

## Introduction and Overview

Cypress College is the newer and smaller of two colleges in the North Orange County Community College District. Established in 1966 to assist Fullerton College in serving the rapidly growing population in Orange County, Cypress College students live primarily in these surrounding communities: Brea, Buena Park, Cypress, Fullerton, La Habra, La Palma, Los Alamitos, Placentia, Rossmoor, Yorba Linda, Stanton, and portions of other cities, such as Anaheim. Opened in 1966, the college's forty-year-old facilities are undergoing extensive renewal and renovation thanks to a general obligation bond combined with state funding.

College programs include general education courses and a broad array of vocational courses and certificates. Like many community colleges, enrollment in the past five years has declined, from a peak in spring 2002 at nearly 16,000 students to the fall 2006 enrollment closer to 13,000 students. A little over half of the Cypress College students are female, about two-thirds are younger than 25, about one-third carry a course load of 12 or more units, and about 40% declare a goal of transferring to a four-year institution.

In spring 2005 following a comprehensive self-study and an evaluation team visit, the college's accreditation was reaffirmed with the requirements for

- A Progress Report and return evaluation team visit in fall 2006 and
- A Focused Midterm Report in spring 2008.

The spring 2005 comprehensive accreditation visit to Cypress College resulted in six recommendations; two of these are the responsibility of both the college and the district. Of the six recommendations, the three to be addressed in the fall 2006 progress report and return visit were:

1. College + District: The team recommends that the Board of Trustees and Chancellor implement a process to systematically develop and document strategic institutional goals for the district. These goals should
  - Provide a framework for the colleges' planning processes (Standard IB.4),
  - Include a review of the district mission statement to ensure that the institutional goals align with the mission (Standard IA.1), and
  - Be reflected in the allocation of district resources (Standard IIID.1).
2. College + District: The team recommends that the District Chancellor develop and implement an evaluation of the existing budget allocation model and make adjustments if appropriate to meet the needs of the entire district. (Standards IIID.; IVB.3.c)

4. College: The team recommends that the college move quickly to address the need to develop and implement a comprehensive planning process. In so doing, the college must rely on the college mission and vision to develop a long-term educational master plan to guide short-term and long-term decision-making including resource allocations. This master plan must be developed collaboratively by college personnel and used as the foundational document for all other components of a comprehensive planning process, such as annual operational plans, technology plans, and facilities plans. All components of this comprehensive planning process must incorporate standardized data, contain measurable outcomes, and be widely disseminated. Once the comprehensive planning process is implemented, the process must be periodically evaluated to facilitate a cycle of continued improvement (Standards IA.4, IB., IIA.2f, IIB.4, IIC.2, IIIA.6, IIIB., IIIC.2, IIID.1a, IIID.3, IVB.2b, Eligibility Requirement 19).

## **Institutional Response to Team Recommendation #1**

*The team recommends that the Board of Trustees and Chancellor implement a process to systematically develop and document strategic institutional goals for the district. These goals should*

- *Provide a framework for the colleges' planning processes (Standard IB.4),*
- *Include a review of the district mission statement to ensure that the institutional goals align with the mission (Standard IA.1), and*
- *Be reflected in the allocation of district resources (Standard IIID.1).*

### Team Observations

This recommendation can be found in both the Cypress College and Fullerton College comprehensive accreditation evaluation visit reports. During the past academic year (2005-2006) the North Orange County Community College District and its colleges have taken seriously the task of developing a district strategic plan. The results of their work are both a document (*NOCCCD District-wide Strategic Plan*) and renewed districtwide collegiality expressed in interviews with Cypress College faculty and staff as well as observed by the team in the tenor of a District Planning Council meeting.

In early fall 2005, the Chancellor recommended the process to develop a strategic plan. Once the process and participants were identified, meetings were held at least twice a month from December through June 2006. Participants were the Board of Trustees and the District Planning Council which includes representatives from each college and the district office. The context for the planning was articulated by the Board of Trustees as the members reached consensus on the vision, mission, and values statements. In other meetings at the district and at each college, specific goals were discussed and finalized through a series of meetings. The three focus areas of the strategic plan (innovation and relevancy for all learners; intra-district and community collaboration; and effective and efficient use of resources) and specific goals within each focus area were further shaped in a first annual districtwide Strategic Conversation hosted by the Board of Trustees. The final document was distributed in June 2006.

The publication of the *NOCCCD District-wide Strategic Plan* is the culmination of phase one. The team observed that the college and district faculty and staff have begun phase two, implementation. The tasks identified for this implementation phase of planning are: identification of key performance indicators; assignment of responsibilities to specific teams or offices; timelines for action plans; alignment of college plans with the district strategic plan; and the development of processes to link budget with the district strategic plan. A tracking document is being developed to illustrate the connections among the focus area in the strategic plan, the specific district goal linked to the colleges' strategic plan, the performance indicators, and the responsible parties.

### Conclusions

The institution has made significant progress on this recommendation. A strategic plan has been developed that identifies strategic goals for the district. In the past 18 months, under the Chancellor's leadership, district and college faculty, staff, and Board members have worked diligently and collaboratively to review and revise the district mission statement and to establish strategic focus areas that will now provide a framework to align with the colleges' ongoing planning processes. During the current semester, the district and its colleges are working according to established planning timelines, and in this current phase of planning, strategies to align the district strategic plan with budget allocations will be developed and implemented.

## **Institutional Response to Team Recommendation #2**

*The team recommends that the District Chancellor develop and implement an evaluation of the existing budget allocation model and make adjustments if appropriate to meet the needs of the entire district. (Standards IIID.; IVB.3.c)*

### Team Observations

This recommendation can be found in both the Cypress College and Fullerton College 2005 accreditation evaluation visit reports. The North Orange County Community College District and its colleges have taken seriously the task of reviewing the district budget allocation model. This review was initiated prior to the colleges' accreditation visits in March 2005, and continued to conclusion in June 2006 with the distribution of a summary document, *North Orange County Community College District Budget Allocation Model Evaluation*.

The district budget allocation model evaluation integrated three divergent strategies:

- Identify and analyze fiscal concerns not addressed by the current budget allocation model;
- Measure current budget allocations in relationship to key efficiency factors, such as FTES, efficiency of facilities use, and credit versus non-credit programming; and
- Compare the NOCCCD budget allocation model to the models of neighboring Orange County multi-college districts.

The analyses for each strategy was initiated in a work group led by the District Vice Chancellor of Finance and Facilities and included the College Directors of Budget and Finance and other district and college staff as needed. Once an analysis was completed, the results were reviewed by Chancellor's Staff, the appropriate campus groups, and the District Planning Council.

Fiscal concerns not addressed by the current budget allocation model: The following four areas were identified as being absent from the seven categories that comprise the current budget allocation model:

- Operational funding (e.g., supplies) to accompany FTES growth:  
*Should supplies and other operational costs be added to college budgets once growth in FTES is achieved?*
- Roll Partnership for Excellence funding into base:  
*Should Partnership for Excellence funds be incorporated into the base budget for each site, mirroring the change made by the state, and eliminating the need to separately track these expenditures?*
- Resources for bringing new facilities online:  
*Should the budget allocation model include increased maintenance costs for new facilities when those new facilities expand a site's needs for custodial services and supplies?*

- Automatic cost-of-living increase:  
*Should the sites be allocated projected ongoing COLA funding during the budget development process?*

At the conclusion of this analysis, the work group agreed to forward two recommendations to the colleges and the District Planning Council for their consideration:

1. Once growth has been achieved, include operational funding as well as the instructional costs to support the continuation of earned growth.
2. Incorporate Partnership for Excellence funding into base allocations for each site.

These two recommendations were approved at all levels in May 2006 and were implemented with the 2006-2007 budget allocations. There was also general agreement that the *automatic cost-of-living increase* would not be incorporated in the district budget allocation model, and that *resources for new facilities* would be reconsidered by the District Planning Council once a funding sources was identified.

Measure the current budget allocation to each site: This evaluation of current budget allocations constituted a myth-busting (or myth-validating) exercise. The goal was to determine the truth of often-repeated statements, such as “Cypress College gets more money than Fullerton College,” and “Fullerton College classes are smaller than Cypress College classes.” Through this analysis, the following facts were documented:

- Fullerton College receives a larger percentage of the budget because this site earns a greater amount of total FTES;
- Cypress College receives more than its proportional share of the funding based on the amount of budget per FTES;
- The personnel costs per college reflect the FTES split, with the exception of slightly higher expenditures for classified staff at Cypress College;
- Hourly and overload instruction costs are higher per FTES at Cypress College than at Fullerton College (\$548 per FTES at Cypress compared to \$527 at Fullerton);
- Operational expenses are higher per FTES at Cypress College than at Fullerton College (\$204 per FTES at Cypress compared to \$172 at Fullerton);
- The ratio of expenses to revenue for credit and non-credit programming is balanced, with non-credit generating approximately 20% of the FTES while costing approximately 10% of the budget; and
- Cypress College has more room-size restrictions than Fullerton College, although the comparison of capacity to enrollment indicates that both colleges have sufficient space to increase efficiency/productivity by increasing class size.

The work group concluded that the current budget allocation model provides adequate resources; there is no pending recommendation to alter the funding patterns.

Compare the NOCCCD budget allocation model to those of neighboring Orange County multi-college districts: Models of three nearby multi-college community college districts were analyzed by the work group and presented to the District Planning Council. Both the work group and the larger district group concluded that foundational differences, such as in the districts' full-time faculty obligations, were significant and therefore failed to generate readily applicable recommendations for changes in the NOCCCD budget allocation model.

### Conclusions

The institution has fulfilled this recommendation. Under the leadership of the Chancellor and the budget officers at the colleges and district, the current NOCCCD budget allocation model has been thoroughly reviewed using three distinct strategies. This analysis has resulted in two changes to the current budget allocation model, and a comprehensive fiscal analysis that has the potential to convert budget comparisons between the two colleges from adversarial conversations into conversations that are issue-focused and data-driven.

## **Institutional Response to Team Recommendation #4**

*The team recommends that the college move quickly to address the need to develop and implement a comprehensive planning process. In so doing, the college must rely on the college mission and vision to develop a long-term educational master plan to guide short-term and long-term decision-making including resource allocations. This master plan must be developed collaboratively by college personnel and used as the foundational document for all other components of a comprehensive planning process, such as annual operational plans, technology plans, and facilities plans. All components of this comprehensive planning process must incorporate standardized data, contain measurable outcomes, and be widely disseminated. Once the comprehensive planning process is implemented, the process must be periodically evaluated to facilitate a cycle of continued improvement (Standards IA.4, IB., IIA.2f, IIB.4, IIC.2, IIIA.6, IIIB., IIIC.2, IIID.1a, IIID.3, IVB.2b, Eligibility Requirement 19).*

### Team Observations

Following this recommendation, Cypress College revised and revised its planning processes and extended that model beyond the existing processes for quality review and strategic planning to include an *Educational Master Plan* and an *Institutional Effectiveness Report*. Beyond these documents, the college's work in the past 18 months has resulted in greater collegewide awareness of the need for planning and potential uses of these processes for making decisions.

The *Educational Master Plan 2006-2016* was developed collaboratively. A Task Force of faculty, staff, and administrators met during fall 2005 to review master plans from other colleges, agree to a format for each department's plan, and identify the foundational data elements. Those data elements included both internal scans (five-years of data for each department, such as WSCH per FTES, student success rate, and FTEF) and external scans (e.g., market trends and job projections for Orange County). In spring 2006, each of the college's 47 departments received the educational master plan template and the individualized data to be addressed in each department's plan. Faculty members across the college participated in preparing the educational master plan entries for their departments, and after consolidation into a single document, the overall college community collaboratively reviewed the draft. In late spring 2006, a day-long retreat was held to categorize the college's instructional programs based on FTES data:

- Programs that generate significant FTES,
- Productive departments of moderate size,
- Small programs with the potential to grow, and
- Programs for further review.

The "...for further review" programs were further divided into (1) programs that have declined in FTES and (2) programs that have not grown. The completed *Educational Master Plan 2006-2016* was presented to the Board of Trustees in early fall 2006.

In the college's revised planning model, the educational master plan will serve as the foundational document for all college planning, including specific plans (technology,

facilities, matriculation, student equity, and student services), the strategic plan, and the annual planning and budget processes.

The college's strategic planning process which predates the current educational master plan is the means of identifying collegewide goals and specific action plans. The college intends to continue the four-year cycle of strategic planning as well as the use of five college directions to organize collegewide goals and action plans:

- Direction One – Instruction
- Direction Two – Student Support Services
- Direction Three – Campus Support Services
- Direction Four – Campus Climate
- Direction Five – Community Relations

Although the lifespan of a strategic plan will remain four years, a revision in the strategic planning process is that action plans related to each goal will be reviewed annually and revised every two years. Action plans are assessed as (1) completed, (2) not yet complete, or (3) ongoing, and the results of this assessment for each action plan are documented the institutional effectiveness report. Action plans for the next two years of a strategic plan's four-year cycle are then developed and distributed as evidenced by the October 2006 distribution of the *2004-2008 Strategic Plan with Objectives and Action Plans for 2006-2008*.

The college direction committees each monitor progress on a set of action plans and prioritizes requests for one-time funds based on whether the project/funding will move the college toward fulfillment of an action plan. This process is evidence of a link between one planning component with the budget.

An institutional effectiveness report has been produced annually for each of the past two academic years. This document establishes standardized data elements for college wide use and consolidates several aspects of planning:

- Demographic and student success data,
- Quality reviews completed the previous year,
- Student/employee perception survey results, and
- Status report on the action plans.

In marked contrast to interviews with college faculty and staff during the previous accreditation visit, team members were pleased by the high level of awareness of planning processes and an acceptance of the accreditation standards to rely on data in decision-making and to link planning to budget allocations.

### Conclusions

The college has made steady progress in the past 18 months in response to this recommendation. The Educational Master 2006-2016 was collaboratively developed, includes standardized data, and will no doubt serve as a key document for college decisions once the connections between and among the various other planning/program review processes are fully developed.

The college has diligently worked in renewing and expanding its planning model. The efforts must continue, however, to develop, test, and refine clear links among the components of planning and between planning and budgeting. For example, quality review in instruction, a peer-supported and peer-organized process, requires that departments respond to objective data, such as WSCH/FTEF, as part of their annual and comprehensive Instructional Quality Assessment reports. However, the IQA Committee does not provide an evaluative response to the reports. The only evaluative response comes from the Executive Vice President to the dean, who then shares that response with the department. Also, while an updated quality review must be submitted at the time that a department/program requests one-time funding, there is again no evaluative response to the program reviews. The review is either submitted or not submitted.

How the various elements of planning are to be used to inform funding decisions is still under discussion as are the necessary connections among the evidence/analyses in the educational master plan, the college's strategic goals, quality reviews, and the other plan components currently under construction, such as the Student Services Plan.

In the current atmosphere of high regard for the administration's guidance and the strength of collaboration among faculty and staff, the college is poised to ask the difficult questions (e.g., *Which college practices need to be revised, consolidate, or eliminated?*) that must be answered before the college can fully implement an effective model for planning and budget development.