

Year Seven Evaluation

College of Southern Idaho
315 Falls Avenue
Twin Falls, ID 83303

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General Introduction

The College of Southern Idaho (CSI) is a comprehensive five year College located in Twin Falls, Idaho serving a

College leadership have taken a strong role in stewarding this work. At this time, core theme indicators fail to fully reflect efforts of the organization in areas such as student support, financial practices, and other non-academic elements and initiatives.

Eligibility Requirement 6. Institutional Integrity

During the past several months the College has been challenged with a case of fiscal misconduct and another related to severance of an employment relationship. CSI leadership and the Board of Trustees have managed each situation through careful processes that demonstrate a deep commitment to ethical behaviors. In both instances, the College demonstrated dedication in reviewing practices and policies, making adjustments when warranted, and mounting appropriate, well constructed responses.

Eligibility Requirement 11. Educational Program

While some CSI educational curricula exhibit clearly identified program outcomes, this is not the case for all offerings. In addition, it was found that program learning outcomes are not made readily available to students and members of the public.

Eligibility Requirement 12. General Education and Related Instruction

CSI has clearly identified general education and related instruction for each of its certificates and degrees. Work is still underway to develop measurable outcomes and associated assessment mechanisms for these elements.

Eligibility Requirement 14. Physical and Technological Infrastructure

Design and maintenance of campus facilities at CSI creates a positive and safe teaching, learning, working, and event environment. College facilities are a true asset for the community.

Eligibility Requirement 18. Financial Resources & Eligibility Requirement 19. Financial Accountability

The College implemented new cash management and fiscal oversight processes as a result of an incident involving a substantial misappropriation of funds. A new auditing firm now serves the College and continued monitoring is planned.

Eligibility Requirement 22. Student Achievement

CSI systems for recruiting, admitting, and retaining students, while newly implemented, are strong and effective. Faculty note that these resources are clearly integrated with the instructional efforts of the institution and attest to the importance of such support system.

Report on Standard One – Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

Introduction

For the purposes of this visit and report, Standard One evaluation efforts focused on general compliance with all Standard One elements. The institution's exhibits, team observations and numerous interviews all informed the conclusions.

Standard 1.A – Mission

Standard Two – Resources and Capacity

Introduction

In order to reach conclusions related to Standard 2, the team focused on their visit's accreditation report, College exhibits, and a series of observations and interviews. Members of the College community were very forthcoming with information, and documentation proved to be clear, accurate, and helpful. There was an overall commitment to institutional honesty and transparency that greatly aided evaluation team members.

Standard 2.A – Governance

Governance changes since the last accreditation visit focused on the alignment of structures with mission and institutional effectiveness and improvement efforts internal and external to the College. The current governance structure CSI has evolved with a change in executive leadership. The structure includes clearly defined roles and responsibilities for faculty, staff, administrators, and students. Faculty governance appears especially strong given numerous opportunities for collective work and discussion. The evaluation team was impressed with the inclusion of the staff and student voice in the governance system.

The College continues to expand their off-campus presence and is working to ensure adequate resources and further aligned operational processes. The team found evidence that, while a number of broad scale changes are impacting the College (e.g., budget reductions and a rapidly growing community), College leadership and employee groups focus on engaging in new learning while working to improve internal and external communication efforts are underway to expand outreach services to local high schools, further supporting community partners.

Governing Board

The CSI Board of Trustees has selected members who do not have contractual, employment, or financial interest in the College. The board has been active and consistent in regularly reviewing, revising, and providing oversight of institutional mission, mission fulfillment, and board policy. The Board also takes seriously its role in responding to human and fiscal resource practice challenges.

Compliment: The evaluation team was impressed with Board of Trustee's policy review practices and the adoption of a systematic and period method of evaluating their individual and collective performance.

The board selects and regularly evaluates the CEO. It was apparent to reviewers that the board understands their role in holding the CEO accountable for implementing board policies such as the review of College governance and the development of institutional assessment methods.

Leadership and Management

The College's CEO has a well developed working knowledge of CSI and the College community expressed strong confidence in his ability to lead the institution in an effective and collegial manner. Several new administrative and academic leaders are in place at CSI. Each

The College's Faculty Senate formed an Academic Integrity Ad Hoc Committee to work with students to investigate, promote, and support a campus academic integrity policy. This policy is located on the CSI website.

Student Disability Services (SDS) works closely with instruction to support equal access, academic accommodations, and support for individuals with disabilities. The office is well staffed and has three interpreters available to serve students. The SDS office has an adequate budget to serve approximately 100 active students.

Concern: Although SDS offers professional development every fall for all fulltime faculty and staff members, it was noted that more ongoing professional development could be facilitated in academic departments, and with adjunct faculty on a semester basis.

The institution demonstrates compliance with admissions and placement policies through Idaho State Board of Education Policy, which guides the coursework of students at a level where they have reasonable probability of success in courses and programs through an evaluation of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities. The Placement Testing, Getting Started, and Office

Academic Freedom

The institution publishes and adheres to policies, approved by its governing board, regarding academic freedom and responsibility that protect its constituencies from ~~internal~~ internal

Professional development is provided to staff and faculty by Human Resources and other department areas through various mechanisms including mini-grant and collaborative retreat opportunities, faculty and staff educational degrees support, personal enrichment, collaborative project work, webinar trainings, and release time to attend conferences. The College offers numerous professional opportunities to CSI employees for professional growth and development. A complete list of activities supports Individual Development Plan development, the Professional and Classified Employees (PACE) organization, and sabbatical leave. These opportunities for faculty and staff are provided on an individualized basis in some instances and in partnership with various members of the campus community in others. Employees noted professional development discussions may also occur during their performance evaluations with supervisors.

Standard 2.C esgcrs

The team observed that through the curriculum development process resource needs are being identified at the time of course approval. It is clear however, that instructional faculty are systematically collaborating with librarians to integrate resources and instruction into the larger instructional program. Despite a lack of systematic engagement, faculty and students praised the Library's instructional program.

The College offers Credit for Prior Learning. The credits for prior learning are awarded only at the undergraduate level a maximum of 25% of the credits are allowed to go toward a declared postsecondary certificate or Associate of Applied Science degree. Although this is the current policy documented in the CSI Catalog, it was noted by the Registrar that there is a state initiative to revise the prior learning policy and most likely the College policy will be updated pending the state recommended revisions. The Registrar will continue to work with faculty on credit by exam and vertical credit as options in the interim of new statewide policy implementation.

The College has an established practice for awarding transfer credit which stipulates the necessary criteria for successful transfer. CSI accepts College transfer credit from regionally accredited postsecondary institutions, as recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. CSI has a standard process of evaluating transcripts of incoming transfer students and operates according to the Idaho State Board of Education's Statewide Articulation and Transfer agreement. Students who transfer from CSI to a four year public institution in Idaho are not required to complete additional lower division general education core classes unless those courses are a program requirement. Courses at each College meets the Idaho General Education Agreement learning outcomes are tagged with a General Education Matriculation Stamp. CSI also accepts general education core courses from other state institutions.

CSI has defined a general education component for associate degree programs that includes a recognizable core of humanities and fine arts, mathematical and natural sciences, and social sciences. Applied dep Sts.(as an)co-1(n)1(e ar)4(t)-1(s,)1(m)96tsourr4(r)-1(i. Yr)-1(a)5(l)-tep Sr courfi

local high schools, and branch campus facilities. The College has recently received grant funding for Complete College America, a program designed to enhance student success from point of entry to graduation. The College's website, the catalog, and the Student Handbook provide descriptive information and steps for accessing student support services.

The physical location of Student Services offices provides a welcoming one-stop experience for students. Offices are centrally-located and provide students with direct access to staff and resources. The College has invested in efficiencies, staffing, and facilities to provide wrap-around support. Technology is used for record-keeping and appropriate security precautions are in place for maintaining the confidentiality of student records.

Student Services is working on the development of enrollment and retention strategies through new initiatives. Among these strategies are new student orientation, SOAR Advising and Registration, PASS (Positive Action for Student Success) Early Alert, and SMART (Students Making a Right Turn mid-semester alerts) system, academic advising and GPS initiatives

advising. It is suggested that the College continue discussions regarding mandatory orientation to assist students in the transition to College life.

Compliment: The Evaluation Committee compliments the Director of Advising and his team for the publication *The First Year Advisor: Your Roadmap to Success*. This booklet is an outstanding resource to assist new students in navigating the College experience.

The online and print versions of the catalog provide information regarding graduation requirements. They also provide descriptive information, credit requirements, lists of courses for particular degrees, information on transfer policies and information directly related to student rights and responsibilities. Career pathway maps are documented in the catalog and are updated annually to reflect changes in program and degree requirements.

Compliment: The College is complimented for the recent 2016 College Catalog publication that demonstrates clear pathways for programs of study and information on completion of degree programs within a four semester period.

CSI outlines clear processes for ensuring that students are able to complete their program of study. The College carefully considers the impact of program closures on students and makes every effort to minimize disruption. If a program is closed, clear transfer policies and procedures are followed. A sample program elimination document was provided; if closure did occur notification would be provided on the program website and/or in the College Catalog.

The College provides information to document its retention policy and practice and follows the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) guidelines. Policy documents authorizing the elimination of certain records and the period of time necessary to maintain records are clearly recorded. The College completes daily data backups for Jenzabar, the College's student information management system. A process for Release of Information is clearly outlined on the website and a form is available for students to use as needed.

The College offers federal and state aid in addition to numerous scholarships. Financial aid and scholarship information is posted on the College website and is addressed in various publications. The College acknowledges an increase in the number of students receiving aid. Although some students expressed concerns regarding communication (mainly due to not opening electronic communication unless they were accepting their awards), students were generally well informed about financial aid and loan obligations. One significant factor impacting financial aid is employee longevity. An assessment by the leadership to identify methods for retaining employees with financial aid competencies would significantly improve retention of financial aid staff and support the College's student success initiatives.

The College of Western Idaho (CWI) is in the candidacy phase for accreditation. CWI began offering classes and financial aid to students in the s

loan obligations. This provides students with interaction strategies for managing student loans and receiving advice from student loan counselors. Loan exit counseling and information that support financial literacy expectations is also available on the Financial Aid website.

Compliment: Student Services and Financial Aid are complimented for reducing default rates for the College over a three year period and maintaining open communication with the College of Western Idaho regarding the transition of Financial Aid from CSI to CWI

CSI clearly supports student success initiatives with robust and innovative academic advising. CSI has adopted a part model where students who are in the Liberal Arts area work with professional advisors while non Liberal Arts students or Professional/Technical students work directly with faculty advisors within their programs of study. Pathways to stay on track over four semesters are noted within programs of study in the College Catalog. The shared advising model provides an opportunity where faculty can best support student success.

Students are provided opportunities for engagement in numerous clubs and activities. Students have a voice on processes and policies through the Student Senate. This is College is the scope of work in Student Affairs and the possibility of restructuring positions associated with student development and student life could provide a depth and breadth to support the student engagement goals of the College

The College provided information on the CSI website related to its auxiliary functions including Housing, Bookstore, Food Services, Student Assistance Programs, and activities for students. Students receive information about local community resources such as medical facilities, financial organizations, housing options, etc.

Intercollegiate athletics at CSI creates a sense of spirit and engagement for not only the students but also faculty and staff. There are seven athletic teams on campus and over 90 percent of the CSI student athletes transfer to four year institutions within two years. Admission, academic standards, and degree requirements are the same for athletes as they are for all other students. The process of awarding athletic scholarships is consistent with Foundation requirements for other scholarship recipients. Athletics is conducted with appropriate institutional oversight and the Athletic Director reports directly to the College President. All funds collected for the athletic program are monitored in accordance with the institution's adopted accounting procedures.

Standard 2.E -Library and Information Resources

The team found that the library holds and provides access to an appropriate level of information resources and that it engages the campus community in discussions about those resources through its Library Advisory Committee and by conducting regular faculty and student surveys.

The Library provides instruction to a number of academic departments. There is significant focus on Transfer Education and the museum supports instruction tied to the City Connections theme. The committee found room to increased instructional support in the areas of Professional Technical, ABE/GED, and administrative research. Evidence was provided through

The organization noted in their report that an embezzlement occurred. As a result of the embezzlement, the organization brought in an external consultant to review internal controls over cash receipting and payroll processing and to provide feedback and potential recommendations for improvement. The Business Office staff and the Board of Trustees were provided with an internal control report outlining concerns and potential remediation activities. The College made strides in implementing the ten different recommendations from the external consultant. While many of those recommendations have been fully implemented, the College has additional work to be completed in this area.

Concern: After discussion with Business Office personnel in reviewing supporting documentation, evaluators recommend that the College continue to carefully and fully evaluate internal control processes to ensure adequate financial oversight, mitigating the potential for misappropriation of assets.

The College budgets capital equipment and facilities based on institutional needs and conservative funding allowances. The College uses enrollment and program priorities, past experience, and an occupancy cost calculation provided by the State of Idaho to budget capital projects. CSI has been able to expand its facilities through the use of grants and state funding, incurring minimal debt obligations that were completely paid off by FY 14.

Compliment: The College should be commended for its ability to fund capital facilities and equipment without incurring additional debt or hampering budget resources.

The College operates two separate auxiliary operations, the Bookstore and Dormitory Housing. Each operates separately from the College General Fund and General Operations. Residual fund balance, if available, may be transferred to services or operations accounts that positively impact students. These transfers require the recommendation of the administration and the approval of the Board of Trustees. College auxiliary operations generate positive change in net assets even after transfers to the General Fund. Through inquiry with College personnel it was determined that auxiliary operations retain excess funds to be used for future operating periods.

The College has an external audit performed on an annual basis. The audit, which includes an examination of the financial statements, is performed by an independent accounting firm.

Standard 2.G -Physical and Technological Infrastructure

The facilities at CSare a testament to hard workdiligence and a commitment to creating a learning environment that is accessible and provides facilities that contribute to the overall learning environment of the College. Through a review of documentation and a tour of campus evaluators gained an understanding of the immensity of campus facilities and the ability of the Collegeto meet the needs of campus staff, faculty, and students.

Compliment: Evaluators commend the campus facility staff for their work in creating a positive campus learning environment through the provision of exceptional facilities and grounds.

The College

discussions with students evaluators noted concerns over the speed and availability of wi access. Evaluators would encourage the College to review its resource allocation to campus wi fi and work with stakeholders to mitigate these concerns.

Compliment: Evaluators recognize the efforts of the Information Technology (IT) staff and the

Concern: The College has not aligned programs and services with the core objectives.

Concern: The College has not appropriately defined data effective for evaluating the accomplishment of core theme objectives.

Summary of Standard Three

Systematic, proactive, ongoing planning efforts must be developed and/or verified with respect to their alignment with core themes, the strategic plan, and associated goals. There is evidence that CS implements the results of the data collection and evaluation being done, but the use of meaningful data to inform decisions and demonstrate fulfillment fails to provide an integrated system of institutional performance improvement.

developed within the context of a condensed accreditation cycle. The evaluators' concerns regarding whether CSI's core themes encompass the full intent of the College mission have already been stated. As CSI considers adjustments to their core themes, objectives and indicators, these comments regarding the existing transfer education core theme indicators should be considered.

1A: Lower division transfer programs and general education curricula meet or exceed Idaho State Board of Education requirements. While assessable and verifiable, this indicator is only minimally meaningful because it is a state requirement and therefore a condition for enabling students to transfer.

1B: Learning outcomes for transfer programs are clearly defined and assessed. As a standard of accreditation (2.C.2) and also a state requirement this indicator is minimally meaningful although it, too, is assessable and verifiable.

1C: Students' evaluation of their transfer experience. This would be meaningful, assessable verifiable but it was not done.

1D: Degree award, retention and completion rates in transfer programs are evaluated and benchmarked. As currently worded this is an objective with associated indicators rather than a single indicator.

The percentage of degree seeking students who graduate is a meaningful, assessable and verifiable indicator

The percentage of first-time, full-time students who return for the second fall semester is

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objective: To meet the economic development and credit educational, social, cultural, and community support needs of the eight county service region by making the college's human and physical resources available, including facilities and the expertise of faculty and staff. The evaluators suggest that the four existing indicators and associated metrics of achievement are actually four objectives with associated indicators. Further, the metrics as currently defined fail to capture the College's actual mission intent and success in economic development, non-credit education, college sponsored/supported educational activities, and ancillary community services. Evaluators encourage the College to use assessment data and the opportunity for improvement to drive planning and continue to define acceptable measurements of core theme satisfaction.

Evaluators agree with CSI's plan to establish more meaningful indicators of success for economic development. The College is clearly a key participant in the economic development activities in the area. Regional economic development efforts are well planned, progress is assessed and opportunities for improvement are integrated into the next round of efforts. As host of SIEDO, the College has been the lead in this impressive work. These planning, assessment and improvement plans should be integrated into the College's core theme plan.

Compliment: The College's ability and determination to respond to employer workforce training needs is outstanding.

The noncredit course/service metrics are meaningful, verifiable and assessable but may set too

Standard Five – Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation, and Sustainability

Introduction

There is much anecdotal evidence that CSI is realizing mission fulfillment. In order to become more purposeful and systematic about measuring mission fulfillment, planning and assessment mechanisms must be better aligned. Work is underway to accomplish this goal; there is an obvious institutional commitment to learning from this visit and further developing the institution's performance improvement systems.

Standard 5.A – Mission Fulfillment

CSI clearly records a long list of accomplishments with ample evidence that the College engaged in many teaching, learning, and service aspects that ensure student success and institutional accountability. The College is strongly connected to the region it serves and continues to seek methods to improve performance at all levels. In many ways, most not verified through data, the College is accomplishing mission fulfillment. However, data being collected, and decisions based, on assessment indicators that are not yet fully developed or meaningful. Engagement in a full review of curricula, planning, and assessment processes is necessary in order to a full continuous improvement model.

Standard 5.B – Adaptation and Sustainability

The evaluation report provides the use of the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) as a source of internal and external environmental monitoring. While the VFA can provide important data to assess the college's performance in student progress and outcomes, it does not identify patterns or trends in the internal and external environment. As the College enters a new strategic planning cycle, it will be important to develop a robust process for environmental scanning of internal and external factors such as trends in student demographics, changes in regional workforce needs, and state funding mandates that may impact the college's future direction.

