January 31, 2008

Dr. Angela Chaillé Meixell  
Chancellor  
Windward Community College  
45-720 Keahala Road  
Kaneohe, HI 96744  

Dear Chancellor Meixell:  

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on January 9-11, 2008, reviewed the Progress Report submitted by the Windward Community College and the report of the evaluation team which visited on Tuesday, November 13, 2007. The Commission took action to accept the report, with a requirement that the Windward Community College complete a Progress Report.

The Commission asks that a Progress Report be submitted by March 15, 2009. The Progress Report should demonstrate the institution’s resolution of the recommendations and concerns as noted below:

**Recommendation 1:** To evaluate institutional effectiveness, the college should continue to improve its strategic planning processes by developing measurable performance indicators for setting institutional goals and strategic directions. (Standard I.B.7)

**Recommendation 5:** The team recommends, to ensure appropriate participation and input, that the college refine its current governance structure policies by including written definitions of the roles and responsibilities for all constituent groups and formalize processes and structures for clear, effective communication and reporting relationships. In addition, the college should implement an annual evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of leaders and decision making which leads to institutional improvements. (Standard IV.A.1, A.2, A.3, A.5)

I also wish to inform you that under U.S. Department of Education regulations, institutions out of compliance with standards or on sanction are expected to correct deficiencies within a two-year period or the Commission must take action to terminate accreditation. The Commission has extended the two-year deadline for resolution of these recommendations for good cause.
Windward Community College is notified that these two recommendations were first noted by the Commission in January 2007 (as a result of the Comprehensive visit in October 2006). Therefore these issues must be resolved by the time of the required Progress Report in March 2009.

I have previously sent you a copy of the evaluation team report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires that you give the report and this letter appropriate dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college report. This group should include the Vice President for Community Colleges of the University of Hawai‘i, campus leadership, and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that all reports be made available to students and the public. Placing copies in the college library can accomplish this. The Progress Report will become part of the accreditation history of the college and should be used in preparing for the next comprehensive evaluation.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express continuing interest in the institution’s educational programs and services. Professional self-regulation is the most effective means of assuring integrity, effectiveness and quality.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. David McClain, President, University of Hawai‘i
Dr. John F. Morton, Vice President for Community Colleges
Mr. Paul R. Field, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Mr. Michael Rota, Associate Vice President
Ms. Kitty Lagareta, Chair, Board of Regents, University of Hawai‘i
Dr. Marie Smith, Team Chair
Evaluation Team Members
PROGRESS VISIT REPORT

WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

45-720 Kea'ahala Road
Kane’ohe, Hawai’i 96744

A Confidential Report Prepared for
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited

Windward Community College
on
November 13, 2007

Sherrill L. Amador, Ed.D., Chair
Geraldine M. Perri, Ph.D.
Windward Community College  
Progress Visit Team Report  

November 13, 2007

Introduction

At its January 2007 meeting, the Commission reviewed the institutional self study report and the report of the evaluation team which visited Windward Community College on October 23-26, 2006. The Commission took action to remove Warning status and reaffirm accreditation with a requirement that the college complete a Progress Report by October 15, 2007, on five recommendations followed by a visit of Commission representatives. The progress report visit was conducted by Dr. Sherrill L. Amador and Dr. Geraldine M. Perri on November 13, 2007. The purpose of the visit was to evaluate the college’s progress report and the evidence provided to determine if sufficient progress had been made since the October 2006 comprehensive evaluation team visit.

The team received the Windward Community College Progress Report in time for the visit. The team commends the college for its preparation for the visit. During the planning of visits by the Commission the actual date (within a three-day window of one week) was changed twice, and unfortunately the college did not learn of the final date change for the visit until the team chair and accreditation liaison officer recognized the conflict just four days before the visit and on a three day holiday for the college. The preparation needed to occur for the visit on Tuesday, instead of Thursday for which the college had originally planned. The ALO and the chair had already agreed to a schedule, so the college adjusted from the planned Thursday to a Tuesday visit with special effort that resulted in a well-coordinated visit for the team.

The team met with the Chancellor, Chancellor’s Executive Committee, Dean of Student Services, interim Dean of Instruction, two interim Assistant Deans of Instruction, Director of Vocational and Community Education, Institutional Researcher, SLO Coordinator, and representatives from the Student Senate, Faculty Senate Chairs, Classified Staff, Budget Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Achieving the Dream Group, Institutional Researcher’s Team, and Institutional Effectiveness Committee. The team held an open forum and 18 people were present.

Background

Windward College is one of seven colleges within the University of Hawaii System and has one of the smallest student populations. The college offers a
liberal arts transfer degree and offers noncredit instruction mainly at its Employment Training Center located at Honolulu College. Prior to the college’s comprehensive visit in October 2006, the college had recommendations surrounding issues of institutional effectiveness, program review, and educational planning leading to resource allocation, which were identified in the 2000 comprehensive visit. A focused midterm progress report was required by the Commission in October 2003 and accepted in January 2004 with a requirement for a progress report in October 2004. In addition, the UH System was experiencing leadership problems and was out of compliance on program reviews. The college was placed on Warning in January 2005 for the same issues identified in 2000 and remained on Warning until the Commission decision to remove Warning in January 2007.

The team found evidence that the college had begun to address its program review deficiencies at the same time the UH System has addressed them. The System provided templates and data for the college as well as the institutional researcher has developed local templates and provided assistance to faculty and staff as they prepared their program reviews. A complete cycle of all programs completing full program reviews which inform plans and lead to resource allocation has not been experienced by the college to date. The college was in the final preparation of its annual department assessment reports which were due December 1 to and required by the Community College System Office. The researcher indicated to the team that the college is still working on developing measures for institutional effectiveness. He attends the Strategic Planning Committee on an ad hoc as needed basis. There was a suggestion made by a prior visiting team in 2005 that the institutional research should be a permanent member of the SPC to assist the college in developing a culture of evidence as it does its institutional work. However, he is currently working with the “expanded” Strategic Planning Committee, which is tasked with writing the new Strategic Plan. The team observed that the college is still struggling with the link between integrated planning leading to resource allocation and the evaluation component to measure institutional effectiveness. The team determined that the college is still in the awareness and early development stage of strategic and educational planning (Recommendation 1); however, it has been fully engaged in developing SLOs and incorporating them into program reviews and has completed one cycle of assessment of SLOs for some courses and programs (Recommendation 2).

The college has had recent successes with its funding for construction of the Library/Learning Resources Center; and operational funding of $1.3 million (two year budget period) for 4 FTE and additional services, contracts, and equipment.

College Responses to the 2006 Commission Recommendations

The following are the Commission’s five recommendations from the 2006 comprehensive self study and evaluation team report and this team’s assessment of progress at Windward College.
Recommendation 1: To evaluate institutional effectiveness, the college should continue to improve its strategic planning processes by developing measurable performance indicators for setting institutional goals and strategic directions. (Standard I.B.7)

As outlined in the Windward College’s Progress Report and verified by the team, the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) spent its nine meetings from November 2006 through May 2007 working on reforming the committee and using the its current planning document to update accomplishments, set new directions and priorities, discuss format. Then in May, the agenda was labeled “planning to plan,” the SPC decided to hire a consultant to help the college with strategic planning. The consultant visited in July and again in October 2007. From interviews with members of the administrative team and SPC, it appeared that sessions with the consultant have led to candid discussions on the subject of strategic planning. These sessions have provided some clarification as to the typical elements usually found in a strategic plan and how they differ from operational activities which are routine.

While the college has been actively engaged in exploring the initial steps in developing a strategic plan, there is still some confusion as to the overall cycle of the planning process, its connection to the budget process and the charge of various college committees as they relate to the college’s overall strategic plan, departmental plans and the budget allocation process. Members of the administrative team and SPC appeared most willing to assist the college in establishing and implementing a strategic plan, but they did express a need for further clarification and understanding of the strategic planning process and its link to the budget allocation process. As a result of the visit, the college learned that its current plan was not strategic but a method to prioritize budget requests and not set the direction of the college.

The team viewed several draft documents that were being developed by subgroups from SPC. These documents had not been viewed or approved by SPC or provided by the SLO as resource documents. It was evident to the team that the individuals and groups developing the documents had not been given clear directions as to the needed outcomes, which does cause miscommunication and at times frustration on what actually needs to be done by staff. And it appeared they wanted the team’s feedback on what they were doing. One document was a preliminary draft of a 2008-2015 strategic plan that used the System goals for the foundation of the college’s working objectives. It contained measures of accomplishment and action strategies; however, the team noted that only a few measures of accomplishment were data based and the actions appeared in many cases to be too general to provide the needed accountability of what specific action should take place to accomplish the objective. The document did not have stated measures for evaluating institutional effectiveness. Another document, which was dated the same day of the visit, was the process that will be used for
integrated planning. The team noted that the process stated provides for annual unit reports to be submitted both to SPC and the Budget Committee at the same time. This draft process does not reflect planning leads to resource resources. The team observed during discussion with the Budget Committee members, they were still unclear how the college planning process will inform Budget Committee work, and where actual priorities will be determined.

The college has hired a Director of Planning and Program Evaluation who will begin in early December. The Chancellor indicated to the team the director will have responsibility for coordinating all planning efforts. The Chancellor also indicated that by March 31 the college should have a new strategic plan and other college plans will be based on the strategic plan.

Conclusion: The college has not met this recommendation. It was evident to the team that the college had just begun to develop a planning process and a strategic plan that will lead to resource allocation. Prior practices were not strategic nor had measurable results because the planning practices were a method to prioritize and justify budget needs based primarily on wants, not a strategic direction. The college has not developed a set of measures to determine its institutional effectiveness nor has it defined how its plans and processes relate to the research function and accountability measures.

Recommendation 2: To improve student learning and success, the team recommends that the college complete its cycle of program reviews and incorporates into these program reviews the assessment of SLOs at course, and program and degree levels. (Standard II.A.1.c)

Windward Community College is a liberal arts college, which offers two degree programs – the Associate in Arts degree and the Associate Degree in Technical Studies, which is currently in the process of being phased out. In addition, the college offers several Academic Subject Certificates (ASC). The college has noted a change in regard to the program review of Academic Subject Certificates. The college will no longer assess ASC programs as stand-alone programs, but will begin the assessment of courses within these certificates as part of the annual department review process.

In 2006, the college completed one cycle of program review for the Associate in Arts Degree. In the program review document the college delineated ten Student Learning Outcomes for the AA degree. Since the 2006 program review and the team visit of October 2006, an Annual Program Review of the AA degree was completed in November 2007. The “Analysis of the Program” section of the report, which addresses program weaknesses, indicates the following: “There remains a question of the appropriateness of the present SLOs. A suggestion has been made that they be more global, across the curriculum, and more closely linked to the mission statement.” The Action Plan section of the Annual Program Review for the AA degree notes seven goals. One goal focuses on SLOs:
“Develop procedures to determine assessment outcomes.” Appendix A of the Annual Program Review includes a comprehensive outline of the SLOs for the degree with a grid indicating the extent to which each course of each discipline meets an SLO(s).

The college has made considerable progress in identifying SLOs at the course level with 94% of the courses having SLOs. The college has developed a 5 year-cycle for the assessment of SLOs with each discipline assessing 20% of its courses annually and is currently in the 2nd year of SLO assessment. Faculty and administrators have attended workshops conducted by both external and internal experts on the development and assessment of SLOs. Most recently, as part of the fall 2007 Convocation, faculty had the opportunity to discuss the assessment of SLOs and plan for instructional changes. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) has taken a lead role in the college with regard to SLOs. The chair of the IEC has been actively tracking progress made by departments in the development and assessment of SLOs. A binder containing a log and copy of every course with SLOs is on file along with documentation of all disciplines which have completed the initial stages of SLO assessment. The college notes that course SLO assessment results have led to course modifications in an effort to improve learning outcomes.

The Employment Training Center offers short-term, non-credit courses of study leading to entry-level jobs. The college has identified competencies for 100% of its non-credit courses and is developing mechanisms for the assessment of these competencies. The programs offered by the ETC are included in the college's cycle of program review. In addition, each of the programs of ETC completes an annual assessment.

Conclusion: The college has made considerable progress on the development of SLOs at the course level and at its program level and has incorporated SLOs into its program review process. A review of program review documents from 2006, validates the completion of SLO development with limited assessment of SLOs with several programs noting that additional guidance or direction from IEC is needed. A review of Annual Program Reviews completed in November 2007, indicates more progress in the assessment phase of SLOs.

The college is encouraged to continue its efforts to train faculty on the assessment of SLOs and to ensure that the incorporation of SLOs into courses, programs and departments is tied to the college’s planning process. The IEC is to be commended for their efforts to date and is encouraged to continue its work in advancing the college in the assessment phase of SLOs. Additionally, the IEC is encouraged to develop mechanisms to link the assessment of SLOs to course and program modification and overall departmental and institutional planning. The college has met this recommendation.
Recommendation 3: The college should define the at-risk population, develop and implement specific strategies for addressing the needs of the at-risk population, and create mechanisms for the continuous assessment and improvement of services to this population. (Standard II.B.3.e)

The college has identified its at-risk student populations and is in the process of implementing specific strategies to address the needs of each at-risk group. The college provided evidence that data was analyzed to determine the at-risk populations of the institution.

To better prepare incoming high school students for the transition to college, a mandatory 3-hour orientation workshop has been instituted. Students are not able to register unless they have completed this workshop. To date, over 300 students have completed the workshop. The college conducted post-orientation evaluations consisting of ten questions. The questions were aimed at assessing the usefulness of the sessions and whether students felt they had a better understanding of the college experience, their role in college, and whether students felt more confident about their next steps in entering college. The college plans on conducting a quantitative assessment of the high school orientation workshop strategy offered to high school graduates of the class of 2007 to determine if there is an increase in student retention and persistence as compared with the fall 2006 cohort.

In addition to this compulsory new student orientation, new students are also contacted during their first semester by the peer mentors who monitor students for difficulty. Trained peer mentors notify counselors of any students who are experiencing difficulties. The college notes that this phase of the high school orientation initiative is rather informal and is being further developed.

To address the needs of first-generation students and students with disabilities, the college applied for a renewal of its Student Support Services grant through the U.S. Department of Education. This granted has been successfully renewed for a 5-year period. The Student Support Services program, which was established in the late seventies, provides special services ranging from tutoring, intensive counseling, a computer lab and a full-time general counselor. As a means of institutionalizing the various elements of the Student Support Services Program, the college has recently hired a full-time counselor specifically dedicated to addressing the needs of the disabled student cohort.

The college also has identified as an at-risk population those students with a G.P.A. below 2.0. The college provides intervention strategies for this cohort which include mandatory advisement, twice monthly student success workshops, and a three-tiered academic warning policy allowing for consistency.

The college has recently become involved with the Achieve the Dream (AtD) initiative. The AtD effort calls for the college to routinely examine data on student
achievement, make decisions predicated on that data, address achievement gaps, monitor progress, and broadly disseminate its findings. The college provided a detailed timeline for the Achieve the Dream strategy which was started in summer 2007 with broad promotion of the initiative to all college constituent groups. In the fall 2007 semester, the college introduced the AtD initiative at Convocation. As well, during the fall semester, the college will gather student data, develop focus groups based on the data, develop system priorities, diagnose causes, and examine existing college efforts. In spring 2008, the college will set priorities and develop strategies to be implemented in fall 2008, followed by evaluation and institutionalization in fall 2009.

**Conclusion:** The college has made considerable progress in its efforts to identify its at-risk student populations and is beginning to identify and implement strategies to address the needs of these “gap” populations. Through an analysis of research data, the college has verified its student cohorts which are at-risk. The measures taken to support high school students transitioning to college are commendable. The college has been proactive in developing a new orientation workshop for its high school students.

The team found the college dedicated to addressing its first-generation and disabled student cohort through the comprehensive range of support services provided by the Student Support Services grant. In addition to the grant, the college is working to institutionalize various support services through the hiring of a full-time counselor for disabled students. To support the academic persistence and retention of its at-risk populations, the college, as part of a University of Hawaii initiative, has become an Achieve the Dream (AtD) college. Through this effort, the college is working to identify and track the progress of its at-risk student population while identifying and implementing strategies aimed at enhancing the persistence and retention of this cohort. The college has met this recommendation.

**Recommendation 4:** In the interest of improvement beyond the standard, the college should act diligently to secure funding which will ensure the construction of the proposed future Library facility. (Standard II.C.1.a)

In May after extensive lobbying by the college staff, families, and local community members throughout spring 2007, the Hawaii State Legislature in appropriated $41,579,000 for the new Library/Learning Resources Center. The college is in the design phase of the project and construction is planned for 2009.

**Conclusion:** The college has met this recommendation.

**Recommendation 5:** The team recommends, to ensure appropriate participation and input, that the college refine its current governance structure policies by including written definitions of the roles and responsibilities for all constituent groups and formalize processes and
structures for clear, effective communication and reporting relationships. In addition, the college should implement an annual evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of leaders and decision making which leads to institutional improvements. (Standard IV.A.1, A.2, A.3, A.5)

The college has spent the past year defining and refining its governance structures and policies. Flow charts have been created to detail decision-making paths and reporting relationships. Written definitions of the roles and responsibilities for all constituent groups in governance can now be found in one document, “College Committees and Councils.” These documents were reviewed by the college groups in October and finalized. They are posted on the college’s website. It is suggested that the college remain diligent in posting both agendas and minutes of all committees and councils in a timely manner. The team suggests that the method for selecting members to the committees and councils be clearly defined, so that the same people who volunteer are the only ones who participate in governance.

The college has not determined how it will evaluate the effectiveness of the governance structure and policies. The UH System is also working on a common evaluation methodology to assess the effectiveness of leadership and decision making which leads to institutional improvement. The System does have in place a “360 degree performance assessment” for executive leadership, but since these are personnel evaluations they are not shared publicly. Clearly, the college needs to develop its own criteria and methodology to determine constituent satisfaction of the new structure, and then determine who will use the information to make the necessary improvements for the future.

To improve campus-wide communication, it was decided to publish a monthly bulletin to keep faculty and staff inform of issues and events. A faculty member has volunteered to take on this task with assigned time to complete it.

Conclusion: The college has partially met this recommendation. The college has refined its governance structures and policies, but the evaluation component of this recommendation still needs to be completed. The college needs to determine whether the structures and policies developed and implemented are effective and lead to institutional improvement over time. Also, one group needs to be identified as the monitor of the evaluation process which has the responsibility to make recommendations based on what is learned from that evaluation.