

Mid-Cycle Evaluation
Peer Evaluation Report

College of Southern Idaho

Twin Falls, Idaho

April 8 and 9, 2018

A confidential report of findings prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

College of Southern Idaho

Mid-Cycle Evaluation Committee Report

Evaluators

The on-site evaluation committee for Mid-Cycle Evaluation of College of Southern Idaho (CSI) consisted of Johnny Mack, Executive Dean of Career and Technical Education at Chemeketa College in Oregon, and Gwendolyn James, Interim Dean of Arts and Science at Spokane Community College in Washington.

Overview of the Mid-Cycle Evaluation Visit to College of Southern Idaho

The Mid-Cycle review on-site visit was conducted April 8-9, 2018. Logistics; including travel, lodging, and meeting schedule for the visit, were coordinated by the Accreditation Liaison Officer, and all arrangements proceeded smoothly. Prior to the visit, digital and hard copy versions of the CSI's Mid-Cycle report were received with sufficient time for study and consultation by the evaluators.

The meetings scheduled for the on-site visit were consistent with the three main parts of the Mid-Cycle report and represented administrative, staff and faculty personnel either mentioned or associated with the report. All meetings were collegial and informative, allowing for quality conversation regarding the practices and evidence associated with the assessment of core themes and institution's efforts toward mission fulfillment. The interaction between college representatives including administrators, staff, faculty and board members with the evaluators was open, honest and responsive to the improvement and success of the institution. The visit focused on providing helpful feedback to CSI's current progress in preparation for a successful, year seven, comprehensive evaluation.

Overview of this Report

The report represents the primary questions/areas noted in NWCCU's Mid-Cycle guidelines. Such areas were addressed by CSI's formal report and guided the informative conversations of the on-site visit. Consistent with the outline presented during exit meeting, the on-site visit and this report reflects observations/strengths and suggestions associated with (1) an institutional assessment plan, (2) the representative examples of mission and core theme operationalization, and (3) preparatory efforts toward the college's Year Seven review.

Part I: Overview of Institutional Assessment Plan

Overall, the evaluators found College of Southern Idaho making significant progress with the assessment and alignment of college resources to support and sustain mission fulfillment. Throughout all meetings and interviews, it was evident that the institution had a clear focus on its strategic priorities; had clearly articulated student learning outcomes, and improved the clarity of learning outcomes consistent to program content and collegiate-level degree achievement. These advancements in accreditation and mission fulfillment progress are supported by the following observations:

- The college's three year report clearly articulated that the college knows and understands where they currently are and what they need to do between now and the Year Seven review. The three year report was a great reflection of what has been and is occurring at the college.

- The spirit of teamwork has successfully promoted infrastructural alignment toward mission fulfillment. Administration, faculty, program chairs, deans, the foundation board, College Board and college committees shared a consistent focus on the strategic priorities of the institution. Student learning outcomes are clearly oriented at the course, program and degree level and incorporate input from CTE industry-based program advisory boards.
- The redevelopment of the Gen ED Program outcomes, which were reviewed and updated by faculty and staff from all of the higher education institutions in Idaho have been implemented at the college. The college has created a process to gather student artifacts to evaluate the Gen Ed program outcomes through Canvas. The college has demonstrated how much work has gone into the development of this assessment process through the creation of the Canvas website and the rubrics used to score the artifacts. The first gathering of artifacts has occurred and assessment of these artifacts has created a reflective discussion on how to continually improve this process.
- The college has created a team (Enterprise Resource Platform Committee) made up of representatives from across campus disciplines to help insure that decisions made at the college can be made with accurate, reliable, and easily accessible data.
- The college has created a dashboard which allows the administration, faculty and staff access to relevant and useful data. This data is being used for continuous improvement at the course, program and institutional levels. The dashboard is also used to gather the data for the performance measures of the core themes.
- The college has suspended the formal presentation of program reviews. Instead data is being used by each program and that the review process is conducted annually, instead of every five years.
- The college offers an annual conference every summer called P20. This conference is a great venue for continuous development and communication of the Gen Ed Program assessment process. Faculty and staff spoke very highly of this conference.
- The Communication program has done significant work with assessment and outcomes and can be used as a model for other Gen Ed programs.

Part II: Representative Student Learning Outcomes Examples

In the Mid-Cycle Evaluation report, the College of Southern Idaho cited two examples to demonstrate how it has continued to develop its assessment of learning outcomes at the General Education and Program level.

Example 1: General Education Assessment

The example included in the Mid-Cycle Evaluation clearly demonstrated that the College has made substantial progress in its planning assessing General Education Outcomes. In response to state-mandated changes in the General Education curriculum and in response to the unique culture and

history of the College, the institution now has clearly defined General Education Outcomes. The College has also engaged in substantive conversations at the local and state level with cross-disciplinary faculty to refine these outcomes and to develop scoring rubrics, all of which were in evidence in the documentation attached to their Evaluation and in our conversations with various constituencies.

The College has also developed a clear plan for faculty-driven assessment of the outcomes and a mechanism for collecting student artifacts. Two years into their reform, the College has only had the opportunity to complete one data collection cycle, which while successful, did not necessarily yield as much faculty participation as they would have liked. Faculty also reported challenges to using the scoring rubrics, primarily in terms of faculty confidence for some with using numerical indicators for scoring and also with knowing how to interpret or find meaning in the data at times.

Example 2: Program Assessment in Communication

The sample work for Communication that was submitted demonstrated a mature program level assessment process in a department that has a rich history of exemplary program assessment. The Communication portfolio and presentation have arisen out of their department's faculty culture, and this assessment activity drives department planning and decision-making. It is well-integrated into the College's Program Review processes, as evidenced by its connection to the development of Individual and Unit Development Plans.

The College has posted its program learning outcomes on its website for all programs, demonstrating that all programs have them. During the meetings with faculty, it became evident that while Career and Technical Education programs typically have well-defined program assessment processes, program assessment is not evenly developed across the College's transfer programs, other than at the General Education level.

The report and information gathered during the visit indicate that while the College has made significant progress in establishing a framework and mechanism for the assessment of General Education outcomes, institutionalizing this within the faculty is, as is the case at most institutions, a work in progress. The College recognizes that there is still work to be done in being responsive to the challenges they have identified and in communicating the process and results to faculty. The appointment of a Department Chair for General Education and the hiring of a full-time Instructional Designer demonstrate the College's commitment to providing the resources that will be integral to their success in institutionalizing their General Education assessment plan.

In the documentation provided and in conversations with members of the campus community, it was evident that the College's revisions to the Program Review process were beneficial in connecting learning outcomes assessment to the IDP/UDP process and thus to resource allocation and planning.

It is also evident that the College has made significant gain in establishing a culture of assessment and evidence-gathering, and these practices are connected to an energized engagement in faculty development.

Part III: Moving Forward to Year Seven

College of Southern Idaho's report and the on-site conversations indicate that the institution has made significant progress toward implementing a continuous cycle of assessment and improvement. This is evident by the work that has been done with the Gen Ed Program outcomes, assessments and rubrics. Although a lot of work has been done, there is still a lot of work to do. The following suggestions are offered to help the college continue its progress:

- Continue to develop the assessment process for the Gen Ed Program. One key component to this is communication. A theme we continuously heard was how the college should communicate the data and feedback to faculty, so they can use this information to make continuous improvements to their classes and programs. Also faculty that are not on the Twin Falls campus, mainly the dual credit faculty need additional communication to encourage more participation in the assessment process.
- College needs to continue to develop assessments in its transfer programs.
- Develop the Core Theme 2.D. 1 and 2 performance measures.
- Include all program outcomes in the printed college catalog.

Conclusion

College of Southern Idaho is well-situated in its preparation for the Year Seven Evaluation. The institution's structural alignment focused on strategic priorities will help the college identify the resources supporting mission fulfillment. Faculty, staff, administrators and Board members who participated in the Mid-Cycle Evaluation were engaged in their roles and cognizant of college's priorities and the need for continual improvement. The various interviews/meetings were candid and represented a genuine interest for the college to be able to successfully move forward. Collectively, these efforts will allow the college to be successful in classifying and effectively utilizing the resources that support the institution's mission to produce a well-trained and highly educated workforce.