

# **Columbia Basin College**

**Pasco, Washington**

**Year Seven Peer Evaluation**

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*A confidential peer-evaluation report prepared for the  
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities*

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## **Introduction**

Columbia Basin College (CBC) is a rural, public, two-year community college located in Pasco and Richland, Washington. CBC serves Franklin and Benton counties with the majority of the population living in the Tri-cities area (Kennewick, Pasco and Richland). CBC's demographics have changed dramatically over the past 54 years. The Franklin County campus serves a high proportion of Hispanic students and is designated as a Title V-Hispanic Serving Institution. CBC recently received approval to award four-year degrees. The college is governed by the Policy Governance Model, by which the Board of Trustees have indentified the six End States and delegated the Means for achieving them to the President.

Columbia Basin College agreed in 2008/09 to step forward and serve as one of four pilot institutions through the standards revision with NWCCU. CBC has worked at an accelerated "7-year cycle," by compressing their work into a two-year timeframe. In joining the pilot process, CBC submitted reports for years 1 and 5 and had site visit teams in years 3 and 7. This visit concludes the compressed 7-year cycle of evaluation. The following report reflects the evaluation team's review of CBC's performance towards the new standards and the new format for the new standards. The Evaluation Team Report to the Commission includes the analysis of Standards 1A, 1B, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 5A, and 5B as well as an evaluation of CBC on Eligibility Requirements 22, 23, and 24, per the *2010 Handbook for Evaluators* (pilot evaluation team draft).

Prior to the campus visit, evaluators reviewed materials (Year Seven Report, appendices, catalog/addendum, and online supplementary materials). The site visit was conducted on October 25-27, 2010. Evaluators conducted interviews, reviewed evidence provided by CBC in the work room/online, and visited the branch campus in Richland.

The college provided vital evidence documents in the workroom and via the Internet. Upon request additional documents were provided by staff during interviews and/or delivered to the workroom in a timely manner. CBC students, staff and faculty were candid in their responses and feedback to evaluators. Exceptional support was provided for evaluators in all areas (e.g., technology, scheduling, food, printing and directions to meeting locations).

The evaluation team's review of the Year Seven Report was positive. CBC provided the evaluation team with candid and honest reporting. Overall the report was organized and well written. This is especially important due to the evolving nature of the condensed reporting cycle of a pilot institution.

## **Assessment of Institution's Self-Evaluation Report and Support Materials**

Columbia Basin College provided the Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report, 2009-11 Catalog and Catalog Addendum, and Fall 2010 Class Schedule for review prior to the site visit. Numerous exhibits (college information, policies and procedures, planning documents, end state monitoring reports, etc.) were available for review in the committee room during the visit. Moreover, college personnel were very responsive to onsite requests from evaluators for additional material.

The Evaluation Committee found the self-evaluation and support materials to be thorough and well-written, providing a good sense of the standing of CBC relative to the standards under review. It was noted the college had elected to modify its full self-evaluation report, Standards 1 through 5, to reflect the updated NWCCU comprehensive report structure (rather than follow separate guidelines initially provided to pilot institutions). There was good use of references and tables, and the inclusion of bookmarks and web links in the PDF document allowed for convenient navigation of the material. In places, it was felt as though full context was not provided, and minor inconsistencies across sections of the report were noted. Overall, however, the self-evaluation and support materials were determined by the committee to be of high-quality, particularly in view of the compressed time frame the college faced as a pilot institution.

### **Brief summary of methods used to verify contents of the institution's self-evaluation report**

The evaluation team utilized data from the self-study and Internet data and documents prior to the visit. In preparation to the visit, CBC's liaison assisted the evaluators with scheduling interviews and providing additional resources as requested.

The on-site workroom provided the evaluation team with documentation and hard-copy resources. Additional verification was done through interviews and group meetings. Evaluators met with over 100 students, faculty and staff during the site visit. Key groups and individuals were interviewed for the purpose of diving deeper into core theme areas. Furthermore, members of the evaluation team met with faculty, students and staff in open forums to address key questions regarding the core themes and standards for a year seven evaluation. The Evaluation Team was impressed at the open forums with the highly engaged group of students, and faculty and staff who consistently shared their strong commitment to the College's mission and focus on student success.

## **Institutional Planning**

### **Report on Standard 3.A**

Columbia Basin College utilizes a Carver Governance model and has worked to integrate the Accreditation Core Themes into the institutional planning process. CBC has identified themes with defined end statements, Goals that cover the broad domain for a theme, prescribed Indicators of Performance, and recorded Desired Outcomes and a Rationale for the inclusion of the particular set of indicators selected.

The systematic planning process for improving CBC's effectiveness in the long-term includes: *Environmental Scan* of external social, education, technological, economic, demographic and political trends; *Statement of Mission* defining the major areas of service the college provides; *Statement of Vision* focused on the aspirations of performance the college aspires to achieve; *Values* that guide the college in the focused areas of emphasis; *Strategy* that outlines the concerted approach taken to accomplish the Mission and Values; a set of three to five year *Strategic Goals*; and *Action Plans* providing details for achieving desired outcomes.

The college planning process allows input from a broad range of constituent groups including the Board of Trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, students and community members. CBC's Board of Trustees closed the loop in the planning process and reviewed the Mission and Core Theme indicators in an August 2010 retreat. Data and summary reports were provided to the Board of Trustees with an opportunity to evaluate the fulfillment of CBC's mission.

The process and structure for institution-wide planning has been delineated in the self-study. Evaluators acknowledge that CBC is facing severe funding reductions at the state level. This funding set back will likely limit the ability of CBC to further demonstrate mission fulfillment in the next budgeting cycle.

The Institution planning includes an emergency preparedness and contingency plan for recovery and continuity of operations should catastrophic events occur. Over 120 staff at CBC have been trained on how to implement the Emergency Response plan should a catastrophe strike. In addition, signage and emergency response resources are clearly available and visible to the campus community. The Evaluation Team compliments Columbia Basin College for their assessment and planning for emergency response (3.A.5).

## **Evaluation of Core Themes**

### **Report on Eligibility Requirements 22 and 23**

#### **22. Student Achievement**

CBC has identified student learning outcomes at the institution level, degree/program level and course level. The college-wide learning outcomes, as well as program/degree outcomes, are published in the catalog and course outcomes are included on class syllabi. The college uses a database software program to crosswalk course outcomes with college-wide outcomes. The database also helps faculty track outcomes assessment, record benchmark levels of student achievement, and document areas requiring improvements. As new programs and courses are developed, a curriculum committee reviews department plans and ensures that course and program outcomes are identified and a plan for assessment is in place.

Evaluators found regular, inclusive, and systematic assessment of learning outcomes across many areas of the college. However, identification and documentation of plans for improvement are less consistent. Plans for change in some courses were clear. Others were not. Further information about student learning outcomes assessment can be found in the core themes sections.

#### **23. Institutional Effectiveness**

CBC has a systematic process for institutional effectiveness and uses the process in determining the extent to which it is fulfilling its mission. Within the discussion of each of the core themes, evaluators identify the places where institutional effectiveness processes are used. Standard Five includes comments about the overall institutional effectiveness process.

## **Report on Core Themes Standards: 3.B Planning, 4.A Assessment, and 4.B Improvement**

### **ACCESS CORE THEME**

#### **3.B Planning**

The access core theme identified three primary goals: increasing enrollment; reasonable progress towards degree completion, with an emphasis on equalizing degree attainment for minority students; and effective support services designed to eliminate barriers to access and success. The access theme itself clearly aligns with the intent of the institutional mission and end states, as well as with limited aspects of CBC's strategic plan. Additionally, the access goals themselves reflect a commitment to student access and success, evident in the variety of entry services as well as post-admission support services, and tie back to results from stakeholder's analysis, environmental scan trends and other elements feeding the institution's strategic plan.

The development of the access theme and its goals appears to have been completed through a very centralized approach, with limited input from key stakeholders. While this approach is helpful given the short timeline in which this institution had to respond, information gathered during on-site interviews indicate a lack of depth of understanding of this theme across a larger spectrum of the institution, which may inhibit how programs and their components are connected to this theme. That said, a significant number of new initiatives aimed at attracting new students (access goal a), retaining current students (access goal b) and creating efficient and effective services (access goal c) have been put into place over the past several years, and have been implemented in response to available assessment metrics and student data. Among these include moving the SOAR program to a fully online component, expanding outreach efforts in target high schools, and creation of the New Student Center, among others. Additionally, the Student Services Division has an assessment plan, including outcomes, measurements, assessment goals, reporting timeline and action plan for key program areas, and several student services areas mentioned active use of TracDAT and its effectiveness of tracking assessment information. However, few individuals were able to tie the development of or changes to programs and services directly back to the core theme as the reason for making the change, indicating a disconnect between institutional themes and department or program level goals.

Following the measurement model adopted by the college, the access core theme includes three to four indicators for each goal, each of which are primarily affected by the programs and services available through the Student Services and Diversity and Outreach divisions. CBC was able to draw on data currently utilized in a variety of state reports, as well as the results of internal (CBC Student Survey) and national (Community College Survey of Student Engagement) survey instruments to provide the data supporting the access indicators. At the theme and indicator levels, the predominant compilation and interpretation of data is done via CBC's institutional research office, who then disseminates it to the Vice President for Student Services (VPSS) or Vice President for Diversity and Outreach (VPDO). Rankings are assigned to each indicator and then outtakes from that data (Strengths, Weaknesses and Improvement Actions; CBC Accreditation Report, September 2010, page 5-6) are derived predominantly by

the VPSS or VPDO, with some assistance from other dean- or director-level administrative staff. In a simplified explanation, the institution:

- Chose access as a theme to assess;
- Developed goals and indicators associated with the theme;
- Measured progress towards those goals (indicator data)
- Analyzed the data (strengths and weaknesses); and
- Indicated intended next steps (improvement actions).

Some efforts have begun to implement the improvement actions and CBC is encouraged to continue these efforts by assessing the outcomes of the new directions. One program in particular should be complimented in their informal use of a full assessment cycle, even though it was not explicitly mentioned as an “improvement action”, and that is the New Student Center’s recent shift of offering SOAR in an in person format to online. This shift was done in response to student satisfaction surveys with the program and plans are in place to assess the effectiveness of this change. This is a demonstration of how a full planning cycle can be used to implement changes at the programmatic level.

#### **4.A Assessment**

In reviewing the various aspects involved with the access core theme, ample evidence exists of ongoing systematic collection of meaningful data, conducted primarily through the Office of Institutional Research. This includes a variety of longitudinal data elements used to measure progress towards most indicators, and the use of regular surveys for the remaining two indicators. The institution also engages in a regular reporting on this theme through annual monitoring reports to the Board of Directors.

Two divisions appear to have primary responsibility for achievement of the access core theme; that is, the Student Services and Diversity and Outreach divisions. Both the Vice President for Student Services and Vice President for Diversity and Outreach maintain a strong understanding of the access core theme and its goals and could clearly articulate how programs and services fit within each goal. As an example, the VPDO highlighted their efforts to increase enrollment by building connections with area high schools that are traditionally underrepresented at CBC or those with higher Latino student enrollment; a clear alignment with access goals A and B. As a corollary example, the VPSS could readily discuss the First Year Introduction program and its impact on retention efforts and effective programs and services (access goals B and C). Finally, the Office of Institutional Research, plays a strong role in evaluating theme goals and indicators and distributing that information to the appropriate vice presidents.

A significant number of student service departments or programs within these divisions manage a large variety of surveys or response tools to solicit student feedback on services (SOAR, FYI, advising and counseling, financial aid, student conduct and others). What is not consistently evident, however, is to what depth the programs are using these results to improve programs or services; if all staff can identify the connection of the programs and services to the access theme and its associated goals; or if there is a connection between the core theme and division,



department and program planning process, allocation of resources, day-to-day practices or related activities.

It is important to note that from the evaluator's perspective, the department outcomes, program changes and access theme goals are in alignment; it is the awareness of this connection that appears to be missing for many staff. Because the goals of the access theme align with institutional organizational structures, it is important that the two vice presidents work closely with their staff to connect their activities to the access core theme goals, help staff understand the indicators and associated evaluation, and see the continuum between both areas of responsibility.

#### **4.B Improvement**

It is clear that the theme of access and its associated goals and indicators has been well thought out is connected to the institution's mission, and that the results of the theme assessment are disseminated to constituents in a timely manner. However, results are being used in department, division or program planning, decision making or resource allocation was not clearly evident through the documentation provided or on-site interviews. This may be tied back to the lack of depth of understanding among key stakeholder, or may be due to the limited time in which this report was produced. Regardless, it is important to insure that key stakeholders are clearly understand their connection to the core theme and how it may be used to bolster future decisions in terms of planning, resource allocation and the like.

While outcomes exist for the primary student service departments, student learning outcomes, in their truest forms, do not exist unilaterally for those areas most affecting the access theme. Examples of departments using student learning outcomes include Counseling and Advising, Disability and Support Services, New Student Center and Student Employment. It appears that the Student Services Division Assessment Plan, in particular, may be relatively new in its design and as such, development of full student learning outcomes, and assessment of those outcomes and/or follow up actions, may evolve over time. All areas impacting the access core theme are encouraged to review and/or develop student learning outcomes to best guide their planning, as well as inform policies and practices.

#### **Concern**

1. Significant and effective work has been done to provide a foundation for long term planning, including development of the access core theme, goals and indicators, as well as the Student Services Assessment plan. The next step is to expand that foundational work across those divisions with primary responsibility for the programs and services feeding the access core theme; connect individual division and department planning to the core theme; and holistically integrate the planning process with resources, capacity and practices (Standard 3.B.2, 4.A.4 and 4.A.5).

## **ACADEMIC CORE THEME**

The Academic Core theme includes four goals and each goal has three to five indicators, for a total of seventeen indicators. A variety of different data sources are used, resulting in a multi-faceted view of Academic excellence and student achievement at CBC.

### **Standard 3.B Planning**

Academic core theme planning at CBC is based on review of core theme assessment results, information from state committees and councils, an environmental scan of current trends/issues, and an internal review of the strengths and weaknesses of the resources used to support the academic core theme. At the executive and board level, plans for strengthening these linkages and results are tied to the strategic planning of the college.

Although some changes have occurred over the college's two-year journey, the indicators for this core theme have remained fairly constant. The college added a goal related to the transition of developmental students into college-level English and Math courses as a result of reviewing data. Goals about workforce student satisfaction and use of appropriate technologies were eliminated, although some activity and measurement around these areas are still included in the strategic plan. This helps ensure progress in these areas, even though they are not called out in the core theme goals. The college has measured the indicators related to its four academic core theme goals, and have had an evaluative conversation with the board about the results. It does not appear that a similar conversation has occurred within the academic divisions of the institution. There appears to be a general lack of awareness of the Academic Core theme and its role in planning beyond the top executive members of CBC. Although executive team members can describe this planning cycle, other people in the institution seem unaware that data is collected and unaware of the methods used for resource allocation. Even in areas where faculty and departments are engaged in work that is related to improving an indicator, the evaluators found faculty were unaware of the data results. In Math, English, and Basic Skills, faculty are involved in conversations about improving the transition of students through the progression of developmental courses to college-level courses. Their discussions and planning do not appear to be informed by the assessment results of the core theme indicators. They had not seen data about the percent of students who transition to the college level or the percent of students who are successful, once they get to that level. Activities and efforts are planned and implemented, but not tied back to core theme indicator results. This lack of connection between department planning and measurement of core indicators may cause faculty to take plans in directions that appear unrelated to the data.

### **Standard 4.A Assessment**

This standard points to four areas of assessment:

1. Assessment for evaluating the accomplishment of core theme objectives
2. Assessment for evaluating educational programs and services
3. Assessment of student achievement through identified student learning outcomes.
4. Assessment of one's assessment processes to ensure meaningful results that lead to improvement.

In addition, assessment results are to be integrated into planning of core theme objectives. Faculty have a primary role in assessing learning outcomes and evaluation of educational programs and services.

CBC has completed one cycle of assessment of the Academic core theme. The seventeen indicators vary in their capacity to provide meaningful, assessable and verifiable data. For example, information about student success in transferring to other institutions is available through statewide data systems and gives a clear picture of student achievement related to this goal. Other indicators, such as those identified to assess the quality and effectiveness of faculty, appear overall less robust, but still shed some light on this goal for the institution. These indicators are used to evaluate progress on the four goals that are part of the Academic core theme.

Faculty in academic divisions have begun discussions about program evaluation. These discussions include, “What is a program?” and “Is a program the same as a discipline or a distribution area?” Each division is answering these questions in ways that are most meaningful to them. For example, English has aligned their writing and composition courses with communication arts for the purposes of identifying and assessing program outcomes. Humanities courses in the English department are aligned with Art and Theatre Humanities courses. This is driven by connections between curriculum and relationships between student learning outcomes for these courses. Other areas are finding that their different disciplines are actually separate programs. History, Psychology, and other social sciences are approaching program evaluation as separate disciplines. This discussion and exploration is shaping the direction for program evaluation in the academic areas.

Although the college self-study indicates that program evaluation is occurring this year, and a Program Self-Study Process was provided in Appendix A of the self-study, evaluators found little evidence of this in the academic areas. Faculty appeared unclear when asked questions related to program review. In spring, 2010, the college received a recommendation about program evaluation and they have had little time to implement any changes. They have identified a process and the discussion has begun, but substantial progress has not been made in the academic divisions. Deans and faculty reported that fruitful discussion has started, but the process is in its infancy. (Standards 4.A.2; 4.A.4)

Course outcomes in the academic areas are tied to college student learning outcomes, and these are assessed according to a plan developed and implemented by the Teaching and Learning Committee. Processes are in place to ensure that outcomes are identified and assessed consistently. Academic Deans monitor the goals set by the Teaching and Learning Committee, ensuring that the faculty are assessing appropriate courses in the academic divisions.

CBC has evaluated their assessment processes and determined that they needed to improve their ability to track assessment of college student learning outcomes more holistically. They have invested in a database and have been entering assessment plans and results as they occur. They have not yet used the power of the new system, which will allow them to look at all assessments related to one outcome, or for a department to review all assessments done in the department’s courses. This higher level analysis of assessment data should inform future decisions about improving student achievement, at the course level, the program level, and the college level.

## **Standard 4.B Improvement**

This standard points to the importance of using core theme, program, and student learning assessment results in improvement planning, decision making, resource allocation, and, in the case of learning assessment, to enhance student achievement.

CBC appears inconsistent in its use of assessment results for decision making, improvement planning, and the enhancement of student learning across the college. Although assessment of academic core theme indicators was evident and consistent, plans for improvement and implementation of those plans were less consistent. (Standards 4.B.1; 4.B.2)

Improvement actions listed in the self-study included:

- Improve Developmental Math course structure and pedagogy
- Assess and improve English placement
- Recruit minority faculty members
- Assess minority hiring rates vs. other colleges
- Share student survey results with faculty
- Encourage greater use of active learning assignments
- Improve faculty/student interactions

In discussions with faculty, they were unaware of improvement plans to encourage greater use of active learning strategies. They had not seen student survey results. Although Math and English faculty were involved in conversations about course structure and placement accuracy, they were unaware that these conversations had any relationship to core theme assessment. Stronger alignment between core theme assessment and plans for improvement is needed to ensure that action plans result in improved performance on core theme indicators. (Standard 4.B.1)

When discussing improvement plans related to the assessment of student learning outcomes, administrators and faculty expressed some concern that the database used to document and track assessment, limits faculty's ability to enter the wide variety of improvement projects and methods in which faculty are engaged. Some of the examples given include:

- Using technology to engage students in new ways
- Providing weekly review in math courses so that students regularly review math concepts presented at the beginning of the class and included on comprehensive final exams
- Using films to depict examples of abnormal behavior
- Linking classes and creating learning communities
- Assigning a group of students to study a concept and then present it to the class (jigsaw method)

Faculty expressed support and encouragement from the administration when trying new things. Faculty could discuss their strategies for improvement, but these weren't always linked to assessment results and weren't always documented as part of the assessment process.

Assessment plans inconsistently included plans for improvement, even when data indicated that plans should be in place. CBC is discussing how to resolve this limitation.

## **Compliments**

1. Faculty are consistently committed to and engaged in the improvement of teaching and learning at CBC.

2. The Academic core theme goals and indicators are well defined and used in planning at the executive team level.

### **Concerns**

1. Identification and implementation of improvement plans are not developed consistently and not used consistently in planning, resource allocation, and the enhancement of student achievement. (Standards 4.B.1; 4.B.2)
2. Program assessment processes have been identified but not implemented in the Academic divisions. The discussions about program evaluation are at the very beginning stages, and need to progress. (Standards 4.A.2; 4.A.4)
3. In areas where changes are being proposed and discussed, data is not available to inform the actions being planned. New program components may be developed that do not contribute to the achievement of the goal. (Standard 3.B.2)

### **WORKFORCE CORE THEME**

Workforce education is at the core of CBC's mission and the Workforce Core Theme (WFCT) developed from the "meaningful employment" end statement in the CBC mission statement adopted by the Board in 1997. Annual Workforce End State Monitoring Reports are provided to the Board to inform them on institutional performance via a detailed set of indicators and measures. This End State reporting established the planning and assessment framework that the college adapted to form the WFCT goals and indicators. From the Year Seven Report, appendices, supporting documents, and interviews with key personnel, the evaluator found that CBC has leveraged the value of previously established measures to build on its strength as a data-driven institution toward the achievement of the WFCT goals.

The WFCT has five major goals, assessed utilizing 14 institutional indicators:

- Goal A, CBC workforce students learn and develop program skills
- Goal B, Workforce programs demonstrate enrollment and viability
- Goal C, Students complete workforce programs
- Goal D, Workforce Students obtain jobs, earn a good salary, perform well
- Goal E, Community support for workforce programs

### **Standard 3.B Planning**

WDCT planning is informed by the use of appropriate data and has been developed at a variety of organizational levels due to CBC's definition of the student-centered, community-oriented, institutionally-holistic WFCT goals. WFCT goals are referenced in the planning processes and documentation available for: student learning outcomes; student support and services; course and program offerings; environmental scans; grants; institutional strategy and effectiveness; and external community partnerships. To achieve this level of engagement, there has been significant effort to create effective communication, data support, and collaborative partnerships that cross

the institution's organizational boundaries and recognize achievement toward WFCT goals and outcomes wherever it occurs.

Planning for the WFCT is integrated within the college's comprehensive Institutional Effectiveness Model which ensures that the planning for the core theme is governed by the Board; linked to the college's resource planning; and guides program development for instruction. Instructional program planning is aligned with the goals of the WFCT by the collaborative efforts of the Vice President for Instruction and academic deans with input from the program faculty, advisory committee representatives, and student representatives.

CBC utilizes a cross-functional Workforce Team to coordinate planning and alignment of the WFCT instructional programs with the contributing components of student support programs and services. The Workforce Team membership includes instructional deans with workforce programs, institutional research, financial aid, Worker Retraining, WorkFirst, Tech Prep, Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST), and other workforce related support staff. The team meets monthly to review the status of workforce programs and services and provide a channel for open cross-campus communication related to all aspects of workforce programs. WFCT planning is also heavily related to goals for the core themes of Access and Basic Skills. For example, the planning associated with the Carl Perkins grant program includes monitoring and development of plans related to student learning, access, retention, and diversity, student completion of certificates and degrees, and involvement of advisory committee members.

Another important element of WFCT planning is the utilization of advisory committees. To comply with state requirements for workforce instructional programs, an active advisory committee representing a balance of management, employee, and labor members is required for each program and must meet a minimum of twice per year. Many of the workforce support services, examples include Worker Retraining and WorkFirst, also function with active advisory committees which support the planning and implementation of grants. The advisory committees provide feedback on how the CBC programs are meeting community needs for workforce development. Committee members also contribute to the development of innovative partnerships with employers and agencies to enhance student outcomes in workforce programs.

The Workforce End State Monitoring Report provides evidence that appropriate data are used as indicators which are used to evaluate core theme performance and assess the institution's fulfillment of the core theme objectives. The Year Seven Report and discussion with the Workforce Team confirms that the results of the institutional assessment of WFCT performance is used to inform planning of workforce programs in instruction, support, services, and resources.

Many sources of relevant data inform WFCT planning; examples include the external environmental scan studies, program accreditation processes, grant evaluations, regional workforce development agency reports, local secondary school systems, partnered transfer institutions, state licensing agencies, and the Washington State Workforce Education Council. Programs with professional accreditations are leveraging data from these accreditations for student assessment and program self-study aligned with the WFCT.

For instructional programs, CBC is developing the relatively new TracDAT to enhance its capacity to collect and use appropriate data to ensure that learning outcomes for workforce

programs are in place and analyzed at the course, program, and institutional (SLO) levels. The Curriculum Committee review and approval processes ensure that learning outcomes are clearly stated for each course on the syllabi. Instructional deans reported that many faculty and staff were engaged with the process of implementing TracDAT to improve student outcomes. A new program self-study process incorporates the data from student learning assessment along with other program measures to inform the evaluation of instructional programs. However, the self-study template (Year Seven Report, Appendix A) developed does not guide programs to identify specific linkages and alignments with the core themes and goals.

For support and service programs, the Workforce Team is key to facilitating collaborative planning. The team has a member from Institutional Research so that they can more readily access appropriate data for analysis and reporting across the organization. Program improvement plans are based on the results of assessment and developed with input and feedback from all of the college stakeholders.

#### **Standard 4.A Assessment**

Assessment of the WFCT mission fulfillment is provided annually to the Board by CBC through a comprehensive assessment of the core theme objectives and indicators in the Workforce End State Monitoring Report. CBC's performance on the WFCT was measured and reported to the campus through the preparation, analysis, and evaluation presented in the 2009-2010 Workforce End State Monitoring Report. From this report, the Board made several refinements and improvements goals and indicators designed to improve performance related to mission fulfillment. Other assessment systems for WFCT goals that have been established and/or aligned to help evaluate the achievement of core theme goals include Resource structured interviews on the WFCT; Student Learning Outcomes; program-level learning outcomes; and program review through a self-study process.

Within the WFCT area, instructional programs are assessed with data and indicators that go beyond those developed for the WFCT goals. A template is utilized to conduct program assessment in a Self-Study process that is currently being implemented across all programs. Common measures have been established for all workforce programs to assess effectiveness and achievement of program goals. Program faculty have a primary role in the process, however not all programs have yet completed the new self-evaluation so there is limited evidence of analysis leading to improvements in all of the instructional programs. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes at the course and program levels occurs in WFCT programs on a regular basis. Assessments have a variety of forms depending on the course, and vary depending on outcomes related to didactic, laboratory, clinical, and externship requirements. Workforce programs maintain syllabi linked to college-wide Student Learning Outcomes and faculty enter assessment data into TracDat on a quarterly basis. TracDat provides the ability to aggregate the assessment of student learning by program as well as college-wide Student Learning Outcomes.

To assess the effectiveness of products and services related to each of the Resource units structured interviews were conducted between WFCT leaders and Resource leaders and the outcome of the interviews were documented by a facilitator. This qualitative assessment identified Resource unit strengths and areas for improvement to support the WFCT.

Discussions with workforce deans and program staff indicated this was a successful way to increase communication across the institution about the WFCT goals and it improved alignment and integration of college resources toward accomplishment of these goals.

#### **Standard 4.B Improvement**

Results of the assessment of WFCT performance and mission fulfillment are reported to the Board and CBC community in the annual Workforce End State Monitoring Report. This report has provided CBC with meaningful results that were used to make substantive modifications to improve programs, services, and administrative processes in the WFCT area. The Year Seven Report provides many examples within this core theme of assessment results impacting planning, decision-making, and resource allocations. However, the connection of core theme goals, indicators, and assessment to the annual institutional operating budget process was difficult to establish in discussions with administrators and faculty; this was attributed in part to the nature of the rapid response required to recent and ongoing budget reductions from the state.

Numerous examples of positive changes that have been made to close the loop on the 2010 WFCT assessment were provided in the Year Seven Report and were discussed in meetings with program staff and administrators. For example, CBC has targeted specific effort toward improving data collection and analysis related to the coding of program students and then has used this process to help identify and remove barriers to graduation.

The results from Student Learning Outcome assessments are compiled annually and results included within the Workforce End State Monitoring Report which is made public at the initial presentation of data to the Board of Trustees, and then posted to CBC's web page. For all program areas interviewed during the visit, the faculty, staff and administrators noted that the value of the assessment activities went beyond the data that was being collected and analyzed. Everyone emphasized the importance of the conversations that the process had generated and were very engaged in making changes that led to improvements in college practices.

#### **Compliments**

1. CBC is complimented on the support and dedicated service they receive from local advisory boards which actively contribute to the WFCT program area planning processes.
2. CBC is complimented for actively engaging its community in program planning processes to develop quality, creative partnerships with regional industry and community organizations to enhance the student experience, improve program quality, and increase the resources that are available to WFCT programs.
3. CTC is complimented for pursuing its WFCT through a holistic suite of programs supported by a well-developed system of planning that utilizes data linked to authentic assessments which are used for program improvement. Despite the compressed timeline in the pilot stage of implementing the new standards, CBC effectively used data, analysis, and assessment for making changes in practice leading to measured improvements in performance and refinements in the WFCT goals and indicators.



4. CBC is complimented for the progress made in the WFCT toward application of the institution's well-documented measurement methodology described in the Year Seven Report.
5. CBC is complimented for the President's presentation of the 2009-2010 Workforce End State Report to the campus and the community [on the web via U-Tube](#), it demonstrates the college's commitment to open dialog on the core themes and achievement of CBC mission fulfillment.

### **Concern**

1. While new tools and templates are in place for the assessment of student learning and program review self-study, they have not yet been uniformly implemented across all WFCT programs. These assessments are not yet fully aligned and integrated with the planning decision-making, and resource allocation processes that contribute to the achievement of the WFCT goals (Standard 4.A.2; 4.A3; 4.A.4).

### **BASIC SKILLS CORE THEME**

Basic Skills programs that address diverse literacy and workforce needs have long been an integral part of Columbia Basin College. The institution's strong history of providing access and varied educational opportunities for adult students in the surrounding communities is reinforced by Basic Skills being a key component of CBC's mission statement. The self study and supporting documents provided a thorough and thoughtful review of the Basic Skills Core Theme but a richer view emerged from interviews with Basic Skills students and key campus personnel.

### **Standard 3.B Planning**

Through the institution's comprehensive planning processes, Basic Skills, originally an End State developed under the Carver model of board governance, was selected as one of six core themes when CBC volunteered to pilot new accreditation standards. The next planning steps identified five goals that, if accomplished, would result in effective performance of the Basic Skills Core Theme. And, for each goal, indicators with available reliable data and performance benchmarks were identified to provide broad coverage of the goal domain. According to administrators, piloting new accreditation standards was an excellent opportunity that provided guidance, different conceptual tools, and helpful deadlines in developing programs and processes to increase student success effectively.

Though the self study cycle was abbreviated in this pilot, the Basic Skills Core Theme goals evolved as data was collected, analyzed and evaluated. Under the auspices of the Institutional Effectiveness Model governed by the Board, the five original goals were refined, aligned, and expanded into seven to reflect the realities of student progress in Basic Skills programs and the effects of budget constraints. Still centered on student success and satisfaction, the goals now recognize achievement of career and educational outcomes and performance in English and

math, in addition to the original goal of students transitioning to higher-level programs. The latest iteration is regarded as both more applied and related to curriculum and course goals. With the pressure of time reduced, further refinement of the wording of the goals can occur. An unsought aspect of institutional strategic planning was its use for decision making on college-wide budget reductions. The results included imposition of limits on Basic Skills program planning and capacity. As a waiver-based program, size and growth of Basic Skills is now proportional to college resources. A result has been a decrease in offerings, especially of ESL classes in off-site locations and a loss of flexibility in meeting students needs. Such cuts are difficult for a program that is student centered and whose staff are engaged with each individual student and closely attuned to even the smallest student achievement. However, Basic Skills remains sufficiently flexible to seek ways to address new needs and challenges through partnerships, collaboration, and innovation.

A hallmark of planning at CBC is environmental scanning. For Basic Skills this has resulted in the development of numerous community partnerships. Participation in Local Planning Area (LPA) meetings with service agencies has made Basic Skills programs a major educational contributor in a broad network to support students. These linkages allow advocacy for regional needs, more efficient and flexible management of resources, development of new program offerings, and service to both employers and perspective employees. Offering classes in as many community locations as possible and feasible is only one example of Basic Skills services which also extend widely to coordinate with state agencies and other area community colleges. CBC has broad representation by Basic Skills and other college personnel in community outreach efforts.

In addition to external collaborations, CBC has promoted new internal collaborations for the core themes as exemplified by the holistic Assessment of Programs, Services, Degrees, and Certificates. This qualitative interview process looked across institutional functions at how the core themes could be supported holistically. The process lead to new understanding and knowledge of other units and service providers, staff being more linked to the success of core themes, opportunities to explain needs and challenges to others, and offers of assistance with the challenges of making improvements. Outcomes that benefitted Basic Skills specifically included:

- additional technology resources through a partnership with the Library that familiarized students with access information and produced resource pages for programs,
- customization of TracDat, the assessment software, to reflect state and federal standards and use of required terminology.

#### **Standard 4.A Assessment**

Planning and assessment are foundational activities to Basic Skills whose program evaluations are influenced by funding sources and often based on grant guidelines and requirements. Staff and faculty report that being identified as a core theme has lead to a more research and data-driven approach to assessment, additional guidance and scrutiny. Basic Skills has a history of using multiple means of assessment, both formal and informal, while seeking direct evidence of student progress and achievement of program goals.

All students enrolled in Basic Skills are required to take standardized pre- and post-tests because of funding provided through state and federal programs. These testing results are reported through the Washington Adult Basic Education Reporting System (WABERS). Students earn a Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) momentum point in the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) each time a significant gain is made on a test score or upon GED completion. Basic Skills programs are accustomed to assessing student progress and fulfilling accountability requirements by reporting student performance data to the appropriate agency. The Annual Basic Skills End State Monitoring Reports are provided to the Board to inform them of performance based on the indicators using these and other data sources.

Though often guided by state and federal standards, the internal assessment processes in Basic Skills are led by a strong, experienced assessment team that keeps cycles of review moving, seeks closer alignment of course and program outcomes with institutional student learning outcomes (SLOs), initiates discussions about program goals and intended outcomes, and disseminates assessment results. Since Basic Skills programs are incremental and progressive to support students moving to higher levels of educational challenge, the use of student learning assessment is essential and leads directly to program changes and improvements so that students can more easily and efficiently achieve educational goals.

The Basic Skills assessment team anticipates a natural and gradual maturation in faculty utilization of TracDat, both in Basic Skills and across the campus. Introduction and use of that program became an impetus to focus on assessment and increase individual faculty accountability while stretching them to think beyond the outcomes of their classroom. More discussions have been reported that can be linked to additional classroom assessments and action plans. Continued professional development of faculty is also viewed as bolstering classroom and program assessment processes. Another available assessment tool is student responses on the course evaluations in Basic Skills. These are noted and triangulated with teacher perception and input for possible adjustments to courses, procedures, or policies.

Though early assessment emphasis has been on mission fulfillment and core theme performance, program evaluation has continued and is now anticipated to receive more focused attention. TracDat, it is hoped, will link all campus programs together for a more holistic view of student learning and build upward from program assessment to a synthesis of outcomes at the campus level.

A major example of holistic alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services to achieve core theme objectives is the collaboration involved with I-BEST programs. Several levels of collaboration are involved with the planning, implementation, and assessment of these short-term, applied workforce programs, including instructors from different programs working together to develop and deliver instruction with high levels of student support and services from across campus to address needs of non-traditional students. The solid, continuing efforts of the cross-functional Workforce Team were mentioned as an example of the collaborations that cross organizational boundaries emerging with new ways of meeting student career needs. The holistic institutional approach of supporting the core themes has led to the development of cross-cutting or cross-theme goals that increase the potential for student success. The addition

of the Basic Skills dean to the Curriculum Committee is another example of new thinking patterns evolving from the more holistic approaches.

Another campus-wide effort is the current focus to improve math success of students at all levels of learning. Basic Skills will be piloting two courses that are designed to prepare students more quickly to advance to higher level math courses. Currently the amount of time it takes a student to progress through the required series of levels is considered to be a detriment to math persistence and success.

Review of assessment results and a desire to be responsiveness to student needs and workforce opportunities keeps attention focused on further development and expansion of the I-BEST program. After examining data on gender demographics, discussions have fostered development of a new short-term manufacturing program to attract more male student participation.

#### **Standard 4.B Improvement**

The self study included examples of Basic Skills utilizing data to make improvements in courses, programs, and procedures. Evolution of the Basic Skills Core Theme goals is a case study of working to identify meaningful indicators of authentic achievement. Other examples emerged in interviews:

- Basic Skills programs engage in inquiry projects annually for the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges through Data for Program Improvement (DPI),
- On-line testing has been implemented which resulted in time savings for students and staff because the software selects the appropriate test quickly and allows students more flexibility on when a test can be taken,
- After seeing initial results on goal indicators, a grant was sought and secured to increase the effectiveness of Basic Skills orientation by presenting the information in video format for greater flexibility in the open entry programs and more consistency of information to students in all locations.

From evidence in the self study and encountered during the site visit, Basic Skills is proving to be a successful core theme that contributes significantly to the fulfillment of the CBC mission. Significant progress is being made in achieving the refined goals. A few areas within Basic Skills have been identified to be strengthened and improved and plans are being made on how best to make those changes.

#### **Compliments**

1. The evaluation team is in admiration of those who successfully compressed a seven-year process into two and produced quality results that benefit students. The College is fortunate to have faculty and staff in Basic Skills and in other areas who serve with dedication, flexibility, years of experience, and an optimistic spirit of innovation.

## Concerns

1. The deficit of not having developed and implemented the goal of a student survey is noted and encouragement offered to complete that task as soon as possible so resulting data can be used to support planning and practices. (Standard 4.A.1)
2. In the absence of extreme time pressures, evidence suggests that an increase of key stakeholder involvement in future planning would be a positive step. (Standard 4.A.4)
3. In regards to resources that support achievement of goals and outcomes, a concern has been expressed about the need for more availability of a counselor to work with Basic Skills students. Currently a counselor is on-site two partial days. Though available at another location at other times, Basic Skills students are usually hesitant to seek assistance in an unfamiliar part of campus. Research indicates that retention and transition to higher level educational programs could be improved with more student interactions with an academic counselor. (Standard 4.A.5)
4. Refinement or re-examination of indicator outcomes based on comparisons or ranking relative to other community colleges in the eastern part of the state is suggested. A concern could arise about how meaningful that relative performance is for continued and sustained improvement. At this point of development, it is unclear what goal is being sought. The inclusion of historical data of earlier performance would be a helpful benchmark. (Standard 3.B.2)

## **CULTURAL ENRICHMENT CORE THEME**

### **Standard 3.B Planning**

The Cultural Enrichment core theme has grown out of the College's Cultural Enrichment end state: "CBC will provide the college and the community with diverse and multiculturally rich programs designed to improve our quality of life, life-long learning opportunities and enhance educational programs." Under the Cultural Enrichment core theme, the College has identified two goals: (A) students, staff, and the community engage in culturally-enriching experiences involving music, theater, literature, and art; and (B) students engage in diversity-oriented educational and cultural programs and activities.

Comprehensive environmental scanning conducted by the College provides an initial basis for planning of programs and services related to the Cultural Enrichment core theme. The end state monitoring report for Cultural Enrichment is another document that informs planning for that core theme. Extensive planning for Cultural Enrichment occurs within and between the divisions and offices of Arts & Humanities, Social Sciences, Diversity & Outreach, and Associated Students of Columbia Basin College (ASCBC). These college groups frequently work with community and school partners to create synergy and advance projects of mutual interest and benefit. The Office of College Relations plays a key role in working with event organizers to publicize Cultural Enrichment programs. Generous funding for many programs is provided by ASCBC, as well as external agencies and partners. The result has been a full and varied slate of arts and diversity courses and programs at the College, the large majority of which boast high rates of attendance and enrollment. However, while offerings and participation are robust,

interviews conducted during the evaluation visit revealed that a mechanism that might promote well-coordinated planning across CBC arts and diversity stakeholders to optimally meet the Cultural Enrichment core theme is not in place at the College.

Data generated from environmental scans and end state reporting conducted by the College has informed Cultural Enrichment core theme planning. Some examples include offering events at low or no cost, expanding courses and programs that are relevant to minority populations and different generations, offering events at day and evening times, etc. Low rates of participation have sometimes led to elimination of courses or programs, although some that do not have broad appeal have been retained for their inherent value and/or importance to a given, albeit small, constituency.

#### **Standard 4.A Assessment**

Assessment of the Cultural Enrichment core theme was achieved through the Cultural Enrichment End State Monitoring Report (March 2009). Indicators used to assess the two Cultural Enrichment goals included number of cultural events, attendance at cultural events, community satisfaction with facilities, enrollments in arts & humanities courses, funding from ASCBC, number of diversity events, attendance at diversity events, number of diversity-related courses, enrollment in diversity-related courses, and student involvement in diversity (according to responses on the Community College Survey of Student Engagement). Upon review of data tied to each indicator, numerical ratings were assigned, and the total number of points was converted to a number on a 100-point scale that was, in turn, equated to a letter grade. In the end, the Cultural Enrichment core theme was assigned an overall letter grade of B on the March 2009 monitoring report; number of cultural events, amount of funding from ASCBC, and number of diversity events were identified as strengths, and attendance at a summer theater series was noted as a weakness.

An additional means of assessing Cultural Enrichment at the College was a series of qualitative interviews between the core theme area and a number of college resource areas: governance, human resources, education resources, student support resources, library and information services, financial resources, and physical and technical infrastructure. The College deemed this to be a beneficial exercise as strengths and improvement areas not documented through previous assessment efforts were identified through the qualitative interview process.

At an August 2010 retreat focused on reviewing data on mission fulfillment and discussing the College's mission, core themes, objectives, and indicators, the CBC Board of Trustees determined that indicators in place for the Cultural Enrichment core theme were weak and in need of further development (see page A-7 of the CBC Year 7 Self-Evaluation Report). For Cultural Enrichment Goal A (engagement in culturally enriching experiences), it was felt surveys or qualitative methods aimed at measuring impact/satisfaction should be developed. Likewise, for Cultural Enrichment Goal B (engagement in diversity-oriented educational and cultural programs), the Board called for development and implementation of new indicators related to satisfaction with events and learning that takes place.

## **Standard 4.B Improvement**

The Cultural Enrichment End State Monitoring Report (March 2009) and qualitative interview process noted in the previous section of this evaluation report have provided the basis for a number of improvements. The end state report pointed a need to update surveys, program for broader audience appeal, improve data collection, maintain diversity courses, and expand focus on the Culture Awareness student learning outcome. The qualitative interviews yielded ideas for improvements related to education resources, library and information services, financial resources, and physical and technical infrastructure.

Results of the 2010 CBC Student Survey were distributed to evaluators during the site visit; among the low-scoring areas were “having serious conversations with students of diverse backgrounds,” “developing an interest in music, theater, literature, or art,” and “attending cultural, athletic, or social events.” Among the strategies for improvement listed in the survey report document was a suggestion to solicit input from the campus community on how to address the issue of low student interest in the arts.

Having identified some areas and strategies for improvement through its assessments of the Cultural Enrichment core theme, it now falls to the College to implement changes, assess the impacts, and continue to cycle through the assessment process. Furthermore, it will be important, as noted in its self-evaluation, for the College to examine and enhance the Cultural Enrichment indicators to ensure their relevance and effectiveness.

### **Compliments**

1. There is strong commitment to and involvement in planning and funding by units with a stake in promoting arts and diversity at the College, resulting in an abundance of well-attended programs and heavily-enrolled courses that advance Cultural Enrichment on campus and in the community.
2. Considerable thought, time, and effort have been expended by many at the College to collect and analyze data related to the Cultural Enrichment core theme, with some useful results and good ideas for improvement to show for that work.

### **Concern**

1. As was expressed by the CBC Board of Trustees in August 2010, current Cultural Enrichment indicators need to be revised and expanded so that more data related to affect, impact, and satisfaction is available to evaluate accomplishment of the core theme objectives. Cultural Enrichment indicators utilized to this point have largely focused on numbers of courses and programs, attendees and enrollees, and dollars spent. Additional meaningful indicators of achievement are needed if assessment results are to fully inform planning, decision making, and allocation of resources for the purpose of continuous improvement. (Standards 4.A.1 & 4.B.1)

## **PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING CORE THEME**

Columbia Basin College has established the physical and emotional well-being of the campus community as a theme that is core to its mission. Within this core theme have been identified three goals for focus and improvement: Provision of activities and resources that improve physical and emotional health; promotion of emotional well-being via information and services; and guarding of students and staff from physical threats and harm. Desired outcomes for each of these goals have been determined and activities designed to reach these outcomes have been identified.

### **Standard 3.B Planning**

Planning around the Physical and Emotional Well-being core theme is included in CBC's strategic plan, although it appears in a limited form, specifically in strategic goal 12, "Enhance campus responses to health, wellness issues" (CBC Strategic Plan, p. 13). This goal appears to have been culled from both the institution's environmental scan and SWOT analysis. The stated reason for including this goal is, "Concerns raised by possibility of pandemic." While this relates tangentially to the Core Theme's *Goal C: The College guards students and staff from physical threats and harm*, the indicators and desired outcomes listed for this goal (CBC Standards 1-5, p. 1-20) do not relate to pandemic preparation or response. While this may be an area in which to consider more closely the alignment of strategic planning with core theme outcomes, there is evidence that planning for the core theme is being considered in the institution's comprehensive planning efforts (3.B.1).

In both data review and interviews during the site visit, evidence was discovered that shows the link between planning for core theme programs and services and their alignment with the achievement of stated goals/outcomes within the theme. However, this evidence is stronger in some indicator areas than in others. Additionally, the institution has determined weighting of this Core Theme based on current budget allocation in relation to the other Themes. While this is helpful in terms of understanding relational achievement of goals within the Themes, it is not clear how adequacy of resource allocation to support this Theme, as outlined in Standard Three, is either determined or implemented (3.B.2).

Examples of strong links between planning and alignment with intended outcomes include goal A3 (use of fitness center by stakeholder groups) and goals C1 and C3 (awareness of processes used to prevent/manage threats and perception of safety at the College). The Fitness Center's expansion gives the College a state-of-the-art facility whose size and range of offerings allow for increased use—one of the intended outcomes of the Core Theme. Additionally, the management of the Center not only encourages use (including free use by faculty, staff, and students), but also thoughtful approaches to workouts (orientations and related progress-tracking programs) and support for students to complete the College's physical education credit requirement. These activities also support the outcome of expanded use, as well as the larger outcome of a healthier campus community. Similarly, the planning activities of the Safety/Emergency Response Committee have focused on achievement of stated desired outcomes. Specifically, plans were created and then implemented to increase the number of employees with Incident Command System training. ICS training has been undertaken by 164 campus employees, thus contributing



both to the numbers of campus community members aware of and knowledgeable about emergency procedures (C1) and, perhaps more importantly, to the actual level of safety the College can provide in times of crisis (C3).

An example of a weaker link between planning and alignment with intended outcomes is *Goal B: The College promotes emotional well-being via information and services*. While activities are being undertaken to achieve stated outcomes, evidence does not suggest a strong connection between those activities, their development, and any overarching plan based on assessment of collected data. An example is the lack of a formal tracking mechanism to determine if the nature and variety of activities relating to emotional health issues are adequate, appropriately aligned with perceived needs, and/or having an impact on student emotional health.

An impressive array of surveys and other data collection methods have been implemented by the College. Some, such as the CBC Student Survey and the CCSSE, touch on a variety of student engagement, satisfaction, and use indicators. Others, such as surveys relating to satisfaction with counseling/advising and judicial hearings, focus narrowly on satisfaction with particular offices and services.

There is clear evidence that these data are used to evaluate performance related to core theme objectives. It is also clear that performance success is based on achievement not of targets or goals within a larger context, but rather improvement toward a level of “good,” generally defined on most instruments used as at least 4.0 on a 5.0 scale. While this method gives an indication of performance relating to student satisfaction with existing services, some areas—notably counseling and disability services—might benefit from a more thorough understanding of how to weave these data into larger conversations about mission and the perpetual goal of best practice.

Areas charged with delivering activities related to the Physical and Emotional Well-being Core Theme are certainly making concerted efforts to gather information and ensure that progress toward desired outcomes is being pursued. With more time will come an increased ability and further opportunity to use data not only to ascertain progress toward intended outcomes, but then to begin thinking about what additional outcomes and further planning might come next (3.B.3).

#### **Standard 4.A Assessment**

Within the Physical and Emotional Well-being Core Theme, CBC has demonstrated that it regularly and systematically collects data related to stated indicators. Analysis of those data also occurs and appears to be getting more robust with time (4.A.1). Achievement of core theme objectives is further along in some areas (Goal C and pieces of Goal A, for example) than others, as shown by the numerical values assigned to outcomes and the assigned grade in the *CBC Assessment of Mission Fulfillment*. However, evaluation of progress and achievement clearly exists across all indicators and outcomes for the Theme and will help determine additional and/or alternate methods of attempting to achieve the stated desired outcomes (4.A.2). It is not clear from interviews or provided materials that there is a well understood approach to connecting planning, allocation of resources, and achievement of outcomes amongst those responsible for activities associated with this Core Theme’s intended outcomes. While programs and activities are assessed and improvements are sought, this is not always clearly connected back to

achievement of the stated outcomes for the Core Theme. Likewise, while allocation of funds in these areas is evident, how that relates to support for activities specifically designed—and assessed—to achieve the stated outcomes as opposed to other functions and responsibilities is not clear (4.A.4, 4.A.5).

Assessment results relating to the Physical and Emotional Well-being Core Theme are disseminated from the Board level down to program managers. As it appears that there is variance amongst administrators' understanding of the relationship between core theme assessment and program design and decision-making, further alignment of assessment efforts with improvement expectations and initiatives at the program level will be important moving forward (4.A.6).

### **Standard 4.B Improvement**

While it is clear that results of assessment of the Physical and Emotional Well-being Core Theme are both based on meaningful institutionally identified indicators of achievement and made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner, how these results are used for improvement by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity directly related to the Core Theme is less clear. This may be due to the compressed time in which work to this point has occurred. As CBC moves forward with assessment activities relating to this Core Theme it will be important to ensure improvement efforts are tied directly to gathered data and supported by appropriate resource allocation (4.B.1).

Student learning outcomes and assessment of student learning relating to this Core Theme do not appear to be an area of focus. As activities continue to evolve based on assessment of collected data, more depth can be added to Core Theme desired outcomes, possibly including specific learning outcomes for various activities (for example, adding particular learning outcomes to the participation outcomes identified in Goals A1, A4, and B1). These outcomes can then be assessed to inform planning and practices that lead to the enhancement of student learning achievements (4.B.2).

### **Concern**

1. It is not clear from interviews or provided materials that there is a well understood approach to connecting planning, allocation of resources, and achievement of outcomes amongst those responsible for activities associated with this Core Theme's intended outcomes. While programs and activities are assessed and improvements are sought, this is not always clearly connected back to achievement of the stated outcomes for the Core Theme. Likewise, while allocation of funds in these areas is evident, how that relates to support for activities specifically designed—and assessed—to achieve the stated outcomes as opposed to other functions and responsibilities is not clear (4.A.4, 4.A.5)

## **Mission Fulfillment, Monitoring, Adaptation and Sustainability**

### **Report on Eligibility Requirements 24**

#### **Scale and Sustainability**

The institution demonstrates that its operational scale (e.g., enrollment, human and financial resources and institutional infrastructure) is sufficient to fulfill its mission and achieve its core themes in the present and will be sufficient to do so in the foreseeable future.

While not immune to external factors and budget realities, evidence across enrollment, human and financial resources, and institutional infrastructure suggest clearly that Columbia Basin College has an operational scale that is sufficient to fulfill its mission and achieve its core themes now and into the future. Despite reductions in state allocations, careful financial and personnel management have positioned CBC well. That said, while facilities and infrastructure have grown appropriately given enrollment trends, are well maintained, and are mission-appropriate, sufficient operating funds to support this infrastructure in a climate of budget reductions will be challenging moving forward. Fortunately, recent building projects have had some funds for on-going operations attached to the state allocation.

#### **Report on Standard 5.A Mission Fulfillment**

The CBC Mission Statement was established in 1996, following a broad external and internal input. CBC's Mission remains relatively unchanged since that time. During the past two years, CBC has developed the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) model to link planning actions and activities. The IE model was developed as an open systems perspective and utilizes a "Balanced Scorecard" approach. Assessment of Mission Fulfillment is a summative assessment of college performance based upon objectives and indicators identified for each Core Theme.

Evaluators acknowledge this is the first opportunity CBC has had to implement the Institutional Effectiveness model. Interviews with a the campus community (i.e., students, staff and faculty) revealed some awareness of the IE work, but little understanding of how the process would impact the College's daily work, strategic planning or budget allocation. It is clear to the Evaluation team that CBC is focused on the spirit of continuous improvement. Therefore, evaluators understand that future actions taken by CBC to improve the effectiveness of the recourses in meeting the core theme will be an evolving and iterative process.

CBC uses the Overview of CBC Mission Fulfillment as a means for an evidence-based judgment about mission fulfillment. While CBC identified the success in each Core Theme area achieving a Grade of B- or better, evaluators noted some areas of unevenness in reporting. In the context of shortened timelines due to this pilot phase, Evaluators agreed a full cycle of review would improve the ability for CBC to sharpen the assessment and reporting process.

## **Report on Standard 5.B Adaptation and Sustainability**

Columbia Basin College utilizes numerous resources to monitor its internal and external environments and demonstrates an ability to adapt as necessarily its mission core themes, programs, and services to accommodate changing and emerging needs, trends and influences. The suspension and addition of programs included a strong internal and external component. Indices used for program suspension primarily focused on regional job demand and wages. Recommendations for program suspensions were made by a cross-representational committee to the President and included the use of external data. CBC also identified the state budget reductions currently impacting the college are reducing the ability of the College to provide services to those most needing additional support.

### **Summary**

The Evaluation Team for the Year Seven report commends Columbia Basin College administration, faculty, staff, and students for their courage and commitment to the pilot process. The Evaluators were impressed with the speed at which special data and report requests were provided. Students, staff and faculty reported in forum meetings a deep regard for the college mission and strong support CBC has within the region.

In addition to the Year-Seven Standards the Evaluation Team reviewed the Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree in Applied Management.

### **Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree in Applied Management**

Columbia Basin College (CBC) offers a Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree in Applied Management. The Washington State Legislature authorized the community college baccalaureate program to increase access to bachelor's degrees for Washington citizens. In August 2008, a substantive change request was filed with NWCCU to extend CBC's accreditation to the Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Applied Management. In fall 2009, NWCCU granted candidacy status and CBC the opened the program to admission.

### **Rationale**

Many two-year degree holders have reached a plateau in their career, unable to advance because they cannot meet the bachelor's degree requirement for many supervisory positions. This degree is designed for those who have earned an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree, but lack the broader business-related education needed to move up into leadership positions. The degree also serves students with an Associate in Arts and Sciences degree and a minimum of two years work experience. Completion of the BAS degree will broaden career opportunities for technicians to achieve promotions into management positions.

## **Description**

Detailed degree information and requirements are available in a comprehensive program handbook available on the program's Website and the 2009-2011 CBC Catalog. The program has a competitive annual application process and has admitted two cohorts of students into the program. The first graduates (estimated at 25 by program staff) are anticipated in spring 2011.

## **Mission alignment**

The BAS degree is tied deeply to the CBC mission and aligns with the Workforce Core Theme. CBC states in the Year Seven Report that the college has no intention of developing into a four-year institution. The development of the BAS Program began as a response to a State Board of Community & Technical College (SBCTC) initiative, but was soon formalized as a CBC strategic plan goal to provide access to baccalaureate education for students that have completed a two-year technical AAS degree.

## **Resources**

The BAS program has a full-time faculty director who is a member of the Business & Information Technology division qualified by credential (Ph.D.) and experience to lead the baccalaureate program. The program has recruited a cadre of qualified adjunct faculty to teach in the program, all are reviewed and approved by the program director. The program maintains an advisory committee and adheres to the CBC Curriculum Committee process; since the development of the program, additional courses have been approved allowing new electives for program students. BAS program follows the same CBC administrative and assessment processes used for other workforce programs. The BAS curriculum and course offerings are supported financially by a FTE funding formula and program revenues (tuition/fees) which are also returned in full to the program. The BAS program utilizes existing classroom and education technology to offer courses in business program facilities on the CBC campus. The director reports that program capacity is sufficient to meet current level of student demand and to support the enrollments as planned for an annual cohort admission cycle.

## **Planning & Implementation**

The BAS is the outcome of multi-year planning processes. To assess needs, CBC utilized multiple sources of information from an institutional environmental scan process that was part of its strategic planning process and program-specific research on the workforce needs of the college's service region. Educational and demographic trend information suggested the need for more bachelors' level graduates in the regional workforce; this trend was supported by the SBCTC statewide strategy and the program's needs assessment for developing an applied baccalaureate degree to enhance workforce development. As a result, CBC planned and implemented the BAS program to provide an educational pathway for AAS graduates to access the knowledge and skills needed to advance and succeed in a management role in their technical field.

## **Assessment**

The BAS has business and general education course requirements designed to achieve both depth and breadth in learning outcomes appropriate for a baccalaureate degree. Syllabi for BAS program general education and management courses identify student learning outcomes. The core applied management course outcomes are mapped to the CBC Student Learning Outcomes and each course has identified how the student will be measured according to the identified outcomes.

Typically AAS graduates entering the BAS will have a limited number of transferrable general education courses. The general education requirements for the BAS program build upon the students' original applied science degrees and are designed to support the applied management core curriculum and student career goals. Once students complete the minimum number of general education credits they will choose the final ten credits based on their specific goals. Students will also select one of two capstone courses that will integrate and assess the knowledge and skills gained throughout their BAS program experience.

## **Substantive change**

The BAS has been developed at CBC as a strategic priority program that is strongly aligned with the Workforce Core Theme. The BAS program has adequate human, financial, and physical resources to offer the curriculum as currently planned. Assessment plans and processes are in place to monitor and improve student learning and program outcomes. Two cohorts of students have been admitted and enrolled; the first cohort of BAS students will graduate in spring 2011. Based on the evidence presented in the program application for accreditation, and reviewed on site during the Year Seven NWCCU evaluation team visit, the committee recommends that CBC be granted the substantive change to accredit the BAS program.

In general, CBC has embraced the development of Core Themes and moved towards indicators to measure mission fulfillment. The Evaluation Team agreed that CBC is moving in the direction to make the necessary improvements and adjustments for the next Accreditation cycle of review.

## **Commendations and Recommendations**

### **Commendations**

1. The Evaluation Committee commends Columbia Basin College for its on-going dedication to the accreditation process. Of particular note are the significant amount of work undertaken in a tightly compressed timeline; approaching this work holistically and with a high degree of collaboration; and using innovative methods to gather and assess data.
2. The Evaluation Committee commends the College for its collection and extensive use of a variety of quantitative data and qualitative interviews to inform the development of themes, goals, and indicators.

3. The Evaluation Committee commends the College for its thoughtful, thorough, data-driven planning, implementation, and assessment of an integrated, campus-wide approach to crisis planning and emergency response that has engaged a variety of community partners.

### **Recommendations**

1. While new tools and templates are in place for the assessment of student learning and program review self-study, they have not yet been fully implemented and integrated with planning, decision-making, and resource allocations across applicable core themes. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the College implement, across the institution, an approach to program evaluation that better aligns and vertically integrates all levels of assessment and that contributes to the achievement of program goals. (Standards 4.A.2; 4.A.3; 4.A.4)
2. Assessment of core theme indicators is evident and consistent. Assessment of student learning, plans for improvement, and implementation of those plans, is inconsistent across the core themes. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the College assess student learning, appropriate to the core themes, and use the results of that assessment of student learning to improve student achievement. (Standards 4.B.1; 4.B.2)