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**September 12, 2007**

**Memo to: College Presidents, Chief Instructional Officers,  
Accreditation Liaison Officers**

**From: Barbara Beno, President**

**Subject: Attached Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness**

I am pleased to send you a new “Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness” that has been developed by the Commission for use by colleges in doing self-assessment, by teams examining college adherence to the Standards of Accreditation, and by the Commission in evaluating institutions. The purpose of the rubric is to provide some common language that can be used to describe a college’s status *vis-à-vis* full adherence to the standards, as well as to provide a developmental framework for understanding each institution’s actions toward achieving full compliance with standards. The Commission hopes the rubric will be a useful tool for colleges and evaluators.

For more than a decade, the Commission’s Standards of Accreditation have required institutions to engage in systematic and regular program review as well as short and long-term planning and resource allocation processes that support the improvement of institutional and educational effectiveness. The 2002 Standards of Accreditation have added student learning outcomes assessment and improvement as important components to the required institutional processes of evaluation, planning and improvement.

As teams and the Commission evaluate institutional and educational effectiveness, these three areas – program review, the use of data and analyses to inform institutional planning and improvement, and the assessment of student learning – consistently emerge as areas in which institutions’ seem to need additional guidance. The Commission, colleges, and teams have all indicated they need a device other than pure narrative for understanding and describing how well colleges have done in reaching full compliance with the standards. In the past, self study reports and team reports have reflected the authors’ unique efforts to find appropriate summative descriptive terms to best communicate each institution’s status. This rubric provides for greater consistency in those descriptive narratives.

It is important to note the sample behaviors described in each text box of the rubric are *not* new criteria or standards by which an institution will be evaluated, but are rather examples of behavior that, if characteristic of an institution, would indicate its stage of implementation of the standards. College leaders may find the rubric helpful in assessing what additional efforts institutions should undertake to achieve full compliance with the Standards of Accreditation.

Finally, institutions and teams should be aware that the Commission expects that institutions be at the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level in Program Review of academic programs (including all educational services). Many institutions have not developed sustained processes for evaluating administrative services, but all should be above the Awareness level in these efforts. The Commission also expects that institutions be at the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level in Planning. The Commission further expects that institutions be at the Development level or above in Student Learning Outcomes, since these are the *newest requirements* included in the Standards of Accreditation. When it adopted the 2002 Standards, the Commission stated it anticipated institutions would need eight to ten years to come into full compliance with the new standards on student learning outcomes assessment and improvement. Of course, the ultimate goal is for institutions to achieve the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level in all three areas.

I hope that this rubric is helpful to you in your leadership work at your campus. The Commission welcomes any ideas for improving this rubric or its use to enhance institutional effectiveness.

BAB

Attachment: Rubric

**Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges**  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

**Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness – Part I: Program Review**

(See attached instructions on how to use this rubric.)

<b>Levels of Implementation</b>	<b>Characteristics of Institutional Effectiveness in Program Review</b> <i>(Sample institutional behaviors)</i>
<b>Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is preliminary investigative dialogue at the institution or within some departments about what data or process should be used for program review.</li> <li>• There is recognition of existing practices and models in program review that make use of institutional research.</li> <li>• There is exploration of program review models by various departments or individuals.</li> <li>• The college is implementing pilot program review models in a few programs/operational units.</li> </ul>
<b>Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program review is embedded in practice across the institution using qualitative and quantitative data to improve program effectiveness.</li> <li>• Dialogue about the results of program review is evident within the program as part of discussion of program effectiveness.</li> <li>• Leadership groups throughout the institution accept responsibility for program review framework development (Senate, Admin. Etc.)</li> <li>• Appropriate resources are allocated to conducting program review of meaningful quality.</li> <li>• Development of a framework for linking results of program review to planning for improvement.</li> <li>• Development of a framework to align results of program review to resource allocation.</li> </ul>
<b>Proficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program review processes are in place and implemented regularly.</li> <li>• Results of all program review are integrated into institution- wide planning for improvement and informed decision-making.</li> <li>• The program review framework is established and implemented.</li> <li>• Dialogue about the results of all program reviews is evident throughout the institution as part of discussion of institutional effectiveness.</li> <li>• Results of program review are clearly and consistently linked to institutional planning processes and resource allocation processes; college can demonstrate or provide specific examples.</li> <li>• The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its program review processes in supporting and improving student achievement and student learning outcomes.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program review processes are ongoing, systematic and used to assess and improve student learning and achievement.</li> <li>• The institution reviews and refines its program review processes to improve institutional effectiveness.</li> <li>• The results of program review are used to continually refine and improve program practices resulting in appropriate improvements in student achievement and learning.</li> </ul>

