

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2017 EXTERNAL EVALUTION TEAM

Solano College Commendations

Commendation 1: The team commends the College for implementing one of 15 prestigious baccalaureate pilot programs under SB 769 that is also a member of California Community College Baccalaureate Coalition. This premier program provides invaluable workforce education and training leading to employment, builds on the College's expertise in biotechnology, is housed in a state-of-the-art facility, and is led by student-centered, passionate faculty and administration embodying the spirit of the College mission. This program is an exemplary model of maximizing opportunities for students who would not otherwise have access to higher education.

Commendation 2: The team commends the College for its work in lowering its federal financial aid cohort default rates from 33.7% down to 15.1% through implementation of a default-prevention program, which includes financial literacy workshops and loan counseling.

Commendation 3: The team commends the College's Governing Board, administration, faculty and staff for their financial management and forecasting. The College's concerted efforts to implement effective multi-year enrollment management practices, reduce costs, and increase ending balance amounts demonstrate the institution's commitment to fiscal stewardship.

Commendation 4: The team commends the College for its Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in Biotechnology and Automotive Technology which received recognition as CTE Stars, part of the California Community College Chancellor's Office Strong Workforce Program.

Commendation 5: The team commends the College's faculty, staff, administration and student leadership for developing and fostering a collegial culture that actively demonstrates dedication and commitment to students and the community.

Commendation 6: The team commends the College on the development and implementation of a comprehensive Facilities Master plan that effectively addresses the current and future needs of students and the community. The commitment and dedication of the faculty, staff, administrators, and Governing Board is evident in the safe, welcoming, and aesthetically pleasing working and learning environment.

Commendation 7: The team commends the College's Umoja Scholars program, a Chancellor's Office Award for Student Success recipient, for its efforts to support student learning and success, particularly for disproportionately impacted African-American students. In 2014-2015 African-American students enrolled in the cohort experienced a 77-89% course success rate as compared to an institution wide 54-56.5% success rate.

Commendation 8: The team commends the College’s English faculty for implementing an acceleration model which improved student equity and success. This program increased access to transfer-level English from 18% to 70% in a five-year period.

Solano College Recommendations

Recommendation 1 (Improvement): In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the Governing Board and College finalize the review, revision, and adoption of all the Board Policies and Administrative Procedures to ensure sound financial practices, financial stability and appropriate internal control mechanisms. The team also recommends that the Board establish and implement a formal plan to review and update all Board Policies and Administrative Procedures on a regular cycle. (I.C.5)

Recommendation 2 (Compliance): In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the College provide sufficient quantity, depth and variety of library support services, specifically access to a robust circulating library collection for Vacaville and Vallejo center students. (II.B.1)

Recommendation 3 (Improvement): In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the College provide equitable student support services for students enrolled at the Travis Air Force Base, Vacaville, and Vallejo centers for categorical programs such as EOPS, Veterans Services, DSP, and CalWORKs. (II.C.1, II.C.3)

Recommendation 4 (Improvement): In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the College implement a continuous cycle of comprehensive non-instructional program review and service area outcome assessment. Assessment results should be fully integrated into planning and resource allocation processes. (I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.7, I.B.8, II.B.3, II.C.1, II.C.2)

Recommendation 5 (Improvement): In order to ensure transparency, provide evidence of appropriate internal control structure for bond expenditures, and provide timely communication to the public regarding the appropriate expenditure of bond funds, the team recommends that the College work to ensure that the Citizen’s Bond Oversight Committee (CBOC) provides an annual report regarding bond expenditures. (III.D.5)

Recommendation 6 (Improvement): In order to increase effectiveness in integrated planning that supports resource allocation, the College mission, and the institution’s culture of transparency and sustained dialogue, the team recommends that all planning and shared governance committees formalize, assess, document, and widely communicate their decision-making processes. Identified planning priorities and the resulting assessments should be used to inform a continuous cycle of improvement. (I.B.5, I.B.9, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.3, IV.A.6)

Recommendation 7 (Improvement): In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the College increase capacity for institutional research to support assessment and planning for advancing the College mission. (I.B.1, I.B.8, I.B.9)

Recommendation 8 (Improvement): In order to improve student learning, the team recommends that the College increase capacity for distance education coordination, develop an integrated distance education plan, and establish a comprehensive faculty professional development program. Planning should include review, formalization, and implementation of processes and procedures to ensure that all online and hybrid courses demonstrate appropriate levels of regular and substantive instructor-initiated contact with students. (I.B.7, II.A.7, II. A.16, II.C.I, II.C.3)

Recommendation 9 (Improvement): In order to improve effectiveness and ensure student access and success, the College should conduct a comprehensive review of LR10. (II.B.3)