

Standard One: Institutional Mission

The institution has a statement of mission that defines the institution, its educational purposes, its students, and its place in the higher education community.

1.1 *The institution has a statement of mission adopted by the governing board, which identifies the broad-based educational purposes it seeks to achieve.*

Descriptive Summary:

The mission statement for El Camino College has evolved considerably since the college's last accreditation visit in Spring, 1996. Today, it appears as Board Policy 1200 (The El Camino College Mission, Philosophy, Values and Guiding Principles) (1.1) and begins, The mission of El Camino College is to meet the educational needs of our diverse community and to ensure student success by offering quality, comprehensive educational opportunities. El Camino College is committed to being an open access institution and serving students of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds.

The expanded mission statement also recognizes the role of faculty and staff in responding to the diverse and changing needs of the college's students and community by providing a comprehensive curriculum and a variety of educational opportunities:

- ¥ Achievement of Associate Degrees in Arts and Sciences
- ¥ Transfer to baccalaureate institutions
- ¥ Mastery of basic skills such as critical thinking, mathematics, written, and oral communication
- ¥ Cultural enrichment and lifelong learning
- ¥ Acquisition of the necessary career education and skills to successfully participate in the workplace and global economy
- ¥ Development of the economy and jobs in the region and state

Institutional goals, supporting or developed from the mission statement, are also presented to assure the attainment of the educational goals:

- ¥ Maintain optimal academic standards
- ¥ Ensure the availability of academic and student support services
- ¥ Provide the technology, infrastructure, and facilities to support teaching and learning
- ¥ Foster a positive campus climate
- ¥ Create educational, business, and community partnerships
- ¥ Follow progressive and prudent fiscal policies and practices
- ¥ Support continuous professional development for faculty and staff

These goals provide the clarity and specificity necessary for the college to actualize its institutional purpose and provide direction for the various departments and offices on campus. Consistent with the pattern of linking institutional goals to the mission statement are the statements of philosophy, values, and guiding principles that frame Board Policy 1200. The statement of philosophy focuses all college activities on El Camino's community and reiterates the commitment of the college to be responsible and responsive in all matters educational, fiscal, and social.

Further reinforcing this commitment is the college's statement of values, which places the institution's highest value on students and their educational goals. The statement of values also identifies the college's four core values—people, integrity, respect, and excellence.

The institution's role and scope, and its philosophy and values, all converge to produce the

guiding principles for El Camino College, which include a commitment to strive for distinction in everything the college does, to cooperate with the college's partners in education, business, and industry, and to provide access and opportunity to all without compromise or discrimination.

Self Evaluation:

El Camino College expanded its mission statement in 2001 to facilitate better the college's desire to establish a broader framework for assessing student learning, in and out of the classroom, as well as the institution's overall effectiveness. The one-sentence mission statement, previously utilized in the late 1990s, was easily publicized and served effectively as a canopy for all the educational purposes of the college. However, the expanded mission statement provides a clear and more comprehensive statement of the institution's future intentions.

While the college mission is included in the catalog (1.2) and the Educational Master Plan (1.3), there is no direct link to the mission statement on the college web page or the campus Infonet. The college communicates progress toward meeting institutional goals that are tied to Partnership for Excellence funds through the *President's Newsletter* (1.4), as well as through *College Performance on Partnership for Excellence Goals through 1999-2000*, a publication produced by the Office of Institutional Research (1.5). However, it does not appear that overall progress on meeting institutional goals has been comparably communicated.

1.2 *The mission statement defines the students the institution intends to serve, as well as the parameters under which programs can be offered and resources allocated.*

Descriptive Summary:

The mission statement clearly defines the college's commitment to serving students of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds. The changing

economic, educational, cultural, and technological needs of the students and community are, furthermore, recognized in the institutional goals and core trends identified in the Educational Master Plan. In response to the analysis of core trends and the direction established by the mission statement, El Camino College has developed partnerships and grants to deliver traditional and non-traditional teaching models and support programs that respond to the needs of clients in the South Bay and the surrounding areas.

Self Evaluation:

El Camino College continues to be responsive to the surrounding community's measurable and continuing shift in its cultural and ethnic demographics and has endeavored to bridge the educational and employment gaps of the underrepresented, underprepared student population with support programs like Adult Reentry, Project Success (focusing on improving retention and transfer for African American students), the Puente Project (focusing on improving retention and transfer for Hispanic students), Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement (MESA), Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOP&S), and a variety of tutoring services. Recently, the college has acquired Title V funding as a Hispanic-serving institution to support efforts of incoming freshmen from all backgrounds. The First Year Experience program combines learning communities and peer mentoring models to enhance academic success for beginning students. The Special Resource Center has established a partnership to provide transition programs and services for students who are learning or developmentally disabled. Its community transition program is one of five in the state and serves as a model for other colleges.

The El Camino College Language Academy (ECLA), developed as a community service-based program in English language instruction, and the International Students Program (ISP), which enrolls students in the college's credit curriculum, address the linguistic and transition-

al needs of foreign students who are coming to the college in ever-increasing numbers. The ECLA, for example, has tripled its enrollment to more than 200 students since its inception in 1997-1998, while the ISP has also tripled in size to 750 students since the institution's last accreditation. To be sure, the college has complemented its multicultural environment with an increased international flavor.

The institution has also developed programs and affiliated partnerships to serve a varied range of student and community needs. The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, Workplace Learning Resource Center, and One-Stop Career/Education Centers offer opportunities for clients transitioning from welfare to work and those who are seeking immediate retraining and employment. Further, the Center for International Trade and Development and the Center for Business Training, which offer state-of-the-art instruction in vocational fields designed to maximize the region's economy, address the economic and employment needs of the community. Programs such as Afternoon College, a credit program established for local high school students pursuing a head start in their college educations, and the College for Youth, which offers a comprehensive, community service-based curriculum that includes grammar, mathematics, and study and test-taking skills for elementary school children, expand the parameters of institutional offerings.

It appears that faculty and staff of the college agree that El Camino is largely accomplishing its mission to meet the educational needs of our diverse community. The results of an institutional priorities survey developed by the Noel-Levitz research group indicate that 59% of faculty and staff either agree or strongly agree that the courses and programs offered meet the needs of current students. Faculty and staff gave even stronger responses to questions dealing with special groups. Seventy percent, for example, agreed or strongly agreed that the college demonstrates a commitment to the needs of underrepresented populations, while 77%

agreed or strongly agreed that El Camino shows a similar commitment to students with disabilities.

Student feedback on a satisfaction survey, also developed by Noel-Levitz, produced a slightly broader range of responses. Thirty-nine percent of students noted that they were satisfied or very satisfied that the college does whatever it can to help students reach their educational goals, while an additional 20% said they were somewhat satisfied. In contrast, 47% of faculty and staff either agreed or strongly agreed with the same statement, while 27% somewhat agreed. When compared to other institutions comprising the Noel-Levitz western regional sampling of community colleges, El Camino students did indicate a lesser degree of satisfaction than their counterparts at other schools, so some exploration into the possible causes may be informative.

1.3 Institutional planning and decision-making are guided by the mission statement.

Descriptive Summary:

The college's expanded statement of institutional purpose continues to serve as the umbrella under which the college subsumes institutional goals and the Educational Master Plan. Because it is a research-based document, the master plan reflects El Camino's emphasis on outcomes-focused strategic planning more than any other operational document. The plan, with its institutional goals drawn from an analysis of core trends, now provides the foundation for decisions regarding instructional programs, support services, staffing, and facilities. At the operational level, the institutional goals have, in turn, helped to determine planning objectives and the allocation of resources. These goals are subsequently linked to individual plans developed at the division/department/unit level through the unit action plan (1.6), which is used to make requests for resources. The UAPs must indicate a direct link to target goals and core trends. Each division/department/unit must

specify the progress achieved in meeting the institutional goals in its annual report.

In order to provide a mechanism for better assessing the progress of divisions/ departments/units toward achievement of the mission of the college, as defined through its institutional goals, the college introduced (Fall, 2000) a new format for annual reports that major organizational units submit. Divisions/departments/units, in their annual reports, indicate how unit objectives tie directly to the institutional goals of the master plan. Requests for budget augmentations and enhancements, Partnership for Excellence funds, and VTEA funds must similarly demonstrate a linkage to the institutional goals before funding decisions can be made.

Self Evaluation:

With the introduction of the new annual report format, the college asks the major divisions and departments to provide their respective vice presidents with quantitative information concerning progress toward institutional goals and issues arising from program review, as well as performance on various key performance indicators. The new annual report, as well as other planning tools, such as the unit action plan, has contributed to heightening awareness that all planning and decision-making should be guided by the mission statement and its outgrowth, the institutional goals.

1.4 *The institution evaluates and revises its mission statement on a regular basis.*

Descriptive Summary:

The El Camino College catalogs of the early 1990s presented the mission statement in the same section as the history of the college (1.7). The mission statement identified the overarching intent of the institution and described the campus clientele, as well as the academic environment. The catalog also listed the college's functional goals, including general education,

occupational education, transfer education, developmental education, educational support services, and community services.

In an attempt to make its mission statement a succinct, easily disseminated, and vital expression of the institution's educational aims, El Camino College, starting with 1994-1995, publicized and distributed a one-sentence statement that appeared on such publications as the college catalog and *President's Newsletter*. The District Planning Council, when it developed the college's Educational Master Plan in 1998, designed and added a value statement, guiding principles, and, most important, eight institutional goals that would complement the purposes of the mission statement published in the master plan. Finally, on January 16, 2001, the Board of Trustees approved a modification of the mission statement that features a statement of philosophy.

Self Evaluation:

The expanded statement of institutional purpose that appears in the 2001-2002 catalog provides the most recent example of the college's commitment to evaluate and revise its mission statement. The impetus for moving from the one-line statement of the late 1990s to a publication of the expanded statement, in fact, stemmed from the college's accreditation steering committee's review of the of the mission statement in 2000. Given the emphasis on assessment and institutional accountability now influencing the accreditation process, the committee found that a broad statement of institutional intent, supported by institutional goals that give direction to the overall operation of the college, greatly facilitated the measurement of institutional effectiveness. The college District Planning Council intends to review the master plan annually and update it every three years. Although the college has demonstrated a willingness to revise its mission statement, coordinating periodic evaluation of the mission statement with updates of the master plan may be desirable.

Planning Agenda:

¥ Establish a process to communicate the progress of accomplishment of institutional goals toward the achievement of the mission. (1.1)

¥ Ensure that all major decisions are made in the context of both the mission statement and Educational Master Plan. (1.3)

¥ Develop a review cycle for the mission statement to guarantee that, as the community changes, the college remains responsive to its needs. (1.4)

References:

- 1.1 Board Policy 1200 — El Camino College Mission, Philosophy, Values and Guiding Principles
- 1.2 El Camino College Catalog, 2001-2002
- 1.3 Educational Master Plan
- 1.4 *President's Newsletter*, February 8, 2001
- 1.5 *College Performance on Partnership for Excellence Goals through 1999-2000*
- 1.6 Unit Action Plan
- 1.7 El Camino College Catalog, 1993-1994