Program Review Response
Student Records Program Review – Winter Term 2009

Overview of presentation

It was wonderful to see the Student Records team all present and contributing to their first program review and presentation in Winter Term, 2009. Clearly, much assessment work was done internally and with the help of external consulting services including Sungard, reviewing systems analysis and American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), reviewing staffing and structure. This program review is an excellent first step that can serve as a benchmark for all future evaluative work.

The report was well-organized and included brief background information, mission statement, and team norms developed in 2007. The chart pairing groupings of services and CAS/professional standards with PCC goals helped define and clarify the key functions. The long listing of goals and planned projects show that student records is receiving some well-deserved attention and that changes and additional services in this area are a high priority for the college.

The summaries from the consultant's reports and their recommendations addressed the strengths and challenges as seen from an outside perspective and provided a very practical list of "to-dos." Although it is always good to have "fresh eyes" look at a situation, it would have been instructive to have staff, some with many years of experience, also weigh in throughout the process. In addition, feedback from Student Record's key customers, the students, is needed – not just for this review but also on an on-going basis.

Areas of exemplary contribution to the mission of PCC

Student Records is a vital function at the college and provides necessary and important services to our students. Accuracy in records, effective and ethical practices, and responsiveness to students and the college community are values shared by Student Records and the college as identified in the PCC mission and values statements.

Evidence that program outcomes are being met

It is clear from this review, and from progress made in subsequent months since the program review presentation, that Student Records is making positive

adjustments and improvements. The change in leadership and the addition of the Registrar position helps focus attention and direct efforts. Recently, staff reclassifications were completed, Student Records was restructured, and the office space was reconfigured, addressing the consultants' recommendation to clarify organizational structure and responsibilities.

Another of the consultant's concerns, compliance with FERPA rules and regulations, is facilitated by development of information materials and increased training opportunities for all college staff. Commencement improvements are one more visible sign of the work the team has done and has resulted in an increase in faculty and volunteer participation at graduation. Implementation of the automated waitlist has benefitted thousands of students and is also greatly appreciated by faculty and staff helping students make better class/registration decisions.

Some of the other areas where progress is being made include: up-front transcript evaluation, improved communications and website, improved online services and forms availability, and diploma printing.

Strengths as identified in the survey administered to faculty department chairs and academic advisors include:
#3 "Ensuring that the security and confidentiality of student record data are maintained." (chairs and advisors)
4 "Preparing and distributing diplomas (advisors)
#5 "Providing accurate information (advisors)
#9 "Properly evaluating and recording transfer credit." (advisors)
#10 "Prescribing and practicing ethical behavior." (advisors)
At least 65% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the effectiveness of Student Records on these questions.

Concerns and areas for improvement expressed during the presentation and in the report

Concerns about the report and the presentation itself are that the recommended guidelines for program review do not appear to have been followed. Generally, administrators and staff in the student or enrollment service area start with questions they want to ask themselves. "What do we want to know about ourselves and what will we do with the information when we get it?" Then they decide what is the best way to collect the information that will answer their questions. This is normally done by data collection, interviews, surveys, and focus groups. Another

way to collect data is to bring in consultants, as was done in this case. However, we would expect them to help answer the questions the work team generated. The report was unclear about who generated the questions/directions for the consultants and what methodology they used. Finally, when all of this information is collected, the group makes recommendations for future actions. Although the recommendation made by the consultants do appear to be meaningful, they do not appear to be made collectively by all staff. Part of the intent of the program review is to help staff see evaluation assessment as part of their role, not just the role of an outside consultant or upper level administrators. Hopefully by working through the process all team members begin to develop the skills needed to analyze and evaluate their own goal and outcomes attainment.

Another concern from the audience at the presentation was that the review was missing feedback from students or alumni. It was also suggested that getting feedback from Deans of Students and Associate Deans of Students during the study might have provided additional helpful comments. Another concerns from the audience was that the report did not begin with or address service outcomes (A few members suspected outcomes may have been confused with values and norms, which were included.) Outcomes training would be beneficial for future program reviews and accreditation reporting.

The survey conducted for the review was administered to faculty department chairs and academic advisors. The questions asked of these two constituent groups were good and provided useful feedback. At least 25% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the effectiveness of Student records in:
 Question #2 "Communicating with other individuals and departments at PCC." (faculty department chairs)
#6 "Providing timely services" (chairs and advisors)
#11 "Initiating collaborative interaction between the Student Records/Graduation Office and other individuals/departments at PCC." (chairs and advisors)
#14 "The Student Records/Graduation Office serves as a catalyst in team building with other individuals/departments at PCC." (chairs and advisors)
#15 "The Student Records/Graduation Office is at the forefront of technological advancements." (chairs and advisors)

The survey results together with the feedback gathered by the consultants informed the 33 recommendations on pages 9-13. I will not repeat those here in the response, but they are thorough and seem to align with the needs. Major

themes are enhanced communication (within the team and with students and the college community), improved procedures and documentation, better use of technology, clearer organizational structure, and opportunities for professional development and training.

Looking toward the future

The Student Records program review outlined an impressive list of recommendations and it is rewarding to see that ten months later many of the suggestions included in the report are already being addressed. Student Records is to be commended for their increasing ability to embrace change and work toward continuous improvement. Those in the review audience applaud these efforts and had the impression that this was an area definitely moving forward with a stronger sense of team and direction.

Hopefully a student satisfaction survey of Student Records is in the works or has already been completed. If so, it would be beneficial to share the results with student and enrollment service leadership as a follow-up to the program review. A survey of PCC graduates who went through commencement could also provide useful feedback. In addition to student feedback, future assessments should include more quantitative information and research of trend data and best practices.

In addition, as the team and individuals in the team make changes we hope that professional development will not just be "allowed," as indicated on page 11 of the review, but that it will be encouraged and supported.

All of the administrators who read the report and attended the review would like to thank Student Records administration and staff for their efforts and congratulate them on an excellent initial program review.

Response prepared by Diane Mulligan, Dean, Student Development, Sylvania November 12, 2009