

*Commission on Colleges  
Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges*

**A REGULAR INTERIM REPORT**

**Bellevue Community College**  
Bellevue, Washington

**April 13-14, 2000**

**Prepared by**

**Michelle Dondero, Vice President  
for Academic & Student Affairs  
Western Nevada Community College**

*A Confidential Report Prepared for the Commission on Colleges that Represents  
the Views of the Evaluator*

## Introduction

Bellevue Community College (BCC) is a comprehensive community college located in Bellevue, Washington. The school received initial accreditation in 1970 and hosted its most recent full-scale visit in 1995. Re-accreditation was affirmed in 1995, at which time the Commission requested a progress report to address two general recommendations related to the integration of budget and planning and the systematic use of outcomes assessment. As requested, BCC submitted a report outlining the school's progress in meeting the recommendations of the Commission on Colleges. The Commission accepted the report and noted that it was "...satisfied with the progress made regarding general recommendations 2 and 3".

This report documents the results of the regular fifth-year interim visit which was expanded to include a specific review of the distance learning activities at BCC. The evaluator specifically reviewed all items listed in Policy 2.6 on Distance Learning.

## Interim Report and Process of Evaluation

As required, the evaluator received a copy of the interim report, college catalog and other documentation prior to the visit, and college staff provided the evaluator with additional requested documentation during the visit. The interim report, which was prepared by the college steering committee, was especially well written and well organized. It provided the evaluator with specific information regarding each of the general recommendations listed in the 1995 full-scale report. In addition to reviewing written documentation, the evaluator met with key college administrators, distance learning personnel and academic faculty. An attempt was made to interview distance learning students, but students did not show for the scheduled interview.

## Actions Taken Regarding Recommendations

The interim report prepared by BCC addresses the recommendations included in the 1995 report, and it specifically and thoroughly addresses each of the seven general recommendations. Information on the significant recommendations follows.

### General Recommendation 1:

**It is recommended that the new central administrative structure be monitored to assure communication and teamwork between "front-line" departments and central administration. (College goal statement on teamwork, 1995 Standards VII--Instructional Staff and VII--Administration.) Reference from 1999 edition of Accreditation Handbook: Standard Six, Governance and Administration.**

In response to recommendations made in the five-year report, BCC flattened the reporting structure and reorganized important units. Academic administrators now report directly to the Executive Dean of Instructional Services, the Dean of Student Services reports directly to the president, and several units have been combined to form a new Institutional Advancement

division. Communication has been improved and specific activities and training have been instituted for all faculty and staff. All faculty and staff are now linked electronically. Faculty, staff and administrative comments regarding the new structure are positive and no problems were noted.

#### **General Recommendation 2:**

**It is recommended that options for improving the understanding, the coordination and the integration of systems for developing the budget, for updating and refining the college-wide plans, and for ongoing decision-making be analyzed and pursued. (College goal statement on Teamwork, 1995 Standard VII--Instructional Staff and VIII--Administration.) Reference from 1999 edition of Accreditation Handbook: Standard Six, Governance and Administration.**

BCC responded to this general recommendation in the 1997 interim report. Planning and budgeting have greatly improved. The budgeting process is now tied to college goals and the process provides for increased college participation. Again, electronic communication has helped to improve the communication and planning process at BCC. The budget process has been streamlined and the college has strengthened the link between planning and budgeting. Progress in this area has been substantial.

#### **Commendation:**

The college is commended for its improved budget planning process.

#### **General Recommendation 3:**

**Although outcome measures to assess achievement of mission and objectives have been identified, focus is needed to put data collected into a systematic college-wide framework that is understood, monitored and used by staff. (1995 Policy Statement 23--Education Assessment.) Reference from 1999 edition of Accreditation Handbook: Standard 2.2-- Policy on Educational Assessment.**

Following the full-scale evaluation in 1995, the college increased its emphasis on the systematic assessment of outcomes. Institutional performance indicators have been identified and course outcomes have been developed for many of the occupational programs. Data collection instruments for institutional effectiveness has been identified and three years of data is now available. The plan incorporates state mandated performance indicators, college staff have received extensive training on assessment, and the college has established the Institutional Assessment Group (IEG). The IEG is responsible for implementing the review process at the program level. The college is also working with the University of Washington to provide information on the success of transfer students, and joint meetings are planned later this year. Processes are in now in place which will help the college to expand its assessment efforts and further progress is anticipated. Although progress in the areas related to outcomes assessment is significant, the college is encouraged to continue its work in this area.

Recommendation:

The college should continue its current efforts to assess achievement and outcomes, and it should make sure the information is further integrated within its planning process.

**General Recommendation 4:**

**It is recommended that accurate and complete faculty and staff manuals be developed. These publications should include all policies and regulations that affect full and part-time members of the faculty, administration and the classified staff. (1995 Standard VIII--Administration.) Reference from 1999 Accreditation Handbook: Standard Four--Faculty and Standard Six--Governance and Administration.**

BCC revised its policies and procedures manual in 1996. The manual is posted electronically which allows easy access and frequent updates. A new and attractive employee handbook was printed in 1996 and all new employees receive a copy. The handbook was posted on the BCC Intranet in 1998. The part-time faculty handbook, which was developed in 1999, is now sent to all faculty.

Commendation:

BCC is commended for the development of attractive, helpful faculty and staff handbooks.

**General Recommendation 5:**

**It is recommended that options be explored to increase student and faculty access to a greater collection of books and media. Whether this is through budget increases or reciprocal borrowing agreements with other libraries, the college needs to meet the growing instructional needs for more information. (1995 Standard IV--Library and Information Resource.) Reference from 1999 Accreditation Handbook: Standard Five--Library and Information Resources.**

Student access to library resources at BCC has greatly improved since the 1995 visit. The library has been improved and expanded, and on-line access has greatly increased. BCC, in collaboration with 19 other community and technical colleges in Washington State, now has access to a web-based public access catalog system called Voyager. Both students and faculty are pleased with the improved access.

Commendation:

BCC is to be commended for improving student access to library resources including CD-ROMs and web-based databases.

**General Recommendation 6:**

**It is recommended that the college catalog be reviewed and edited for accurate, current and concise information, which includes a summary of student rights,**

**responsibilities, grievance, and discipline policies. (Eligibility Requirements #19, 1985 Accreditation Report, Recommendation #6, 1995 Policy Statement #5--Principles of Good Practice in Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment and Representation of Accredited Status, and Standard IX--Students.) Reference from 1999 Accreditation Handbook: Standard Three--Students and Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status.**

As recommended by the Commission on Colleges, BCC's college catalog has been reviewed and edited. The catalog is now published annually in order to provide more timely and accurate information. Required information regarding student's rights is included and the catalog is greatly improved.

#### **General Recommendation 7:**

**It is recommended that high priority continue to be placed on meeting the obvious and pressing need for additional and improved classrooms and laboratories, for expanded library to include student study space and for instructional and noninstructional equipment to match emerging technologies. (1995 Standard III--Physical Plan, Materials and Equipment.) Reference from 1999 Accreditation Handbook: Standard Eight--Physical Resources.**

College facilities at BCC have been greatly expanded and improved. The addition of several new buildings including the Northwest Center for Emerging Technologies and the general classroom building L have alleviated many of the problems noted in the report. Remodeling the Student Union building has had a similar positive effect. Landscaping has been greatly improved, and the general appearance of the college is excellent.

#### **Commendation:**

The college and the facilities administrator should be specifically commended for the significant improvements which have been made to the facilities at BCC.

### **Distance Education**

As requested by the Commission on Colleges, the evaluator reviewed Policy 2.6 and documented the library and support services, which are required in order to meet requirements. Distance education is clearly consistent with BCC's mission. Each program offered via distance education is approved in the department and by the division chair. The instructors require student/teacher interaction and student/student interaction is encouraged. Defined outcomes are required by the institution and by the distance education division. Program outcomes match the outcomes of on-campus courses and program integrity is clearly maintained. Department chairs are responsible for hiring faculty and for appropriate oversight. Assessment of achievement is required for each course. Training is offered for all teachers who teach via distance education, and faculty support services are available.

The Student Services Department has established its own web site and required services are available. BCC is an open admission college and students who enroll in BCC's distance education courses have the same access as on-campus students. Student services support of distance education students is improving and students generally have the appropriate services.

Many of the required library resources are now on-line and distance education students have greatly improved access because of the new network. The college continues to provide needed financial and technical support to distance education and has clearly demonstrated its commitment to distance education.

Distance education courses at BCC are evaluated using an on-line evaluation form, and distance education student outcomes and assessment are similar to the outcomes of on-campus students.

In summary, the distance education program at BCC is well established and continued success and growth in this area is anticipated.

### **Questions Related to Other Institutional Changes**

#### **Questions 1,2,3-Changes in Mission, Graduation Requirements, New Majors and Minors**

No significant changes in BCC's mission and objectives have occurred since they were adopted in 1994. Graduation requirements have not changed and while several new majors have been added, others have been eliminated. Although the general undergraduate admission policy has not changed, the college has adopted special admission procedures for underage students who are seeking admission to specific courses.

#### **Question 6-Enrollment**

Enrollment at growth at BCC has been substantial. The college enrollment has increased about 28% since 1995. The most significant growth is in continuing education and non-academic transfer programs. The number of female students has grown from 61% in 1993 to 68% in 1999. The college has also experienced a significant increase in the number of minority students and in the number of enrolled students with disabilities.

#### **Question 7-Faculty**

The number of full-time faculty at BCC has grown from 133 in 1994, to 156 in the fall of 1999. Major growth has occurred in information technology and English as a Second Language. The average faculty salary has increased from \$39,994 in the fall of 1994 to \$44,603 in the fall of 1999. Restrictions placed on faculty salary increases are negatively impacting the college's ability to recruit qualified faculty and staff. The tenure process at BCC has been reviewed and revisions are being incorporated in the formal contract negotiations, which are conducted between the faculty association and the administration. Faculty evaluation includes all required components.

#### Question 8 and 9-Changes in Physical Plan and Library Services

Important changes in the physical plant and in library services are discussed in earlier sections of this document.

#### Question 10-Finances

Funding changes at BCC include a decreasing dependence on state funds and increased support from grants, contract, entrepreneurial enterprises and fundraising. State support has decreased from 49% to 42% of the overall budget.

#### Question 11-Administrative Structure

Information regarding leadership and management is discussed in earlier sections of this document.

#### Question 12-Accomplishments

Major accomplishments at BCC during the last five years include greatly improved technology and expanded physical space. Future plans include expansion of existing technology, improved business processes and new emphasis on the liberal arts mission.

#### Question 13-Institutional Mission/Program Effectiveness

An analysis of mission and objectives and assessment appears in earlier sections of this document.

### **Conclusion**

Bellevue Community College has made substantial progress during the last five years. Major improvements in facilities and improved technological access have enhanced the educational programs and improved communication at all levels. The college has addressed all of the recommendations noted in the full-scale evaluation which was completed in 1995. The college has established needed support services for distance education programs and has implemented a number of planning and assessment projects.

### **Commendations**

1. Bellevue Community College is commended for its excellent new facilities and the major improvements which have been completed since the 1995 visit. New buildings, new landscaping, new technology and attention to detail have improved the educational environment and increased opportunities for students.
2. The college is commended for improving student access to library resources and the implementation of a web-based on-line access system. The college is commended for its increased use of CD-ROMs and web-based databases.

3. The college is commended for the development of attractive, new faculty and staff handbooks.
4. The college is commended for developing an inclusive budget process, which is tied to the planning process.
5. The college is commended for the quality of its five-year Interim Accreditation Report, which provided the evaluator with required information in a concise format.

### **General Recommendation**

1. BCC should continue its current assessment and planning efforts. The college should be encouraged to analyze the newly available data and outcomes information and to incorporate this information throughout its planning processes.