

Focused Interim Report Pierce College District Lakewood and Puyallup, Washington



Presented to
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and Universities
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Introduction

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities conducted an accreditation visit to Pierce College District October 7-10, 2007. Following the visit, a letter dated January 23, 2008 from the commission instructed the District to prepare a focused interim report and host a commission representative in spring 2009 as a response to the evaluation team's six recommendations.

This report, with accompanying documentation, addresses each of those recommendations and describes the progress the district has made. Each recommendation begins with a background and overview statement of the status of this topic up to the ten year accreditation visit in 2007, followed by actions and activities the District has engaged in since fall 2007 to fully address the recommendation. The report was collaboratively authored by a variety of college personnel actively engaged in the efforts related to each respective recommendation.

Recommendations and Commendations

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Accreditation Visit Pierce College October 2007

The evaluation committee was favorably impressed with Pierce College District. The institutional Self-Study was written well, logically organized, and addressed the Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Standards and Policies. The required exhibits in the team room were organized and easy to use. Faculty, staff, and students were especially helpful in answering questions and providing additional clarity. The institution's commitment to providing its students modern instructional facilities and highly qualified faculty and staff is evident throughout. The Board of Trustees demonstrates a unique commitment to the mission, vision, values, goals, and Expected Outcomes Policies.

The District meets the Commission's Eligibility Requirement, Standards, and Policies. The evaluation committee provides six General Recommendations because the evidence collected during the visit suggests that these areas need to be improved and strengthened.

Commendations

1. The evaluation committee commends Pierce College District for successfully securing State allocations to expand, repair, or renovate both campuses in the next 6-8 years, and also the Facilities Department for the stewardship of its resources and maintaining the buildings and grounds in excellent condition.
2. The evaluation committee commends the PCD Foundation for furthering the goals of the District through fund raising and resource support, including the capital campaign to support the childcare facilities at each college.
3. The evaluation committee commends the District Distance Learning Program for having consistent annual growth and maintaining a high completion rate. The military contract faculty is commended for their development and ongoing assessment of an extensive online curriculum delivered to its students throughout the world.
4. The evaluation committee commends the library faculty, staff, and administration for the outstanding work that they perform in support of the faculty and students and for receiving of the 2005 Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) College Library of the Year award.
5. Pierce College District is commended for an incredible array of student programs and services that meet the needs of a diverse student body. Student services are complemented by an award-winning student leadership program and student government programs offered each month and colorfully promoted in quarterly calendars.

6. The evaluation committee commends Pierce College District for its creativity in partnering with other colleges and community agencies in order to facilitate student learning as well as expansion of programs. Particularly noteworthy are partnerships and community outreach in the areas of ESL classes, and the Dental Hygiene and Occupational Safety and Health programs.
7. The evaluation committee commends the faculty and staff of the District for their student-centered focus and their passion for education, which is pervasive throughout their campuses and sites.

Recommendations

1. The evaluation committee recommends that a process for assessing the five core abilities and general education outcomes be developed and implemented **(Standard 2.B.1, Policy 2.2)**
2. While student learning outcomes and assessment activities are in place at course and program levels, the evaluation committee did not find evidence of learning outcomes for each of the district's degree and certificate programs. Therefore, it is recommended that the institution identify, publish, and assess the learning outcomes for each of its degree and certificate programs. **(Eligibility Requirement 12, Standard 2.B.2)**
3. The evaluation committee recommends that the institution develop policies and procedures for the evaluation of part-time faculty consistent with Policy 4.1 Faculty Evaluation. **(Standard 4.A.5, Policy 4.1)**
4. The evaluation committee recommends that the Pierce College District develop and periodically assess a policy on the use of part-time faculty in light of its mission and goals. **(Standard 4.A.10)**
5. The evaluation committee recommends that the District define and clarify the roles of the various constituents in its shared governance process. **(Eligibility Requirement 7, Standard 6.A.1)**
6. The evaluation committee recommends that the District implement and periodically review appropriate procedures to evaluate all administrators regularly. **(Standard 6.C.3, 6.C.8)**

Recommendation One

The evaluation committee recommends that a process for assessing the five core abilities and general education outcomes be developed and implemented (Standard 2.B.1, Policy 2.2)

Background and Overview

Student learning is the heart of our mission at Pierce College. Our commitment to identify clear learning outcomes, teach to those outcomes effectively, and assess them authentically has led us to become continually more learning centered. While our District has many different aspects — transfer programs, professional technical education, basic skills development, and lifelong learning — the place where all of these parts of the mission find common ground is in our commitment to teaching and learning.

For transfer students, the diverse experience offered through General Education requirements will probably be the most enduring component of their learning at Pierce. Given this important role, it is critical that Pierce is able to state clearly what is expected from its General Education program and course requirements, and why. It is also critical to determine what students are achieving.

Through 2007, Pierce College held an ambitious definition of General Education containing three primary components: Core Areas of Knowledge, the Core Abilities, and whole student development.

General Education at Pierce College 1999-2008

General Education is designed to prepare students to live and work effectively in a dynamically changing world by emphasizing whole student development, the core areas of knowledge, and the Five Core Abilities:

- *Effective Communication*
- *Critical thinking/problem solving*
 - *Multiculturalism*
 - *Information competency*
 - *Responsibility*

As part of the 2007 self-study, departments across the District worked together to articulate the core “Big Ideas” in the various discipline areas — general outcomes for the humanities, communication, social sciences, natural sciences and quantitative reasoning (Appendix 1.1). Big Ideas (later termed Fundamental Areas of Knowledge – FAKs) described the transferrable learning outcomes, which reflect concepts in each of the distribution areas and the themes common to courses within each area (e.g. What makes a social science a social science?) Departments worked to examine how these Big Ideas are integrated into the curriculum in their own areas; however, we needed to develop a more systematic means of assessing these outcomes on a regular basis.

The Core Abilities

In contrast to the core areas of knowledge, which are closely connected to academic disciplines, core abilities transcend specific courses and disciplines. The core abilities comprise skill sets that Pierce College has identified as central to our students' success at other schools, and throughout their life. The Five Core Abilities were defined by 1997 and revised in 2004 (Appendix 1.2). In 2003 the District's curriculum committee – the Council on Learning and Student Success (CLASS) (Appendix 1.3) – set the expectation that faculty were to teach and assess any Core Ability designated on their official course outlines, as teaching of the Core Abilities was undocumented and we needed to collect more evidence to know how instruction and assessment was occurring and what students were learning.

Whole Student Development

While we believe that we have done a good job of articulating the Fundamental Areas of Knowledge and the Core Abilities, we realized we had considerable work to do in articulating the rationale for the third General Education component: Whole Student Development. The assessment of Whole Student Development was accomplished through the institutional student surveys as well as through individual programs such as Student Programs, the Multicultural Leadership Institute, TRIO, the student newspapers, student athletics and performance groups, work-based learning, and internships programs. The student surveys provided sound documentation and data for student perception of their progress in Whole Student Development (Exhibit 1.1). The programs provided excellent opportunities for students to develop specific skills outside of the classroom, and while several of these programs had individualized methods for assessing this element, there was no formal or systematic mechanism. The self study revealed that while Whole Student Development was cited in our formal definition of General Education, many faculty believed that they never intended it to be a formal General Education requirement, but instead incorporated it in the definition in order to highlight the full range of opportunities (inside and outside the classroom) available for students at Pierce.

The process for formally assessing the General Education outcomes of our Transfer Degree started when Pierce College changed the program/department review process to a Program Self-study process in 2005. Faculty members were now asked to include an assessment of student learning in the Program/Department Self-study process, and programs/departments did a gap analysis to determine in which courses core abilities were taught (Step 3 of the Program Self-study process). The results and planning activities (Steps 4, 5, 6, and 7) were included in the 2006/2007 Program Self-study process (Appendix 1.4). The distribution area outcomes (Big Ideas) were initially identified in September 2005.

Core Abilities in Professional/Technical Programs

Professional/technical programs identified the placement of Core Ability assessments across program courses in conjunction with their program competencies. As with general education courses, faculty have used course outlines to designate which abilities will be taught in which courses. Program Outcome Guides (POGS) also showed that core abilities were integrated into the program's student learning outcomes (Appendix 1.5).

Actions and Activities Since Fall 2007

While we had made good progress with assessment and there were many pockets of evidence, systematic assessment of general education and core abilities was identified by the NWCCU visiting team in October 2007 as needing further attention. We went to work designing an assessment model and plan that would bring us into full compliance with the commission standards and policies. In March 2008, the Assessment team proposed a more comprehensive assessment process which CLASS approved. The team then led the faculty through a process of designing assessments for the general education outcomes of the Transfer Degree, and the Core Abilities in transfer, basic skills, and professional/technical programs in spring/summer 2008. Handouts for faculty described the pathway the team had outlined (Appendix 1.6). Care was taken to link this process to the previous work that had been done on the 2006/2007 Program Self-study. A full in-service day in April 2008 as well as the annual Summer Institute were devoted to these efforts.

In early September, 2008 faculty received a letter from the Assessment Team and Vice Presidents of Learning and Student Success outlining the history and recommended a process for assessing the general education outcomes and the five core abilities for professional technical and basic skills programs. The letter detailed faculty responsibilities in this process. (Appendix 1.7) The letter also described the second half of the assessment process: to "roll-up" student learning from the course to the program level and ultimately to the institutional level. Work proceeded on these plans throughout fall quarter 2008. A small group of faculty volunteered to evaluate commercial and homegrown databases as potential sources of aggregated data.

Studying the Recommendations and Organizing to Address Them

In Winter 2008, CLASS formed 3 subcommittees to address how we would study and assess the General Education component to our Transfer Degree Program. The subcommittees were: Core Abilities Subcommittee, Whole Student Development Subcommittee, and Distribution Area Subcommittee, one for each of three general education components. Each subcommittee had diverse membership and spent several months studying their topic and returned to CLASS with a proposal on how to proceed with their area of focus. CLASS meetings in April 2008 focused on the reports and recommendations from these teams (Exhibit 1.3).

As a result, two proposals went to the faculty at the May 2008 division meetings: 1) a new Assessment Team/Curriculum Team model that used the Core Abilities as the organizing structure and 2) a revised definition of Whole Student Development. The faculty ultimately decided to adopt the Assessment Team/Curriculum Team model but use the Distribution areas, Professional Technical programs, and Basic Skills programs as the organizing structure instead of the Core Abilities. Later the faculty removed Whole Student Development from the General Education definition, referring it to Student Services Directors for their consideration. They believed it better aligned with the outcomes and assessment models in Student Services rather than in General Education.

Following CLASS' direction, the Assessment Team transitioned from a 5 faculty to 7 faculty member team effective September 2008 (Appendix 1.8) The subcommittee

discussions and the proposals that emerged from those discussions were instrumental in jumpstarting the deep conversations about General Education and assessment, and the philosophical issues that underlie this work.

Redefining General Education

Efforts to clarify the college's definition of General Education were undertaken by CLASS in fall 2008. The council discussed the original intent of including Whole Student Development in the definition as well as what faculty wanted from a Pierce General Education experience. They proposed a revised definition of General Education on October 15, 2008. The faculty approved the definition in their November division meetings, and CLASS formally adopted the definition on November 19, 2008 (Exhibit 1.2). The result was a new description that brought us back to our original focus.

General Education prepares students to live and work in a dynamically changing world by emphasizing whole student development through fundamental areas of knowledge and five core abilities: Critical, Creative, and Reflective Thinking, Information Competency, Multiculturalism, Responsibility, Effective Communication.

-Council for Learning and Student Success, 2008

Whole Student Development will continue to be assessed through Student Services but not through General Education. We are exploring additional assessment methods and frameworks such as moving from a locally authored student survey to the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) as one way to appraise this important component of college experience.

Pilot Assessment Project

In fall quarter 2008, roughly 25% of the faculty across the District entered into a pilot project (Appendix 1.9 and Exhibit 1.4) to assess student learning in the different degrees, certificates, programs, and in the general education distribution areas. Primary attention was focused on a few of the Distribution Area outcomes. Professional Technical Programs focused more on assessing the five Core Abilities in their degree and certificate offerings. This provided us with an opportunity to pilot the proposed assessment model (what we referred to as the Distribution Outcomes and Core Abilities model) and test the data collection and debriefing methods. Faculty members were provided with a form to assist the Assessment Team in compiling the student learning information. The Assessment Team members are compiling the information about student learning on the Fundamental Area of Knowledge pilot, which will be available in April 2009 and presented to division faculty in May 2009. When taken as a whole, we expect to determine to what degree our students are achieving the selected Fundamental Areas of Knowledge or Core Ability learning outcome(s). We will also be able to apply our learning about the process to the final Assessment model and procedures.

New Models Emerge

In response to an Assessment Team survey to determine where the faculty needed assistance in completing their responsibilities, the faculty expressed disagreement and dissatisfaction about the processes that had been outlined, believing that the Assessment Plan had not been fully vetted. While the Assessment Plan had been approved by CLASS, many faculty were asking for further discussion and several of the social science faculty members wanted to propose other methods of assessing content. Faculty also sought to ensure that assessment data and collection/storage methods fully complied with FERPA guidelines.

The Assessment team and CLASS discussed the pilot assessment project as well as the many and varied campus conversations that were occurring. What were faculty discovering as they worked through the pilot? Was it the system of assessment we wanted and needed? In response to faculty and to further encourage discussion and faculty engagement with assessment, CLASS elected to back up its timeline and allow for the addition of new or revised models so as to be sure all faculty felt confident in the process. This would allow for faculty who had just completed a first quarter of using the model to give feedback about how that system was working. The team evaluated what steps of the current process could be continued and what should be suspended pending selection of a final model. Many questions and points of clarification were requested by faculty; developing responses was part of the progress and growth as a body and an important component of inclusivity and education. (Exhibit 1.5)

In January 2009 the Assessment Team members and a group of social science faculty members presented two models (referred to as the Distribution Outcomes model and the Integrated model) to the faculty in their division meetings and in open forums on both campuses. Also presented were two methods for “rolling up” the information to the distribution level and the institutional level using either an “Institutional Portfolio” or a database for aggregating assessment data. This provided an opportunity for faculty to ask questions and most importantly to engage in deep discussion. Both models had their strengths but neither seemed to satisfy all of our needs. It became apparent that it would take several months or longer for district faculty to fully discuss the theory and philosophy that underlies the assessment of core abilities.

Following these forums, the Assessment team and social science faculty that had proposed the Integrated model met together in order to accelerate a solution. That discussion resulted in a proposal for an Assessment Plan that was neither the Integrated model nor the Distribution model but had elements of both. More importantly, it would allow the faculty to move forward with assessment without immediately settling all of the broad philosophical issues still on the table.

New Assessment Plan

CLASS put forward a first reading of the Assessment Plan at their January 21, 2009 meeting. Divisions discussed the plan in February and there was general agreement that it would serve to move us forward. The Assessment Plan builds on the pilot plan used in fall 2008 in that faculty select outcomes from the Fundamental Areas of Knowledge and Core Abilities. The pilot had reduced both categories to fewer choices in an effort to

make assessment manageable, but some faculty found the system too restrictive. CLASS passed the final version of the Assessment Plan on February 18, 2009 (Appendix 1.10).

The 2008-2011 Assessment Plan includes annual formal assessment of 1/3 of courses taught by faculty, collection of evidence of assessment, analysis by the submitting faculty member as well as a representative faculty body, and creation of an annually updated Institutional Portfolio that will house and publish assessment data and analysis. This means we complete the full assessment cycle with assessment analysis at the course, program/department, and institutional levels. As gaps in the student journey are identified based on analysis, the system of assessment will be adapted to address those.

The Assessment Plan Timeline

With a newly revised definition of general education and a fully vetted and CLASS-approved assessment plan for core abilities, and general education in place, the Assessment Team has a fully adopted assessment timeline as well as several supporting documents to assist faculty in the implementation (Appendix 1.11).

The Assessment Plan and implementation timeline bring us into compliance with NWCCU Standard 2 and Policy 2.2. Faculty involvement has been strong, we have acquired a deeper knowledge base, and there is a greater level of fluency regarding educational assessment. Based on the Assessment Team members' reports of their meetings with faculty it is reasonable to say that we have hit a critical mass of faculty involvement. The Assessment Team predicts that the most important level of engagement will occur when the faculty receive the student learning data in their hands.

Challenges

- Implementing the timeline and staying on track
- Supporting the Assessment team
- Educating part-time faculty about the assessment plan
- Fully utilizing the results of assessments to enact change
- Continuing the faculty dialogue relative to philosophy, theory, and methodology of assessment in order to keep assessment and student learning outcomes at the forefront of our work
- Incorporating additional assessment of Whole Student Development into the Student Services outcomes assessment process

Appendices

- Appendix 1.1 – Distribution Area Outcomes – Fundamental Areas of Knowledge
- Appendix 1.2 – Pierce College Five Core Abilities
- Appendix 1.3 – Council for Learning and Student Success 2009 Membership
- Appendix 1.4 – Program Self-Study Process Example
- Appendix 1.5 – Map and POG Examples
- Appendix 1.6 – Handouts, April 2008 In-service
- Appendix 1.7 – Letter to Faculty from Assessment Team and Vice Presidents for Learning and Student Success
- Appendix 1.8 – Assessment Team and Curriculum Committee Model
- Appendix 1.9 – Pilot Project – Degree Level Assessment, Description
- Appendix 1.10 – Assessment Plan and Assessment Plan Timeline
- Appendix 1.11 – Assessment Team Supporting Documents
- Appendix 1.12 – New Course Outline Form (Drafted and Proposed to CLASS by Assessment Team)

Exhibits

- Exhibit 1.1 – 2006 Student Survey
- Exhibit 1.2 – Completed Course Outline Forms (Representative Sample)
- Exhibit 1.3 – Council on Learning and Student Success Minutes, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009
- Exhibit 1.4 – Pilot Project Results and Samples
- Exhibit 1.5 – Faculty Question and Answer Documents
- Exhibit 1.6 – Program and Department Maps and POGS – Examples
- Exhibit 1.7 – Assessment Team Minutes

Recommendation Two

While student learning outcomes and assessment activities are in place at course and program levels, the evaluation committee did not find evidence of learning outcomes for each of the district's degree and certificate programs. Therefore, it is recommended that the institution identify, publish, and assess the learning outcomes for each of its degree and certificate programs. (Eligibility Requirement 12, Standard 2.B.2)

Background and Overview

Outcomes have been a part of Pierce College culture since the early 1990's when Washington State Community and Technical Colleges provided the funding and support to begin exploration and pilot projects. Pierce values decision-making based on information, and educational assessment that is in alignment with that value. Assessment is conducted at multiple levels to guide long-term program development and to assess learning outcomes for students in individual courses and programs. We have sought to demonstrate learning through a complete suite of outcomes at the course, program, and degree levels.

Degree and Certificate Requirements and Outcomes

The District offers seven Associates degrees and twenty-eight Professional Technical degrees and certificate programs (Appendix 2.1). Degree objectives for each of these degrees and certificates are outlined for students in the District Catalog (Exhibit 2.1) and have been available online. In 2005, the faculty transformed these objectives and requirements into student learning outcomes.

Course Outcomes: Learning outcomes for all courses were developed in the late 1990's and revisited between 2002 and 2005 as the college's curriculum committee, the Council on Learning and Student Success (CLASS) required that all courses migrate to a new course outline form. Course level learning outcomes guide the teaching and assessment. Each course outline details learning outcomes (including core abilities) developed by program/department faculty and approved by an interdisciplinary committee of faculty members. Course outlines also include methods of assessment that faculty use to demonstrate student achievement. Course outcomes are published for students in the online catalog (OCA), located on the Pierce College website under the Online Advising Tools link (http://134.39.200.118/cat/program_listing.cfm?CC=110) (Exhibit 2.3).

Program Outcomes: Program outcomes describe what we want our students to be able to do after completing all required courses; they also serve to integrate the learning from individual courses. The centerpiece of our self studies in 2005 was in developing a Program Map (Map), a visual representation of a student's journey through a program from a curricular perspective. The Map assists the faculty in making decisions that refine course sequencing and assessment. The companion to the Map is the Program Outcome Guide (POG) that details the program entry requirements, outcomes, curricular concepts and themes, and assessments associated with the program's outcomes (Appendix 1.5).

These documents assure that courses align with the intended student learning, core ability, and “Big Idea” outcomes, and assist us in making critical decisions about how and where assessment occurs. The Map and POG are based on the work of Ruth Stiehl (Exhibits 1.5 and 2.2) who served as a consultant to our process. Pierce College has adopted several of Stiehl’s philosophies, including the concept that outcomes are “out there,” or beyond what might be visible in the classroom, and that it is our job as educators to provide students with the experiences that will add up to the fulfillment of those outcomes on the job or in the classroom post-graduation. Outcomes were developed in consultation with former students and program advisory boards.

Although faculty have been working with learning outcomes and assessment for some time, the Stiehl model facilitated group discussion and collaboration regarding learning outcomes and assessment in relation to student learning and achievement as opposed to courses. The model has enabled the District to use a common vocabulary related to outcomes assessment that makes the sharing of ideas and observations about assessment more productive. Maps and POGS are formal curriculum documents (Exhibit 2.4).

General Education Program Outcomes: As part of the 2007 self-study, distribution area faculty across the District worked together to articulate the core “Big Ideas” in the various discipline areas—distribution outcomes for the humanities, communication, social sciences, natural sciences, and quantitative reasoning (Appendix 1.1). These Big Ideas (also referred to at different points in our process as Distribution Outcomes and Fundamental Areas of Knowledge – FAKs) describe transferrable learning outcomes in the distribution areas; the concepts and the themes that serve as a thread within the distribution and distinguish one distribution area from another. Departments worked to examine how these Big Ideas are integrated into the curriculum in their disciplines; however, we needed to develop a more systematic means of assessing these outcomes and collecting and compiling the results.

Degree and Certificate Outcomes - Professional Technical

Degree and certificate outcomes for professional/technical programs were systematically developed during the Map and POG process in 2005 even though most programs were already operating with outcomes or objectives prior to this work. While they were in use by faculty, the accreditation self study process revealed that the certificate and program outcomes were not published for students (Exhibit 2.4).

Degree Outcomes – Associates Degrees

General Education forms the heart of the AA and AS degree programs. As described in Recommendation One, the process of identifying learning outcomes for the AA and AS degrees has been in process since 2006. As of the accreditation visit in 2007 we needed to complete this process, develop systematic assessments, and publish the outcomes for students.

Actions and Activities Since Fall 2007

Defining Outcomes – Professional Technical Programs and Certificates

Professional Technical program faculty were invited to review all learning outcomes and the information on Maps and POGS during academic year 2008-2009; every program will review outcomes in during the next self-study cycle in the 2009-2010. This provided (and will provide) faculty with an opportunity to update courses and verify the alignment between program learning outcomes, course and program level assessments, Core Ability assessment, and course content.

Defining Outcomes– General Education Program

As detailed in Recommendation One of this report, since 2007 the District faculty have engaged in a thorough discussion of General Education resulting in the following:

- a revised definition of General Education that clarified their original intent,
- General Education Outcomes (Big Ideas/Fundamental Areas of Knowledge and Core Abilities),
- an Assessment Plan for General Education at the course, program, and institutional levels,
- an Assessment Plan Timeline that addresses implementation,
- a new structure for the Assessment Team and Curriculum Committees that aligns with the Assessment Plan, and a
- revised Course Outline Form that formalizes and documents the process (Recommendation One Appendices and Exhibits).

Defining Outcomes – Basic Skills Programs

While not formally required of Basic Skills programs, the faculty elected to include Core Abilities in the Basic Skills programs and courses, agreeing that they are a unique part of the Pierce College experience. The outcomes used for course outline are developed and taken from the Washington State Adult Learning Standards. The core abilities are assessed based on the applicability to real-life contexts in particular skill areas (i.e. writing, reading, oral communication, and math).

Assessing Outcomes – Professional Technical Programs and Certificates

Professional/Technical Program outcomes are assessed at the course, certificate, and program levels. This progression is outlined in the POG and Map with many programs containing a specific sequence of skills courses which must be taught and assessed prior to students progressing to the next level of courses. This is particularly true in the allied health cohort group programs of nursing, dental hygiene, certified nursing assistants, and veterinary technology. These programs also mandate certification and licensing exams (i.e. NCLEX for Nursing, ADA Boards for Dental Hygiene) which provide an assessment that is standardized and required prior to students being able to practice in their profession. Pass rates for these exams are tracked as part of the program accreditation process and Pierce students consistently meet and exceed standards (Exhibit 2.5).

Other Professional Technical programs also help connect students with certification assessments:

- industry certifications in Computer Information Systems and Business Technology (BTECH) programs,
- the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services administered Interpreter certification process,
- Fire Command national certifications,
- Occupational Safety and Health standard requirements,
- Paralegal certification.

All professional/technical programs include a worked-based learning experience where skills are applied and assessed by the student, faculty member, and internship provider. Several programs (i.e. Early Childhood Education, Digital Design, and Business Management) also include a culminating project experience such as a portfolio or career presentation (Exhibit 2.6).

Advisory committee members work with faculty to ensure course and program outcomes are current and relevant to what students will be asked to know and do in the workplace. Advisory committee members have recommended standards for progression on program pathways (Exhibit 2.7).

During 2007-08 a Prior Learning Assessment Policy and processes were approved through CLASS, which provides faculty and students a vehicle to assess and align industry skills with course and program content (Appendix 2.2). We are currently providing prior learning assessment in the Fire Command program and the Homeland Security programs has moved to a modularized format for computer applications skills so students can be assessed and placed at the appropriate skill levels. There is additional work to do in this area but getting the policy and process in place was a large step forward.

Assessing Program Outcomes – General Education Transfer Program

A comprehensive Assessment Plan as described in Recommendation One of this report (Appendix 1.10) details the process faculty will use to assess transfer degree learning outcomes. Departmental faculty will examine student work for each of the General Education learning outcomes for evidence of achievement. These collegial discussions will assist faculty in refining curriculum and determining the nuances of student learning. They will have an opportunity to determine what changes they can make to positively influence learning. The evidence of students learning, outcomes data, and themes that emerge from faculty analysis gathered by the departmental faculty will be forwarded on to the Assessment Team where it will be compiled into an Institutional Portfolio. Assessment Team members will compile the data from the department processes and write an analysis from the Fundamental Areas of Knowledge and Core Ability perspectives, as well as from the overall degree level. This will provide information and perspective from both lenses and form a holistic picture of student achievement at Pierce College. From the Institutional Portfolio we will find patterns and trends across the distribution areas and District departments and identify practices, policies, or actions that will increase student learning and success. What can we uncover about student learning that will lead us to continue practices or to change practices? The Assessment Team Pilot Project (Appendix 1.9 and Exhibit 1.4) will help us refine this process before full implementation in fall 2009.

Individual department and program data as well as Fundamental Areas of Knowledge/Core Ability data and the accompanying analyses will also appear as a section of program and departmental self studies on student learning as well as in the Institutional Effectiveness reports (Sample of one section Appendix 5.7).

Publishing Outcomes: Courses

All courses continue to be updated in the Online Catalog (OCA) as they are changed; it is our formal record of outcomes and course descriptions. The Catalog is printed every two years.

Publishing Outcomes: Professional Technical Programs and Certificates

For Professional Technical programs and certificates, CLASS determined that “publishing” would be defined as uploading program outcomes to the program websites as well as printing in the program description sections in the printed Catalog. These websites contain other program information such as course and degree requirements, job information, point of contact information for program enrollment and advising. All outcomes were uploaded to the websites in 2008-2009 so students have access to the outcomes faculty and industry partners have established for them. Core Ability outcomes are imbedded in program outcomes and are published independently on the District website (<http://www.pierce.ctc.edu/proftech/programs.php>) (Exhibit 2.8)

This District also has published Curriculum Sheets for Protech programs that are updated each summer and will also list program outcomes. These are also transitioning to an electronic format so students can access them from the online advising tools as well as from the program websites.

Publishing Outcomes: Associates Degrees

The General Education definition for all seven Associates degrees along with the Core Ability and Fundamental Areas of Knowledge outcomes are available for students on the Pierce College homepage under the Programs and Classes tab (<http://www.pierce.ctc.edu/programs/degrees/?aa>) (Exhibit 2.9).

While the Associates degrees outside of the general transfer degree use the identified Core Abilities and Fundamental Areas of Knowledge outcomes, there are some subtle distinctions that need to be identified in light of the new definition of General Education. The Assessment Timeline identifies this as one our next steps (Appendix 1.10).

Summary of Progress

With this new Assessment Plan in place, the District can be proud of a 4-tier assessment program for instructional departments (Appendix 2.3). We believe this approach, combined with our overall focus on Institutional Effectiveness, will continue to demonstrate our high quality instruction and the excellent work of our students.

The actions that specifically needed to be addressed by Pierce College District to meet this standard were:

- Publishing professional technical outcomes
- Completing outcomes for General Education
- Developing the assessment mechanisms for General Education outcomes of the Transfer Degree
- Publishing General Education outcomes
- Refining and publishing outcomes for all seven of the Associates degrees

Through the actions and activities we have engaged in since Fall 2007, these have either been accomplished or we have laid the critical groundwork to complete the task. Several of these refinements were grounded in philosophical work that took time and energy and necessitated a process that just had to be worked through. Table 2.1 provides a summary of our progress and how we plan to complete the remaining work.

Table 2.1 Status of NWCCU Standard Requirements

	Define	Assess	Publish
Courses Outcomes	+	+	+
Program Outcomes : General Education	X	T	X
Program Outcomes: Professional Technical	+	+	X
Degree Outcomes: Transfer Degree	XT	XT	XT
Degree and Certificate Outcomes: Professional Technical	+	+	X

+ = Completed prior to 2007 accreditation visit

X = Completed since 2007

T = Completion date identified on assessment plan timeline (Appendix XX)

XT = Partially completed since 2007 and completion date identified on Assessment Plan Timeline

Challenges

- Focusing on the full implementation over the next academic year in light of budget cuts and increased workloads
- Including part time faculty in the departmental assessment discussions
- Establishing an institutional portfolio process that is inclusive and meaningful
- Continuing to engage all members of District with educational assessment
- Revising District website so that it is more intuitive for students and learning outcomes can be located more easily

Appendices

- Appendix 2.1 – Pierce College Degree and Certificate Programs
- Appendix 2.2 – Prior Learning Assessment Policy
- Appendix 2.3 – Assessment at Pierce College Diagram

Exhibits

- Exhibit 2.1 – Pierce College District Catalog
- Exhibit 2.2 – Ruth Stiehl Publications List
- Exhibit 2.3 – Online Catalog (OCA) Samples
- Exhibit 2.4 – Program Maps and POGS
- Exhibit 2.5 – Professional Technical Program Examination Pass Rates
- Exhibit 2.6 – Examples – Professional Technical Program Projects
- Exhibit 2.7 – Professional Technical Program Advisory Committees
- Exhibit 2.8 – Core Abilities Website
- Exhibit 2.9 – Degree Requirements Website

Recommendation Three

The evaluation committee recommends that the institution develop policies and procedures for the evaluation of part-time faculty consistent with Policy 4.1 Faculty Evaluation. (Standard 4.A.5, Policy 4.1)

Background and Overview

Part-time faculty have been key to the success of our students and our college as a whole. Faculty evaluation processes at Pierce College are designed to guarantee the effectiveness of those individuals who are directly responsible for our instructional program. Evaluation of faculty through multiple indices is critical for maintaining teaching excellence and encouraging continued professional growth and improvement of faculty. The District currently employs multiple methods for evaluating all, including evaluations by students, division chairs, deans, directors, peers, self-evaluation, and professional development plans. While evaluation of full-time faculty has consistently used these indices, we have been challenged with consistent procedures for part-time faculty.

Although procedures for the evaluation of part-time faculty have been in place for many years, the 2007 Accreditation Self-study process revealed that evaluation procedures were inconsistently applied and did not stem from a formal policy. The evaluation of part-time faculty was briefly described in the *2004-2007 Pierce College Federation of Teachers Negotiated Agreement* as a periodic review by the campus vice president or designee, and division chairs, but no systematic processes were utilized other than classroom evaluations by students using the University of Washington Assessment System (Appendix 3.1).

Improvement Actions Since Fall 2007

Recognizing the need for a standardized evaluation tool across the District, the Instructional Administrators appointed a taskforce (Appendix 3.2) in winter 2008 to review the part-time faculty evaluation policy and procedures. The charge of the Instructional Administrators taskforce was to make recommendations for change in practice that would create the consistency and effectiveness that is needed and expected from an inclusive evaluation process. The Instructional Administrators asked for assistance from the Part-time Faculty Taskforce (Appendix 3.3). The members of this taskforce also reviewed the *Washington State Board for Community and Technical College's Best Practices* as part of their discussion. Four of the model's best practices informed the development of our policy: (1) conduct evaluations using defined standards and multiple indices of performance, (2) share performance reviews with the affected faculty member, (3) conduct continuing part-time faculty evaluations with a similar frequency to full-time faculty evaluations, and (4) use evaluations in decisions about part-time faculty to determine employment, retention, and professional development needs.

The Instructional Administrators Part-time Faculty Evaluation taskforce reviewed the accreditation report, accreditation standards, the Negotiated Agreement, the District policy on evaluation, and the appropriate section of the *Washington Administrative Code*. This eight-month discussion and revision process, which was the work of faculty representatives and administrators, resulted in an enhanced evaluation policy and procedure.

Enhanced Policy and Procedures for Part-time Faculty Evaluation

The policy and procedures for evaluating part-time faculty are now described in the instructional policy "Evaluation of Part-time Faculty" (Appendix 3.4) and are consistent with the language in the *Negotiated Agreement Pierce College Federation of Teachers 2008-2011* (Appendix 3.5 and Exhibit 3.1)

The policy and procedures were developed through the shared governance processes of the college and allow for periodic review. This policy and corresponding procedures meet the Commission standards, as they are systematic, call for evaluation of each faculty member within a specific time period, are structured to be evaluative as well as supportive with the overall goal of faculty development, involve full-time faculty to ensure subject matter and pedagogical knowledge, include provisions for working with faculty when areas for improvement are identified, and utilize multiple indices. The process allows time for development and improvement and for non-renewal of contracts if sufficient progress is not demonstrated.

Responsibility for Implementation

The Instructional Administrators are responsible for the periodic review of the Part-time Faculty Evaluation Policy and Procedures. The Division Chairs, Deans, and Directors who directly supervise faculty are charged with the implementation of the evaluation of individual faculty. Division Chairs, Deans, and Directors are responsible for maintaining the evaluation schedule for each faculty member (Exhibit 3.2).

The Administrative Assistants in each Division maintain the documentation of which faculty are scheduled to be evaluated and notify them of the process. A comprehensive spreadsheet documents the details of the process (Exhibit 3.2). The Department Coordinators and the Division Chairs, Deans and Directors work together to select full-time faculty who will conduct observations and provide feedback. The policy and procedures for the evaluation process assure consistency across the District.

History of Development of Part-time Faculty Evaluation Process:

November 2007	Instructional Administrators	Appoints taskforce.
February 2008	Instructional Administrators Part-time Faculty Evaluation Taskforce	Draft statement developed
February 2008	Instructional Administrators	Reviewed
March 2008	Faculty instructional divisions and Part-time Faculty Task Force	Reviewed and Revised
June 2008	Instructional Administrators Part-time Faculty Evaluation Taskforce	Revised
June 2008	Part-Time Faculty Taskforce	Reviewed
November 2008	Language included in Negotiated Agreement	Approved
December 4, 2008	Evaluation procedure approved by District Policy and Governance Cabinet	Approved
Winter quarter 2009		Procedure implemented

Challenges

- Department Coordinators have many part-time faculty to evaluate each quarter. Although faculty evaluation is a priority, it competes with the numerous responsibilities.
- Part-time faculty who teach online courses may be limited by time and location for meeting with their respective division chair to discuss the evaluations.
- Self-evaluations may be a challenge for part-time faculty. Acculturating them to the value of this optional component may take time.

Appendices

- Appendix 3.1 – University of Washington Evaluation System
- Appendix 3.2 – Instructional Administrators Membership and Part-time Faculty Evaluation Taskforce Membership
- Appendix 3.3 – Part-Time Faculty Taskforce Membership
- Appendix 3.4 – Evaluation of Part Time Faculty Process and Procedures
- Appendix 3.5 – *Pierce College Federation of Teachers Negotiated Agreement 2008-2011, Part-Time Faculty*

Exhibits

- Exhibit 3.1 – *Pierce College Federation of Teachers Negotiated Agreement 2008-2011*
- Exhibit 3.2 –Part-Time Faculty Evaluation Schedule
- Exhibit 3.3 – Sample Completed Evaluations of Part-Time Faculty

Recommendation Four

The evaluation committee recommends that the Pierce College District develop and periodically assess a policy on the use of part-time faculty in light of its mission and goals. (Standard 4.A.10)

Background and Overview

Pierce College part-time faculty add a unique dimension to a student's educational experience. Many are practitioners in their field and bring a distinctive view of the world to the classroom. Providing opportunities for professional development, orienting new part-time faculty to the position, and assuring part-time faculty are up-to-date with learning outcomes and policy are some of the key factors that will lend to their success and consequently to student success.

Each fall, the Institutional Administrators evaluate program vitality reports, and examine program offerings and strategic directions to determine which faculty positions to replace or add (Appendix 4.1; Exhibit 4.1). The percentage of part-time faculty in each program is thoughtfully considered as part of this evaluation process. However, the District was lacking a formal policy on the use of part-time faculty and the process sufficiently documented.

Part-Time Faculty

In accordance with the mission and goals of Pierce College, the District currently employs 377 part-time faculty possessing the necessary skills, experience, and credentials for their specific teaching assignments. Recognizing the importance of part-time faculty to the goal of high-quality instruction, and the need to assess institutional policies, procedures, and working conditions for part-time faculty, the District convened a Part-Time Faculty Task Force in November 2003 (Appendix 3.3).

Part-Time Faculty Task Force Purpose Statement

"We value the role of part-time faculty in achieving our mission and goals. The development of part-time faculty members is crucial to our ability to continue to ensure quality education for our students. By maximizing our resources, we can provide support and inclusion to part-time faculty across the District. We have convened this task force to review and consider the many aspects relating to part-time faculty: achieving student learning, outcomes and assessment, professional development opportunities, and employment practices and procedures. As team members we will need to be focused, flexible, knowledgeable, and dedicated to the job at hand. We are asking for a high level of commitment, communication, and collaboration among task force members, as well as with other members of our college community, to create 'best practices' regarding our part-time faculty."

The Task Force is a District-wide representative group, including twenty-two members comprised of full-time and part-time faculty, administrative assistants, division chairs, administrators, and representatives from colleges and Extended Learning. Members serve on at least one or more subgroups within the Task Force, depending upon the focus of the groups. The accomplishments of the sub-groups include a process for the recruitment and appointment of part-time faculty, a District-wide Notice of Reasonable Assurance, and Multi-Term Contracts. (Exhibit 4.2).

Policy Analysis

The 2007 accreditation self-study team that developed Standard 4 discovered that the District did not have a policy on the use of part-time faculty. Over the years, there have been several attempts to initiate processes and practices to review the use of part-time faculty members as an example of the District demonstrating our commitment to instructional excellence. However, no official policy guided the work. For example, one of the directives of the Part-time Faculty Task Force is to examine institutional policies concerning the use of part-time faculty in light of the mission and goals of the institution. In conjunction with our annual recruitment process, the Instructional Administrators team considers the part-time / full-time ratios across the District when making recommendations for full-time hires and unexpected vacancies.

Improvement Actions since Fall 2007

In spring 2008, the Instructional Administrators appointed a taskforce to develop this policy and corresponding procedures (Appendix 4.2). Following shared governance practices, the taskforce sought comments from key constituent groups and conducted research to identify all factors that should be included. The taskforce reviewed the accreditation report, accreditation standards, the Negotiated Agreement, and the District policy on faculty hiring. This six-month discussion and revision process included input from faculty representatives and administrators, resulting in a new policy and procedures. This action brings the District into full compliance with NWCCU standards.

New Policy and Procedures on the Employment of Part-time Faculty

The policy and procedures for use of part-time faculty are now described in the instructional policy "Employment of Part-time Faculty" (Appendix 4.3) and are consistent with the language in the *Negotiated Agreement Pierce College Federation of Teachers 2008-2011* (Appendix 3.5). The policy and procedures were developed through the shared governance processes.

Responsibility for Implementation

The Instructional Administrators are responsible for the periodic review of the Employment of Part-time Faculty Policy and Procedures. The Institutional Researcher is responsible for generating data on the full-time/part-time faculty mix as part of the annual Instructional Status Report. The Vice-Presidents for Learning and Student Success are responsible for initiating the discussion of the use of part-time faculty and for forwarding the data to both the Pierce College Federation of Teachers and the Part-time Faculty Taskforce.

History of Development - Part-Time Faculty Evaluation Process:

April 2008	Instructional Administrators	Developed
March 2009	Part-Time Faculty Taskforce	Reviewed
March 2009	Executive Team	Reviewed
March 2009	Human Resources	Reviewed
March 2009	Instructional Administrators	Approved
March 4 & 6, 2009	Instructional Divisions	Reviewed
March 5, 2009	Cabinet	1 st Reading
March 10, 2009	Part-Time Faculty Taskforce	Reviewed
April 2008	Cabinet	2 nd Reading and Approval - Pending

Appendices

- Appendix 4.1 – Sample Department Data from Instructional Status Report; Sample Program/Department Data for Determining Faculty Replacement and New Positions
- Appendix 4.2 – Instructional Administrators Part-Time Faculty Taskforce Membership
- Appendix 4.3 – Employment of Part Time Faculty – Policy

Exhibits

- Exhibit 4.1 – 2007 -2008 Instructional Status Report; Complete program/department data for determining faculty replacement and new positions for the 2009-2010 academic year
- Exhibit 4.2 – District-wide Notice of Reasonable Assurance and Multi-Term Contracts
- Exhibit 4.3 – Part-time Faculty Priority Consideration Documents

Recommendation Five

The evaluation committee recommends that the District define and clarify the roles of the various constituents in its shared governance process (Eligibility Requirement 7, Standard 6.A.1)

Background and Overview

Shared governance is an important attribute of a strong and positive academic climate. The purpose of shared governance at Pierce College is to provide various employee and student constituent groups with meaningful opportunities to engage in and impact the institution's decision-making process.

Shared governance has been a topic of extensive discussion throughout the Pierce College District during the 2007-08 and 2008-09 academic years. Whereas many opportunities exist for input and influence in decision-making processes throughout the district, there has been disagreement among various constituent groups about their role and authority in decision-making. The District has been engaged in processes that define and clarify the roles of various constituent groups.

Overall Organizational Structure

Pierce College, with its two colleges and vast Extended Learning sites and programs, is a complex and diverse college district (Appendix 5.1 and Exhibit 5.1). Shared governance processes and opportunities for input into decision-making is equally complex and poses many challenges.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the college's policy-making body. It consists of five community members who are appointed for five-year terms by the state governor (Appendix 5.2). The Board meets monthly. In addition to regular updates from college personnel, the Board is kept abreast of activities by various student and employee constituent groups, including Student Government, Pierce College Federation of Teachers, and Washington Public Employees Association. In regards to shared governance, the topic was initiated at the July 2007 Board meeting in response to concerns that were raised regarding the role of various constituent groups in decision-making processes. In subsequent meetings throughout the year, the Board received regular updates on the District Policy and Governance Cabinet's work on shared governance (Exhibit 5.2).

District Policy and Governance Cabinet

Governance of the institution is a primary focus of the District Policy and Governance Cabinet (Cabinet), a representative body that includes members from faculty, staff, administrators, and student ranks from the two campuses and Extended Learning sites, with the Chancellor serving as chair (Appendix 5.3). The Cabinet serves as the parent body in the Collegial System. It reviews and recommends all policy to the Chancellor before it is recommended to the Board of Trustees for adoption, establishes ad hoc committees, affirms the work of the more than seventy committees that are a part of

the shared governance structure, and serves as the budget oversight committee for the District. Cabinet meets monthly during the academic year. A regular schedule of meetings and preliminary notice about agenda items allows for a first and second reading of proposals (Exhibit 5.3).

Although the Cabinet represents a model of shared governance, a conversation regarding how shared governance is generally defined and how its principles could be applied throughout the District was initiated at the July 24, 2007 Cabinet meeting by Chancellor Michele Johnson. The subject was henceforth a topic of discussion at the subsequent meetings throughout the 2007-08 and 2008-09 academic years.

Communications

The District, with its two colleges and a vast Extended Learning program, presents considerable communication challenges. There are many venues for communications that are actively utilized. The Chancellor, Presidents, and other members of the administration endeavor to facilitate cooperative working relationships, promote coordination within and among organizational units, and encourage open communication and goal attainment. They utilize the District's governance system, consisting of more than seventy separate boards and committees for information flow and operational decision-making (Exhibit 5.4).

The seven instructional Division Chairs are an additional and critical resource, facilitating the sharing of information to and from faculty divisions (Appendix 5.4). Complexity of structure brings challenges and opportunities with both operations and communication. The current District structure is clearly advantageous for students, providing consistent requirements and policies, and greater course offerings. It also efficiently leverages resources and provides personnel with a broader level of expertise and creativity than would be possible within a single campus model. However, it also complicates our efforts and calls upon us to be ever vigilant regarding who is impacted by a decision or by information. It is often difficult to keep track, and as in many large organizations, individuals are unintentionally overlooked. For example, District employees have indicated their desire to be more actively included in campus-based committee decisions. All employees and work teams need assistance in balancing inclusiveness with efficiency.

Student Engagement

The District actively provides opportunities for the participation of students in the shared governance process. Students are involved in the governance system as members of the Cabinet, the Services and Activities Fee Committee, the Student Technology Fee Committee, and other bodies. Student Government representatives provide regular reports to the Board. Students also participate as members of various personnel screening committees and serve on tenure committees. The voice of student government and student leadership plays a significant role in the District's decision-making process (Exhibit 5.5).

Faculty and Staff Engagement

The District places high importance on its relationship with the Pierce College Federation of Teachers (PCFT) and the Washington Public Employees Association (WPEA), bargaining units of the faculty and staff, respectively. Clearly established protocols are in place to ensure developments, changes, and concerns related to negotiated agreements are addressed in collaborative and productive ways. PCFT and WPEA leadership present reports to the Board at each meeting. The current PCFT and WPEA contracts provide definition and guidance for some of the shared governance functions (Exhibit 5.6 and 3.1). The Board of Trustees established "Positive College Environment" as one of their five Expected Outcomes Policies. The Institutional Effectiveness Report published annually beginning in 2008 includes measures on this element (Exhibit 5.7)

Faculty Participation in Shared Governance

Faculty at Pierce College participate in shared governance processes through several overlapping structures: the curriculum approval and review process, the Division structure, the committee structure, and the Pierce College Federation of Teachers.

The curriculum process is perhaps the most important role for faculty in the governance process. Curriculum development and approval begins with faculty working with their department on a District-wide level to develop new courses, write learning outcomes, and review and update course and program outlines. After department approval, curriculum changes move to District curriculum committees, which are made up of faculty from across the District, and led by members of our Assessment Team. The curriculum committees work with department faculty to assure that new or revised course or program outlines are clearly written, have assessable outcomes, and are consistent in format so they can be used by a wide variety of faculty. After approval by the curriculum committee, new or updated curriculum moves to the Council for Learning and Student Success (CLASS), which is composed of a majority of faculty, but also includes instructional and student services administrators, as well as student representatives. CLASS gives final approval to curriculum matters.

In monthly division meetings, faculty consider a variety of issues and make recommendations. These issues include broad instructional issues, college and district matters, policies and procedures under review, and regular committee reports. The District committee structure governs or makes recommendations on many of the most important issues in the life of the college. Divisions appoint or elect representatives to many standing committees that are part of overall shared governance.

The Pierce College Federation of Teachers (PCFT) also plays a role in the shared governance process by negotiating faculty agreements and appointing faculty to various positions within the committee structure, including tenure and screening committees. The PCFT meets regularly with Administration representatives to resolve issues through the Federation/Administration committee. The PCFT President or a designee is a member of the Cabinet, the Budget Team, the Calendar Committee and others.

Executive Team

The District Chancellor convenes an Executive Team (E-Team) that provides senior-level leadership for the District (Appendix 5.5). E-Team meets weekly, serving as the primary vehicle through which the Chancellor and Presidents gather information, receive guidance, and exercise collaborative leadership. E-Team spearheads District-wide planning and realization of the directions of the Board.

E-Team also facilitates cooperative working relationships, promotes coordination among and within organizational units, and encourages open communication and goal attainment by serving on governance committees that also include representation from faculty, classified staff, and students. This broad representation provides Pierce leadership with input and guidance for decision-making.

Improvement and Actions Since Fall 2007

The District had begun its work on defining and clarifying shared governance prior to the accreditation visit in October 2007. With a major change in the organizational structure in 2005 and two consecutive years of budget cuts, the District had experienced disagreement regarding the role and authority in decision-making processes of various constituent groups. Cabinet took on the work of shared governance.

Cabinet's membership was expanded in March 2007 in order to include more voices in policy and budget-level discussions, achieve greater focus on the Board's outcomes, and increase communication across the District. Since Cabinet is the final eyes on policy before recommendation to the Chancellor and adoption by the Board, it was important that the representation reflect the complexity and diversity of the District. Four positions were added (one faculty, one classified staff, one administrator, and one student), and PCFT and WPEA positions were designated. E-team members were removed and replaced with non-senior administrators in an effort to expand the diversity of voices at the table. E-team members now serve as resources to Cabinet, providing context and information as needed.

Throughout the 2007-08 and 2008-09 academic years, Cabinet led the discussions and activities for defining shared governance. Some highlights and outcomes from those discussions are as follows:

- Two sub-committees were formed to explore shared governance. The Committee on Committees (later referred to as the Taskforce on Committees) focused its attention on the roles and structures of college committees, while the other collected research on various shared governance models. The research was presented to Cabinet and to the college through open forums, and feedback was gathered.
- Eight core articles on the topic of shared governance were acknowledged and made available to the college community (Exhibit 5.8). The cabinet reviewed the main ideas and tenets of each article. The research committee held numerous open forums across the district to allow employees and students to give their feedback about the articles. Following this review, the primary themes were identified: trust, involvement, culture, relationships, role clarity, democracy,

decision-making, efficiency, and clear structure. Finally, of these nine themes, three were identified as the most important: 1) trust, 2) role clarity, and 3) clear structure.

- Shared governance was the primary component of the All-Day District meeting on February 19, 2008, where all employees throughout the District reviewed the work of Cabinet and provided their input regarding the definition and processes of shared governance.
- A survey was implemented to help determine the next steps in the shared governance process.
- The Cabinet collectively summarized the qualities of a shared governance model that is fully realized. These qualities are as follows: equality, integrity, personal responsibility, compassion, communication, teamwork, accountability, student success, effective communication, inclusivity, collegiality, academic discourse, trust, customer service, and fraternity. Different perspectives regarding how to springboard these ideas into actions were explored.
- A working matrix, taken from an American Federation of Teachers document, regarding five tenets of shared governance was developed by the Committee on Committees and submitted to the full Cabinet for their consideration and adoption (Exhibit 5.9).

Review of Committees

The Committee on Committees took the work of the research subcommittee of Cabinet and recommended the following definition of shared governance:

Participation in shared governance is inclusive wherein all members of the college community have opportunity for their voices to be heard and given proper weight in decisions that affect the mission and operation of the college.

This definition was adopted by Cabinet in 2008 and is being shared with the college community. The Committee on Committees has completed a survey of all college committees, tasks forces and workgroups in order to determine their role in shared governance. Definitions have been established for different types of committees and membership, and reporting lines have been defined (Appendix 5.6). The Committee on Committees will complete its work by the end of spring quarter, bringing the college into compliance with the NWCCU standards on identifying the roles and functions of all constituents in shared governance.

Meetings with District Executive Team/PCFT Executive Board

After a series of surveys and meetings to assess and address faculty issues, which included shared governance, the PCFT asked tenured faculty to participate in a vote of no confidence in the Chancellor in spring 2008. As a result of a majority voting no confidence, the E-Team and PCFT Executive Board held facilitated meetings in an

attempt to move forward to resolve issues in a positive manner, beginning in summer 2008. This took place concurrently with the process of defining shared governance and clarifying roles of constituent groups in decision-making processes.

The first three meetings were facilitated by Dan Leahy, a personal and organizational development specialist. These meetings have successfully contributed to opening dialogue, finding common ground and increasing understanding. Together, the group developed a list of “agreements” to help shape conversations (Appendix 5.7). These agreements have played a critical role in giving members of the group a tool to have healthy communications and develop fruitful relationships. For the fourth meeting, the group determined they could lead the conversation on their own, without the assistance of a facilitator. It was decided that the Chancellor and the PCFT Vice President would co-facilitate the meeting, which occurred on February 13, 2009. Future meetings are scheduled to occur quarterly. After each meeting, the Vice President of Advancement and the PCFT Vice President develop a joint communication that is sent to the entire District, informing the college community of the meeting’s outcomes (Appendix 5.8).

During the February 13, 2009 meeting, the PCFT introduced a continuum of faculty input in decision-making processes that ranges from no input to full input from faculty, staff and students throughout the district.

The proposed levels of governance input are:

1. No input
2. PCFT President/Vice President
3. PCFT Executive Committee
4. All Faculty (via Divisions or PCFT)
5. Faculty and staff
6. Faculty, staff and students

The group decided the PCFT President and Vice President will meet monthly with the campus Presidents and Vice Presidents to review current and future issues of concern to E-Team, the Instructional Administrative Team and/or PCFT. These meetings will be one tool to clarify the appropriate levels of input and information sharing listed above that supports the spirit of shared governance. The District will continue to clarify which issues are appropriate for which level of shared governance. An important outcome of the meetings for the union was the recognition of the union as the representative body for faculty issues that are not designated to other shared governance bodies or committees.

Meetings with Washington Public Employees Association

In addition to regular Labor/Management meetings with the Vice President for Human Resources, the WPEA job representatives, the two campus Presidents and the Executive Vice President for Extended Learning have held two meetings. Both of these meetings were focused on issues the WPEA job representatives had with both process and communication of daily operational items. It was determined that ongoing issues related to working conditions would continue to be taken to the Labor/Management team. Any issues that could not be resolved through these channels could become grievances and moved through the appropriate levels. No grievances have been presented to date.

In addition to these meetings, both campus Presidents hold quarterly classified staff meetings where individuals or group representatives can share their concerns directly with the Presidents. Information is shared as well as concerns brought forward to be addressed. The Fort Steilacoom President has recently implemented a process whereby staff can write their question down and submit them without self-identifying.

Forums for the Information and Input

Each campus President also has quarterly “brown-bag” lunches that serve as a forum for all campus constituents to receive District and campus information, and to share concerns. They also hold quarterly All-College meetings with all constituent groups. Campus Presidents have Advisory Committees that meet regularly to guide them with decision-making.

Challenges

- The district is facing very financially challenging times with a state budget deficit of \$9 billion. Budget reductions will require many difficult decisions. Our budget process is very inclusive and transparent; however, with the types of cuts the District will make, there is bound to be those who feel they did not have the level of input into decisions they would desire.
- Whereas, Cabinet has been very involved in the process of defining shared governance; there is still work to do to help educate others across the District as to the definition and complexity of shared governance.
- The District will need to continue to help various constituent groups distinguish between shared governance and shared decision-making.
- At times, there is lower than desired level of employee engagement, some of which is due to work load, and some to good communication practices by mid-level managers viewing themselves as the primary information resource for staff.

Appendices

Appendix 5.1 – Organizational Chart

Appendix 5.2 – Board of Trustees Members

Appendix 5.3 – District Policy and Governance Cabinet Membership 2008-2009

Appendix 5.4 – District Division Chair Members and Structure

Appendix 5.5 – Executive Team Membership

Appendix 5.5 – Committee on Committees Report on Shared Governance Unit
Definitions

Appendix 5.6 – Agreements. Pierce College Federation of Teachers and Executive Team

Appendix 5.7 – Communications with District Community. Pierce College Federation of
Teachers and Executive Team

Exhibits

Exhibit 5.1 – Full Organizational Chart

Exhibit 5.2 – Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes 2007-2008 and 2008-2009

Exhibit 5.3 – District Policy and Governance Cabinet Minutes 2007-2008 and 2008-2009

Exhibit 5.4 – District Shared Governance Units

Exhibit 5.5 – Summary of Student Contributions to Shared Governance

- Exhibit 5.6 – Washington Public Employees Association (WPEA) Contract
- Exhibit 5.7 – Institutional Effectiveness Report Outcome IV Positive College Environment
- Exhibit 5.8 – Readings on Shared Governance
- Exhibit 5.9 – American Federation of Teachers Shared Governance Matrix

Recommendation Six

The evaluation committee recommends that the District implement and periodically review appropriate procedures to evaluate all administrators regularly. (Standard 6.C.3, 6.C.8)

Background and Overview

Administrators at Pierce College provide leadership and support for the diverse activities of the District. Ninety-eight administrative exempt individuals are included in this employee group: Chancellor, Presidents, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors, Executive Assistants, and Budget Managers, as well as managers of smaller college programs. The self-study revealed that while several administrators were evaluated using a range of processes, the last comprehensive evaluation of exempt employees was conducted in 2000. Evaluations for the Executive Team members (Exhibit 6.1) were conducted in 2006. This process used a survey tool that allowed any employee to provide input. The results were compiled and provided to each individual as well as consolidated into a report that was reviewed as an executive team. This discussion enabled the executive team to evaluate collective strengths and areas for change, and to explore more effective tools for getting useful feedback. In addition, the Chancellor has been evaluated annually (most recently in fall 2008) by the Board of Trustees as part of the contract renewal process.

Improvement Actions Since Fall 2007

In an effort to begin a comprehensive, systematic administrative evaluation process, the Human Resources office initiated new evaluation procedures for administrative exempt employees in January 2008. This system had an initial six month start-up period along with a plan to get all employees in this category on an annual July 1 – June 30 evaluation schedule.

After this initial trial, the Vice President for Human Resources met with the Administrative Exempt Task Force to review the feedback tool and process used in January 2008. This Task Force includes representatives from each college, the District, Extended Learning and from most pay ranges within the ranks of administrative exempt employees (Appendix 6.1). The Task Force's primary responsibility is to recommend compensation practices to the Executive Team. In addition, this group has served as a sounding board for the development of the administrative exempt evaluation process. In June 2008, the Task Force recommended changes to the tool so there would be focus on coaching for leadership and supervision competencies. Modifications were made with the intent to gather specific observations that could be used by the supervisor to prepare a more insightful assessment of performance.

The feedback tool was revised and recommended by the Task Force to the Executive Team. In October 2008, the new tool was sent to all administrative exempt employees, with the expectation that supervisors complete or update evaluations for the July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009 cycle.

The Administrative Exempt Evaluation Process

The evaluation process for all administrative exempt employees utilizes two tools: a Performance and Development Plan (PDP) and a Feedback Form (Appendix 6.2). The supervisor uses the PDP to provide feedback about past performance using information gathered from the employee's self evaluation, feedback from peers and subordinates, and the supervisor's own observations. Looking ahead, the supervisor and employee develop expectations for the upcoming period referencing any areas of improvement identified in the feedback section. The expectations include work to be accomplished and competencies to be strengthened. The supervisor and employee also work together on any updates to the job description.

The most important part of the process is the discussion between supervisor and employee. This is a time to recognize what has been accomplished, share perceptions from peers and subordinates, give support for good performance, and to identify areas of personal development that could be strengthened. Strategies for development are also offered.

Evaluations for administrative exempt employees were started early in 2008. However, we wanted the evaluation cycle for this group of employees to run from July 1 to June 30 to mirror the contract year, so we asked supervisors and employees to prepare an annual evaluation starting on July 1, 2008.

Assessment of Our Progress

A review of personnel files shows that as of March 2009, approximately 50% of administrative exempt employees have been evaluated. While this number does not meet our standard of excellence, it also does not reflect the true extent of our work. Most supervisors have completed the goal setting and discussion portion of the evaluation process, but have not formally documented their work; closing the loop with the paperwork has been difficult. The Vice President for Human Resources is continuing to work with supervisors to complete these sections so we will be 100% compliant by June 30, 2009 and can provide feedback on the work that has been performed. We will continue to train and coach supervisors and employees in the importance of the communications that occur during the feedback and expectation preparation process.

Challenges:

- More deeply instilling the evaluation and goal setting culture;
- Informing the college community of how their input is used in helping to identify performance expectations and accomplishments of these employees;
- Finalizing a feedback tool that completely fits our needs; and
- Determining how to more fully implement coaching so as to support competency-building at leadership levels.

Appendices

- Appendix 6.1 - Administrative Exempt Compensation Taskforce Membership
- Appendix 6.2 - Administrative Exempt Evaluation Tool

Exhibits

- Exhibit 6.1 - Executive Team Evaluation Tool

Appendices