

Peer Review Team Report:

Human Resources & Employee Relations

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After reviewing the Human Resources & Employee Relations self study document, the peer review team interviewed employees of the service area. The employees generally indicated that there was full-participation, though varying degrees, in writing the self study report. All employees believed the self study report to be thorough, accurate and balanced with very little, if any, information left out. The general consensus was that Human Resources & Employee Relations is adequately serving the needs of the college, but could improve if given appropriate resources.

Area 1. Service Area Description

Findings:

The mission of the Office of Human Resources & Employee Relations is “providing quality services for a diverse population of employees.” Based on reading the self-study report and conducting interviews of staff members, it seems that the staff has a clear understanding of the service area’s role within the college. Though it is sometimes challenging for support staff to feel connected with the college’s mission, the staff in Human Resources is aware of how their actions and job duties affect the students the college serves and the quality of education offered by the college. “The Office of Human Resources has a critical part in the recruitment and hiring of qualified personnel to support student learning programs and services.”

Area 2. Self-Evaluation

Findings:

The self-study report appears to fairly reflect the current state of Human Resources & Employee Relations. The service area staff interviewed all agree that the report provided an accurate depiction of the program. The self-study report identifies numerous areas in which the program is succeeding, a few shortcomings, and also the constraints currently hindering the program. Despite budget, technology and staffing shortfalls, the program adequately performs what it calls “maintenance HR activities,” but is unable to devote enough resources to strategic “full-range HR activities,” including certain planning, management and training initiatives. The report comments that “[t]he District’s ability to be more proactive in addressing these strategic issues remains hindered by the lack of available staffing resources.” With a HR staff to employee ratio of roughly one half the number of the desired staffing ratio, they work very hard to effectively meet the needs of

employees, students and the community. Based on interviews with service area staff, it seems clear that the program would benefit noticeably from integration of information systems technology and additional staffing, which each require appropriate financial resources. The self-study report, along with feedback from staff interviews, indicated that the staff as a whole is acutely aware of the challenges the program faces, as they are attempting to improve and resolve those within their control, while other problems will require additional resources. “The most significant challenge for the department is the state budget, which makes difficult decisions necessary for the continued operation of the College.” Between losing hourly employee positions, and having full-time employees forced to use their time inefficiently due to technology deficiencies, there is a distinct and immediate need “to align the disparate information systems that the District uses.” The program has explored a few solutions to the problem, but has found the options presented to be somewhat costly. The self-study report comments that the “failure to act is also costly in terms of wasted employee efforts, [and] inability to accurately budget and plan.”

Area 3. Planning

Findings:

The program seems to have reasonable goals, strategies and plans in place, despite uncertainties revolving around the budget. While numerous goals have been identified, a few stood out. Aside from the obvious need to adopt an integrated information system, the program plans to resolve inefficiencies by transitioning toward a self-service culture through the use of technology. They also plan to develop and implement a more comprehensive training plan for College employees. Additionally, interviews revealed that the program intends to develop a handbook for employees outlining processes and procedures. Lastly, the program will develop a staffing master plan, which accounts for growth in enrollment and the need for support at existing and new facilities, and in the long term will also develop a more scalable staffing model that can “more fluidly adapt to changing budget realities and anticipate college growth.” The goals and plans described in the self-study report seem to be logical in advancing the purpose of the service area and fulfilling its mission over the coming years.

Area 4. Summaries and Recommendations

Findings:

The self-study report acknowledges that service area has been previously “challenged by inconsistent leadership, incongruous technology, and understaffing.” While the program is currently performing at a basic maintenance level, the need for staffing and a comprehensive technology solution will become magnified as the College grows. “The inefficiencies for staff and for the ability to effectively plan and budget cannot be sustained.” Interviews of staff members provided feedback consistent with the self-study report regarding the needs of the program and recommendations for the future. In summary, the self-study report appears to be accurate, and fairly represent the condition and needs of the program. The staff worked together to create the self-study report and

there seems to be a consensus regarding the needs of the program, but needs adequate financial resources, which may require a significant investment.

Recommendations:

The peer review team found the self-study report to be thorough and fair. The team feels confident that the report is an accurate representation of the program, and this was verified by interviews of staff members. Based on this information, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) The program should continue working to complete its procedures manual, to ensure all processes are in a written format, and appropriately calendared.
- 2) Though not addressed in the self-study report, interviews of staff indicated that the program does have operational outcomes, but there are concerns of measurability. The program needs to review, and possibly revise, its operational outcomes and their measurability, and then develop and implement appropriate assessment tools. Assessment results should then be used to improve the service area performance.
- 3) The program should continue to develop its recommendations in terms of the Educational Master plan, and the creation of a timeline for attainment. A plan of action for implementation of goals and objectives for improvement or enhancement of the service areas and associated costs should be included.