



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
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Memo to: ACCJC Member Institutions

From: Barbara Beno, President *Barbara A. Beno*

Subject: ACCJC Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness

Attached you will find a copy of the Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness, updated by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges/WASC in June 2011. This Rubric was first published in 2007 and has undergone two previous editorial revisions. The 2011 edition reflects language added to provide some additional detail.

Since 1994, the Commission's Accreditation Standards have required institutions to engage in a systematic and regular review of program quality as well as in short-and long-term planning, and an allocation of resources to assure that institutions achieve their stated mission and assess and improve institutional effectiveness. The 2002 Accreditation Standards added requirements that institutions become more intentionally supportive of student learning by defining intended student learning outcomes, assessing learning, and incorporating the results of assessment into decisions about institutional priorities and improvement plans.

The Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness was developed to assist colleges as they conduct self evaluation, and to assist external review teams as they examine institutional quality during accreditation reviews. The Rubric gives institutional members, evaluators, and the Commission a common language to use in describing the institution's practices in three key areas of the continuous quality improvement process – Program Review, Integrated Planning, and Student Learning Outcomes.

It is important to note that the sample behaviors described in each text box of the Rubric are not new criteria or standards for evaluation of an institution's quality, but rather are examples of behavior that, if characteristic of an institution, would indicate the institution's stage in the implementation of the Accreditation Standards, particularly Standard IB and important sections of Standard II and Standard III. The Rubric should be used in conjunction with the Accreditation Standards and the *Guide to Evaluating Institutions*, and *Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education*.

The Commission has previously announced its expectations for institutional performance with regard to the practices described in the Rubric, as follows:

- The Commission expects all accredited institutions to be at the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level in Program Review (Part I of the Rubric) and Planning (Part II of the Rubric).
- The Commission expects all accredited institutions to be at least at the Proficiency Level or above in Student Learning Outcomes (Part III of the Rubric).

Institutions in the ACCJC membership widely share a commitment to the purposes of assessment – to improve student outcomes. The Commission hopes that institutional leaders will continue to find the 2011 Rubric helpful as they assess their own institution's quality and work to achieve greater student success.

The Commission welcomes any ideas for improving the Rubric and for improving institutional practices in continuous quality improvement.¹ Please direct comments to accjc@accjc.org.

BAB/mg

Attachment

¹ The ACCJC's Task Force on Student Learning Outcomes met in spring 2011 to provide the updates contained in the 2011 Rubric.

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Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness – Part I: Program Review

(See cover letter for how to use this rubric.)

Levels of Implementation	Characteristics of Institutional Effectiveness in Program Review <i>(Sample institutional behaviors)</i>
Awareness	• There is preliminary investigative dialogue at the institution or within some departments about what data or process should be used for program review. • There is recognition of existing practices and models in program review that make use of institutional research. • There is exploration of program review models by various departments or individuals. • The college is implementing pilot program review models in a few programs/operational units.
Development	• Program review is embedded in practice across the institution using qualitative and quantitative data to improve program effectiveness. • Dialogue about the results of program review is evident within the program as part of discussion of program effectiveness. • Leadership groups throughout the institution accept responsibility for program review framework development (Senate, Admin., etc.) • Appropriate resources are allocated to conducting program review of meaningful quality. • Development of a framework for linking results of program review to planning for improvement. • Development of a framework to align results of program review to resource allocation.
Proficiency	• Program review processes are in place and implemented regularly. • Results of all program reviews are integrated into institution-wide planning for improvement and informed decision-making. • The program review framework is established and implemented. • Dialogue about the results of all program reviews is evident throughout the institution as part of discussion of institutional effectiveness. • Results of program review are clearly and consistently linked to institutional planning processes and resource allocation processes; college can demonstrate or provide specific examples. • The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its program review processes in supporting and improving student achievement and student learning outcomes.
Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement	• Program review processes are ongoing, systematic and used to assess and improve student learning and achievement. • The institution reviews and refines its program review processes to improve institutional effectiveness. • The results of program review are used to continually refine and improve program practices resulting in appropriate improvements in student achievement and learning.

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Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness – Part II: Planning

(See cover letter for how to use this rubric.)

Levels of Implementation	Characteristics of Institutional Effectiveness in Planning <i>(Sample institutional behaviors)</i>
Awareness	• The college has preliminary investigative dialogue about planning processes. • There is recognition of case need for quantitative and qualitative data and analysis in planning. • The college has initiated pilot projects and efforts in developing systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning and implementation (e.g., in human or physical resources). • Planning found in only some areas of college operations. • There is exploration of models and definitions and issues related to planning. • There is minimal linkage between plans and a resource allocation process, perhaps planning for use of "new money". • The college may have a consultant-supported plan for facilities, or a strategic plan.
Development	• The Institution has defined a planning process and assigned responsibility for implementing it. • The Institution has identified quantitative and qualitative data and is using it. • Planning efforts are specifically linked to institutional mission and goals. • The Institution uses applicable quantitative data to improve institutional effectiveness in some areas of operation. • Governance and decision-making processes incorporate review of institutional effectiveness in mission and plans for improvement. • Planning processes reflect the participation of a broad constituent base.
Proficiency	• The college has a well documented, ongoing process for evaluating itself in all areas of operation, analyzing and publishing the results and planning and implementing improvements. • The institution's component plans are integrated into a comprehensive plan to achieve broad educational purposes and improve institutional effectiveness. • The institution effectively uses its human, physical, technology, and financial resources to achieve its broad educational purposes, including stated student learning outcomes. • The college has documented assessment results and communicated matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies (documents data and analysis of achievement of its educational mission). • The institution assesses progress toward achieving its education goals over time (uses longitudinal data and analyses). • The institution plans and effectively incorporates results of program review in all areas of educational services: instruction, support services, library and learning resources.
Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement	• The institution uses ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to refine its key processes and improve student learning. • There is dialogue about institutional effectiveness that is ongoing, robust and pervasive; data and analyses are widely distributed and used throughout the institution. • There is ongoing review and adaptation of evaluation and planning processes. • There is consistent and continuous commitment to improving student learning; and educational effectiveness is a demonstrable priority in all planning structures and processes.

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Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness – Part III: Student Learning Outcomes

(See cover letter for how to use this rubric.)

Levels of Implementation	Characteristics of Institutional Effectiveness in Student Learning Outcomes <i>(Sample institutional behaviors)</i>
Awareness	• There is preliminary, investigative dialogue about student learning outcomes. • There is recognition of existing practices such as course objectives and how they relate to student learning outcomes. • There is exploration of models, definitions, and issues taking place by a few people. • Pilot projects and efforts may be in progress. • The college has discussed whether to define student learning outcomes at the level of some courses or programs or degrees; where to begin.
Development	• College has established an institutional framework for definition of student learning outcomes (where to start), how to extend, and timeline. • College has established authentic assessment strategies for assessing student learning outcomes as appropriate to intended course, program, and degree learning outcomes. • Existing organizational structures (e.g., Senate, Curriculum Committee) are supporting strategies for student learning outcomes definition and assessment. • Leadership groups (e.g., Academic Senate and administration), have accepted responsibility for student learning outcomes implementation. • Appropriate resources are being allocated to support student learning outcomes and assessment. • Faculty and staff are fully engaged in student learning outcomes development.
Proficiency	• Student learning outcomes and authentic assessments are in place for courses, programs, support services, certificates and degrees. • There is widespread institutional dialogue about the results of assessment and identification of gaps. • Decision-making includes dialogue on the results of assessment and is purposefully directed toward aligning institution-wide practices to support and improve student learning. • Appropriate resources continue to be allocated and fine-tuned. • Comprehensive assessment reports exist and are completed and updated on a regular basis. • Course student learning outcomes are aligned with degree student learning outcomes. • Students demonstrate awareness of goals and purposes of courses and programs in which they are enrolled.
Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement	• Student learning outcomes and assessment are ongoing, systematic and used for continuous quality improvement. • Dialogue about student learning is ongoing, pervasive and robust. • There is evaluation of student learning outcomes processes. • Evaluation and fine-tuning of organizational structures to support student learning is ongoing. • Student learning improvement is a visible priority in all practices and structures across the college. • Learning outcomes are specifically linked to program reviews.