.e., assigned between 100 and 200 students a year) in the education department due to the high student demand for the program. The department has developed a Student Reference Guide to assist transfer students with general program information and answers to frequently asked questions.

#### **Standard Two, Instructional Area: Nursing Department**

The Nursing Department provides Associate Degree in Nursing and has a recently expanded LPN-RN track program. The demand for both degree options is high. The Nursing Department is current and in good standing with state approval (State Nursing Commission) and specialized accreditation (NLNAC).

There are six full-time tenured positions, one intern position and four to eight part-time faculty positions, per quarter. Two of the full-time positions have been recently filled after two failed searches. Nursing faculty hiring challenges exist in part due to the current RN market demands. The College has responded to a shortage of Nursing Faculty by creating an internship program that trains qualified nurses who are interested in college teaching and actively enrolled in a Master's degree program. The program has been successful as the past three nursing faculty hires have been on-site interns. All Nursing faculty members have advanced degrees except for the intern, who has a Bachelor's degree and is enrolled in a Master's program.

The classrooms used by the nursing program, Health Occupations Laboratory, offices and safety equipment are adequate for the program. The technology is current for a two-year program. Collaboration with vendors and local hospitals provides students with a broader exposure to technology in the medical field. Library reference materials are sufficient and integrated into the learning process. A number of medical reference books are available to students in the laboratory. Online references have been available in the library and will soon be available in the Health Occupations Laboratory.

The Nursing program receives roughly three times the number of applicants that it can serve. The student attrition, five-year average, is strong at seven percent. This is in part due to a highly selective enrollment process. The current diversity breakdown for the nursing program differs substantially from the college. The nursing selection process may want to be reviewed in light of the college diversity initiatives.

### **Standard Two, Instructional Area: Physical Education Department**

There are sufficient faculty to meet the student demand in the Physical Education Department. The department has four full-time tenured and eight to ten part-time faculty per quarter. A Facilities Coordinator actively maintains the PE & Athletic facilities, outdoor instructional/competition areas, and equipment at safe and effective levels. All full-time teaching faculty members have an advanced degree. Part-time faculty without a Master's degree have professional experience and/or certification in their area of teaching.

The program's goals, policies, methods and delivery systems are compatible with the institution's mission. The Associate of Arts Degree requires three (3) credits of Health or Physical Education. Faculty have the major role and responsibility for design, integrity, and implementation of curriculum. Information and library resources are integrated into the health curriculum, including assignments performed in the library or using information technology. Recent program enhancements include a newly developed Health course that meets the College Global Diversity requirement. In addition, a number of PE courses have implemented a pre and post-test assessment process. While a number of Health and PE courses are clearly embedding outcome assessments into course curriculum, a number of courses are still in transition. Another primary area for improvement in the Health and PE area is in the physical resources area. The College has identified the need to improve the space needs in the female locker room facility. The Strength Training Lab also lacks sufficient space to house the cardiovascular equipment that is currently placed around the outside perimeter of the Pavilion.

### **Foreign Languages, Humanities/Philosophy/Literature, Sign Language, Interactive Media, Journalism, Library Technician, Music/Art/Drama, Printing, Production Illustration, Speech, Writing –**

### **Standard Two – Educational Programs and Its Effectiveness**

#### **Arts and Humanities**

All of the educational programs which are offered in the Arts and Humanities Division have a very high degree of faculty involvement in curricular design, addressing the staffing and physical needs of the program, incorporating library or other appropriate information resources, and being attentive to student needs. Of particular merit is the Technology Center which many programs make extensive use of. The degree of involvement in setting program outcomes, assessing those outcomes, and using that information to improve teaching and learning, varies substantially from department to department. That involvement is addressed in the following commentary.

#### **Art**

The Art Department is striving to meet the needs of students who have a profound interest in pursuing art as an academic focus as well as the needs of students who are interested in sampling what art has to offer. The department feels well supported by the college in fulfilling this dual mission. There seems to be some competition for enrollment between Art History/Appreciation and the studio art courses. There is

some question about whether the program serves a focus based on the making of art or the telling about art. The department seems to have found its niche in providing a foundations program which serves students in understanding the basic underlying premise of traditional studio art techniques. Program faculty visit the University of Washington to review articulation of coursework and check on former students, although they are small in number. The recent move to five credit studio classes has not diminished enrollment and is seen as a benefit to those students who are serious about the creative aspects of art.

The outcomes and assessments in this program are yet to be fully developed. Although published, they are quite vague in nature; "Learn how to design," "build on skills," and "better understand how art is made." Most of the assessment is instructor led facilitation of student strengths and weaknesses. This is little evidence that the program evaluates student learning in an attempt to use that information to make further improvements in the curriculum.

### **Drama**

Although the drama program maintains a presence in a twofold mission of enhancing performance opportunities for the general students, as well as preparing theater "majors," most of the written comments and interview time was spent in discussing what the program does for its advanced students. Faculty are rightfully proud of those students who have been accepted at very prestigious professional schools and universities; however these students are small in number. This does beg the question about emphasis of energy when the needs of the larger student population are not as openly addressed. This seems to be true both in the performance and technical aspects of theatrical production. General student needs are addressed in the appreciation type courses.

The outcomes and assessments are focused predominantly around directorial feedback in performance. The published outcomes are vague in nature; "comprehend and use methods for script analysis," "develop creative approaches to character development," and "master extensive memory tasks." These outcomes become problematic in assessment. Most of the comments around assessment focused on how it will improve "teaching" rather than how it will improve "student learning."

### **Humanities, Literature & Philosophy**

The HLP Department has formed a cohesive unit around the common themes which underlie all three disciplines. One of these themes, also a college-wide endeavor, is the enhancement and appreciation of diversity. The department offers a curriculum which encourages cross-cultural understanding and requires students to use writing and oral presentation in response to the many faceted perspectives. Faculty are actively involved in cross-disciplinary teaching through the coordinated studies classes.

Department faculty identified six common outcomes for student learning in the various courses offered. Faculty published for student understanding the criteria based scoring upon which grades are determined. The program is not far from being able to close the gap between assessment of outcomes and continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

### **Interactive Media Program**

The IMP is a complex blending of various skills and disciplines into a technology based learning experience that is in a constant state of change. The physical needs of the program are demanding, both in hardware and continuous software upgrading. This need is currently being well met. The program has been substantially retooled in the last three years and the current graduating class is the first to go fully through the new program. This limits the amount of overall program assessment which can be effectively done. Newly designed data base tracking systems, with assistance from Institutional Research, will help track potential, current, and past students.

The downturn in the economy and the loss of high tech jobs has created difficulties for the department, both in terms of enrollments and job placements for graduates. Learning outcomes have been defined and student products can be viewed in the online department gallery. Assessment of technological skills is quite evident in these student samples, however assessment of the "soft" skills needs further development.

### **Journalism/Television**

Although small in size, this department is able to sustain a very active print presence through the *Thunderword* newspaper and television/video production. None of the faculty who teaches in this area is singularly dedicated to this one program. Each has commitments to teach concurrently in other departments. This can cause difficulties in coordination of schedules and diffusion of energies. In spite of this faculty have done an admirable job of meeting student needs in both the print and visual medium. Through participation in these mediums students learn first hand about planning, meeting deadlines, and working collaboratively.

The production of a weekly newspaper is an obvious outcome measurement for this program, as are student television/video productions. Beginning student writers are guided by more advanced students and the faculty advisor. How the published outcomes are achieved, and assessment beyond the publication of the newspaper or television/video production, is not fully clear.

### **Library Technician Program**

This program has made its presence known both in the traditional classroom setting and online. Creative arrangements have been made with various external agencies to provide educational opportunities for their staff needing library technology training and certification. Students are required to participate in internships, and in doing so, gain practical field experience and make contacts which often lead to potential employment.

Although the program is sequentially developed, the outcomes are vague and the assessments of learning unfocused. Hopefully, the department will redefine the outcomes to set the standards of what students should be able to do, and establish assessment practices which determine that students have achieved those standards.

### **Music**

The Music program takes their goal of "Music for Everyone" quite seriously and has done an admirable job in providing instruction for academic majors, performance activities, interdisciplinary studies for non majors, and community outreach. Faculty recognizes the need to meet all students where they are at and to guide them to a new level of understanding and enrichment. The number and quality of student participation has been helped by the Running Start program.

Outcomes for these various types of classes have been established, but how they relate to the department overall are not clear. Overall program assessments are also in need of clarification. The involvement of music faculty in interdisciplinary endeavors such as coordinated studies, IMP, etc. is laudable.

### **Printing Program**

The Printing Program provides students with hands on training with very sophisticated equipment and technology. Students are able to experience a real world learning that requires them to address teamwork, client satisfaction, deadlines, and occasional unrealistic demands. The program has developed numerous professional relationships which have resulted in donated equipment and test site opportunities with major software companies.

The down side of this experience is missing from the self study. The program is based on a cost centered approach with all instruction focused around college and community print jobs. Since the department must aggressively seek these printing jobs in order to survive there is some question of educational intent. What happens to planned curriculum when there is a crunch of print jobs? Does the need for continued income outweigh the planned, daily instruction? The published outcomes and assessments lend weight to the focus on print production and meeting client need. Assessment of student learning based on client satisfaction with the final printed product is less than a fully balanced approach. The unanswered question is whether the needs of students, who have access to excellent equipment in a real world scenario, is balanced with the needs of the college for completion of all awaiting print jobs.

### **Production Illustration Program**

The Production Illustration program provides students with industry based skills to move into jobs in the graphic arts field. The college provides excellent resources for the technology intensive part of this field of study. The computer classrooms provide an excellent opportunity for students to learn the software applications which they must know to be successful in the industry. The program does a good job of finding the balance between the technology and artistic requirements with coursework that addresses both needs. The assessment of this learning needs to be more fully realized.

The program recently added a capstone course in which students from marketing, advertising, production illustration, and offset printing provide professional services to not-for-profit and government agencies. This is an outstanding experience for students which provides them with a real world experience, a team based project, and a final product which enhances their portfolio. Unfortunately, the published outcomes and assessments did not mention this capstone experience, which is an excellent opportunity for a final program assessment. Hopefully, in the future this will be incorporated into the overall assessment.

### **Speech**

Although the Speech Department offers several different courses, the primary focus is on SPCH100 Basic Oral Communication. The spring term 2003 schedule shows 19 sections of this course, two sections of pre-college speech, and one each of Intercultural, Interpersonal, and Presentation Skills. The department has chosen to take continuous improvement of this course very seriously and addressed the issue of consistency across all sections by developing a common rubric to be used by every instructor. The faculty structured assessment around a rubric which evaluates students' motivation, knowledge, and skills. As data were collected the evidence of student learning began to show a weakness in the section of the course dedicated to communication in group process. As a result of this faculty reevaluated the class methodology and made changes in instruction which resulted in a substantive increase in student learning for this portion of the course, and thus closing the loop on educational effectiveness. The department is to be highly praised for its advanced use of student outcomes and assessment in such a positive manner and for providing other departments with a successful example to follow.

### **World Languages**

Although courses in this department are focused on delivering traditional study based around the four basic language skills, faculty set a priority for bringing the inclusion of culture into the learning process from the first term forward. This is happening through textbook choices which highlight cultural issues, service learning projects in public schools, tutoring ESL students, and other means. Second year students are immersed in culture even more deeply by studying the literature, history, and diversity of people and thought from the represented areas.

The five program outcomes are clearly defined and the department is making progress toward standardizing the assessment process. In Spanish classes, each of the five outcomes is assessed by various assignments, presentations, and examinations. All students must participate in oral proficiency exams which are modeled on the ACTFL standards. The department is hopeful that these clear outcomes and assessment procedures will increase student retention rates in second year study.

### **Writing**

Although all of the writing faculty also teach classes in another department (HLP or Journalism) they are pleased with the intense focus on writing which having a separate department gives. The program's primary responsibility is ensuring that students completing WR101 (a core requirement for most students) are writing at an acceptable college level. A recent change in organization places pre-college writing courses in this department, allowing for a more coordinated and seamless approach to consecutive learning.

The writing faculty take learning outcomes and appropriate assessment measures quite seriously. Students in WR101 have a common portfolio exit assessment with the corresponding scoring guide. Exit assessments for classes leading to WR101 are in development and should lead to improved learning. Information is being gathered to determine student success as related to the COMPASS test score

placements and comparable progress through classes leading to WR101. The establishment of a Gateway Writing faculty position has been very beneficial in helping many departments across the campus to establish suitable writing assignments and assessment in their courses. It also offers the Writing Department additional information about how students retain and demonstrate their writing skills.

### **Pre-college Educational Activities -**

#### **Standard 2.A – General Requirements, Instructional Area: Pre-college Programs--*ABE, GED, ESL (credit and non-credit), Reading, Writing, High School Completion and the Tutoring Center***

Highline Community College's commitment to its pre-college focus is evident in the fact that the Dean of Instruction includes "Pre-College Education" in his title, a change from the last full accreditation visit. Overall, the pre-college programs appear to conform to the requirements of Standard Two. Student objectives, student assessment plans and course modification procedures are in place and consistently applied throughout the departments. Department faculty meet regularly to maintain the program's coherent breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis. One innovation which has emerged is the focus on use of library resources and practice of research methods using the internet.

### **Non-Credit ABE/GED/ESL Program**

#### ***Summary of findings of the self-study***

Because the non-credit ABE, GED and ESL program at Highline Community College is under constant state and federal scrutiny, it has a good grasp of assessment requirements and how to translate assessment results into program improvements. They have a culturally diverse staff who are sensitive to the needs of their students. Also, because their courses are off-site in community settings, they bring Highline Community College's presence into the community at large. Having such a large, district-wide program, however, presents a coordination challenge, especially since class scheduling, part-time staffing and part-time faculty evaluations are managed by a faculty member with release time.

#### ***Analysis***

The non-credit ABE, GED and ESL program at Highline Community College appears to be thriving. Since the last accreditation visit, the non-credit ESL program has increased its staffing with the addition of a third full-time faculty member, demonstrating the institution's commitment to a stable program which strives to meet the needs of an increasing population of non-English speaking students. It should be noted, however, that these departments are always under pressure to provide classes in locations throughout the district and, therefore, have a heavy reliance on part-time faculty. Also, the college has made a conscious decision to give priority for on-campus classroom space during the morning to core curricular offerings, so non-credit classes are not offered on-campus from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

This program appears to be in compliance with the effectiveness criteria of both the state Office of Adult Literacy and the Washington Adult Basic Education Reporting System, requirements of which ensure regular and consistent program review. In addition, faculty continue to modify their program to meet the specific needs of their students. An example is the curricular shift towards Family Literacy goals of the Even Start program and the inclusion of computer technology training for their students where possible.

The non-credit ESL department is to be commended for its professional development of its staff, both full and part-time. The ***Instructor's Handbook*** is an excellent tool which provides good support for its part-time faculty. Also, the practice of holding meetings at the first of each term is laudable.

The unity of this department is admirable in light of the fact that coordination duties fall upon rotating faculty coordinators who accomplish their duties during release time. As this department expands and the number of students increases, it is recommended that creating the position for a full-time program coordinator be considered.

## **Reading, Writing and ESL (credit)**

### ***Summary of findings of the self-study***

The Pre-college Studies reading, writing and credit ESL appear to be carrying out the goals of their mission statement. Since the last full accreditation visit, there have been some significant changes in organizational structure and increases in student enrollment. During this evolution, there have been positive initiatives in departmental practices such as their collaboration with the library, creation of assessment tools for Writing/ESL 60 and 91 and launch of linked courses to content classes such as Psychology 100. At the same time, the department is grappling with the domination of its classes of ESL speakers in both ESL and non-ESL tracks and the lack of a full-time writing instructor, leaving that responsibility to the Writing Department.

### ***Analysis***

The College's commitment to its pre-college focus is evident in the number of full-time reading faculty (It is uncommon in most institutions to have such a ratio of reading-only specialists.) and the integration of pre-college offerings in the Writing and Mathematics departments (not uncommon, but notable). The department participation in the "Gateway" faculty program is also to be commended. Such college-wide initiatives make a positive impact on student learning.

In general, the Pre-college program is supported by strong, well-qualified, committed faculty who appear to clearly understand the challenges of their area. In the analysis in 4.1 of their self-study notebook, outcomes are connected to assessment measures although the assessment indicators listed in section 1 are assessment activities, not assessment indicators. Department faculty appear to be conscientious in reviewing and updating course offerings and have created a strong reading program. It is recommended, however, that the problem of the decrease in number of students taking the College reading placement test be addressed, to include the possibility of instituting college-wide mandatory placement testing for all incoming students.

The strengths of the Reading area are not duplicated in the Writing area, however. The self-study identifies the need for better articulation with the Writing Department. Such a need should be addressed and remedied. Past collaborative efforts between the Pre-college Education Department and the Writing Department have resulted in positive outcomes such as the exit assessment rubrics for Writing 91 and 98.

## **High School Completion and the Tutoring Center**

The High School Completion Program has a satisfactory completion rate, providing high school non-finishers with a viable option to the GED program. The ***High School Completion Handbook*** is an excellent guide for students involved in the program. One soon-to-be-initiated measure to assist students in finishing their degrees is mandatory advising. The College's focus on advising here and college-wide is to be commended.

The efforts of the Tutoring Center to assist students in being academically successful are laudable. The College and its participating departments are to be commended for their support of this facility. It is noteworthy that Peer Tutoring is in large part supported by General Funds, in addition to work/study and Perkins funds. Secondly, the "Gateway" faculty's involvement with Peer Tutor training is an asset. The emphasis on tutor training, which is held on a regular weekly schedule, is admirable.

## **Off Campus and Special Programs Providing Extended Learning, Academic Credit and Non-Credit Programs -**

### **Standard Two, Instructional Area: Educational Program and Its Effectiveness to include Off-Campus and other Special Programs Providing Extended Learning Academic Credit and Non-**

## **Credit Programs (including Federal Way Campus, Contracted Training, Study Abroad, College in the High School)**

Highline Community College outreach programs and activities are comprised of: 1) the Center for Extended Learning (CEL) which is primarily service-clearing and is currently housed in seven external locations in addition to the main campus; 2) Supported Employment and Community Services; 3) Women's Programs and WorkFirst; 4) English as a Second Language/Adult Basic Education/GED (ESL/ABE/GED); 5) the College in the High School program including Running Start; and 6) the Cooperative Education Co-Op program.

The primary purpose of the entrepreneurially based, revenue generating Center for Extended Learning program is to offer classes, courses, classes, workshops, seminars and customized training in a variety of areas. The mission is identified as one to "enrich the community through personal and professional life-long learning opportunities" that support the College's mission. The College is clearly committed to the CEL program but in times of economic distress, revenue generation to support the service-learning components of CEL is hindered. CEL's Contracted Training and Technology related programs offered at the Federal Way Campus have been particularly hard hit due to the current recession in the Seattle area. It is not clear how the College will continue to support contracted training at that site.

Highline offers vital community assistance to people with disabilities through its highly successful supported employment and community services program. A key element in the design of services is the focus on inclusion. This program supports students who are part of a diverse and multifaceted community.

In keeping with College's considerable commitment to offering programs in the assisting the un-served, Highline Community College offers Woman's and WorkFirst Services that provide education and training for single parents, displaced homemakers, low-income parents' education and training to empower them and assist them in preparing for entry or re-entry into the workforce. These successful programs remain important priorities for the College.

The ESL/ABE/GED programs are campus based with outreach available at eleven off campus locations. These programs grew out of the College's commitment to diversity and to serving the underserved. Although the College remains committed to supporting these programs, their delivery is hindered due to the lack of computer based instructional software.

Highline Community College offers a successful College in a High School program that offers high school students the chance to complete lower division college courses while still in high school. The Program is small but growing. Running Start is a unique program whereby high school students may enroll in college courses and receive both college and high school credit. This program too is small but is expected to grow. Highline views these programs as an important component of the cluster of community services it currently offers.

The Co-Op program is consistent with the College's commitment to provide "real-world" work experience work experience. The program has grown dramatically in recent years. Participation in the Co-Op program is both required and elective depending upon the academic program in which the student is enrolled. The completion rate for Co-Op students is quite high and continued growth for the program is projected.

Consistent with College's Mission and Goals statement, the institution remains clearly committed to offering a myriad of community service to enrich the lives of those in the environs of the College and the lives of those for whom the College can provide services and education enabling the under-served and disenfranchised to move into self-sustaining circumstances. In a climate of diminishing resources to support existing extra-campus based educational programs and services, the College must make difficult choices as to which programs are to be sustained and then develop strategies to support these programs including those already associated with revenue generation and service-clearing.

## **Policy 2.1 – General Education/Related Instruction –**

### **Policy 2.1 General Education and Related Instruction**

Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degree programs at Highline all contain a substantial and coherent program of general education courses. These courses are of college level and appropriate content in the humanities and fine arts, natural sciences, mathematics, and the social sciences. The rationale for general education requirements is published in the college catalog and focused on providing a broad educational background and preparation for transfer into baccalaureate degree programs. Courses meeting each category of requirement are identified in the college catalog and other college publications. General education distribution requirements provide students with the option of selecting an emphasis that allows a stronger concentration of courses within one of the distribution areas. A Diversity and Globalism requirement was added to the Associate of Arts degree requirements in 1997 to be effective for students entering fall 1999. The general education components of the transfer degree are taught by faculty who are clearly qualified with appropriate credentials.

All Associate of Applied Science Degrees and certificate programs of a year or more include a recognizable body of instruction in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations. Safety is addressed in selected certificate and degree programs where safety is deemed to be a component of the area of practice. The institution has identified college level courses that can appropriately be used to fulfill these requirements and are taught in stand-alone courses by discipline faculty who are appropriately qualified.

### **Policy 2.2 – Educational Assessment –**

Each institution is expected to adopt an assessment plan responsive to its mission and needs. This involves the planning stage, carrying out of those plans, the assessment of the outcomes, and the influencing of the planning process by the assessment activities.

Highline Community College has made a commitment to fulfilling this expectation but is experiencing some inherent confusion regarding the process. The first of four central initiatives in the revised 2001 strategic plan states “Achieve excellence in teaching and learning.” This initiative is reinforced by the ten College-Wide Student Learning Outcomes. However, there is confusion among faculty and departments as to the relationship and/or differences between the central initiatives, the college-wide outcomes, and the development of departmental and course level outcomes,

The college has vested the development of outcomes and assessments in the Standards, Outcomes, and Competencies Committee (SOCC). This faculty driven committee has undertaken its own education without outside assistance. After some initial struggles in defining its relationship to departments (not wanting to be the outcomes police) the committee began holding workshops to help program faculty see the educational value of outcomes based learning. SOCC developed a template and began consulting with departments to fill out the requested information: Mission Statement, Department Objectives, Student Learning Outcomes, and Assessment Strategies.

Unfortunately, this exacerbated the confusion within departments as to what constituted student learning outcomes and departmental outcomes or objectives. Although most programs have published information in each of these categories, there is little consistency in the establishment of learning outcomes or the process of assessing that learning. SOCC might better serve the needs of faculty by establishing a common language or vocabulary for everyone to use. Currently, there is not clarity in differentiating an outcome from a competency. Some departments are still confusing student learning outcomes with faculty teaching strategies. There is not an accepted definition, nor is there agreement, of what assessment means. Until the college adopts a common language there will be continued difficulty in addressing the underlying issues of Policy 2.2

SOCC is in a position to lead campus discussions regarding the role of departmental outcomes in relationship to the college-wide outcomes. Are they separate, unrelated issues? If they are related, should departmental outcomes be subsets of the college-wide outcomes? How are the college-wide outcomes assessed? Does the assessment on a course and departmental level become the collective assessment college-wide?

These questions address the issues of planning, carrying out of plans, and assessments. They do not address the last issue, that being how this process affects future planning, the continuous improvement cycle. A few programs on campus are emerging as leaders of the full process, wherein they have set their outcomes, determined a plan for assessment, collected the data, evaluated that data, and made necessary adjustments in order to optimize student learning. SOCC should publicly celebrate the successes of these programs in order to help others see how it is being done, while also seeing the value enhancement for student learning.

A further stage of development which SOCC might want to explore is the application of outcomes and assessment to degree distribution requirements. How do courses get listed as meeting distribution requirements? Are there common outcomes for student learning? Do the assessments for all courses in a distribution area, no matter the type of assessment used, demonstrate a common mastery of the specified outcomes?

It is important that Highline Community College recommit its efforts toward creating an integrated and meaningful system of outcomes. The entire instructional community of the college must embrace learning outcomes, institutional assessment activities, and the subsequent analysis which informs improvement in teaching performance and student achievement.

## **Policy 2.6 – Policy on Distance Delivery -**

### **STANDARD 2, POLICY 2.6 Distance Learning**

#### **Approval and Purpose:**

The college has incorporated distance learning into its broad institutional goals of in a variety of ways:

- The 2001 Strategic Plan , Initiative # 1, *Achieve Excellence in Teaching and Learning*, Activity B. 8 commits the institution to assessing and removing barriers to student success such as scheduling
- Initiative #1, D promotes the development of alternative delivery methods; development of online courses, the use of online technology and continued development of online degree programs
- Initiative # 1, E supports defining and evaluating current and future populations served by alternative delivery methods
- Student outcomes include values related to learning independently, using technology, and acquisition of information literacy
- The Instruction Cabinet approved in 2002 a series of suggestions that will enhance and improve distance learning efforts
- Good support and training for faculty are available through the Instructional Design and Instructional Computing departments
- The Distance Learning Committee is representative, and is active in DL issues
- The college budget has incorporated technology into many aspects of the college, including facilities, management, staffing and infrastructure. Alternative delivery methods and expanding distance education are seen as potential solutions to problems related to adequacy of facilities and access issues

The distance learning program at HCC has been developed under existing institutional standards and was approved in 2000 by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Colleges

and Universities through the substantive change process. Distance learning is organized and managed in a decentralized fashion, with general management oversight provided by the Dean of Instruction for Transfer and Pre-College Education. He describes his role as being a facilitator. Technical and faculty training support are provided by Instructional Design and Instructional Computing, which report to the Dean of Instructional Resources. The web site and web page maintenance are supported by the Faculty Resource Center. Management of individual HCC courses and curricula falls to the particular academic discipline. General management of courses offered through the Washington Online consortium also falls to the Dean of Instruction.

The college has taken a very conservative approach to distance learning ( DL ) development. The college intentionally offers a limited number of classes; the level of development of online classes is markedly less than one would expect for a college the size of HCC and with such a rich technology environment. There have been varying degrees of institutional enthusiasm for distance learning and the program has had several directors over the past few years. This may have led to the somewhat fragmented nature of the program. There is no clearly-identifiable distance learning department, coordinator, budget or nuclear staff.

Though highlighted in the institutional strategic initiatives, the present and future role of distance learning has not been clearly articulated at HCC. Online classes are seen as having value to serve the needs of the local community, but the institution does not intent to market these classes to a broader audience. DL courses are seen as a benefit to place-bound students and to those with scheduling issues. However, there is a strong institutional philosophy that DL courses will not supplant face-to-face instruction. A class must exist in the traditional classroom format before it can be developed online. Online classes are not seen as the answer to over-crowded classrooms or facility issues. There is no data that shows how many HCC students are taking online classes at other institutions and transferring that credit back to HCC.

Though the college participates in WAOL, which offers numerous online courses, HCC's use has historically been very limited. There is currently no effort to expand WAOL offerings at HCC, but the Instructional Cabinet has begun discussions about issues related to WAOL classes that might spur additional institutional interest.

There is some institutional interest in completing the availability of the transfer degree at a distance, but no specific plans have been developed. Enrollment in transfer-type courses has been very good. No additional DL fee is currently being charged, but one is being considered.

#### **Curriculum and Instruction:**

The Distance Learning Committee provides faculty oversight of curriculum and instruction. The committee is comprised of one faculty from each division, the Dean of Instruction for Transfer and Pre-College Education, and representatives from the Library and Instructional Design.

Course development interest must originate at the department/division level.

The Distance Learning Committee must approve all distance learning course Development. The Distance Learning Committee has been perceived by some faculty as an obstacle to development, but the committee sees its role as assuring the quality of the course and the preparedness of the instructor to teach in an alternate delivery mode. If the college decides to expand its development of DL courses it may need to address this issue.

The departments/division have control over which courses through WAOL will be offered. These decisions were made based on course equivalencies and content. The departments can object to a course that is being offered and the course can be removed.

Currently there is no additional release time or additional pay for faculty who want to develop distance learning courses. Faculty must develop courses on their own time. Some have perceived this as a barrier to expanded development. The Title III grant may provide some funds for DL development, however.

The Distance Learning Committee has developed an "Approval for Distance Learning Courses" form that requires the developer to think through and respond to a series of questions related to DL delivery for that course and, that additionally requires sign-off by staff from the Library, Instructional Design, Instructional Computing or video production and testing. In addition to the division chair. This ensures that the developer has taken the range of support necessary to succeed in teaching a DL course into consideration.

The Distance Learning Committee adopted guidelines in 1999 for development of online courses. One guideline stipulates that the content of an online course should not be different from its traditional counterpart. Another of the guidelines specifically mandates that the instructor provide a structure that incorporates student-instructor and student-to-student interaction. Enrollment is kept to 20-25 students the first time the course is taught, which makes interaction easier. Then the cap rises to reflect that of the land-based class.

A very bright spot in the distance learning picture is the availability of technology training and support. The lack of a course management system has been perceived by some to be a barrier to development. It is difficult and cumbersome to develop DL online classes with the patchwork of tools that have been available previously. The college has solved this challenge by licensing the popular Blackboard course management system, which should be implemented over the summer.

However, online classes have benefited from the direct support of Instructional Design (ID ) and Instructional Computing ( IC ).ID supports faculty as they incorporate the Internet, and multimedia technology into their courses, and has been involved in DL development since the beginning. ID offers workshops and training specific to the needs of DL development faculty and runs an on-going support group for DL instructors. ID helped develop DL guidelines and procedures. The IC department provides technical hardware and software assistance as well as managing the servers related to DL.

The institution is fortunate to have adequate network bandwidth to support distance learning. Riding on this network are computers on faculty desktops and in student labs that are replaced approximately every three years. The college added a state-of-the-art computing facility in 2002. This facility joined an excellent Multi-Media Instructional Design Studio, which is used heavily for incorporating technology into instruction. Training is available for faculty to learn how to use the tools in each of these facilities.

Efforts are made during the licensing and contracting of both hardware and software and commercial instructional programs to ensure that standards and content are up-to-date.

The faculty contract addresses copyright ownership in section 902. It provides that material developed on the faculty's own time, without college resources, belongs to the faculty. If college resources are utilized, the college is considered the author unless a written agreement is reached before work has begun. Because the issue of intellectual property has grown more complex with the advent of web-based instruction and technology, the college may want to more fully explore and codify intellectual property ownership in the event that the development of DL is expanded or it takes on a more significant role in the curriculum.

#### **Library and Information Resources:**

"Instructional Resources views distance education not as a separate entity, but as a significant piece of the overall instruction offered by the college." The library provides information to DL students and access to library resources via the web. Many of the library electronic resources are available online. DL students can access library resources through inter-library loan as well. Reference assistance is available by phone and through user's guides. The library is participating in a grant project entitled "Information Literacy Distance Learners " which explores connecting distance learners to skills and resources necessary for success in learning. The library's strategic plan includes goals related to improving access and services to all students, including those at a distance.

Distant students have an array of student services available to them. Many college documents, policies and procedures are available on the web. Information admissions, financial aid, course materials, technology and course content and other related content are available from the college home page or the distance learning home page. DL students can register and online buy their textbooks online. Financial aid is available to the distance learner.

A counselor who serves as liaison to the DL student is available on-campus and by phone. The planning and advising process incorporates a mechanism that screens the student for the necessary placement scores and prerequisites. Students are counseled about the necessary personal skills that are needed to be successful in a DL class. The DL web page also contains much helpful information to help a student get started properly and to succeed. Arrangements can be made with the testing center for course-required exams. As is the case with other colleges, placement testing cannot be done at a distance, but special arrangements can be made for proctored testing for truly remote students.

To ensure the integrity of student work and testing, password-protected access to courses is in place, along with other software-specific security measures. The testing center can provide proctored testing. During the instructional design process, security and integrity issues are dealt with, and college workshops have been offered on the topic of plagiarism and academic standards for online resources.

ADA needs are handled in the same manner for DL students as they are for traditional students. HCC offers many support services for students with disabilities through the office of Access Services. The procedures are spelled out in several college documents. The library provides adaptive equipment and adjustable workstations. The Instructional Computing Center classrooms have at least one ADA station. Other accommodations are available upon request from Access Services. An AA station is available in the open lab area as well, as well as other adaptive equipment.

The college has just begun to address the challenge of ADA compliance with web pages and other web-based components of DL courses, such as streaming media. Training provided by Instructional design incorporates ADA issues, but the institution needs to implement a system-wide solution to electronic compliance standards.

Student issues with technology can be addressed through the Instructional Computing Center or the DL home page.

Student complaints are handled in the same manner as for traditional students. Technical issues go to the coordinator for Instructional Computing. Academic or other complaints follow the procedure detailed in the student handbook.

#### **Facilities and Finances, Commitment to Support:**

The institution possesses the infrastructure and equipment and the technical expertise for distance education as evidenced by the discussion under " Faculty Support" above.

Distance Learning budgets and planning efforts are imbedded in several different divisions and departments, including the library, Instructional Computing, Instructional Design, student services, and the Faculty Resource Center. Infrastructure that supports other college network applications also supports DL.

The college has adequate resources to sustain the viability of DL at its current level. Should the college decide to grow the program, a closer scrutiny of resources will be required. Though the institutional strategic plan incorporates DL initiatives, indicating a commitment to support, more strategic planning will also be necessary if the program is expanded significantly.

#### **Evaluation and Assessment:**

Student capability to succeed in distance education programs is addressed under student services, above.

Data indicate that HCC students enrolled in WAOL courses succeed at a rate comparable to other state students.

No strategic plan or systematic, comprehensive program of assessment is in place for distance learning. Some departments are doing internal planning and assessment that impacts distance learning, however. The Library, Instructional Design, the Faculty Resource Center, and Instructional Computing are examples.

The Distance Learning Committee has developed a course evaluation form that is available to DL students. The form is returned to the department who uses student feedback to evaluate the individual DL course.

The college has recommended that a strategic planning process that provides direction for distance learning should be developed. Further, the college recommends that an assessment process should be developed that includes such issues as intellectual property ownership, compensation and workload. Student outcomes in DL classes, measurement criteria and evaluation tools are also important goals for the college.

## **Standard Three – Students**

### **PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION**

In recent years, qualified staff members have been hired reflecting the goal of providing adequate services consistent with the mission of Student Services. Meeting the needs of students as well as the community is accomplished through the promotion and hiring of staff members of diversity; all members hold degrees in fields qualifying them for areas requiring specific skills; all are encouraged to attend workshops to complete further education. More than half of the staff has more than five years' experience in student services.

Staff assignments are defined by position descriptions and are consistent with the educational qualifications and student service area of expertise. Student Service supervisors consistently attempt to recruit and retain staff members of color, and employees with special skills and abilities, building upon the initiative to “create a college climate that values diversity and global perspectives”.

Student Service staff are not evaluated annually. Performance Evaluations are not conducted in a systematic manner. It is highly suggested that a consistent employee evaluation system be established and accomplished on an annual basis giving credibility to personnel training and development.

Student Service facilities are minimally adequate. Although reorganization has facilitated better space utilization, the Student Service building accommodations are overcrowded, need refurbishing, need new carpet, and furnishings need to be added. Consideration must be given to the impressions gained by those visiting the facility for services. The plans for a new student center and the consolidation of student service functions must occur.

The established budget process involving student service areas and the respective Associate Dean or Director seems adequate, but a suggestion is made to involve the specific student service staff to a higher degree. The funding currently received seems sufficient and appropriated in a manner consistent with needs, goals and special program requirements.

## GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Not all Student Service areas have established data collection methodologies and decision making processes adequate to service student needs. In many areas services are rendered without knowing the outcomes or student satisfaction. Although some data collection instruments are utilized such as the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, individual area questionnaires, and basic on-going annual evaluation programs, a systematic evaluation process needs to be established allowing program resources to be tailored around student needs, as well as institutional goals and objectives and community requests. Many Student Service areas are aware of this need and have established a data collection system and an evaluation process, through an implementation proposal in their 2002-2003 goal statements. In order to adequately meet the changing student needs and to establish student services germane to the specific goal attainment, the data/evaluation process must be part of the allocation plan and process.

An interview with the student government and other students-at-large indicates students feel represented and are insured a voice in college governance. The Associated Students of Highline Community College by-laws provide for the appointment of students on various college committees. A full range of committee assignments from budget to policy, activities to governing policy and procedure recommendations are all indications students are considered for and are serving on college committees of substantial merit.

Catalogs, student handbooks, a pamphlet entitled "Student Rights and Responsibilities", class schedules, a club handbook and other web site references all cause the policies on students' rights and responsibilities to be readily available and accessible. Procedures are established through various Student Service offices to offer assistance and implementation of these policies.

The Highline Community College campus security report is provided in Compliance with the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act. A web site is established and hard copies of this report are utilized for dissemination of informational requirements. Post cards are mailed to each student indicating this information is available under the web site address.

Although there is a certain amount of campus unrest regarding safety issues on campus, the College seems to be attentive to student concerns regarding safety issues. Crime statistics are reported weekly in the "Thunderword". An open communication process exists between faculty, staff and security personnel allowing for notification when serious situations warrant, and an all-campus committee to review campus safety concerns is established to make recommendations. A committee established by students has met and generated recommendations to be considered in future quarters.

Students are able to acquire information regarding college policy, enrollment processes, financial aid availability, grievance and discrimination policies, student conduct, academic honesty, along with opportunities to serve in student government, student organizations and other governing Instructions and procedures through the college catalog. Also, through various pamphlets published by a variety of Student Service offices, through a student handbook and on the web site established for queries relating to students interaction with the college community. All appear to be clear and precise and compliment the established guidelines for student retention and recruitment.

Although many changes have occurred during the past several years within Student Service leadership and organizationally modifications are being made consistent with space utilization, student growth and budget requests, there must be established a consistent system for evaluation. Consideration must be given to the appropriateness, adequacy and utilization of student services and programs wherein the results of the evaluation concerning student needs establish the basis for change. Areas can be consolidated or realigned to establish clearer student interaction and direction. Consideration should be given to new, non-traditional methods of serving students where methods established through technology could adequately eliminate student waiting, misinformation and confusion.

## **ACADEMIC CREDIT AND RECORDS**

Consistent with prudent records management, the college has established a methodology to secure student records and history. The Student Management System is utilized to control access and the establishment of demographic gathering of student information. Back-up procedures are documented, storage processes are established and secure off-site repositories are in place. Appropriate policies and requirements secure time sensitive regulations.

Commendations are made regarding the suggested web-based tutorial program, to be established in the near future, enabling any employee accessing the student education records to complete a training program regarding the requirements of the Family Rights and Privacy Act.

Criteria concerning credit, non-credit, transferability of said credit and the awarding of specific degrees according to credit gained through specific classroom activity is specifically outlined. Dissemination of credit for the purposes of the awarding of degrees and the transferability of credit to receiving institutions occurs through proper definition and consistency.

In harmony with statewide college curriculum, the college has established a protocol for evaluation, sending and accepting transfer credit from/to other institutions. In close relationship with Academic Affairs and consultation with college faculty, a full-time credentials evaluator in the Registrar's Office accepts, evaluates and processes college credit.

Specific instructions regarding credit, non-credit, grading equivalents, and other Transcript possible notations are clearly articulated and explained in the college Catalog and other publications regarding the instructional outcomes process.

## **STUDENT SERVICES**

Highline Community College is an open-door college. Criteria has been established and assessment instruments and requirements have been put in place, not with the purpose of screening students out, but rather placing students where their abilities will give benefit to the educational endeavor. Other programs with enrollment limitations and educational preparations have special admission procedures and requirements.

Highline Community College has made changes regarding admissions that enhance the process. Students are given an option regarding social security numbers, a photo ID system has been converted to a high-quality card with greater capabilities and versatility and clarity has been added to the residency process allowing student clarification on requirements and instructions for applying for resident status.

Commendations are given to the establishment of a system allowing names of students interested in specialized areas to be given to departments for further contacts, recruitment and information sharing. This is an example of data gathering and the utilization of the gathered data to assist the college and community objectives.

Multicultural Services established the first 'Unity Through Diversity Week Program' which is celebrated annually. Awards have been given for the success of this program. As a result of this and other programs established through the various offices of Student Services, the students of color population has increased significantly over the past years. Enhanced retention services, campus-wide programming and diversity hiring practices have demonstrated a concerted effort to promote a positive campus environment as reflected in the "Diversity and Participation of People of Color in Higher Education" report.

Commendations are given to the college's obvious efforts to establish a student body of diversity and multiculturalism. In keeping with Highline's Strategic Initiative Two: "to enhance a college climate that values diversity and global perspectives", collaborative efforts have been made to promote a positive campus environment through enhanced retention services for

students of color, campus-wide programming, and diversity hiring practices. With the changing demographics relating to diversity, this effort must be supported by more resources through budget considerations and personnel planning and hiring strategically.

A well defined policy explains the time limit established for enrollment and withdrawal of a student within any given quarter. Instructions are given regarding accessibility to touch-tone, on-line registration and in-person contact with the Registrar's office. Admonition is given to the student to contact various Student Service and faculty resources allowing for adequate knowledge of resultant difficulties the withdrawal could cause.

A strong suggestion is made to establish as a high priority a degree audit system enabling student advisement and degree determination for graduation purposes. The degree audit system will reduce student in-person inquiries, will enable more accurate advising and information giving, and will establish an immediate record of student progress.

The Financial Aid office having launched a laudable new web site configuration containing the new FASFA forms along with more scholarship options, more consumer education information, loan entrance and exiting counseling and satisfactory progress petitions. As a result of the Financial Aid office web-site development, the Student Service area will utilize the form and format as a template for all agencies. Various informational pieces need to be considered to help students become aware of these new services and they need to be developed and disseminated in order to have students involved in this facilitating service.

The college catalog outlines the various forms of Financial Aid adequately and explains the eligibility requirements clearly. Standards of progress are also given. Further information is available at the Financial Aid office.

Student Services in collaboration with the various Academic Departments are sensitive to new incoming students. "Fall Opening Week New Student Orientation Day" is held with presentations from various campus entities. In addition, evening orientations are held during the first week of class along with a barbecue dinner and information fair.

New and continuing students may receive assistance from various areas in Student Services. All of these agencies are willing to assist students or refer them to other areas of interest. The agency name and location might cause confusion to new students if not marketed correctly. Although commendations are given to Student Services for the "one stop" concept of the Entry Services program, brochures, signage and advertising need to be posted and printed for student access and assistance. An overall information campaign informing students of specific services available to them is important.

Personal counseling is accomplished through the Counseling Center. All counselors are adequately credentialed. A code of ethics is established describing and establishing parameters for proper counseling techniques.

Faculty Advising receives mixed reviews. All faculty are required to be involved, advising loads are disparate, technology enhancing processes need to be developed and implemented, and the degree audit program should be launched. Some faculty members are not available when students need assistance, faculty really care about students and are dedicated to assisting successful scholarship and guidance, and faculty know their programs better than many college offices and personnel. These reflect some of the comments received through campus wide interviews. It is suggested that the training of Faculty Advisors be coordinated, communicated and enhanced. Improving the Faculty Resource Center and Educational Planning and Advising Center's collaboration efforts could result in the Faculty Advising component reaching full potential and design. The concept of faculty advisors' in residence could be explored and implemented.

A new food service program has been established and is operating in the student center. As a service to the college and the community, Conference and Food Services are provided and coordinated through the

Student Service programs department. Housed in the student center, the facilities are very inadequate and not exciting nor appealing. Limited space is available for conference services and expansion of the program. The campus looks forward to the new facility for these functions.

Standard 3.D.15 states in part: "...that the institution...ensures appropriate services and facilities are accessible to students in its programs., and, ...activities and programs include adaptation for traditionally under-represented students, such as physically disabled...". Although much retrofitting has been accomplished within many of the restricted access areas, there are still facilities needing consideration and causing difficulties for the under-represented college population. It is suggested that the college not wait until old buildings are replaced with new to correct this situation. Current students need the "equal opportunity for participation".

Student Programs has finalized the plans for construction of a new student center. Construction will begin within the next couple of weeks. These new facilities will facilitate the personal, social and intellectual development of students through co-curricular activities, programs and projects. Student Programs is established for all students to become involved in leadership, educational and activity events. They are also sensitive to individual needs and special accessibility situations. A handbook is published and disseminated to students wishing information about programming goals and objectives, special programs, and the student code of conduct.

Students become involved in campus activities through committee assignments, through the establishment of committees resolving campus issues and through leadership and educational programming. Student advocates reside within this organization.

Appropriate relationships exist between the student programs office and the administration of the college. Each has respect for the special nature of assigned functions involving college governance and activities. Open door practices exist exhibiting trust and confidence in mutual understanding and communication of issues and questions.

Intramurals provides appropriate activities, depending upon the time and season, and facilities for student recreational and athletic needs not connected to the intercollegiate program. The variety of activities include volleyball, indoor soccer, basketball, pickleball, softball, flag football and tennis.

The bookstore is a self-support entity located in the student administration building. As the student center is completed, the Bookstore, which reports to the vice-president for administration, will move into the new facility. The new space will be welcomed as the lack of suitable space in the current facility prohibits the expanded requirements to meet student needs and desires. The bookstore is a positive influence on campus as the contributions and financial commitments are utilized to enhance cultural celebrations, assist with the construction of the new student center and provide merchandise relating to campus life.

The student newspaper entitled the "Thunderwood" has a long standing tradition of excellence. Many students are involved in publishing the weekly publication.

## **INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS**

The goals established for the 2002-2003 school year begin with the following statement: "We, the Athletic Department at Highline Community College, are dedicated and committed to the academic, Athletic, and social growth of each student-athlete. Through Educational ideals learned both on and off the field of play, we will instill in our student-athletes the benefits of competition, sportsmanship, hard work, commitment, and teamwork." Equity exists, as defined through title IX, as a result of women's volleyball, men's and women's soccer, men's and women's basketball, men's wrestling , women's softball, and men's and women's track and field.

The college is a member of the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges. Highline's scholarship policy exceeds the Requirements of the NWAACC. Every effort is made to make athletes students first and athletes second. Continual progress reports of each athlete are received through cooperation with the instructors and the athletic department. Special tutoring programs and study halls assist with academic success as monitored by the athletic academic advisor.

Athletic budgets are ultimately approved by the Board of Trustees after budget preparation and presentations are made to the student government Services and Activities budget committee and recommended through the vice-president for student services.

Equity among intercollegiate programs is evaluated continuously and annually; a report is submitted to the NWAACC and the state of Washington.

Athletic scheduling is accomplished through sports committees in coordination with the NWAACC. Schedules are completed with the student athlete's scholarship endeavors as prime concern. All scheduling is accomplished to minimize student absences from class.

### **Policy 3.1 Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status.**

Catalogs and class schedules are available to students through hard copy as well as on the web-site. A careful review indicates clear, factually accurate, and current information is contained in each Publication.

Currency is diminished as the catalog, published for a two year period, reaches its final year of publication. Programs tend to change and policies are modified which causes a compromise to the dissemination of appropriate information to Highline's interested community.

The college web-site, containing catalog information, is changed on a yearly basis and reflects modifications resulting from curriculum modification, policy changes and other substantial informational instructions to students.

Consistent formats should be followed when describing program requirements especially those relating to the certificate options.

Section A3 lists items that should be included in college publications. Each suggested item has been reviewed and has been found adequately covered in college publications. Each of these items can be found in publications located on the web-site: [www.highline.edu/stuserv/vpstudents/waccontents.html](http://www.highline.edu/stuserv/vpstudents/waccontents.html).

Accreditation representation is adequately noted and follows the guidelines as outlined in C.1.-6.

## **Standard Four – Faculty**

### **Faculty Selection, Evaluation, Roles, Welfare, and Development**

Highline Community College employs professionally qualified faculty whose primary commitment is to the institution, the discipline and program. Evidence supports that faculty participation in academic planning, curriculum development and review is well documented in the institution's policies and processes. Involvement in academic advising is very strong, as is participation in institutional governance. Students report a high degree of satisfaction with both their access to faculty advisors and the content of information provided through the process.

Faculty workloads reflect the mission and goals of the institution and utilize the talents and competencies of faculty. Strong support for professional growth is supported, evidenced by both financial assistance and release time to pursue professional development.

Salaries and benefits are adequate to attract and retain a competent faculty. Consistent policies in line with the mission and goals of the institution allow benefits for half time faculty and year to year contracts that include only teaching without other committee and service responsibilities. Recruitment information indicates that periodically specific disciplines may experience extreme market demand conditions resulting in difficult-to-fill positions. The review team notes that special consideration to salary and benefits may need to be considered in order to fill such positions. Policies on salaries and benefits are clearly stated, widely available, and equitably administered.

Regular and systematic evaluation of faculty performance occurs. The policies and procedures for evaluation of full-time tenured and non-tenured faculty are well established and clearly defined. A process for evaluation of part-time and adjunct faculty members exists. Application across divisions is uneven.

The College has a systematic process for the recruitment and appointment of full time faculty that includes the use of national and local advertising and screening committees and recommendation of ranked candidates to the hiring authority. Institutional personnel policies and procedures are published and made available to faculty. The college fosters and protects academic freedom for faculty.

Part-time faculty members are qualified with appropriate academic credentials, background, and/or professional experience to fulfill their teaching assignments and other prescribed duties and responsibilities. Employment practices for part-time faculty include dissemination of information regarding the institution, the work assignment, rights and responsibilities, and conditions of employment. An adjunct faculty handbook provides appropriate, relevant information. Some adjunct faculty members report that orientation varies across the institution and a desire for more comprehensive orientation for new adjunct faculty members.

*The visiting team commends both the full time and part-time faculty for their enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment to the students, the programs, and the college.*

### **Scholarship, Research and Artistic Creation**

While research is not a requirement of employment and tenure at Highline, the faculty regularly engages in scholarly, artistic and academic research activities, which include conference participation or presentations, course development, grant writing, and membership in professional organizations. Faculty scholarship demonstrates the personal and institutional commitment to promoting professional growth and acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills to enhance the delivery of instruction.

Commitment from the institution to support these activities is evident in sponsored research, professional development, study abroad program, sabbaticals, funding for adjunct and full time faculty in-service seminars, speakers, and workshops, the Summer Institute, and creation and continued funding of the Faculty Resource Center, where periodic showcasing of faculty creative works and academic accomplishments with receptions and recognition occurs.

### **Policy 4.1 – Faculty Evaluation –**

According to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Highline Community College provides a faculty evaluation system that “promotes high educational quality and encourages the collegial openness and sharing that characterizes the relationships among the College’s faculty”. The pre-tenure evaluation is a well thought out, well designed process for full-time faculty. Campus wide a Tenure Review committee oversees the progress of all tenure track individuals and each pre-tenure faculty member has a working committee with department, division, and at-large faculty representatives which oversee the two-year process. Post-tenure faculty continue to be evaluated every three years in a repeating 6-year cycle. Multiple indices are used to evaluate performance including self, peer, and student evaluations.

Ultimately, the tenure portfolio is reviewed by the appropriate vice-president and steps are taken to either accept the portfolio or to recommend an improvement plan to the faculty member.

Non-tenure track, full-time faculty and adjunct faculty are asked to have student evaluations done each quarter with feedback given by the departmental coordinator.

For the full-time faculty, a well-defined policy is in place and the process is consistently applied and is thorough without being burdensome. For adjunct faculty, however, the established policy is uneven in both its application and the feedback given to the faculty.

## **Standard Five – Library and Information Resources**

The college has recognized the importance of the library and information resources in achieving its institutional mission and goals. The *Strategic Plan* addresses this specifically in Initiative One activities, which include the goals of providing computer access for students and assuring basic computer literacy skills for every student; providing continuous network access to electronic services and resources ( including a variety of electronic library resources ) for all students and staff; including off-campus sites in the campus network; and providing sufficient bandwidth and access to the Internet. Student outcomes include expectations related to the use of technology and information resources and information literacy.

The library and information resources have made many advancements and changes since the last full-scale accreditation visit. Three areas now make up an Instructional Resources (IR) unit: the Library, Instructional Computing and Instructional Design. While the entities operate independently of one another, each providing a unique array of services, collectively IR provides strategic leadership and planning as well as operational support and management in information resources and educational technologies. There have been several positive changes in management and new areas of activity and support have been developed.

Many efforts have been made to incorporate technology into every aspect of the institution's instruction, student services and administrative efforts. Substantial revenues have been expended in this effort. This is reflected in the Self Study, with references to, discussions about and recommendations regarding technology appearing in every standard. Enhancements in staffing, faculty training, technology support, and facilities expansion such as the 2002 addition to the Instructional Computing Center, the creation of the Multimedia Instructional Design Studio, and improvements in infrastructure reflect the college's commitment to implementing its strategic goals. Standards have been set for desktop computers for staff, the computing infrastructure has been strengthened, and a computer replacement cycle for staff computers has been implemented. All campus buildings are now linked with a fiber-optic network, and off-site locations and programs are linked to the campus in a variety of ways

While IR and Administrative Technology ( AT ), which is housed in a separate division, provide leadership for information resources the underlying philosophy that accompanies that leadership deserves a special note: technology acquisition and implementation is user driven to a very large degree. IR and AT strive to be responsive to institutional administrative and instructional change and needs. Staff feel that they have avoided acquiring technology simply because it is popular or because the respective unit managers and staff feel it is important to be on the cutting-edge; instead, they have worked with administrative and instructional users to predict, manage and respond to changes in needs and interests. This has resulted in a flexible use of resources and a campus that, as a whole, seems to be very comfortable with technology, and a very positive integration of technology into the instructional program.

### **Purpose and Scope, Information Resources and Services, Facilities and Access** **( 5.A, 5. B, 5. C )**

The mission of the library is to support the college curriculum by providing a variety of print and electronic resources and to offer assistance and instruction in their use. Many of the electronic resources are

available to students off-campus via the Internet, and patron user information is available in electronic form on the web. The library provides services and support to distance learning and off-campus students largely through its online databases. Information about the library is available electronically on the web and in print. Library information appears in the catalog, schedule and the student handbook. Information and user guides are widely available in the library itself.

A clear collection development plan is in place. Faculty have input into acquisitions through working with individual library contacts and with designated library liaisons. The librarians have a great rapport with the teaching faculty, and new faculty are given substantial library information and support during the new faculty orientation process. Each academic grouping is allocated a specific amount of money for expenditure to support their curricula. The library has responded positively to new curriculum, within budget limits. The materials acquired to support the campus outcome related to diversity are a good example. Patron access to materials is extended by the library's participation in reciprocal borrowing agreements with other state community and technical colleges.

ADA issues have been addressed in a variety of ways, including adaptive workstations and technology. Staff demonstrate a sensitivity to the needs of disabled students, as well as to those who face cultural, ethnic, socio-economic or academic challenges.

While the collection generally meets curricular needs, there are some concerns related to the print materials collection and its budget. Though the Dean of Instructional Resources considers the unit's budget to be adequate overall, the library is challenged to provide a balanced collection of electronic resources and print materials. The ongoing costs of databases, increased costs of periodical subscriptions and standing orders, and increased faculty requests for media have eroded the amount available for book purchase. Faculty, though generally very positive about the library, its staff and resources, as indicated by a faculty survey conducted in 2002, ranked their satisfaction with the currency of the book and periodical considerably lower than other library materials and services. Discussion with faculty indicated that they understood this to be a budget-related issue, rather than a lack of responsiveness by the library. Highline's ranking for expenditure per total students is relatively low. Weeding and acquisitions have improved the currency of the print collection, as had been recommended in the 1993 accreditation report, but data indicates that a third of the collection was published between 1980 and 1989, and another third between 1990-99. Although some of the items would be classic works wherein the copyright date would not necessarily be significant, it is strongly suggested that additional resources to improve the print collection be considered.

The library plays a critical role in the new institutional information literacy outcome. The library has worked collaboratively with the faculty to develop library instruction sessions tailored to specific content needs. These sessions have been rated as very useful by faculty. The faculty praised the library staff for their responsiveness to instructional needs and for working closely with them to plan session content. However, the new literacy outcome will change the way that librarians address library instruction. Thus, the library has proposed an *Action Plan for Advancing Program of Literacy Instruction at Highline Community College* that it hopes to implement soon.

There are some institutional challenges to successfully integrating this outcome. There is a lack of common understanding about the definition of information literacy at the department and faculty level; there is a lack of clear outcomes that can be reflected at the department or course level; no clear measures have been developed and no assessment tools have been agreed-upon. No evaluation instruments have been developed. Academic faculty reports a great deal of confusion about the exact meaning of information literacy as it impacts their classes. If information literacy remains an important priority for Highline, these issues should be addressed in a timely manner.

The library is involved in curriculum development in a variety of ways. Distance Learning development guidelines mandate library sign off; the collection development librarian regularly receives course adoption forms so that library materials and instruction can be anticipated; librarians teach credit courses in academic departments; information resource instruction sessions keep staff involved with changing curricular needs.

Library Media Services provides support to permanently installed classroom equipment, and delivers additional equipment across campus. Media services also includes an enviable array of instructional support services, staff and technology in its media production facilities. The facilities are well-organized and up-to-date. Enthusiastic, well-trained staff assist instructors and others in the use of these resources. The college is very fortunate to have such support , technology and facilities .

A concern in the Media Services area stems from its aging equipment collection, due to a lack of funding. This concern was also addressed in Standard 8. Much of the traditional AV equipment, still heavily used by faculty, has exceeded its expected life span. Outdated equipment results in repairs that are expensive in both maintenance costs and personnel time, and delays in ability to provide adequate service to instruction. Media Services also reports that demand exceeds supply. The concept of a standardized equipment replacement schedule should be addressed.

Instructional Computing ( IC ) and Instructional Design ( ID ) play important instructional support roles. ID supports faculty and staff as they incorporate the Internet and multimedia technology into their instruction or projects, including distance learning. IC provides facilities and technical support to instructional computing, including the Instructional Computing Center and 13 campus labs and computer areas, incorporating over 800 computers and a variety of computer-related equipment. IC also supports more than 20 servers related to instructional efforts.

Of note is the instructional role played by staff in Media and ID. The exempt-level staff have teaching written into their contracts. They teach several credit courses annually outside the department, as time allows. The Media Services manager's contract allows teaching as well. IC works closely with instruction, particularly distance learning.

The staff are very aware of instructional issues and needs. They noted that their classroom experience gives them more credibility with other teaching faculty, which ultimately makes it easier to encourage the use of technology in the classroom. Their proactive roles help bridge the traditional gap between technology and teaching in a manner that truly benefits the institution.

### **Personnel and Management:**

Instructional Resources is managed by the Dean of Instructional Resources, who reports to the Vice-President of Academic Affairs. The dean also serves as the library director. IR department coordinators and full-time librarians report to the dean. Positive, dedicated staff are a real strength of the unit. Staff throughout the unit meet or exceed professional requirements or expected training. Several staff are working on degree requirements or taking classes

Campus funds for staff development are available for exempt, faculty and support staff. Additional funds are provided for staff development by the Instructional Resources operational budget. Notably, the IC staff has a 5% per day commitment to learning written into their contracts. This arrangement is flexible, to allow for prioritization of their work day/week. Documentation indicates that all IR staff are taking advantage of opportunities, and some training is provided as a part of regular IR meetings. However, though the dean encourages staff development, unit staff reports that workloads have impacted their ability to participate to the level they would like in staff development activities. The technical support staff in Library Media, ID and IC particularly feel the shortage of time.

Staffing levels, a concern in 1993 accreditation report, have been addressed. The library has added three full-time MLS librarians in reference and two additional exempt staff. The Instructional Design Department was created in 1997 to support technology-oriented curriculum and instructional efforts, and Instructional Computing, created in 1996 in response to growth in the use of technology in instruction, has also had additional staff and positive changes in work organization. Though the number of part-time hours has been reduced for library and Instructional Design as a result of budge cuts, staffing levels appear to be sufficient.

Staff expressed respect and support for their supervisors and coordinators, and management evidenced a high level of respect and trust for the staff. Staff show a high regard and easy sense of collegiality for one another.

Despite the general improvement in staffing levels, the dean and her staff voiced concerns about workloads. The demands for support from IR staff have risen with the acquisition of technology, the changing expectations of college staff about the use of technology in instruction and campus projects, growth in distance learning, and the subsequent increased use of technologies on and off-campus. Staff reports that because of these changes, they no longer have the time to provide the type of institutional leadership in investigating, piloting and implementing new technologies. Support staff in particular noted that they have difficulty maintaining the expected level of services in light of the reduction of part-time support and cross-functional work assignments. The Self-Study document indicated that the IR unit recommends a realignment of workloads to address some of these concerns.

The dean has developed a variety of strategies to improve communication within the unit, to reduce isolation of tech staff, and to cross-train much of the staff. The cross-functional Library Management team and Instructional Technologies team include representatives from each of the IR areas; there are several cross unit committees; and with the exception of the media tech staff and the video production staff, all support staff work 6 hours per week in an area outside their primary job assignment. Job descriptions have been re-written to reflect this development.

Staff evaluation is an area that should be addressed. The IR unit reflects institution-wide inconsistencies in this area, in the scheduling of evaluations and the procedures and tools used. The concept of a staff development plan is also not systematic throughout IR. While IR faculty is evaluated in line with the faculty contract, evaluation for exempt, support and administration is not consistent. Support staff also noted that some supervisors had not been adequately trained to use existing tools. Some exempt staff who have been at HCC for several years have never been evaluated, and IR support staff evaluation varies within the unit, depending on the department. Though all staff agree that their supervisor or coordinator is very aware of performance issues and that much informal evaluation takes place, this does not take the place of institutionally-documented processes.

Computer support at Highline is divided into two components: instructional computing and administrative technology. The manager of Instructional Computing reports to the Instructional Resources dean; the director of Administrative Technology ( AT ) reports to the vice-president for administration. When the president first assumed leadership of the college, she asked the campus to look at the separation of the two departments. After considerable consideration, Highline determined that two separate departments best served its needs. Each area could utilize its resources to provide quality, timely service dedicated to the particular needs of its constituents.

Efforts have been made to provide for collaboration and communication between these two units. The two groups had historically had many issues between them. Today's staff recognize the importance of communication, however, and the situation is reported to be much improved. Staff noted that though there is an occasional "dropped stitch", communication functions very well.

Representatives from IC and AT participate in the Technology Advisory ( TAC ), a group charged with planning for campus-wide technology issues and recommending policy and procedure related to operations, as well as budget requests to the executive level. The AT director, the IR dean, and other staff, including a representative from the Federal Way facility, also meet together in the Technology Resources Group ( TRG ), created by the IR dean and the AT director, to address higher-level technical issues. Operational issues and planning are a part of TRG's charge.

#### **Planning and Evaluation:**

Instructional Resources has recommended that the unit "...should move planning and evaluation to an outcomes-based model, with clearly-planned assessment and measurement tools."

There is documented evidence of unit planning. Each department and each cross-department committee does a planning activity in the summer, which is reviewed the following summer. (This year's planing encompassed two years.) The cross-functional Library Management team prepares the library's plan; the Instructional Computing department articulates its plan with the Instructional Technology Team; Instructional Design incorporates information from various surveys feedback from contacts with faculty and requirements by the Faculty Resource Center grant; ID's annual plan also becomes a part of the Instructional Technology Team plan.

The activity goals selected correspond to relevant campus strategic initiatives. Progress towards the goals is reviewed regularly with the Library Management Team and the Instructional Technology Team. Activity goals are used to set agendas at unit and departmental meetings. Progress towards the goals is reported regularly to the dean.

Departments report some use of outcomes assessment, data, and anecdotal information for program and service evaluation and improvement. For example, Instructional Design gathers statistics about its services. The department noticed that enrollment had dropped in its training workshops. An informal needs analysis followed. As a result, ID modified its schedule to better meet user need. Instructional Computing noted that distance learning students were utilizing a great deal of tech support time. So, a different approach to the fee for using ICC resources was initiated. The Library and Media Services analyze usage statistics to make purchase decisions.

However, although IR activities around the campus strategic initiatives are clearly identified, expected outcomes, outcomes measures and evaluation tools have not yet been consistently developed and implemented. Further, data that has been collected may not always relate to the activities identified in the strategic plan, and data related to the activities is not always consistently collected. Instructional Resources has noted that it needs to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. It was also noted that data is not used systematically in decision-making and program or services improvement.

Library information sessions are routinely evaluated for presentation, but not necessarily content. *The Action Plan for Information Literacy* has identified that the department has poorly developed information outcomes and assessment tools. The plan lays out a strategy to remedy these shortcomings, but has not yet been implemented. The library strategic plan for 2002-2004 includes this as a goal.

Highline CC is a very technology-rich campus and many administrative and instructional activities are technology-driven. The campus has adopted a strategic initiative ( # 1 ) that includes assessment ( D ) that ensures that technology meets institutional needs. However, the institution lacks a comprehensive strategic technology plan that would effectively guide long-range planning and allocation of resources. The Technology Advisory Committee is charged with planning for campus-wide technology issues. The TAC committee has been able to provide a broad perspective on infrastructure and technology needs and operational and policy issues and make recommendations to the executive leaders.

The institution has been very fortunate to have had the opportunity to allocate a large amount of resources to technology and infrastructure. The general plan of replacing most desk-top and many lab computers approximately every three years is noteworthy. Additionally, the institution has been able to be flexible and responsive to administrative and instructional needs. Technology-based areas such as Instructional Design, Instructional Computing and Administrative Technology have commented that user needs drive technology purchase, implementation and planning, that direction comes from the programs that use the resources. The comment was made that the "network meets today's needs." The time it takes to research new technology and to make long-range plans in relation to staff workloads, and the rapidly changing technology environment have perhaps made the institution reluctant to embrace long-range information resources and infrastructure planning.

However, these strategies may not work in an era of shrinking budgets, increasing costs and accelerating user demands. The college could benefit from identifying an individual who is specifically responsible for campus-wide technology planning, implementation and evaluation. Further, it is strongly suggested that the college initiate, carry out and assess a comprehensive, long-range and strategic technology plan.

## Standard Six – Governance and Administration

The governance system at Highline Community College is headed by a local Board of Trustees with specific policies and responsibilities outlined in a handbook provided by the Attorney General's office of Washington. Certain duties also rest with a variety of state agencies, including the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Each of these agencies has its own policies and procedures manuals, codes, and guidelines. Internal to the College all constituents are involved in governance in ways that appear appropriate. The authority, responsibilities, and relationships between/among these groups are also described in Board of Trustees' bylaws, the Highline Community College policy manual, and other appropriate documents. Responsibilities of all involved appear clearly defined and equitably administered.

All evidence indicates that the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students understand and fulfill their roles as described in appropriate documents. A variety of opportunities are provided for consideration of their views. The College appears to enjoy and appreciate its long history of shared governance, though some point out that a significant amount of time is necessary to keep such a system viable. Streamlining is not a new concept, however, as the College recently has revised its policy development process, making it more streamlined and less labor intensive. The Policy Development Council is the group that bears the principal responsibility in the development of new policies, change of existing policy, and review/update of existing policy. The Council's recommendations are forwarded to the President for further action. Other governance entities, such as the Faculty Senate and the Highline College Education Association, appear to play equally busy and appropriate roles, as do an array of cabinets and committees.

The Board of Trustees of Highline Community College consists of five members, four men and one woman. All trustees are selected on the state level and none are employed by the College. The President serves in an ex-officio non-voting member of the board and also as its secretary. Policies are in place to provide for continuity and change of board membership. Evidence supports that the Board of Trustees acts only as a committee of the whole. The board's duties, organizational structure, and operating procedures are described in a handbook entitled "Legal Obligations of College and University Trustees", provided to each trustee by the Office of the Attorney General of Washington. Trustees also operate under guidelines of the Washington ethics law and the Highline Community College code of ethics.

The Highline Community College Board of Trustees has the authority to hire the president and to set the president's salary. Each year the President presents the Board of Trustees with a self-**evaluation which is followed by an evaluative discussion between the President and the Trustees.** In addition the Trustees have recently developed a presidential evaluation form which all complete as an additional evaluation measure.

Evidence and documents support the Board of Trustees' role in review and approval of the Highline Community College mission. The board also approves programs and major changes therein. The board additionally evaluates its performance, in December, 2002 through a Board of Trustees self-evaluation questionnaire, to insure it carries out its responsibilities effectively. Trustees indicate intentions to continue the self evaluation of their performance.

Through evaluating the president, the Board expects and insures that the institution is staffed and organized effectively. Periodic fiscal audit reports and the annual budget are reviewed by the Board, along with periodic fiscal reports.

Members of the evaluation committee met with the Chair and Chair-Elect of the Board of Trustees and conversation with them confirmed that the trustees are knowledgeable about Highline Community College's accreditation status and appropriately involved in the process. Trustees also exhibited excellent overall knowledge of the institution and an admirable level of support for the College.

The President of Highline Community College, Dr. Priscilla Bell, serves as a full-time President for the institution. The duties, responsibilities, and ethical conduct required for all administrative personnel are found in the position descriptions and the Highline Community College ethics handbook, which has earned praise from the Washington State Auditors office. All administrators appear to act in accordance with these documents and to be qualified for their positions and provide effective leadership and management. Faculty appreciate that administrators make them feel valued and important. A mutual respect exists.

Institutional Advancement activities are directly related to the mission and goals of the College. Interestingly, a member of faculty/staff interviewed stressed the need for the College to strengthen its fund-raising efforts. Yet another individual mentioned the same need in an open campus meeting. Perhaps Highline Community College may want to look at this area especially at this time of reduced resources from other revenue sources.

Conversation with Highline Community College personnel produced a consensus that, in general, decision-making at the College is both participative and timely. The new policy development council and its 2-week timeline in processing policy matters is an example of Highline Community College's efforts to streamline decision-making in an area that can be prone to bogging down.

Policies, procedures, and criteria for administration and staff appointment, retention, promotion and/or termination are published and accessible in the administrators' handbook and other materials. Formal administrative evaluations, however, are still a work in progress and are not conducted. A committee is working on this and results are expected by Fall 2003.

A study suggests salaries for staff and for some administrative positions are not competitive with comparable positions in surrounding colleges. However, it is unclear whether the comparisons were with other community colleges or with different categories of institutions such as four-year or with private institutions, which could account for salary differentials. A study comparing Highline Community College and other Washington community colleges' salaries could be helpful for information purposes.

Faculty play a clear role in Highline Community College's governance structure, an institutional tradition of which the College is very proud. Students, also, participate in governance in all appropriate areas.

## **Standard Seven – Finance**

### **Standard Seven - Finance**

Highline Community College is governed by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and a local board of trustees. There is evidence in the official minutes of meetings that the Highline Community College Board of Trustees has given the College administration appropriate autonomy in financial planning and budgeting matters.

Long and short-range capital planning is guided by a master plan.

The college starts its annual budget planning in February of each fiscal year for the ensuing fiscal year. There is evidence that it is a strategically guided process that takes into consideration at least a three-year projection of the major categories of income, specific plans for the major categories of expenditure, and plans for the management of capital revenue and expenditures. There is evidence that the Board of Trustees approves an annual budget prior to the beginning of the fiscal year beginning on July 1, and that it is disseminated to appropriate constituencies. The college does not appear to have written policies or procedures for developing the annual operating budget, or for making appropriate revisions to the budget

during the fiscal year. However, it does appear that even in the absence of procedural documents in writing, the college does make necessary revisions to the budget on a timely basis. There is sufficient evidence that the college has not been operating in a deficit position or borrowed to support the operating budget.

All debt is regularly monitored which allows for adequate budgeting. The college does not have a governing board policy guiding the use and limit of debt. However, the board approves all debt and the college has had adequate funds for timely payments. Most funding for capital projects is provided for the state. Certificates of Participation with the State of Washington Treasurer have recently been provided for construction of a new Student Union. The students had also approved using a portion of the student and activity fees to help fund this project.

Based on information contained in the Fiscal Year 2000/2001 through Fiscal year 2001/2002 audited financial statements, there is evidence that sufficient and various sources of funds exist to support the college's current level of operations. There is sufficient debt service coverage from dedicated revenues to pay the outstanding debt to its final maturity. Therefore, there should not be a drain on resources available for educational purposes. It also appears from the revenue of the financial statements that the college has adequate levels of fund balance to meet its contingencies, including protection against the impact of fluctuations in annual enrollments.

In the review of the audited financial statements for the past four years, it appears there is sufficient support from revenues to provide the necessary financial stability for the college. There is no accumulated deficit based on the revenue of the most recent audited financial statements.

There is minimal non-mandatory transfer between funds, based upon the review of the most recent audit. The transfers are legal, based upon the annual audit review, and are documented when the transfers are made.

The college demonstrates the adequacy of financial resources for the support of all of its offerings, based upon the audited financial statements for the past four years.

The college identifies the sources of its student financial aid for current enrollment and demonstrates that it plans for future financial aid.

The college budgets and maintains adequate financial reserves as reflected in the audited financial statements.

Based upon a review of the Board of Trustees meeting minutes, it appears that the college understands the financial relationship between the general fund operating entities, and the auxiliary enterprises. All of the enterprise revenues remain in the enterprise fund, and are not used to support the education and general operating budget.

The finance office provided the college administration with monthly financial status reports. The Board of Trustees are provided quarterly financial status reports.

Financial functions are centralized in the Financial Services Directors office. Financial information presented from the latest audited financial statements indicate that all the expenditures and income are fully controlled by the institution and accounted for in the college's general ledger system.

Based on a review of the fiscal year 2002 audit, the college accounting system follows generally accepted accounting principles. All expenditures and revenue from all sources are accounted for within the college's general ledger system.

The State of Washington Auditor's Office is responsible for the annual audit of the college's financial statements. Therefore, an independent audit is not required. For the college, all funds for financial aid

and from other sources are subject to the annual audit and therefore, an independent audit is not required.

The college demonstrates sound internal control practices, with an adequate staff to provide the appropriate separation of duties for internal control purposes. In the fiscal year 2002 audit report, it is evident that the college has responded to the findings in the previous audits.

The college has made available the support documentations for examinations as part of the evaluation team's evaluation.

The Washington State Auditor for all funds audits Highline Community College along with all other community colleges in Washington annually. The management letter for the latest audit contained no conditions significant enough to report as findings.

All fund raising activities are governed by policy, comply with governmental regulations and are conducted in a professional manner. Formal written policies govern the relationship between the college and the foundation. All investments are properly administered according to benefactors requests and applicable law.

## **Standard Eight – Physical Resources**

### **Standard Eight - Physical Resources**

A master plan adopted in 1996 and revised in 2001 is used to guide the planning and construction at Highline Community College.

Current or planned construction includes a new Early Childhood Development Center, the Student Union Building and the Higher Education Center to be shared with Central Washington University.

Off campus facilities have been upgraded and currently meet the educational needs and facilities requirements of the students.

Classrooms have adequate furnishings and seem comfortable. There is a new computer lab that gives students access to computers. The computer labs are staffed with technical support during all open hours.

There is no evidence that a long-range technology plan exists that addresses infrastructure and technology needs for the institution.

Hazardous materials are stored and disposed of according to state and federal requirements.

The maintenance staff is adequate to support current repairs and has a good work plan for performing preventive maintenance. The facilities and operations department does request feedback for their facility and staff concerning services provided.

Security is provided during all hours that classes are in session. There are concerns among students, faculty and staff about personal safety along with concerns for their property.

Another area of concern from students and faculty is the amount of parking available on campus. The college has indicated that they are taking steps to address this issue.

The buildings are not well signed and very hard to identify. There are very few campus signs that indicate where buildings are. Most buildings are only identified with a number that doesn't give an indication of what is housed in that building. The college should identify the buildings better and provide better directions to other areas of campus.

A majority of the buildings at Highline Community College were constructed during the 1960's and did not have the requirements of ADA. Money provided from the State of Washington has allowed for the college to upgrade and retrofit several of the buildings. Between the state and Highline Community College over \$1,800,000 have been spent on ADA improvements. Since the state funding has been discontinued, all future ADA retrofits will require other sources of revenue. Although much retrofitting has been accomplished there are still facilities needing consideration and causing difficulties for the under-represented college population.

## **Standard Nine – Institutional Integrity**

Evidence supports Highline Community College as an institution in which the Board of Trustees and employees advocate high ethical standards in management and operations and in its dealings with students, the public, organizations and external agencies. In 2001, a college-wide review of all policies was initiated, which is scheduled to continue through 2004. The Board of Trustees supports these efforts.

College publications are available on the College Intranet and are distributed to all personnel. Nevertheless, the College has begun to upgrade its training and professional development efforts to provide additional training in specific work areas. A group of workshops dubbed by some "Highline 101" is a good example of this.

Efforts are taken to insure the accuracy of published information, especially the college catalogue and class schedule, both of which are broadly distributed on the campus and in the community. Errors found appear to be the result of mistakes and the two-year format, but certainly do not reflect any attempt on the College's part to misrepresent itself.

Institutional policies define conflict of interest for the Board of Trustees and employees. Academic freedom, too, is defined and appears to be alive and well at Highline. Overall it seems that Highline Community College is an institution committed to the pursuit of truth and its commitment to others. It appears to manage its affairs with integrity and conversation with personnel and students substantiates this.

## **General Commendations and Recommendations**

### **Commendations**

1. Highline Community College is commended for actively engaging in college-wide appreciation of diversity. This commitment can be recognized in the inclusive, multidimensional approach to instruction, student services, and on/off campus activities.

2. Highline Community College is commended for providing exemplary support to faculty in the areas of instructional and professional development. Examples include the Instructional Design department, the Instructional Computing department and the Faculty Resource Center; as well as the Summer Institute Program, faculty internships and the International Education Initiative.
3. Highline Community College is commended for its special spirit. Trustees, administrators, faculty and staff are extremely dedicated, go the “extra mile”, and are strongly invested in the values of the college. The spirit of collegiality and mutual respect is everywhere apparent.
4. Highline Community College is commended for their innovative instructional approaches to supporting student success through “student-focused” experiences and “learning-centered” opportunities.

## **Recommendations**

1. The Evaluation Committee recommends the College develop needed policies, procedures, and criteria for evaluation of administration and staff and implement those evaluations as a high institutional priority. (Standard 6.C.8)
2. The Evaluation Committee recommends the College develop, implement and evaluate a comprehensive, long-range technology plan that address infrastructure and technology needs for the institution. (Standard 8.A)
3. The Evaluation Committee recommends the institution identify and publish expected learning outcomes for degree and certificate programs where such outcomes do not now exist. The Committee also recommends that the institution regularly and systematically assess its programs and student learning outcomes and use the results of its assessment to improve teaching and learning at the institution. (Policy 2.2, Standard 2.B, ER12)
4. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the College address Standard 3.D.15, which states in part: “that the institution...ensures appropriate services and facilities are accessible to students in its programs, and,...activities and programs include adaptation for traditionally under-represented students, and such as physically disabled...” Although much retrofitting has been accomplished within many of the restricted access areas, there are still facilities needing consideration and causing difficulties for the under-represented college population. (Standard 3.D.15)
5. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the institution evaluate and improve the security and safety provided for students, faculty, and staff. There are concerns among students, faculty and staff about personal safety along with concerns for their property. (Standard 8.A.5)