

Recommendation #1

The college should carefully structure its employment procedures to ensure recruitment and hiring efforts that result in further diversification of the staff with an emphasis on full-time faculty in particular. (2.6,7.A.3, 7.D.1)

During the 2003–04 academic year, Palomar College hired 16 new full-time faculty. Of that number, 25% (n = 4) were from under-represented groups. While the percent of underrepresented applicants and interviewees has remained relatively constant, except for the anomaly in the 2002–03 academic year, which may be a result of the small number of faculty hired that year, the percent of those from underrepresented groups who have been hired has increased, see Table 1.

Table 1—Percent Under-represented applicants, interviewees and hires

Year	# of positions	# of applicants	% under-represented applicants	% under-represented interviewees	% under-represented hires
00-01	31	1,028	20.9%	25.1%	9.7%
01-02	12	470	18.3%	22.6%	16.7%
02-03	4	23	8.7%	13.3%	25%
03-04	16	984	20.5%	18.5%	25%

To ensure recruitment efforts that may result in the hiring of a more diverse full-time faculty, Palomar has initiated, and remains committed to, the following strategies:

- Continue to increase the college’s awareness of the benefits of hiring a more diverse faculty and staff. We have added the goal of increasing the diversity of faculty in the College’s Strategic Planning Process.
- Continue to attend job fairs and will continue to target advertising to specific colleges and universities, as well as local and national professional organizations that serve ethnically diverse candidates (including Camp Pendleton).
- Begin advertising new faculty positions earlier in the year so competitive diverse candidates will still be in the job pool when the hiring process begins.
- Continue to offer professional development workshops to improve the application/interviewing skills of our adjunct faculty, a logical source of many diverse applicants. This will increase their competitiveness in the hiring process. The first workshop was held in Fall 2004 and a second is scheduled for Spring 2005.
- Continue to add the ethnic breakdown of the current student population to recruiting materials, and develop new recruiting brochures depicting more diversity in the College while also marketing the diversity of our local area in our recruiting materials.
- Continue to update the Palomar and Human Resources web pages featuring more photographs that include ethnically diverse students and staff. A web page entitled “Faces of Palomar” is under development and will reflect the diversity of students, faculty, and staff.
- Continue to establish partnerships with community college teacher training programs for underrepresented candidates (e.g., SDICCA) and to participate in community outreach efforts with our membership in the Higher Education Recruiting Consortium (HERC).

- Continue to improve the selection committee training materials. Emphasize the need to include diverse members on each selection committee to reflect the diversity on campus. This could increase the desire of ethnically diverse candidates to want to teach at Palomar. We also train selection committees in cultural differences in approaches to the interview process.

Summary:

Palomar is making gradual progress in diversifying its full-time faculty. The College has carefully structured its employment procedures to ensure recruitment and hiring efforts that may result in further diversification of the staff with an emphasis on full-time faculty in particular.

Recommendation #2

Given the relative newness of the strategic planning process and the plans to re-establish the institutional review process, within two years the college should evaluate the effectiveness of the institutional review process, modifying, as appropriate, and linking it to strategic planning and the resource allocation process. This will greatly assist the college in assuring that its long-term educational and facilities planning efforts are updated. (3.B.3, 3.C.3)

Based on the WASC report of 2003, the newly-formed Strategic Planning Council (SPC) charged the Institutional Review Committee (IRC) with evaluating and modifying the process to address the concerns about effectiveness and links to planning. As a result of its evaluation, IRC proposed that Palomar College make the changes described below. The Strategic Planning Council approved the new process and the College began implementing it in 2003-04.

The new process includes four key changes.

- First, the review process is an annual event for every program instead of the previous cycle of once every 5 years. This allows a timely evaluation, particularly important for disciplines that change rapidly or for departments that experience internal change. It also provides the divisions with the capability to look at all areas together when prioritizing needs and allocating resources each year.
- Second, the review process is based on a simplified and standard set of questions and data which is established at the beginning of the cycle by the planning councils. This allows for continuous updating of the type of information gathered each year. For example, the new institutional review forms ask programs/departments to identify one student learning outcome and describe how it is assessed. This addresses a major college-wide movement to define student learning outcomes.
- Third, the review process is expertise-based. With the new process, the program or department reviews are now evaluated by the division deans/directors in consultation with the department chairs. Previously, individual members of IRC evaluated the reviews. The deans/directors then write an area report which is sent to the appropriate planning council (e.g., Instructional Planning Council).
- Fourth, the review process is integrated into the planning council structure of the College. As mentioned above, at the beginning of the review cycle, each planning council defines the data that their respective programs/departments will use when completing their annual reviews. When the reviews are completed, planning councils evaluate area reports made by the division deans/directors.

The planning councils incorporate the needs identified through the institutional review process when generating priorities to pass on to the Strategic Planning Council and, if necessary, to the Revenue Allocation Committee. Further, the Strategic Planning Council can consider the results of the divisional institutional reviews when developing the Institution's Annual Implementation Plan (a component of the Strategic Planning Process). Thus, the review process is now linked to Palomar College's strategic planning and resource allocation process.

After the first year of implementation, IRC held focus groups to evaluate the effectiveness of the new process. In general, departments/programs appreciated the new forms and process and felt that the revised process encouraged compliance. Based on specific feedback from the focus groups, Institutional Research and Planning is adding data to allow for the evaluation of trends. Further, the IRC has recommended strengthening the feedback loop from the planning councils to departments/programs to inform them about how the completed reviews and reports are used in the planning and resource allocation process.

Additional plans which the college has developed:

As the College completes several cycles of this new process it is expected that slight modifications will be needed to strengthen and increase its impact. The IRC is tasked with providing training on the process, monitoring the effectiveness of the process, and recommending improvements to increase its effectiveness, if needed.

Summary:

Palomar College, through its IRC, has evaluated the effectiveness of the institutional review process and modified it based on this evaluation. Further, the process is now linked to the strategic planning and resource allocation process of the college. The new process is an annual, expertise-based process for each department or program. The needs and the progress of each area are presented to the appropriate planning councils by the division dean or director. The planning councils use the information in sending reports to the Strategic Planning Council and, if necessary, to the Revenue Allocation Committee.

Recommendation #3

The college has begun to develop processes for measuring student learning outcomes and should integrate into its formal methods of review of academic programs and certificates the creation and evaluation of student learning outcomes on a course, program, and degree/certificate level. (4.B.3)

Fall, 2003

- Palomar College established a Learning Outcomes Task Force. This was a 31-member task force, co-chaired by the college President and the Faculty Senate President. All college constituent groups, including students, were represented.
- From within the larger Task Force, a small working group was established to work with the co-chairs on a proposed organizational structure to formalize our college's approach to learning outcomes.
- The products of the work of the Task Force and small working group were the revision of the college's Principles of Assessment (attachment #1) and a Governance Structure Group Request (attachment #2), establishing a Learning Outcomes Council (LOC) which would be guided by a Coordinating Committee.

- The faculty co-chair reported to the LOC about a review of core skills developed by the Curriculum Committee. In this request, department chairs and program directors were asked to consider the ways in which a number of core skills are assessed in their disciplines (attachment #3). This information has helped the Coordinating Committee imagine how the college might begin thinking about “skills” and “concepts” or “knowledges” in different ways.
- Concurrent with these activities, the Institutional Review Committee, whose task is to oversee program review in instructional and non-instructional programs, began to discuss the relationship of institutional review/program review to learning outcomes.

Spring, 2004

- Institutional resources were identified, including reassigned time for the faculty co-chair and faculty coordinating committee members. Administrative support and commitment to a faculty-driven process were identified as essential elements.
- The Task Force continued to refine its products and to shepherd them through the formal governance process. The proposed organizational structure of the Learning Outcomes Council and the Coordinating Committee were approved by the Faculty Senate, the Instructional Planning Council, the Curriculum Committee, the Strategic Planning Council, and they were finally endorsed by the Governing Board.
- In Spring 2004, the Curriculum Committee recommended the adoption of Curricunet, an automated curriculum management system. The system will allow for the inclusion of learning outcomes for every course offered on campus.
- The Institutional Review Committee completed its work on the revision of the Data Collection Form (attachment #4) to include a new request: that departments and programs “identify one learning outcome that has been incorporated in one course in the program.” Additionally, they were asked to identify a measure by which that learning outcome had been assessed.

Fall, 2004

- The LOC and the Coordinating Committee began meeting regularly at the start of the semester. The faculty co-chair addressed the faculty and administration at the Fall Plenary Session, identifying student learning outcomes as among the most important initiatives for the college and encouraging participation in the dialogue.
- The LOC meets once a month, and the Coordinating Committee meets three times a month. The attention has been almost exclusively on dialogue, more often called conversation or discussion. These meetings have resulted in an enthusiastic and sometimes intense exchange of ideas about how the college will “develop processes for measuring student learning outcomes.” This has been an essential element of what is hoped will eventually be considerable integration of these ideas.
- The college funded the Coordinating Committee’s participation in the AAHE/WASC “Workshop on Assessment” in October. The committee members became better informed about the larger context of assessment and its relationship to the new accreditation standards. The experience allowed for team-building, which has resulted in gained momentum and enthusiasm for the work. Most importantly, the team project which was generated at the conference outlines a one-year plan, “Conversation, Information, Preservation” for engaging the entire campus in a focus on student learning outcomes (attachment #5).
- The LOC invited the chair of the Nursing program to share some of the details of that program’s response to accreditation requirements which have been in place for some time. The remarkable success of the Nursing program and its approach to learning outcomes and assessment suggests that much can be learned from many other programs on our campus, most of them in vocational and technical areas, which are accountable to various accrediting bodies.

- The faculty co-chair of the LOC and Coordinating Committee developed a presentation, "Student Learning Outcomes: an Invitation to an Important Conversation," which was presented to the Governing Board in November. This same presentation has been given to the Faculty Senate, the Chairs and Directors group, and several planning councils.

Spring, 2005

- The Coordinating Committee offered a presentation and facilitated discussion of student learning outcomes at the Adjunct Faculty Spring '05 Plenary Session.
- A web-site has been established for the purpose of posting information, articles, and ideas about learning outcomes and assessment.
- The Coordinating Committee has created a newsletter intended to inform and entertain colleagues with glimpses into work relating to student learning outcomes.
- The college library has established a collection of materials dedicated to student learning outcomes and assessment.
- The members of the LOC have begun to recruit interested students who might benefit from participation in this process. An invitation was extended to future teachers and any other students who might experience this as a significant learning opportunity. It is hoped that these students will serve as ambassadors and information-gatherers for this campus-wide initiative.
- The faculty co-chair of the LOC joined representatives of the Vocational/Technical division for a workshop on Program Improvement and Assessment in February, 2005.

Additional plans which the college has developed:

- The one-year plan for "Conversation, Information, and Preservation," developed by the Coordinating Committee and endorsed by the LOC, has been incorporated into the Professional Development Spring 2005 schedule (attachment #6). The entire campus community is invited to participate in a series of eight forums, which will facilitate discussion of student learning outcomes.
- In order to reach out to faculty who do not teach at the San Marcos campus, the LOC will offer additional forums at night and at the college's largest education center in Escondido.
- In addition to the more formal environment of the forums, plans are underway to organize an informal gathering off-campus in order to engage faculty and staff in conversations about this initiative.
- The LOC will act in support of a project called "Campus Explorations." This will operate as a campus-wide learning community, focusing on a particular theme and offering connected occasions for students, faculty, and staff – interdisciplinary discussion sections, guest speakers, performances, etc.
- The Coordinating Committee will ask student journalists from *The Telescope*, our campus newspaper, to help spread the word about the campus-wide attention to student learning outcomes and about the role students play in contributing to those outcomes.
- The LOC will request that individual faculty members begin to share their ideas, methods and plans at council meetings, and every effort will be made to create an environment in which many will be willing to participate.

Summary:

In considering this recommendation, the LOC agreed to begin with a strong acknowledgement that the assessment of learning outcomes has always been successfully undertaken by the faculty here at Palomar College. In this spirit, numerous campus constituents have worked diligently to respond in a meaningful, authentic way to this recommendation. As a first step, Palomar has begun to formally record the methods by which outcomes are measured and student success is achieved. One of the significant challenges at Palomar College was to establish an environment in which we could engage in healthy collegial debate about trends in assessment and performance reporting. The LOC will continue to

encourage dialogue and to focus on communication, seeking broad participation. Preparing the ground for truly transformative change in the area of learning outcomes will no doubt prove worthwhile for our students and our community.

Recommendation #4

The college should develop mechanisms to ensure that supervisors and department chairs evaluate classified staff, administrators/managers, and part-time faculty on a regular cycle with formal and timely follow-up following college policy or contract provisions. (7.B.1, 7.B.2)

The Human Resources Planning Council has developed procedures to ensure that supervisors and department chairs evaluate classified staff, administrators/managers, and part-time faculty on a regular cycle with formal and timely follow-up complying with college policy or contract provisions. Human Resources will implement follow-up procedures that will include notification to the employee being evaluated, as well as to the employee's supervisor/manager, so that timely completion of the evaluation is more likely to occur.

The Human Resources Department is currently discussing these procedures with the constituent group representatives so that the procedures may be implemented during Spring/Summer 2005. Included in these discussions will be consideration for the frequency of the evaluation cycle that ensures timeliness of feedback to the employee. Once in place, extensive training will be conducted for all those responsible for completing evaluations of all classified staff and administrators/managers.

New procedures regarding the evaluation of part-time faculty are included in a new contract between Palomar College and the Palomar Faculty Federation. Pending ratification of this contract and adoption by Palomar's Board of Governors, these new procedures will be implemented no later than Fall 2005. The new procedures clearly define a timeline allowing for regular evaluations, personnel and faculty responsible for the evaluation, and the evaluation cycle.

Summary:

The Human Resources Department will implement these procedures by Fall 2005 to ensure that supervisors and department chairs evaluate classified staff, administrators/managers, and part-time faculty on a regular cycle with formal and timely follow-up, complying with college policy and contract provisions.

Recommendation #5

The college should ensure the planning and resource allocation process effectively address the need for equipment replacement to meet the educational and student services needs of the college. (6.2, 6.5, 8.1, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 3.B.3, 9.A.1, 9.A.3)

To address this recommendation, the Strategic Planning Council (SPC) convened an Equipment Replacement Task Force in Spring 2004. The Task Force recommended an Equipment Replacement Procedure that was approved by SPC and provides for general funding allocation for equipment replacement based upon eligibility, priority and critical or safety needs.

Through extensive work of the Fiscal Stability Task Force convened in Summer 2004, Palomar College is fully analyzing its budget development and allocation process. The Task Force is still meeting and will be making final recommendations to SPC this Spring. It is anticipated that one of the recommendations from the planning councils to SPC will be to ensure a budget line item allocation for equipment replacement

and repair and for the purchase and maintenance of site software licenses. This recommendation would ensure an on-going allocation of funds to address department and division priorities in instruction and student services.

In addition, a Technology Master Planning Task Force was convened in Spring 2004 to develop a comprehensive, college-wide technology and programs services plan linked to the 20-year Educational and Facilities Master Plan. The plan will include an assessment of the current state of technology as well as recommend a long-term plan for resource allocation, including staffing levels, equipment replacement, and facilities. The Task Force will complete its work and make its recommendations to SPC during Spring 2005.

For the past two years, the State Chancellor's Office has distributed block grant funds requiring a 3:1 college match. It is anticipated that this specified funding allocation will continue and will enable Palomar College to use these funds as one resource for equipment replacement and repair. To allocate these block grant funds, each instructional division and student services area develop a prioritized list of equipment based on department priorities. To ensure that various instructional and student service needs are addressed, funds are categorized and allocated to support general instructional equipment needs and repairs, computer labs, faculty, classroom technology, and student support services. The distribution of these funds is an inclusive process among faculty, department chairs, administrators, and governance committees responsible for prioritizing and allocating these funds. This procedure is currently adequately addressing the equipment replacement needs in instruction and student services.

Summary:

Progress on this recommendation has been made over the past year and a half. Through the efforts of Palomar's shared governance process, various task force recommendations, strategies and procedures, funding sources have been identified and implemented or are under discussion. The combination of these procedures, strategies, and funding sources will ensure an on-going planning and resource allocation process that will effectively address the replacement of equipment for the instructional programs and student support services of Palomar College.

Recommendation #6

The team recommends that future retiree health and dental benefits be clearly identified and funded as a future obligation of the college. (9.C.1)

Palomar College has identified several issues concerning future retiree health and dental benefits as a future financial obligation. In the past, the college paid the total cost of the retiree medical premiums for all retirees from the Unrestricted General Fund. Palomar paid the current annual premium as a current expense employing the "pay as you go model". When additional funds were available, some funds were earmarked to offset the retiree health obligation. The balance accumulated was inadequate to catch up to the total future liability of the rising costs of medical premiums. Beginning in 2004-2005, future retiree medical benefit costs are considered part of the complete benefit package cost for each employee. Funds are now being transferred into the Retiree Medical Fund for every current employee. As the college implements this process, over \$3 million has been transferred to the Retiree Medical Fund during 2004-2005. This amount is expected to exceed the premiums paid out resulting in a balance in that fund that is expected to increase from year to year.

Although this new funding model will cover the future retiree medical benefits for current employees from this point forward, it does not address the existing liability for current retirees and for a number of long-term employees close to retirement. Through the Benefits Committee and the Resource Allocation Committee (RAC), Palomar will address the future liability for current retirees once it receives an updated actuarial study to be completed in the spring semester of 2005.

Another problem identified by the college regarding future retiree medical benefits was the practice of funding all retiree medical premiums from the Unrestricted General Fund. This was an issue because some retirees were funded 100% from categorical programs (such as EOPS or Matriculation) their entire

careers at Palomar. To address this problem, the current process of funding future retiree medical benefit costs as part of the complete benefit package is now being covered by the program that funds the employee. Categorical programs will now fund both current and future retirement benefits. This represents the true costs that should be charged to these programs.

Summary:

Palomar College has clearly identified future retiree health and dental benefits and has taken steps to fully fund the future retiree health and medical benefits of current employees. A plan to fund the future liability of current retirees and long term employees close to retirement will be developed once an updated actuarial study is completed in Spring of 2005.