

Merritt College

Accreditation Follow-Up Report (AFR) Response and Writing Template
 Sub-Committee for College Recommendation 1
 Project Timeline: September 16 – December 2, 2015

SECTION 1: College Recommendation and Accreditation Standard		
College Recommendation 1: In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the College develop and implement a policy and procedures for systematically reviewing the college mission statement.		
Accreditation Standards (Out of Compliance)	I.A.3	
Accreditation Standards and Sub-Standards and Questions from the <i>Guide to Evaluating Institutions</i> , 2013 Edition	I.A.3: Using the institution’s governance and decision-making processes, the institution reviews its mission statement on a regular basis and revises it as necessary.	
	How effective is the institution’s process for periodic review of the mission statement? Does the process allow for incorporating the interests of the institutions’ stakeholders?	
	How does the institution know that the way the mission statement is developed, approved, and communicated to all stakeholders is effective? What circumstances prompt changes to the statement?	
	Does the College use the same Mission statement in all documentation?	
SECTION 2: Accreditation Report References and Sources of Evidence		
<i>Merritt College External Evaluation Report</i> <i>May 8, 2015</i>	Standard I.A.3	pp. 29-30
<i>Merritt College Self-Evaluation Report</i> <i>Spring 2015</i>	Standard I.A.3	pp. 88-91
<i>ACCJC Guide to Evaluating Institutions</i>	Sources of Evidence: Examples of Standard I Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness	
	A. Improving Institutional Effectiveness	p. 13
SECTION 3: College Recommendation Sub-Committee Structure		
Shared Governance Committee(s)	College Education Master Planning Committee (CEMPC) College Council	
Administrative Support	Vice President of Instruction & Dr. Lilia Chavez	
College Recommendation Co-Leads	Chris Grampp (Faculty) Maura Sealund (Classified Staff)	
Sub-Committee Members	Anthony Powell, Tanya Ilarde, Kinga Sidzinska, Elaine Wallace, Thomas Renbarger, Waaduda Karim	

Standard I – Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Standard IA – Mission

General Observations

The Mission Statement for Merritt College defines the College's broad educational purposes: "...enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve by helping students to attain knowledge, master skills, and develop the appreciation, attitudes, and values needed to succeed and participate responsibly in a democratic society and in a global economy." Recent changes in this mission statement are found on posters hung around the college campus and on the college website.

Findings and Evidence

The Board of Trustees of the Peralta Community College District approved the College's mission statement on June 24, 2014. Prior to that, the mission statement had not been updated since 2004. In 2009, the College Council recommended changes to the mission statement, however, the Board of Trustees never acted upon the recommended changes. It is unclear whether the College brought the recommended changes to its mission statement for board approval. The college Self-Evaluation Report states that the mission statement is to be reviewed every six years, however, the Team found no evidence to indicate that such a review cycle has been codified. Interviews with college constituencies during the visit revealed that there has not been broad-based dialogue and no formalized process to consistently review the College mission statement. (Standards I.A.1; I.A.2; I.A.3)

The revised mission statement was found on posters hung around the college campus and on the college website. The evidence provided in the 2014 self-study indicated that the college brochure included the updated mission statement. However, the brochure on the website reviewed by the Team on March 10, 2015 did not have the updated mission statement. The Team confirmed that the updated mission statement would be included in the 2015-2017 college catalog. (Standard I.A.2)

The 2010 Merritt College Integrated Planning and Budgeting Process flow chart (Self Study Evidence I.A.28) clearly shows the college mission at the top of the planning hierarchy, suggesting that the college mission drives the planning process. A review of the Comprehensive Instructional Program Review (CIPR) template, however, does not show any linkages between planning and the College Mission. The evidence provided to and examined by the Team suggests that while some of the instructional programs may discuss their program mission during the planning process, the link between planning and the college mission is not clearly established. Additional review of CIPR and Annual Program Update (APU) documents found that the plans draw linkages between the instructional programs plans and the College's strategic goals, but do not integrate the College Mission into the budget allocation process. Based on interviews with constituency groups and governance committee members, the Team found other discrepancies and inconsistencies regarding the implementation of the CIPR and APU

with integrated planning, and the budget allocation processes in relation to the centrality of the college mission. (Standard I.A.4)

Conclusion

Merritt College's mission statement describes the college's broad educational purposes including their target audience and their needs. A recent addition of the phrase 'and in a global economy' was added when the Peralta Community College District Board of Trustees approved the mission statement in June of 2014. (I.A.1; I.A.2)

The report states that the college mission statement is to be reviewed every six years. Evidence provided indicates that prior to the most recent update of the mission statement (June 2014), the college mission statement had not been revised since 2004. In 2009, the College Council recommended changes to the mission statement, however, those recommended the Board of Trustees never acted upon changes. Based on the interviews and evidence provided, there is no specific policy or codified systematic process in place. (Standard I.A.3)

The Merritt College Integrated Planning and Budgeting Process flow chart (evidence I.A.28) shows the mission statement at the top, suggesting that the college mission is central to the planning and budgeting process. The flow chart also shows that the mission statement links to and drives the college strategic directions and program review, leading to a series of reviews by management and the College Educational Master Planning Committee (CEMPC) and culminating in a recommendation by College Council to the College President. Evidence outlining the College's strategic directions for 2014-2017 is a draft document (Self Study Evidence I.B.17); as such the Team could not definitively state that the college mission drives the current strategic directions. The Team did not find evidence demonstrating that the college is following its established planning and budgeting process. (Standards I.A.1; I.A.4)

The College does not meet the Standard.

Recommendations

College Recommendation 1: In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the College develop and implement policy and procedures for systematically reviewing the college mission statement. (I.A.3)

College Recommendation 2: In order to increase institutional effectiveness, the Team recommends that the College implement an evidence-based process that links institutional planning and decision-making to the college mission. (I.A.4)

Actionable Improvement Plan:

None

Standard I.A.2

The mission statement is approved by the governing board and published.

Descriptive Summary:

Merritt College is part of the Peralta Community College District, and on June 24, 2014, the Board of Trustees approved the College's recently updated mission statement **(I.A.15)**. Prior to that time, the Board of Trustees last approved the College's revised Mission Statement in 2004 **(I.A.16)**. This updated mission statement will be published in the College Catalog at next printing and is listed on all participatory governance and committee correspondence.

Self-Evaluation:

The College meets this Standard. The Board recently approved changes to Merritt's Mission Statement and that statement is to be published in hardcopy and electronic formats.

Supporting Evidence:

- I.A.15. PCCD Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, 06/24/14
<http://web.peralta.edu/trustees/files/2011/04/6-24-14-Board-Meeting-Minutes.pdf>
- I.A.16. PCCD Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, 10/12/04
<http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/PCCD-BOT-Meeting-Minutes-10-12-04.pdf>

Actionable Improvement Plan:

None

Standard I.A.3

Using the institution's governance and decision-making processes, the institution reviews its mission statement on a regular basis and revises it as necessary.

Descriptive Summary:

Merritt College's use of its governance and decision-making process in reviewing and revising its mission statement is chronicled below in a summary of the College's most recent efforts to update its mission statement. As mentioned earlier, Merritt College's mission statement was last approved by PCCD Board action in 2004. This followed a review process that began at the College in 2003.

On November 5, 2003, a Task Force was convened to respond to a recommendation from the Accreditation Commission to: (1) review and revise the College's current Mission Statement to reflect specific commitments; and (2) establish a process for the Mission Statement to be evaluated and revised on a regularly scheduled basis **(I.A.17)**.

In December 2003, a revised Mission, Vision, and Values statement was drafted and endorsed by the College community, approved and adopted by the College Council, and approved by the Board of Trustees in 2004. The 2004 mission statement read as follows:

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

To accomplish its mission the College provides open access to excellent instructional programs and comprehensive support services in a culturally rich, caring and supportive learning environment.

The College's purpose is to provide opportunities for lifelong learning, contribute to the economic growth of communities served while assisting students to attain degrees and certificates, earn credits to transfer and develop the skills necessary to complete their educational goals **(I.A.18)**.

Following this 2004 ratification and adoption, the College has regularly reviewed its mission statement, and on November 19, 2008, the College Council met to reaffirm the College's Mission statement **(I.A.19)**. No discussion was held on that date, and the topic was tabled until March 11, 2009 when the College Council, with a quorum present, recommended two minor edits to the Mission Statement **(II.A.20)**. Archival data shows that two motions were passed to approve the minor modifications and to affirm the revised Mission Statement **(I.A.21)**.

In spring of 2009, the College presented its Institutional Self-Study in Support for Reaffirmation of Accreditation to the Board of Trustees for adoption and submittal to ACCJC. Contained in that document was the four-step process proposed for periodically reviewing and revising Merritt College's Mission Statement **(II.B.22)**:

1. A committee approved by College Council reviews the mission statement and makes recommendations of any possible changes to the College Council.
2. The revision recommendations are reviewed by all Merritt College governance groups, and feedback is provided to the College Council.
3. Upon final review, the College Council makes a recommendation to the Merritt College President.
4. The President submits the revised mission statement to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

This document also contained a planning agenda associated with Standard I that read:

The College will review and revise the mission statement at least every six years, or as necessary to reflect a new direction of the College agreed upon by the governance groups and approved by the Board of Trustees **(I.A.23)**.

The College Education Master Planning Committee (CEMPC), a sub-committee of the College Council, undertook this planning agenda as a major task for its committee work during FY 13-14, subsequently created a calendar of meetings and extensive dialogue, and sent a resolution to the College Council. The College Council met on March 26, 2014, received the resolution from CEMPC **(I.A.24)** and took action to recommend this minor modification to the College President **(I.A.25)**. The President then prepared and submitted the changes to the PCCD Board of Trustees at its June 24, 2014 meeting **(I.A.26)** where the PCCD Board of Trustees took action to approve the proposed changes to Merritt's Mission Statement and authorized its publication **(I.A.27)**.

Self-Evaluation:

The College meets this Standard. Using its governance and decision-making processes, the College reviews its mission statement on a regular basis and revises it as necessary.

Supporting Evidence:

- I.A.17. Merritt College Accreditation Task Force
<http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/Accreditation-Task-Force-2003.11.05.pdf>
- I.A.18. Merritt College Mission Statement, 2004
<http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/MC-mission-statement-in-Institutional-Progress-Report-2004.03.15.pdf>
- I.A.19. Merritt College Council Meeting Minutes, 11/19/08
<http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/MCC-meeting-minutes-2008.11.19.pdf>
- I.A.20. Merritt College Council Meeting Minutes, 03/11/09
<http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/MCC-meeting-minutes-2009.03.11.pdf>
- I.A.21. [Merritt College Council Meeting Minutes, 10/26/11](http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/MCC-Meeting-Minutes-10-26-11.pdf)
<http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/MCC-Meeting-Minutes-10-26-11.pdf>
Merritt College Council Meeting Minutes, 03/28/12
<http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/MCC-meeting-minutes-2012.03.28.pdf>
- I.A.22. Merritt College 2009 Self-Study Report (pp. 4-5)
<http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/2009-Merritt-College-Institutional-Self-Study-in-Support-of-Reaffirmatio....pdf>
- I.A.23. Merritt College 2009 Self-Study Report (pp. 7 & 199)
<http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/2009-Merritt-College-Institutional-Self-Study-in-Support-of-Reaffirmatio....pdf>

- I.A.24. Merritt College Educational Master Planning Committee Resolution to College Council
<http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/CEMPC-Resolution-to-College-Council.pdf>
- I.A.25. Merritt College Council Meeting Minutes, 03/26/14
<http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/MCC-meeting-minutes-2014.03.26.pdf>
- I.A.26. PCCD Board of Trustees Meeting Packet, 06/10/14
<http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/PCCD-BOT-Meeting-Packet-06-10-14.pdf>
- I.A.27. PCCD Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, 06/24/14
<http://web.peralta.edu/trustees/files/2011/04/6-24-14-Board-Meeting-Minutes.pdf>

Actionable Improvement Plan:

None

Standard I.A.4

The institution's mission is central to the institutional planning and decision-making.

Descriptive Summary:

Beginning in 2005, Merritt undertook a systemic change to ensure that the College's mission was central to its institutional planning and decision-making. The mission statement is central to the College's successful contribution to achieving the District mission and strategic goals as well as to the strategic directions chosen by the College (**I.A.28**). In April of 2005, the College Council approved and recommended to the College President the following 10-step planning model (**I.A.29**):

- Step 1: Situational Analysis & Recommendation
- Step 2: Feedback
- Step 3: Endorsement
- Step 4: Division Goals
- Step 5: Annual Unit Action Plans
- Step 6: Synthesis
- Step 7: Review & Analysis
- Step 8: Review & Feedback
- Step 9: Endorsement of College Annual Action Plan
- Step 10: Presidential Approval

The College then took action to design and implement a ten-step budget development process for instructional programs and a five-step budget development process for non-instructional units at the College (**I.A.30**).