Mid-Cycle Evaluation

Klamath Community

College

April 19-20, 2021

A confidential report of findings prepared for the

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

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Introduction

Klamath Community College (KCC), located in Klamath Falls, Oregon, is an open access two year institution with a service district of Klamath County. KCC additionally serves higher education needs of Lake County through an agreement with the Lake County school district. Dr. Roberto Gutierrez has served as President of KCC since 2012. The college is governed by a locally elected Board of Education. The college offers one-year certificates, Associate's degrees, and maintains partnerships with four year institutions affording students the opportunity to complete their Bachelor's degree locally. KCC reports an FTE of 1670 students in AY 2019.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, on April 19-20, 2021 Dr. Alexander and Dr. Fisher conducted a virtual mid-cycle evaluation review with administration, faculty, staff, and members of the Board of Education of Klamath Community College. The Self-Evaluation Report, college catalog and appendices were available in Box by March 2nd, 2021, about 7 weeks prior to the visit. The Self-Evaluation Report was comprehensive. The Evaluation Team found the appendices especially helpful, containing many reports and examples of initiatives in which the institution is engaged. Due to the thorough nature of the appendices, the Evaluation Team did not request additional materials. On the institutional report certification form the box next to "There was broad participation/review by the campus community in preparation of this report" was not checked. Conversation with the ALO clarified while there was broad participation across campus through committees and larger open virtual meetings, KCC has a standard formal process requiring every employee and Board of Education member to attend yearly all campus events (fall convocation and spring data summit) in person. Since in person events were not held this past year, the college could not verify that their 'every person' standard was met thus did not check the box.

Part I: Mission Fulfillment

Founded in 1996, Klamath Community College serves Klamath and Lake Counties with educational services and functions with a public charge to serve its service region's residents. Guiding it in doing so is its Mission Statement:

> *"Klamath Community College provides accessible, quality education and services in response to the diverse needs of the student, business, and community. The College supports student success in workforce training, academic transfer, foundational skills development, and community education."*

The evidence of Mission Fulfillment provided with the report and emergent in visit meetings is robust. KCC has established core themes to guide its institutional actions. Those four core themes are **accessible, quality, community,** and **student success.** The themes are evident in the Mission Statement and are aligned with its strategic initiatives. Within its overall planning and budgeting structures, KCC has intentionally aligned these processes and more to anchor actions with its mission. Throughout the visit, the intentionality and acceptance of the mission as a guiding "north star" was evident. The Mid-Cycle Evaluation Report provided an extensive appendix which provided substantial institutional artifacts to confirm that KCC embraces its mission, operationalizes it within their daily actions and future plans, and sustains a culture that "lives" the mission within its workforce.

KCC issues a Mission Fulfillment Report that is linked to its strategic planning cycle. Included in the Appendix, it communicated the institutional progress toward fulfillment at strategic theme levels which contribute to the assessment of overall mission fulfillment. It has defined mission fulfillment to be meeting at least three-fourths of its established measurable outcomes. Actions plans develop when there is a gap for fulfillment. KCC is presented with an ongoing opportunity to sustain the energy and intentionality. Through its annual Board retreat and ongoing, mandatory all-employee meetings, KCC intentionally discusses its mission, its measures and desired outcomes. These practices are designed to accomplish systematic and transparent ways for KCC to engage in its mission fulfillment work.

One strong dimension of evidence of mission fulfillment is the linking of the budget to the strategic plan and the plan's concomitant linkage to mission fulfillment. The report, ancillary materials in the Appendix, and the discussions onsite all evidenced a systematic link between the College's desire to fulfill its mission and the purposeful culture created by College leadership. There are clear and ongoing connections between the strategic plan, individual programs, the budget, and an organization-wide emphasis on continuous improvement. The College provided documentation of this work through a variety of artifacts. Its Mission Fulfillment Report (Appendix A), the Student Achievement Review (Appendix J), the documentation of the program review process and the exemplars of that process -- all effectively document that KCC consciously seeks to accomplish its mission. The evaluation team compliments the College's leadership, and particularly the KCC President, for his commitment to meeting with each department to review plans and budgets. This thoroughness and transparency are key assets for leadership to sustain

an inclusive culture at KCC.

It was evident to the evaluators that the College leadership has a supportive Board which understands its mission. Through its annual Board retreat, attention to monthly financial statements and student achievement dashboards, the Board is both providing the public oversight dimension for strategic vision and mission. However, it is clear the Board also deeply respects the College's leadership, faculty and staff in their work and seek to find ways to support that work. Although more difficult to document with artifacts, the culture of KCC is a key asset in its mission fulfillment. KCC faculty and staff communicated a culture of inquiry and reported that they were supported in their work with data and resources. The evaluators commend KCC's team for the extensive artifacts provided to support our review. The comprehensive appendix allowed for a deeper understanding of KCC.

Strengths

Creating and sustaining a culture of inquiry and a focus on student success, anchored to a commitment for continuous improvement, is a significant feat. KCC is complimented for these strengths. The Board, College leadership, faculty and staff all manifest the commitment to effectively accomplish its public charge -- to bring education to those it serves. Its Board communicated its pride in their work and being a part of advancing the work of a talented team at the College. KCC has developed a well-conceived program review process, linked into its strategic plan, and its evidence-based, data-informed culture. This culture is strengthened through transparent actions such as issuance of the Mission Fulfillment Report, Student Achievement Review, and the conducting of an annualized Data Summit. It is also a strength of the institution that it links resourcing to its plan and evidence -- and a leadership team which routinely messages and manifests its support.

Opportunities

The Northwest Commission's 2020 standards communicate an expectation that institutions use benchmarking as a part of its "toolkit" to inform its improvement. While the Commission does not prescribe what national peer resources should be used, it does communicate an expectation that national peer benchmarking will occur. KCC has the opportunity to determine what national peer benchmarking works best for it and operationalize it. During the visit, several options were discussed; it remains KCC's decision which option works best for it. Also, KCC has the opportunity to build succession planning within its team for strategic planning and program review. The ongoing operational work is led by a few key individuals. Their work is inclusive and clearly accepted by those in the College community.

Part II: Student Achievement

Klamath Community College has a history of use of student achievement data. Core Theme 4: Student Success includes retention, completion, graduation, and transfer data primarily from IPEDS and the State of Oregon databases as evidenced in the Mission Fulfillment Report (Appendix A). KCC is in the process of incorporating disaggregated data from the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) to evaluate consistent student achievement measures comparative with regional peers in Oregon. The College has identified a peer group of Oregon Community Colleges with enrollment less than 5,000 FTE as the peer group to benchmark against. KCC has not yet identified a national peer group to benchmark against.

KCC produced the first Student Achievement Report in Fall 2020 (Appendix J). The report was benchmarked against regional peers. Indicators included persistence, completion, retention, and postgraduation success disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status (Pell grant), and full-time status. First generation college student data was not included in the report nor was any evidence to obtain and include this data provided during meetings with the evaluation team.

The College has yet to formulate a plan for folding disaggregated and peer benchmarked student achievement data, including the 2020 Student Achievement Report, into KCC systems and processes. Campus conversations indicated an intent to spend the 2021-2022 academic year incorporating these additional data requirements into Klamath Community College's mission fulfillment plan and continuous improvement cycle as part of the College's standard three year strategic planning cycle.

Strengths

The 2020 establishment of a set of regional peers and the 2020 Student Achievement Report provides an excellent foundation for meaningful conversations about student success through an equity lens at KCC. The framework previously established for the role of institutional data in the campus continuous improvement cycle is strong, including the employee required yearly Mission Fulfillment Data Summit. This framework can easily be adapted to include a disaggregated and benchmarked Student Achievement focus.

Evaluation team interviews reflected KCC's commitment to student success. It was clear through the team's conversations with all levels of KCC employees and the Board of Education that student success is at the heart of KCC's decision making.

Opportunities

While an initial Student Achievement report was prepared, the College is not currently using

the disaggregated data in its campus continuous improvement and student success work. Currently no data is provided for the first generation category articulated in 1.D.2.

The College is not currently aligning or benchmarking disaggregated indicators against national peers. KCC reports student achievement data as part of the mid-cycle report along with a regional peer group, but the data is not currently benchmarked. (1.D.3)

Part III: Program Assessment

Klamath Community College provided assessment materials from one non-instructional program and two instructional programs as evidence of their program assessment process (Appendices G-I). The Veteran's Services non-instructional program was reviewed in the 2017-2018 new program review process launch year. The instructional program *Communications*, a General Education Discipline, was reviewed in 2018-2019. The instructional CTE program Associate of Applied Science in *Accounting* was reviewed in 2019-2020.

The Klamath Community College Program Review process (Appendix F) is robust and data driven. Student learning outcomes and assessment data; as well as student success, engagement and satisfaction data are included as part of the review.   Rubrics are included for committee assessment of the achievement of programs goals, labor market analysis, resources, effectiveness, budget, strengths and weaknesses, new goals and plan, and overall achievement. Program review is overseen by a twenty member campus wide Continuous Innovation and Improvement Committee (CIIC). Faculty and staff in meetings expressed strong appreciation for this all-inclusive representation, viewing it as a mechanism for developing and maintaining community as well as an understanding of program needs across campus.

After completing the program review process departments create five year action plans with their supervisor. This action plan feeds directly in to the yearly department and institutional planning, budget, and strategic plan cycles; and the program review follow up process. Due to this tiered system yearly results occur through the budget and strategic planning cycle, while the loop is not closed for five years in the program review process. The first round of programs in the new program review process will undergo a second cycle in 2022-2023. This makes 2022-2023 the first year to close the loop on action plans created as a result of the program review process.

Faculty and staff from these programs during meetings expressed while initially experiencing a feeling of being overwhelmed, the written instructions and paperwork were easy to follow and complete. They noted feeling supported by the program review process leads and finding the program review mechanism useful and meaningful. Reading reviewers comments before attending a program review meeting to discuss their program was appreciated.

The Accounting program review resulted in action items with completions dates of spring and summer 2021 to update program learning outcomes to be more measurable and relevant to market and industry needs, as well as recruiting additional part-time faculty. The Communications program review action items focused on effective onboarding of new

faculty, creating a new technical writing program, and improving the tracking process for professional development.

While typically the leads of the program review process provide data for departments, conversations with Veteran's services indicated a need for Veteran's services to provide some of their program review data through connections with other Veteran's programs in Oregon. The Veteran's services director, in meetings, indicated the program review loop has been closed through expansion from one to three colleges of the Base to Bachelor's degree program, combined with expansion of articulation agreements from one degree program to a second degree program at the same institution.

Strengths

KCC has a well-established, strong student outcomes assessment program. Faculty are committed to student learning including assessment at the course, program and institutional level.

The college has recently established a comprehensive data driven program review process with cross campus representation. The program review process integrates with the department and institutional level continuous improvement budget and strategic planning cycles. Program directors and departments consistently state the new program review process is meaningful and useful.

Opportunities

The last group of instructional and non-instructional programs are set to undergo the new program review process for the first time in 2021-2022. A second round of the program review process will first begin in 2022-2023. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed to evidence long term sustainability and institutionalization of the program review process. KCC has the opportunity to demonstrate a full cycle of program review; as well as documentation of systematic monitoring of program review action plans, incorporation of feedback, changes made, and impacts of changes.

The program review process does not include a student success equity lens through use of disaggregated and peer benchmarked student achievement data. During meetings with the evaluation team, faculty and administrators indicated a likely implementation date of fall 2022 for the newly required student achievement data to be woven in to the current campus processes.

PART IV: Moving Forward

The institutionally-submitted report for this part provided the following as items for the College as it moves forward in its work:

A comprehensive administrative procedures review relying upon sample federally-compliant board and administrative procedures provided by the Oregon Community College Association. This process is estimated to take from three to five years by the institution.
The institution also reports that it is systematically using evidence checklists collected from College units to provide evidence for Standard Two.
KCC's report also communicates that it will work to refine Student Learning Outcomes and continue to refine its ongoing system to track and assess SLOs -- as well as course and program outcomes.

Although these items are both appropriate and will strengthen the institution as they are accomplished. These planned "Moving Forward" items are acknowledged by the evaluators for their inherent value as part of a continuous improvement culture. Beyond these items, the evaluator team heard some consistent themes from members of the College's Board, leadership, faculty, and staff. Those additional items for the College for "Moving Forward" are added in this report to (a) document what we heard during the visits; and (b) to encourage and validate their importance.

A consistent planned action -- communicated by almost every constituency group -- was the reported need and desire to work more closely with the Klamath tribes. This planned action indicates that the College community envisions the way it fulfills its mission is comprehensive. In particular, KCC's equity work will be advanced as it finds ways to partner with the tribes and serve that regional constituency.
A new strategic plan for KCC is planned for development as the College moves into the next academic year. KCC's constituencies reported their awareness that this work has some time sensitivity to be accomplished in 2021-2022. Revisiting and refining or -eliminating core themes, establishing indicators and benchmarks, including national peers, and development of the plan itself will also form important work for the College in the relatively near future.
Building processes to create sustainability for its planning and assessment efforts is also a reported need from the College leadership and will form one other important dimension to the institution's "Moving Forward."

Strengths

Already noted in this report, KCC's culture is a strength. The College community trusts its leadership **and each other** to help each other accomplish goals and to do what is right to accomplish mission fulfillment and to support students. It evidences a culture of inquiry and relying upon data to inform its planning and decision-making. A key part of its culture is purposeful/intention linking of resources to actions in its budgeting model.

Opportunities

Like other institutions, KCC has had a challenging 2020-2021 academic year. The pandemic changed almost every way that institutions operated, and KCC is no different. KCC has sought to sustain its planning and assessment efforts, but the pandemic delayed its reported opportunities to continue some of its traditional meetings and processes (e.g Data Summit) that maintained inertia. KCC has the opportunity to use 2020-2021 to work collaboratively across College constituencies to affirm, refine, or eliminate core themes, build a new plan and establish benchmarks, including national peers. It also has the opportunity to expand its mission fulfillment work through collaboration with the Klamath tribes. As it envisions its new plan, building in succession/sustainability also presents KCC with an opportunity for its own improvement to "future proof" its culture.

PART V: Conclusion

The mid-cycle evaluation report is intended to be a formative document; it is a snapshot of Klamath Community College's progress in the years following the 2018 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Visit.

Klamath Community College expresses a heartfelt commitment to student success. The College budget and mission fulfillment process are inextricably linked to President Gutierrez's vision that Klamath Community College will only be healthy when the demographics of the employee and student population are reflective of the county population; and all on campus are successful, and feel supported and welcome. This approach and passion drive all campus processes. Employees reflect back this passion.

Klamath Community College has made significant progress over the past seven years establishing and maintaining integrated continuous improvement and assessment processes. One important change between the 2010 and 2020 NWCCU accreditation standards is the focus on disaggregation of data. Colleges are asked to benchmark student achievement against both regional and national peer groups and to disaggregate data to make decisions about resource allocation to ensure equity. This presents an opportunity for KCC to have discussions about what Colleges they would like to have as its national peer group, available data sources, and setting appropriate benchmarks. Additionally, the College has the opportunity to determine if it wishes to keep, refine, or remove core themes from the institutional mission fulfillment process.

PART VI: Response to Addendum