

A Follow-Up Report and Visit

Palomar Community College District  
San Marcos, CA

A Confidential Report Prepared for The Accrediting Commission  
For Community and Junior Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited

Palomar College  
On  
April 1, 2011

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## **Introduction and Overview**

On April 1, 2011, a team representing the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) visited Palomar College in San Marcos, California. The team visit was a follow-up to the April 2010 follow-up team visit in which the Accreditation Commission acted to continue the Warning sanction the college received following the Comprehensive Visit in March 2009. On June 30, 2010, the Accrediting Commission determined that recommendations 3, 5, and 6 had been fully resolved by the college, and that though considerable progress had been made on the remaining recommendation 2, the college would require additional time to fully complete the implementation the components of an integrated evaluation, planning, and resource allocation cycle. The purpose of this follow-up team visit was to verify that the March 2011 Follow-up Report and evidence prepared by the college accurately reflected the college's resolution of recommendation 2.

Overall, the team found that the college had made great effort to prepare for the April 1, 2011 Follow-up team visit. The Follow-up Report, which was made available before the March 15 deadline, was well organized, focused on key issues associated with all subsections of recommendation 2, and did a commendable job of describing and clarifying the complexities and relationships between the components of the college's Integrated Planning Model. The team was able to verify the findings of the previous follow-up visit that, overall, the college constituency represented a highly developed culture of understanding, collaboration, capacity, and positive intent to fully address the remaining recommendation. The team held interviews and examined documents and evidence which were available in the Follow-up Report, an Addendum to the Follow-up Report provided electronically before the visit, the college website, and hard copy provided in the team room and during interviews.

During the visit, the team interviewed approximately 45 members of the college that included individuals from the following positions and groups.

- Board of Trustees
- College Superintendent/President
- Vice President for Instruction/Accreditation Liaison Officer
- President of Administrative Association
- Vice President for Finance & Administrative Services
- Director of Information Services
- Supervisor, Academic Technology
- Co-Presidents Palomar Faculty Federation
- Council of Classified Employees
- Faculty Senate
- Director of Institutional Research and Planning & Research Analyst
- Strategic Planning Council
- Instructional Planning Council and Department Chairs
- Associated Student Government
- Accreditation Writing Team

The Commission identified one recommendation with four areas of focus in its June 30, 2010 letter to the college. The following represents the visiting team's findings and conclusions for each of the four sections of recommendation 2.

## **Recommendation #2 – Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation Decision-Making**

In order for the college to meet standards, ensure a broad-based, ongoing, systematic, and cyclical process that includes evaluation, planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation, the team recommends the following plan development, implementation, evaluation, and improvement steps be taken. (I.A.4; I.B.2; I.B.3, .4; III.A.2; III.B.2.b; III.D.2; III.C.1.d)

### **Recommendation #2.1**

**Develop a comprehensive and an integrated long-range Strategic Plan, including measurable goals that can be used to influence resource allocation decisions on an annual basis. The Strategic Plan should incorporate the priorities established in all of the college's major plans to include its:**

- a. Technology Plan**
- b. Facilities Master Plan**
- c. Educational Master Plan, including the addition of the planned expansion of facilities to the northern and southern areas of the college's service areas**
- d. Human Resources Staffing Plan**

### **Findings and Evidence**

The team commends the continuous and productive progress made by the college in the development and implementation of a robust and well designed integrated evaluation, planning, and resource allocation cycle since the April 2010 follow-up visit. Prior to the April 2010 follow-up team visit, the college primary participatory governance group, the Strategic Planning Council (SPC) had established the Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation Decision-Making Model (IPM). This Integrated Planning Model provides the overall organizational structure to coordinate the relationship between the college's long range Master Plans, the medium range Strategic Plan, the short range Program Review and Planning processes (PRP), and the Resource Allocation Model (RAM). The Integrated Planning Model (IPM) links the priorities established in the Educational Master Plan, the Facilities Master Plan, the Technology Master Plan, the Equipment Master Plan, and the Human Resources Staffing Plan to the Strategic Plan which is linked with, informs, and is informed by both the Program Review and the Resource Allocation processes. At the time of the visit, the team found evidence that all Master Plans had been updated and were in place and priorities and those from the program review process were reflected in resource allocation decisions over the past year.

The Educational and Facilities Master Plans have been fully integrated together as the Master Plan 2022, the college's principle long-range planning process that provides the overall framework to drive the other operational Master Plans. The mid-range Strategic Plan contains the college's mission, values, goals and measurable objectives that reflect college priorities emerging from the relationship between the master plans, program review, and resource allocation processes. The Strategic Planning Council develops the Annual Action Plan following

a Formative Review of the Integrated Planning Model and the results of the current year's activities. This review allows the college to modify its goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan along with resource allocations to address new priorities in the coming year. The Resource Allocation Model (RAM), which is centrally located within the Integrated Planning Model, places Strategic Plan priorities and those from Program Review at the center of resource allocation decisions. The Resource Allocation Model has as a design feature, a contingency tree to address fluctuations of available resources that provides the college with guidelines for adjusting planning strategies and resource allocations when the baseline budget changes. The Strategic Plan Priority Funding which is defined in the Resource Allocation Model provides the college with a flexible process that can be modified annually to specify funding aligned with the goals and objectives contained within the Annual Action Plan. College units apply for this funding for projects included in the 2-year program review and planning cycle that address goals and objectives contained in the Strategic Plan.

Central to the Integrated Planning Model, is the Strategic Planning Council, which as the principle participatory governance group at the college, oversees all aspects of the college's integrated evaluation, planning, and resource allocation process. The bi-monthly meeting schedule of the council has a standing agenda item named "Integrated Planning Model" where the membership reviews the progress of the annual Action Plan, the cumulative results of which coupled with the annual Formative Evaluation of the planning and resource allocation processes and results, provide the basis for crafting the subsequent year Action Plan. The Strategic Planning Council had completed the Formative Evaluation of the Year One Annual Plan at the time of the team visit, and these findings have already begun to shape the development of college's Year Two Action Plan. The Strategic Planning Council which develops the Annual Plan has established a format that outlines the individuals and college groups responsible, the project steps, timelines, measurable outcomes, progress and Strategic Planning Council actions for goals and objectives. The Annual Action Plan is reviewed and updated throughout the year to document progress and completion of objectives in the Strategic Plan.

## **Conclusion**

Since the April 2010 follow-up visit, the college has maintained its commitment to resolving recommendation 2.1, and at the time of the visit demonstrated unequivocal evidence that it had addressed the Commission's concerns related recommendation 2.1. Because the Integrated Planning Model the college has implemented is sophisticated, complex, and time consuming to maintain, the primary concern of the visiting team was whether it was sustainable. The team found overwhelming evidence through interviews with the college's constituency that, as a result of the enormous amount of time spent in developing the components of the model over the last two years, the college membership had become personally deeply invested, committed, with a strong sense of ownership in a process they wanted to continue to refine and improve. This experience provided evidence to the team that not only had the college created an integrated planning model that met accreditation standards, it was meeting the needs and interests of the college as well.

The college has fully addressed the recommendation and is in compliance with Standards and Policies.

### **Recommendation #2.2**

**Modify the budget development process in a manner that will place the college's strategic plan priorities at the center of its resource allocation decisions (III.D.1, 1.c).**

### **Findings and Evidence**

Planning documents (strategic, program review and planning) articulate the college's processes and the relationship between departmental plans and the college's overarching Master Plan 2022. There is broad awareness across the college of how annual planning occurs as well as an understanding that the annual strategic planning priorities are operational in nature and are intended to facilitate the implementation of all the college's master plans. The team validated that the college builds its annual strategic planning objectives from priorities established in the master plans and also considers department level annual plans. This process provides a thorough analysis and consideration of the college's overarching goals as well as the needs and priorities of its many departments. The process is designed to position the college's strategic plan priorities at the center of resource allocation decisions.

The college has established a clear process to integrate annual strategic planning priorities and annual resource allocation processes. Once the annual strategic planning priorities are established, the college dedicates and allocates one half of one percent of the annual budget to fund activities. The team was impressed with the commitment Palomar College has made in this area and applauds the collective decision to formalize annual funding for these efforts. The team learned from many members of the campus community that they are proud of their decision to fund activities leading to institutional improvement and feel there is a collective dedication to this process.

The team was also impressed with the level of tracking done by the college. The Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services demonstrated the tracking system which utilizes codes to link funds to strategic plan activities. This will be future evidence that the college is meeting the expectation of this standard.

### **Conclusion**

The team was able to validate that the college is fully meeting the standard and has ensured resources will be available to fund activities which support the achievement of the college's overall goals.

### **Recommendation #2.3**

**Develop mechanisms to regularly evaluate all of the college's planning and resource allocation processes as the basis for improvement (I.B.6; II.A.2.f; II.B.4; III.D.3; IV.A.5)**

### **Findings and Evidence**

The college had establish a Annual Planning, Resource Allocation, and Evaluation Timeline cycle that specifies the incremental schedule for the review and updating of the Master Plan 2022 (12 year cycle), the Technology, Staff, and Equipment Master Plans (6 year cycle), the Strategic

Plan (3 year cycle) and Program Review and Planning (2 year cycle). All planning processes have scheduled informal and formal reviews throughout their cycles. The college is completing year one of the Strategic Plan 2013 Action Plan, and a Follow-up Report addendum received by the team on March 30, 2011, provided evidence that the Strategic Planning Council and the four Planning Councils [Finance & Administrative Services Planning Council, Human Resource Services Planning Council, Instructional Planning Council, and Student Services Planning Council] completed the first annually scheduled Formative Evaluation of the Integrated Planning, Evaluation and Resource Allocation Decision-Making Model. SPC will complete and publish the Formative Evaluation of the Resource Allocation Model during early April 2011. The findings from these scheduled Formative Evaluations have already resulted in new dialog emerging across college sectors associated with refinements and improvements to the Year Two Action Plan goals and objectives.

The Research and Planning Office supports evaluation efforts at the college through a comprehensive Fact Book, research briefs, focused comprehensive studies, along with the templates and data to support the Program Review process. Members of the Research and Planning unit were embedded throughout major planning groups as well as the Strategic Planning Council, and play an active role of guiding, informing, and discussing the relevance of the evaluation process and its relationship to planning and budget allocation decisions.

### **Conclusion**

The team found that the college has established an ongoing and comprehensive evaluation process that is widely embraced by planning and resource allocation decision making groups. Evidence that evaluation processes do lead to improvement in planning and resource allocation decisions were found within the Formative Evaluations of the four Planning Councils and Strategic Planning Council that were completed prior to the team visit. Interviews with members of college during the visit verified that evaluation has become a dynamic process the college has embraced to foster dialog related to improvement of college planning and resource allocation priorities.

The college has fully addressed the recommendation.

### **Recommendation #2.4**

**Develop an updated Technology Plan to address such major concerns as disaster recovery, data security, and on-going equipment replacement (III.C; III.C.1.a, c, d; III.C.2; III.D; Previous Recommendation #5).**

The college had made significant progress toward this goal as noted in the follow up report of 2010. The college completed the update to the technology plan (Technology Master Plan 2016) which was accepted by the Strategic Planning Council in November 2010. The plan is comprehensive in nature and address a broad range of issues including disaster recovery, equipment replacement, and data security.

The current Technology Master Plan 2016 also formed a standing workgroup of the Finance and Administrative Services Planning Council (FASPC) to evaluate technology needs and make

recommendations to the college. This workgroup considers the college's priorities and plans to ensure that technology needs are addressed in alignment with the overall college priorities. The team was able to validate from many individuals a broad understanding of the role of this workgroup and acknowledges of the important role they play in linking technology needs to the college's overall planning processes.

### **Conclusion**

The team has validated that the college has fully met this recommendation and is in alignment with the standard.