Ad Hoc Report

Prepared for the

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Green River College

March 3, 2022

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Introduction

Green River College received its Spring 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Evaluation in April 2020. In a letter dated July 22, 2020, the college was notified of six commendations and two recommendations. This Ad Hoc Report and the accompanying Ad Hoc Evaluation on April 14, 2022 are to address progress concerning the two recommendations around governance and learning outcomes assessment.

Response to Recommendation 1: Governance

Recommendation 1: Work to demonstrate and document an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities (2020 Standard 2.A.2, 2.A.3, 2.A.4).

Referenced Standards:
- 2.A.2. The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of authority, responsibility, and accountability who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness.
- 2.A.3. The institution employs an appropriately qualified chief executive officer with full-time responsibility to the institution. The chief executive may serve as an ex officio member of the governing board(s) but may not serve as its chair.
- 2.A.4. The institution's decision-making structures and processes, which are documented and publicly available, must include provisions for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which each has a direct and reasonable interest.

This section describes Green River College's work to demonstrate and document an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly defined roles. It will cover both the existing College Council structure as well as movement towards a structure that more fully and transparently integrates existing committee and group work into collaborative decision making. Examples of this emerging structure are also provided. Green River acknowledges that the large number of formal and informal committees and work groups that have emerged over its fifty-five years of operations has contributed to a lack of clear understanding of governance and decision-making structures.

College Council

The College Council is a college-wide body that reviews and considers key college issues and makes recommendations to the president based on a shared understanding of the mission, vision, strategic plan goals, and values. The council comprises two representatives from each of the constituent councils as well as area representatives across the college. Constituent councils include the Instructional Council, Classified Council, Exempt Council, Administrator Council, and the Associated Students of Green River College (representing students). Area representatives include Executive Team Liaisons, Human Resources/Legal Affairs, College Relations, Informational Technology, International Programs & Extended Learning, Branch Locations, Green River Foundation, and Equity Hiring Task Force. In

September 2021, the College Council added representatives from Veteran's Affairs and Green River Diversity and Equity Council.

The College Council engages in monthly discussions on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest and makes recommendations to the President's executive team (President's Cabinet) or other constituent councils as appropriate for further consideration and action. The monthly agenda is built around standing reports from each council and area representative as well as college-wide topics. A current example is soliciting feedback on the job description for the new position, VP of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The College Council also meets with the President's Executive Team twice a quarter to discuss a chosen topic from each group. The College Council consensually decides on discussion items for the President's Executive Team – College Council joint meetings, which can initiate from any council or area representative.

While the College Council continues to share information and request feedback across its membership on college-wide matters, there continue to be many groups and committees doing cross-campus work and making decisions that do not feed through the College Council. The next section describes the foundational work to create a more integrated structure of governance and current examples using that model.

New Integrated Governance and Planning Models

While the College Council has for years successfully brought together representation from across campus, in a Town Hall meeting in 2019, new college president Dr. Suzanne Johnson graphically illustrated how many work groups and committees existed outside of the College Council structure. This lack of a coherent governance structure had limited the college's ability to effectively communicate, have clear and transparent decision-making processes visible to all, collaborate, promote inclusive and impactful involvement of staff and faculty across the college, and visibly demonstrate accountability and mutual responsibility.

Over a series of three town hall meetings held March – May 2019, the community began to examine the informal governance structures that had evolved across time. Faculty and staff worked together to align and organize the many committees and councils under nine proposed college-wide participatory planning committees called focus groups. Through inclusive college-wide input, two potential overarching governance models emerged.

To ensure all faculty and staff had opportunities to provide feedback on the two models, the college conducted and shared the results of a college-wide survey through Fall quarter 2019. Though the town hall discussions were rich and provided robust feedback, indicating an interest from faculty and staff in a new governance structure, they also indicated a need for more processing time to ensure full participation and transparent decision-making. Two additional town halls were scheduled for winter and spring of 2020 where the Fall survey results were to guide the continued work on integrated governance and planning with the goal of having a new governance structure in place by 2020-21. The COVID-19 pandemic brought this overall work to a halt before a new overarching structure was chosen and implemented.

However, a basic framework of organization and communication had been identified:
1. **smaller existing work groups** do the initial work, conversation, and information gathering;

2. these work groups funnel to an **intermediate "focus group"** able to gather and synthesize information from several areas; and
3. these focus groups then bring information to a **larger college-wide entity** for decision-making and cohesive strategic planning, oversight, budget alignment and overall mission fulfillment.
4. Decisions are documented and shared via college-wide communication vehicles, such as the college's intranet.

This model is being piloted for several distinct processes that needed to be implemented immediately: the budget development process, the strategic plan development process, the post-pandemic re-opening committee, and the implementation of PeopleSoft (ctcLink).

Budget Development Process

The annual budget development process has been restructured over the course of several years and now follows the framework identified in 2019-20 through college-wide input. In the budget development process, existing groups and committees work on budget development in their individual areas (smaller existing work groups). That information is then gathered in each executive team member's larger area ("focus group"). Needs are examined, discussed, and refined within the context of operational plans and mission fulfillment. That refined information is submitted to the executive team (college-wide group) for consideration and decisions. Final budget decisions are made by the executive team for inclusion in the final operating budget presented to the Board of Trustees. The final budget is available on the Budget site on the college's intranet. Budget Town Halls have been conducted annually to review budget philosophy, revenue and expenses, and the budget development process.

Strategic Plan Development Process

The Strategic Plan Steering Committee's charge was to lead the college through the new strategic plan development process throughout the 2020-21 academic year. The committee's membership included representation from across the college. It was constructed with careful consideration of diverse roles at the college and diversity of perspective, knowledge, and expertise. This committee acted as the intermediate focus group, continually gathering ideas, content, and feedback from existing groups, students, and the community. The process, communication plan, supporting work, timeline and drafts are documented in the [Strategic Planning pages](#) on Green River's website. This interactive process steered by a diverse focus group culminated in a strategic plan, equity, mission, vision, and values statement adopted by the Board of Trustees in July 2021.

Post-Pandemic Reopening Process

The Reopening Committee is charged with preparing Green River College for a safe return to in-person and virtual instruction and support services. The committee structure and decision-making process uses the campus-wide governance structure framework. The Reopening Committee makes recommendations to the executive team (college-wide group) for consideration and decisions. The reopening committee (focus group) itself has representation from stakeholders throughout campus. Decisions and guidelines are discussed both in subcommittees and representative areas, and this information goes to the Reopening Committee for consideration and synthesis. Recommendations are made to the executive team. Decisions and guidelines are published on the intranet, website, and social media, as well as in emails to staff and faculty and in Canvas to students.

PeopleSoft (ctcLink) Implementation Process

The ctcLink committee structure is charged with managing the replacement of the legacy administrative system and the implementation of a new centralized system of online, integrated software tools for student administration, student finance, college financials, human resources, academics and institutional reporting. This massive implementation process which started in 2019 has touched every area of campus and was potentially overwhelming in scope.

Although the ctcLink governance model began to be developed before the new framework, the finished governance structure and communication model is an excellent example of successful use of the framework. The ctcLink governance structure was formalized in November 2019. Working groups were developed consisting of Pillar Leads (representing the functional areas PeopleSoft), Subject Matter Experts, and Team Leads (representing experts in college areas). These working groups reported to the Project Steering Committee (the intermediate focus group) which included the larger campus/project view and include the Implementation Team, Executive Sponsor, and Project Manager. The Executive Leadership Team retained the final decision-making authority.

The participation and communication around this project have been unprecedented at Green River. The ctcLink intranet site organizes all information around the project, including structure, timelines, and an archive of communications. The Project Steering Committee also held monthly all-campus meetings for ctcLink. Smaller updates were given quarterly and then monthly as the go-live date of October 2022 neared. Information was also shared in campus meetings such as the Board of Trustees Meetings, President's Office Hours, All Faculty meetings, and campus department leadership meetings. In preparation for go-live, additional working groups formed to deal with issues during and after deployment. The structure remains during this first year post-deployment.

Future Development

The successful piloting of the framework for these disparate processes proves that this model can work effectively at Green River. As the college returns to more normal processes post-pandemic it will also resume work on choosing a governance model that integrates the large number of formal and informal committees and work groups into a cohesive structure. This will lead to a clear understanding of the governance and decision-making structures.

Response to Recommendation 2: Learning Outcomes Assessment

Recommendation 2: Move to fully implement an effective and comprehensive system of direct and authentic assessment that measures student accomplishment of existing course, program, and college-wide learning outcomes from which are derived meaningful results that provide clear direction for curricular and instructional improvement (2020 Standard 1.B.1, 1.C.3, 1.C.7, 1.D.3, and 1.D.4)

Referenced Standards:

- 1.B.1. The institution demonstrates a continuous process to assess institutional effectiveness, including student learning and achievement and support services. The institution uses an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement.

- 1.C.3. The institution identifies and publishes expected program and degree learning outcomes for all degrees, certificates, and credentials. Information on expected student learning outcomes for all courses is provided to enrolled students.
- 1.C.7. The institution uses the results of its assessment efforts to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes.
- 1.D.3. The institution's disaggregated indicators of student achievement should be widely published and available on the institution's website. Such disaggregated indicators should be aligned with meaningful, institutionally identified indicators benchmarked against indicators for peer institutions at the regional and national levels and be used for continuous improvement to inform planning, decision making, and allocation of resources.
- 1.D.4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing indicators of student achievement are transparent and are used to inform and implement strategies and allocate resources to mitigate perceived gaps in achievement and equity.

This section describes the work done to move Green River towards an effective and comprehensive system of authentic assessment from which are derived meaningful results used for continuous improvement. As described in the previous institutional effectiveness report, Green River placed considerable emphasis on shifting to a faculty-led outcomes assessment culture over the past several years, and the processes and assessment methods described below reflect those changes. At Green River, the processes and timelines for college-wide learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, and course learning outcomes are very different and will be described separately.

College-wide Learning Outcomes

Green River's College-Wide Learning Outcomes (CWLO) had been well established and assessed for the past decade. However, continued revisions have been made to respond to accreditation recommendations and to make the process smoother and more effective for faculty. In 2019-20, the Learning Outcomes Committee (LOC) made a revision to the process by piloting using Canvas to facilitate college-wide assessment. All faculty teaching classes that integrated one or both of the Written Communication and Critical Thinking outcomes were trained to integrate master assessment rubrics into Canvas. The assessment was run over winter quarter and measured outcomes across all degrees and certificates. Data was aggregated at an administrative level and delivered to Institutional Research in Spring for processing to make it easier to communicate and analyze. Unfortunately, Institutional Research found that the data from Canvas wasn't extractable in a usable form that could be used to generate trends or for faculty reflection. This pilot demonstrated that Canvas was a usable tool to bring faculty on board, but the technology failed to fulfill the intended purpose.

In 2020-21, the Learning Outcomes Committee began to investigate software to aid in learning outcomes assessment and that could coordinate with Canvas to facilitate data processing for assessments used through that platform. They chose Nuventive, purchased it, and began the onboarding process. At the same time, the campus rallied around the idea of a new diversity, equity and inclusion learning outcome. In the past, concerns over measurability and applicability across disciplines had caused previous attempts at a diversity outcome to be abandoned. In a year-long process, the LOC partnered with the Instructional Diversity Committee to develop the new Diversity and Equity outcome. This involved many meetings, public forums, and outreach to divisions and committees. Because of the

importance of this work, LOC focused exclusively on the new outcome and did not run full assessment processes on other college-wide learning outcomes in 2020-21.

In the first few months of 2021-22, the Learning Outcomes Committee has drafted a framework to accompany the Diversity and Equity outcome. They also finished gathering feedback from faculty about desired revisions to the pre-existing outcomes. Finally, the LOC continues to implement new outcomes assessment software (Nuventive) to facilitate assessment and make analysis easier. Given tandem updates to ctcLink as well as updates within Nuventive itself, this has been a slow-moving process. The LOC plans to once again facilitate Campus-wide Assessment using the new software starting Fall 2022.

Program Learning Outcomes

In 2019-20, each program (department or division depending on the area) completed a full cycle of assessment. The Learning Outcomes Committee worked with each area to develop a process unique and fitting for each area, and 58 faculty members participated as leads/facilitators in their areas. At the end of the year, each program submitted a report documenting their assessment outcomes, methods, findings, and changes made based on findings. The reports are uploaded in each division's assessment Canvas shell and in the campus-wide network drive.

In 2020-21, many faculty expressed difficulties and strain because of teaching shifts due to the pandemic. Although all programs had previously planned to complete a full cycle of assessment, the Learning Outcomes Committee instead asked which programs felt that they could effectively conduct program-level assessment during these difficulties. Humanities, Trades, Transitional Skills and Wellness, Business, Technology, Fine Arts, and Science all volunteered. Reports documenting assessment outcomes, methods, findings, and changes made based on findings are posted in the campus-wide network drive.

Green River's past practice has been to assess program learning outcomes at the department and division level. The accreditation change defining programs as degrees is resulting in a reorganization of our program-level assessment. However, in 2021-2022, Nursing, OTA, PTA, and English are moving forward with program-level assessment while the LOC is leading the efforts to reformulate program-level processes. The continuing Guided Pathways work will also help formulate program-level work. The implementation of the new outcomes assessment software (Nuventive) will be key moving forward.

Course Learning Outcomes

The Learning Outcomes Committee uses the annual Summer Institute to train faculty in assessment best practices. Training includes the assessment process, outcomes alignment, Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) assessment design, and rubric design. It is focused on the complete cycle of assessment at the course level and is based on the outcomes listed in the Course Adoption and Revision form for each course.

Because of the pandemic move to online education, larger groups were able to be trained using a mix of synchronous and asynchronous learning. 60 faculty members from across nearly all divisions and both adjunct and fulltime received training in Summer 2020, and 32 additional faculty were trained in Summer 2021. Although many faculty are trained in effective course learning outcomes assessment, tracking course-level assessment has not been systematic or consistent. The implementation of the new

software (Nuventive) will allow consistent tracking. The development of a new professional learning center on campus will also help facilitate course-level assessment.

Conclusion

Governance

In 2020, two different models were being considered for the composition of the focus groups and college-wide group. That work was slowed due the continuing focus on pandemic processes. Although the college was unable to make final decisions about an overarching governance model for the institution, work has been done to identify a framework that would allow the work of existing groups and committees to be further refined through a "focus" group structure with more representation from pertinent areas across campus. Final adoption or decision making is then done through a larger, campus-wide group. Depending on the scope of the decisions, communication takes place through the intranet, website, email to staff, email or Canvas for students, and Town Halls.

The framework has been successfully piloted. Four examples include the budget development process, strategic plan development process, post-pandemic reopening process, and the PeopleSoft (ctcLink) implementation. The college will continue its work developing the overarching structure in the near future.

Learning Outcomes Assessment

The Learning Outcomes Committee has been key in facilitating college-wide, program, and course-level assessment. The LOC continues to facilitate changes in process due to changes in definitions at the program level and the addition of a new outcome at the college-wide level. The LOC is also actively working on the implementation of the Nuventive software, which will aid in tracking at the course level, and in data processing, reporting, and tracking at all levels. The college is also working on recovering from the disruption of the pandemic which complicated and slowed all processes. Green River is now well-positioned to more fully implement an effective and comprehensive system of authentic assessment.