2017-18 Summary of Annual Department Reviews (Years 4-6)
Columbia Gorge Community College
October 2018

Participating Departments

- Business Office
- Child Care Partners
- Human Resources: Payroll

- Instructional Services
- President's Office
- Student Services,

Information Technology Services (ITS) and Facilities did not participate in this year's review. Both of these departments faced significant personnel changes that impacted their ability to complete the review process. The chief technology and planning officer retired in December, 2017. His responsibilities were shifted to the online services specialist who filled in as the interim manager of ITS. As the college began the significant work of implementing a new ERP, an additional ITS staff member resigned in July, leaving the department with only 2.5 staff members to manage all department functions. The director of facilities similarly retired July, 2018, and the new director did not start employment until the end of July. He was not aware of the department review process until shortly before the September 1 due date. As a result, the Facilities review was not completed.

Summary of Highlights and Trends

Progress on 2017-18 Department Goals & New Goals for 2018-19

Similar to last year's department review, department goals varied in their scope and nature. There were broad goals that might be better described as department mission. These large goals are recognizable as ongoing, not necessarily something to be completed in any given year. However, they usually have identified sub-goals that may be completed in a year or two. Then there were goals that identified a more specific project that a department wanted to accomplish. The project generally included multiple steps and could involve multiple departments and have resource, human and financial, impacts. Finally, there were goals that represented projects that were specific to the department and did not involve other departments. These goals read more as a department "to-do" list for the year. Having a mix of these three types of goals would appear to show a healthy planning process: one that is looking to the future providing consistency and sustainability, but also one that addresses and respects the realities of immediate needs.

All departments described completion of or at least progress on most all of their goals. At the same time, there were some goals or portions of goals that had to be set aside or postponed. In most instances, unrealized goals were carried over and identified in the coming year's goals. Reported barriers included: staff turnover (internal and external partners), budget constraints, insufficient time available, and lack of available institutional data and research capabilities. Staffing was a common

theme in the reviews. Turnover and staff/faculty vacancies were not limited to any particular department. All departments referenced staffing issues or challenges that had to be dealt with. Some of these challenges were resolved (hiring of a new president), some are listed as a Big Dream, but the majority are ongoing and generally considered to be the result of budget constraints. Also noted was how staff turnover of external partners can create barriers for goal achievement when goals require the collaborative effort of multiple agencies. Another identified barrier was the lack of institutional research and data gathering capabilities highlighted by at least two departments. Concern was expressed that while the outsourced institutional research contract effectively manages our data reporting requirements for external agencies, we do not have the necessary internal research and analysis to address program planning, development and sustainability. Finally, while barriers may impede progress toward goals, they can just as often lead to creative problem solving and departments discovering new approaches to problematic areas.

Progress toward Institutional Strategic Goals

Gleaning information from the Department Reviews regarding mission fulfillment and progress toward institutional strategic goals is limited. Only two reviews identified how their department goals align with and support progress on Strategic Master Plan and Core Theme objectives and goals. The majority left it to the reader's interpretation of department activity. As the college continues to develop its planning and reporting processes, research on the intersection and alignment of department review and progress toward institutional goals and mission fulfillment would be beneficial. Developing links between these processes could help build a more institutional and united approach to mission fulfillment.

Assessment of Department Operational Functions

Departments were to analyze, evaluate and report on the performance/adequacy of department operational function areas F-I. Two of the six reporting departments responses are not included as they reported on function areas A-E instead.

F. **Communication & Coordination**

Departments have varying interpretations of this function area due to having differing constituencies with whom they are communicating; however, their responses fell into primarily one or more of the following four communication groups: customers (students, service users); internal staff (within the department); cross-departmental staff/faculty (within the college); and external partners/contacts (between college departments and external agencies and partners). A diverse set of methods were reported for communicating with each group. Customer communication methods included: face-to-face, phone, email, website, CGCC TV, Campus Currents, social media feeds, events, regional meetings, local fairs, and the use of a Customer Relationship Management software. Internal department communication was handled through regular meetings, faculty inservice, email, "Hang Outs", and Google Drive. Cross-departmental communication happens via email, phone, Zoom, requested f2f meetings,

institutional committees and councils, staff meetings, staff inservice, and the occasional walk across the hall or campus to drop-in on a colleague. Communicating with external agencies and partners happens via participation on a variety of local, regional and statewide committees and attendance at local events. While this is not an exhaustive listing of all the ways that CGCC departments are communicating, it shows a variety of communication techniques being used.

Responses regarding this function are focused mostly on listing the variety of communication vehicles in use. Less was reported on whether these methods were effective or not; however, a couple of departments did speak to quality of communication and areas for improvement. Time constraints resulting from over committed staff was referenced as an impediment to maintaining robust and inclusive internal department communication in one case. Another department spoke of the need to improve its cross-departmental communication and has included this as a goal for 2018-19.

Coordination was minimally addressed in the reports. It may be that the distinction between communication and coordination is not clear. The concerns expressed by the two departments in the previous paragraph touch on coordination and how a lack of communication can weaken coordination. Communication and coordination was described as having an impact on department planning and vice versa. The implementation of new Customer Relationship Management software has improved the timeliness and relevance of prospective student information.

G. **Facilities & Technological Resources**

All departments report that they have adequate facilities to carry out the function of their departments. Satisfaction was expressed regarding campus cleanliness, attractiveness, and safety.

Departments were for the most part equally satisfied with the technological resources available to them as well as the service provided by the Information Technology Services department. However, it was noted that the growth of synchronous instruction and online course offerings necessitates research into a potential increase in technology related to teaching, including: improved microphone and camera options and a new learning management platform.

There is anticipation around the introduction of a new Student Information System and its potential for improving the college's ability to support students and their success.

H. **Financial Management & Budget**

The four departments reporting on this function had varying takes on the adequacy of their budgets. One department reported that it had a remaining fund balance at the end of 2017-18 of $8,000, prompting a $10,000 reduction in its 2018-19 budget. Despite the reduction, this department still feels adequately funded. Another department suffered an $11,000 reduction

in its grant funding which resulted in the loss of an employee who was unable to afford the cut in wages and benefits due to the mandatory shift from full time to part time. The department needed to reorganize its staffing to accommodate the change. A reported gap in funding for on campus activities and support for Student Life is thought to be limiting the college's ability to effectively engage with students in these areas. Another department describes the budget as "slim" but notes that the department is practicing good stewardship in order to manage the funds available.

Regarding financial management, departments report that they are working closely with the Business Office to stay abreast of departmental allocations and spending. Suggested areas for review and improvement prior to the 2019-20 budget build are: 1) stricter oversight of travel expenditures, and 2) budgeting processes regarding lab fees and program/technology fees.

I. **Planning & Evaluation**

The purpose, amount and intensity of planning and evaluation activities vary across the reporting departments. Smaller departments with only two or three employees are able to communicate often, even daily, and are regularly checking-in regarding progress and efficacy of ongoing activities. Larger departments with employees in multiple locations and with varying work schedules have greater challenges for organizing department-wide planning and evaluation activities and generally make use of small sub-groups when doing this work. Two departments referred to external partner and agency requirements that necessitated specific planning and evaluation activities. One department referred to the annual department review as part of its planning and evaluation process. And only one department mentioned linking departmental planning to institutional planning and the college's Strategic Master Plan and/or Core Theme objectives. These last two observations appear to indicate a tendency for departments to plan independently of each other and with minimal awareness of any unifying college-wide goals.

Big Dreams

Department dreams, for the most part, fell into three categories: dreams about specific, functional department needs; dreams that speak to quality and attitude; and dreams related to potential programming and services. As may be expected, the realization of many of the dreams is contingent on funding, and the financial requirements may impact a single budget cycle, multiple cycles, or result in an ongoing expense (iPads for ELT and Board members, hiring of new positions [Compliance Officer, HR/Payroll Specialist, Work Study Student for the President's Office], building new facilities [skill center, on-campus childcare facility]). Then again, some dreams have less clear financial ramifications as they address quality and changes in culture or attitudes (achieve a culture based on collaboration, innovation and "can-do" attitude, be an Aspen award winning college, require diversity and equity training for all staff and faculty).

Finally, there are dreams that show that several departments are thinking about college programming and related services. Some of these dreams build on other previously mentioned dreams. For example,

the desired on-campus childcare center could provide, in addition to childcare services, a learning lab for students in CGCC's Early Childhood Education (ECE) program. A more robust ECE program could participate in state-wide efforts to create ECE classes that are portable and stackable across Oregon community colleges. Similarly, it is thought that the building of a college skill center with appropriate space would allow CGCC to be nimbler in providing innovative programming to meet community needs. Then there is a dream that mixes services and programming – to complete Degree Partnerships with all major public four-year Oregon institutions, including articulation of coursework and commitments regarding collective support services provided to transferring students.

Thoughts on Assessment Methodology and Potential Improvements

With the realization of the 2017-18 Department Review, CGCC has now completed two consecutive years of reported self-reflection and planning by college departments. Modifications were made to the Department Review Template and Guidelines in the winter/spring of 2018. The revised template was presented and training provided regarding its completion to the executive leadership team and department leads at the June 5, 2018 Quality Council meeting. In order to align to the seven year NWCCU review cycle, departments were requested to address all template items for reporting years 4-6 (Section One – mission only; Section Three – functions F-I; and Sections Two, Four and Five). Reviews were due by August 31, 2018.

There were some inconsistencies in the completion of the review. In Section Three: Assessment of Department Operational Functions, two of the six reporting departments addressed functions A-E rather than F-I. It appears they may have used last year's report as a template for completing this year's report.

Section Two: Action on Annual Goals & Analysis is the heart of the program review. While there was some improvement from last year, it appears that providing analysis continues to be a confusing area for several departments. A brief description of data and analysis was added to the Guidelines & Template, and analysis, its relevance and use, was explained and discussed at the June 5 training session. Still, the tendency was to list actions toward goal achievement but provide little analysis nor conclusion regarding overall achievement or status of the reviewed goal. Section Two includes a list of bullets to be addressed in regards to each departmental goal. The departments which responded to these bullet requests where much more successful in providing a complete accounting of goal achievement and analysis. It is recommended that this is an area for further training/professional development.

Section Two also asks departments to describe how the achievement of their departmental goal aligns with and supports the current Strategic Master Plan (SMP) objectives as well as Core Theme objectives and mission fulfillment. As noted above, only two of the six departments addressed this in their review. It may be that this is just an oversight in the review process; however, it may represent a more critical issue that departmental planning is not aligned with institutional planning.