

Austin Community College

Addendum to the 2002 Self-Study Compliance Audit Report

February 2003

The Compliance Audit Report is by nature a snapshot in time. Austin Community College's *Compliance Audit Report* reflects the state of the College at the time each Committee submitted its final section report. Since that time there have been a few changes that need to be noted to the Visiting Team.

All Sections

Mission of the College: The Austin Community College Board of Trustees recently adopted a new Vision/Mission/Values policy. The mission has remained unchanged, since the Texas Education Code prescribes it, but the vision and values statement are new. Evaluation of the previous mission statement began in 2001 shortly after the self-study began, and involved the College community in a more in-depth way. First, the President had a series of forums in Fall 2001 and early Spring 2002 to develop *A Future Vision for Austin Community College*. Then, after initial discussions of Board Policy A-1 "Mission of the College" by the Board and the College administration, an open forum with faculty, staff and students was held to continue work on the vision, mission and values of the College. This forum was well attended by a broad cross section of ACC constituencies. From this group, a smaller committee was formed to draft the new Vision/Mission/Values Policy. The Board adopted this new Policy A-1 after the second reading on October 7, 2002.

Financial Resources: ACC receives its funds from three primary sources: state funding, property taxes, and student tuition and fees. Its financial situation is complicated by several important factors: it has the lowest, capped tax rate in the State (barely one-third the State average), its tuition rates are among the highest among community colleges in the State, local tax revenues are expected to decline by 4% and State reimbursement as a percentage of the total budget continues to significantly decline. The State of Texas, like many in the nation, is experiencing funding problems which impact public education.

In December 2002, the Board of Trustees passed a resolution calling for a public referendum in May 2003. The referendum will call for two things: (1) an increase in the tax cap from five to nine cents, to be implemented gradually (from five to seven cents in FY 04, from seven to eight cents in FY05 and from eight to nine cents in FY 06) and (2) a one cent tax to offset general obligation bonds of \$99 million to be used for facilities renovation and construction.

The Master Plan: FY 2004-06, adopted by the Board in February 2003, includes detailed financial projections related to the referendum goals as well as identifies projected reductions which will be required if the referendum is not successful.

Comprehensive Master Plan: Throughout the process of conducting the Self-Study, the College also was in the process of updating the *Comprehensive Master Plan 2000-2001* that covered FY 2001– FY 2003. The College completed the new *Master Plan: FY 2004-06* in November 2002 and the Board of Trustees adopted it at the February 3, 2003 meeting. Draft versions of this document are referred to in the Compliance Audit. The final document is available on the web at <http://www3.austincc.edu/evpcss/masterplan.htm>, and a printed copy will be available in the Resource Room for the Visiting Team.

Section IV Educational Programs

In January 2003, Task Force Chair and Program Coordinator titles were changed to Department Chair for simplicity with little change in job descriptions. Associate Dean positions were eliminated and replaced with Assistant Deans who are, for the most part, responsible for resolving student problems in specific Dean areas. Both of these changes have been well received by faculty groups, and allow the College to provide better assistance when and where it is most convenient to students. These changes were announced in Fall 2002, and implementation proceeded smoothly.

Section V Library and Other Learning Resources

Library Services has had generous open hours of operation throughout the history of the College. However, due to a budget shortfall in FY 2001, causing loss of hourly funds and a lack of ability to fill some staffing table positions due to a hiring freeze in FY 2002, Library Services found it necessary to reduce hours at some campuses by one hour in the morning and one or two hours in the evening, as well as reducing some weekend hours. The change in hours started in Summer 2002 and has continued in FY 2003 as funds have not been restored and a hiring freeze still exists. The reduction in hours mostly affected three campuses, Northridge, Rio Grande and Riverside. The change in hours resulted in all six campuses being open the same hours Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., with hours still varying on weekends based on campus needs. For instance, the Northridge Campus, home of the “Weekend College,” continues to be open 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays and 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. on Sundays. Library hours are still adequate, and the extensive resources available on the Internet through the Library Services web portal continue to be available twenty-four hours a day.

Similar reductions in hours of operation of the campus-based offices of Admissions, Counseling, Advising and Financial Aid have been instituted with the start of the spring semester in January 2003. All new hours can be found posted on the web at the respective departmental web sites.

Other Events

Texas School Performance Review: In April 2002, Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander (now Carole Keeton Strayhorn), Comptroller for the State of Texas, announced that her Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) program would conduct a review of Austin Community College. After six months of work the report was released to the public at a press conference on November 27, 2002. TSPR recommended 107 ways for ACC to save more than \$15 million in gross savings over a five-year period. The largest financial

recommendation was to increase average class size to 21, which ACC exceeded in Fall 2002. ACC has already implemented many other recommendations from the Comptroller and sees her report as a valuable resource. The report also listed 59 commendations for best practices found at ACC. The 560-page report is available on the Comptroller's web site at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/tspr/acc/>. In addition, a copy of the report will be available in the Resource Room for the Visiting Team.

Key Personnel Changes: During the Self-Study process, three associate vice presidents resigned to accept other positions outside ACC. Luckily, for the purposes of the self-study, these people left ACC after making significant contributions to the Compliance Audit. They included:

- Dr. Martha Oburn, AVP, Office of Institutional Effectiveness—her replacement, Dr. Baba Adam, started work on February 3, 2003.
- Dr. Maggie Culp, AVP, Retention and Student Services—her replacement, Dr. Kathleen Christiansen started work on February 3, 2003.
- Dr. Alan Rasco, AVP, Workforce Education—Donetta Goodall, AVP, Academic Transfer Programs, is serving as Interim AVP, Workforce Education until the position is filled.

ACC also hired a new Vice President for Business Services in May 2002, Ben Ferrell.

Action Taken on Recommendations from the Compliance Committees

4.2.1.3 ACC must establish an administrative rule outlining the process for coordination of separate or special program admission requirements.

Action: The College has determined that the responsibility for coordination of separate or special program admission requirements should rest with the Director of Admissions. Furthermore, wording to this effect has been added to the existing Administrative Rule 1.03.003, "Admission." Both the Student Services Council and the Academic and Campus Affairs Council are reviewing the changes to the "Admission" Rule at their February 2003 meetings. After their review, the revised Admission Rule will be sent to the President of the College for final approval.

Responsibility: Executive Vice President (EVP) for Academic and Campus Affairs; Associate Vice President (AVP) of Retention and Student Services; Director of Admissions

4.2.1.7 Student Services Council must review the admission policy every two years and document that review.

Action: The College has determined that the responsibility for reviewing the Administrative Rule on "Admission" should rest with the Academic and Campus Affairs Council rather than the Student Services Council. To this end, the "Admission" Administrative Rule has been revised to indicate that this responsibility rests with the Academic Council. Furthermore the "Functions" of the Academic Council have been

amended to indicate that it “Reviews all appropriate administrative rules annually.” Documentation of this review will be evident in Council minutes. Both the Student Services Council and the Academic and Campus Affairs Council are reviewing the recommended changes to the Admission Rule and the list of “Functions” for their council at their February 2003 meetings. After their review, the changes to the “Admission” Rule will be forwarded to the President of the College for final approval.

Responsibility: EVP for Academic and Campus Affairs; AVP of Retention and Student Services; Director of Admissions

4.2.1.16 ACC must review transfer student transcripts prior to the end of the first semester in which they are enrolled.

Action: In early 2002, due to College budget constraints, a newly created transcript evaluator position was eliminated before it could be filled. Additionally, replacement of staff in positions that were vacated due to retirement was delayed due to the hiring freeze that was implemented at ACC. These actions impacted the ability of the remaining staff to maintain the previous pace of transcript evaluations. In May 2002 one employee went on maternity leave, with the College then having only one evaluator position staffed. However, the Admissions Office was able to prioritize and expedite the posting of credits for several groups of students, to minimize the evaluation time when time was an issue for the student by doing the following:

- Financial aid and veteran’s benefits students complete a priority request form or are referred by the financial aid offices for priority evaluation.
- Students who are meeting with an advisor or counselor to determine Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) compliance based on transfer credit receive immediate evaluation assistance during an advising session. Each campus has an assigned evaluator, who can be called to assist with individual student evaluations on the spot.
- Students who are meeting with an academic advisor as a part of a degree audit process are routed through the graduation office to staff that are trained to evaluate transcripts, for a priority evaluation.

These measures have worked well. In addition, a new transcript reviewer was hired December 2002 and another Reviewer is returning from maternity leave March 2003. The College expects to be caught up with evaluating the backlog of transcripts by December 2003.

Responsibility: AVP of Retention and Student Services; Director of Admissions

4.7.2 ACC must provide a location with an adequate number of fireproof cabinets or a fireproof vault for the Admission and Records Department to store current student records.

ACC also must provide fireproof cabinets for the Continuing Education Department student records.

Action: The College is renovating space on the first floor of the Highland Business Center for the Academic Records Department. A fireproof room is part of this construction. The Department and the student records should be moved into the space by the end of February 2003. The Continuing Education Department will move its student records into file cabinets kept in the fireproof room at the same time.

Responsibility: AVP of Facilities and Operations; AVP of Retention and Student Services; Director of Admissions; Dean of Continuing Education

4.8.0 In order to provide evidence that the College has employed qualified faculty members, Human Resources must develop and implement an effective procedure for processing and maintaining official transcripts in a timely manner.

Action: A committee was formed and met February 11, 2003 to begin development of a process that will track transcripts of potential and actual employees from the time they arrive at ACC.

Responsibility: AVP of Human Resources; AVP of Academic Programs

4.8.1.3/4.8.1.4 The Office of Human Resources must maintain access to information on accredited and not-accredited institutions.

The Office of Human Resources must include a statement about the availability of this information in the *Guidelines for Hiring Full-Time Faculty* and the *Guidelines for Hiring Adjunct Faculty*.

Action: The *Guidelines for Hiring Full-Time Faculty* and the *Guidelines for Hiring Adjunct Faculty* are being amended. They will include a statement that it is the responsibility of the Chair of the Hiring Committee to confirm the accreditation status through the appropriate regional accrediting entity.

Responsibility: AVP of Human Resources