

March 31,
2016

The purpose of the newsletter is to ensure open communication, transparency, and accountability to all college constituencies around the Accreditation Follow-Up Report processes.

Volume 1,
Issue 7



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AFR Steering Committee

Town Hall Meeting,
Wednesday, April 13

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Location TBA

Welcome to Merritt College Accreditation Follow-Up Report (AFR) Updates!

AFR Steering Committee Meetings

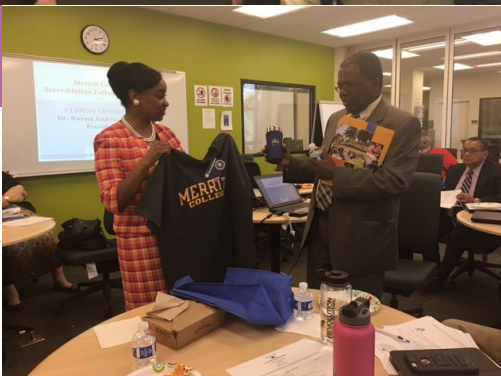


Dr. Jowel Laguerre and the AFR Steering Committee Co-Leads, College Administrators and Core Team.

March 2, 2016 the Chancellor Visits!

This has been a progressive month for the AFR process! We are moving steadily towards our goals. The AFR Core Team invited the Chancellor to attend the March 2, 2016 AFR Steering Committee meeting. Despite his busy schedule, the Chancellor participated in the March 2, 2016 meeting to support our efforts and to lend his expertise!

After a comprehensive overview of Merritt's progress to date, by AFR Chair Dr. Audrey Trotter, the Chancellor provided insights on several key elements of a successful site visit and Accreditation Follow-up Report. Dr. Laguerre reiterated the need for faculty, administrators and staff to be fully prepared to engage with the ACCJC team during the October 2016 visit. Faculty, administrators and staff who are knowledgeable of AFR processes are



Dr. Mia Kelly presents Chancellor Dr. Jowel Laguerre with a Merritt t-shirt and a coffee mug in appreciation of his support and as mementos of his visit.

instrumental to a successful visit. A well written report is one that is not exaggerated. It is clear, concise and to the point, and should guide the reader directly to the evidence in support of the narrative. For example, use a specific page number from a multi-page report to support a statement in the College Recommendation (CR) narrative. When addressing out-of-compliance Standards listed

in more than one College Recommendation (CR), be sure that the information and evidence is consistent across the CRs. Dr. Laguerre reported that the District is working on their recommendations emphasizing that the District should not impact the College's accreditation.

*Dr. Mia Kelly
Editor*

AFR Newsletter

March 16 & 30 AFR Steering Committee Meetings

March 16

After the opening welcome, Dr. Trotter thanked those who attended the meeting given the challenge of the numerous college meetings simultaneously taking place on the afternoon of March 16, 2016.

Reflections were then shared from the March 2, AFR Steering Committee meeting attended by Chancellor Dr. Jowel Laguerre. Several important recommendations emerged.

1. The AFR Steering Committee needs to increase its efforts in broadly disseminating information on accreditation in preparation for the October visit.
2. An AFR team member suggested a mock site visit that engages faculty, staff and administrators.
3. Establish AFR Steering Committee Co-Leads and the Sub-Committee team as Train-the-Trainers to assist others in gaining knowledge of accreditation processes.

Dr. Trotter reviewed significant points made by Dr. Annette Dambrosio's in one of the February 2016 Chancellor's C-Direct reports. Dr. Dambrosio's shared learning from her participation in the Annual Statewide Academic Senate Accreditation Institute. Several of those points illustrate how Merritt is on track with actions taken to date in the AFR process.

Other points remind us of what Merritt must continue to focus on:

1. Sustainability of corrective actions taken to meet Standards.
2. Institutionalization of behaviors, practices, and mindsets to maximize institutional effectiveness.
3. Always document in writing how we are addressing Accreditation concerns.
4. The College's mission statement must drive all planning efforts.



5. Evaluate and follow-up on planning efforts.
 6. Engage in broad-based dialogue and ensure that our participatory governance structures address institutional goals.
 7. Student-Centered Focus. Keep in mind that everything that we do is aimed at assisting students to earn a quality education.
 8. Accreditation reports should "be on point". No need for lengthy documents.
- The meeting closed with the distribution of the Institutional Effective Partnership Resource Team's initial Report.

March 30

The March 30 AFR Steering Committee meeting focused on: 1) progress in the completion of edited written narratives; 2) planning for an AFR Steering Committee sponsored Accreditation Town Hall Meeting; 3) March 28th District AFR Lead's Meeting; 4) summary of the January 22 and February 19 AFR Workshop Pre and Post Survey Results; and, 5) ACCJC New Evaluator Workshop.

Half of the edited AFR College Recommendation drafts will be disseminated and discussed at an April 13, 2016 Town Hall Meeting. This represents an ongoing effort to promote inclusivity and engagement of the College Community in broad-based dialogue. It is imperative that everyone participate in the AFR Town Hall Meetings! Please attend the meetings to broaden accreditation knowledge and provide the much needed support for a cohesive Merritt College AFR.

New Evaluator Training

Dr. Kelly attended the **ACCJC New Evaluator Training** in Los Angeles. Salient take-away points included: the need to ensure that all information is readily available for evaluators; the external Team is seeking ease of access. Review "**The Guide to Evaluating Institutions**" on the ACCJC website to fully understand the process.

Prepare and expect to be interviewed!



AFR Core Value and Vision Statement

Our Logo is symbolic of Merritt's collective diversity, ideas, and desire to work collaboratively to create a unified whole in efforts of restoring the institution's accreditation to excellence and beyond... through inspection and evidence-based analysis we are reconstructing the puzzle to exemplify the shared vision, mission, and core values of the institution. — Dr. Mia Kelly

AFR District Updates



Dr. Annette Dambrosio

Dr. Annette Dambrosio serves as the Lead in assisting the District in addressing eight ACCJC District Recommendations. On March 28, 2016, Dr. Dambrosio facilitated a District AFR Lead's Meeting with representatives from each of the four Peralta Colleges. Dr. Audrey Trotter and Dr. Mia Kelly represented Merritt.

A goal of the meeting was to ensure seamless integration of District Recommendations into the College AFRs. In addition, the AFR Leads from each College reported on their progress and agreed upon processes for merging the ACCJC District Recommendations into the College Reports. More importantly, all agreed upon AFR timelines and processes for identifying constituents to read and review the District Recommendation drafts.

Dr. Dambrosio also reported that initial District Recommendation drafts would be presented at the April 29 Planning and Budgeting Council (PBC) meeting and again in May.

Other critical areas of discussion included the following:

1) Deadlines for Completion of College and District Draft Reports

The target date for the completion of draft Accreditation Follow-Up Reports is by the end of May 2016. All agreed that work in refining the drafts may take place throughout the Summer months.

2) Critical Reading of Our Work

Dr. Dambrosio proposed that everyone on the District AFR Lead's Committee read the completed draft narratives for all eight of the District Recommendations. All will be encouraged to make suggestions, ask questions, and to recommend supporting evidence, as needed. Dr. Dambrosio also volunteered to serve as a critical reader for any of the College Reports, as needed.

3) Merging District Recommendations into the College AFRs

All agreed to merge the final written eight District Recommendation narratives into each of the College's AFRs as written and received. No changes will be made to the District Recommendation narrative to ensure consistency in all four of the College AFRs.

4) Formatting/Pagination/Evidence Links (LIVE LINKS AND TESTING)

Pagination will change in the AFRs once the District Recommendation narrative is merged into each College report. The goal is to utilize the same numbering system for District and College Recommendation Evidence Lists in all College AFRs. Most importantly, all reinforced the importance of operative live evidence document links that should be tested and retested in advance of the AFR

submission to ACCJC. Reports should be sent to a variety of readers with a variety of computers and software to ensure that live evidence document links work.

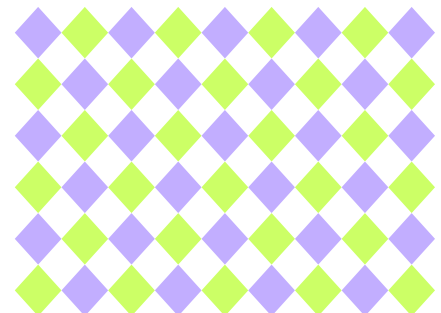
Dr. Dambrosio urged all to use brevity in writing AFR responses. Be succinct and concise. Visiting Team members want to read responses to Recommendations only. Too many times, reports include extraneous information and excessive verbiage.

5) August 2016 Flex Days—Presentation of the Four College Accreditation Follow-Up Reports

The AFR District Meeting Leads agreed that final Accreditation Follow-Up Reports would be disseminated at the August 2016 District And College Flex Day Programs.

6) Peralta Colleges Board Approval

Final Accreditation Follow-Up Reports (AFRs) will be presented to the Peralta Board of Trustees for approval at the September 13, 2016 meeting (or sooner).



We are currently progressing well towards our goals!!

Draft Narrative Updates

At least half of the edited College Recommendation response narratives are completed or near completion. The plan is for the AFR Committee to disseminate completed drafts to the entire College Community at the Town Hall Meeting on Wednesday, April 13, from 1-2:30. The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC) has completed the Merritt College Learning Assessment and Acceleration Plan Report which lays out a timeline for proficiency and sustainability and will support the written response to Recommendation 6. The goal is to have the penultimate draft completed by the end of April!

Meetings with the President

Since September 2015, the AFR Core Team has scheduled bimonthly meetings with the President to provide updates on our planning processes, address obstacles encountered, and identify critical issues that needed attention.

Additionally, the AFR Core Team has met regularly with the College administrators to enlist support and discuss strategies to engage constituents in their respective units in addressing critical College operations and procedures necessary to meet ACCJC Standards.

Pre and Post Survey Results for World CAFÉ Workshops

Dr. Kelly presented a compilation of the Pre and Post Survey Data from our World Café Workshops on the Four (4) Institutional Administrative Procedures: **1) Integrated Planning and Budgeting; 2) Student Learning Outcomes Assessment; 3) College Educational Master Plan; and, 4) Use of Data in Institutional Planning and Decision-Making**

The Likert scale Qualitative and Quantitative surveys indicate:

- ◆ We are clearer about the accreditation timeline, more clear about the **importance** of SLO assessment.
- ◆ More clear about institutional processes.
- ◆ We are reasonably confident in our ability to articulate the critical institutional processes especially if handouts are available as a reference. (From the February 19, 2016 Workshop)

Concerns and areas of improvement:

- ◆ We can improve on how we use assessment. Even though we understand the **importance** of SLO assessment, we can improve on using assessment to make improvements and/or improve inter-departmental communication of the use of assessment. Also, the timelines for completing assessment (SLO, PLO or ILO) may be unclear.
- ◆ Individuals need more support and training on SLOs.
- ◆ We need to improve how we use data.
- ◆ There was a decrease in understanding the definition of the accreditation status of probation vs warning.
- ◆ The workshop only reached a total of 39 college constituents.

Recommendation—Create a continuous loop whereby we continue to provide information regarding these critical processes.

Continue to disseminate information broadly to all college constituents and to provide updates on these four critical administrative procedures should be a priority at the upcoming annual college summits (June and September 2016).



Merritt College Mission Statement

The mission of Merritt College is to enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve by helping students attain knowledge, master skills, and develop the appreciation, attitudes and values needed to succeed and participate responsibly in a democratic society and a global community.