Summative Essay, Standard III: Resources

While the institution is the vehicle for the educational journey, and instructional and support staff represent the guidance and map through which the journey is accomplished, resources serve as the infrastructure to facilitate students’ educational plans. This framework, consisting of human, physical, technical, and financial resources, supports the various educational pathways provided by Norco Campus.

Institutional Commitment

Norco Campus demonstrates its commitment to providing the resources necessary to offer high quality education to its students through an integrated resource allocation process that supports the institution’s mission statement and reflects student needs. As part of this commitment to support students, Norco has instituted strategic planning processes that ensure representation by all stakeholders and solicit participation campus wide. Using data provided by Institutional Research, each instructional, student services, and administrative unit assesses its human, physical, technical, and financial resource needs using the program review process. To ensure appropriate allocation of resources, resource needs are discussed in the Norco Academic Planning Council, the Norco Strategic Planning Committee and its subcommittees, the Norco Academic Senate, and the Norco Administrative Planning Council. In these deliberative bodies, high prioritization of a specific resource category is dependent, in part, upon satisfactory articulation and assessment of student learning and service area outcomes. Additionally, the institution requires all requests for resources to be linked to educational programs and student success initiatives. All these processes reflect institutional commitment to quality education.

Evaluation, Planning and Improvement

Evaluation, planning and improvement is the theme most closely linked to Standard III: Resources. Formal planning and evaluation are integral to Norco’s ongoing systematic and reflective campus-wide strategic planning process. A core element of this process concerns policies and procedures related to allocation of human, physical, technical, and financial resources to support quality educational programs.

The district has developed clear policies and procedures governing the employment, retention, evaluation, and professional development of its personnel. Norco Campus works closely with the district Office of Diversity and Human Resources to ensure appropriate understanding of and concern for issues of equity and diversity, and the campus regularly assesses its effectiveness in this area consistent with its mission. Hiring processes for each employee category are aligned with institutional planning and budget cycles. In addition, Norco has made a concerted effort to maintain the highest levels of commitment to academic excellence as well as to diversity and equity in its hiring procedures.

Norco Campus has integrated facilities planning into its institutional planning process, resulting in a strategic approach to prioritizing the physical resource needs of its students, faculty, and staff. In response to rapid growth, six new portable buildings are being moved on campus and are scheduled to open in fall 2007; a new Student Success Center has been approved by the Board of Trustees and is being discussed by a design team comprised of all campus stakeholders; and with Phase III of the Norco Campus build-out reconfirmed by the state, the com-
pletion of planned Phase III projects will significantly address Norco’s classroom and office space needs. A new Long Range Educational and Campus (Facilities) Master Plan is also being developed using the expertise of outside consultants experienced in environmental planning and college master plan development.

Technology resources on Norco Campus are kept up to date in order to support and enhance student learning. As part of ongoing evaluation, planning and improvement integrated into campus-wide strategic planning, the Technology Resource subcommittee was instrumental in determining the appropriate allocation of capital expenditures for technology, designing a plan that allowed upgrades for computers where appropriate and replacing computers where necessary. Accordingly, most Norco classrooms are now equipped with recently upgraded multimedia equipment; computer-based labs and other engineering, manufacturing, business, and dedicated computer classrooms have recently replaced hardware and software. The input from this subcommittee has been vital to maintaining the quality of hardware and software on campus and demonstrates the efficiency of the evaluation and planning processes at the Norco Campus.

The Norco Academic Master Plan reflects the mission and goals of the Norco Campus. As one of the primary elements for financial planning at both district and campus levels, the NAMP is reviewed and updated regularly. Institutional planning is linked closely to financial planning at both district and campus levels, and planning decisions are connected to the district strategic initiatives which focus on improvements in student learning and institutional effectiveness. The Vice President of Business Services will make a significant contribution to the design of a new district budget allocation model. The Financial Resources subcommittee of the Norco Strategic Planning Committee is the cornerstone for integrating financial planning with campus-wide strategic planning for resource allocation.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Essential to the comprehensive program review process is the establishment and assessment of student learning outcomes at the course, program, certificate, and degree levels. Resource allocation is based explicitly on annual program updates, with instructional, student services, and administrative unit SLOs included among the ranking criteria. At Norco Campus, each department develops an Academic Master Plan based on assessment of educational needs and projection of future growth. These resource needs are prioritized by the Norco Academic Planning Council using specific criteria. Central to these criteria is the requirement that a discipline has established student learning outcomes, assessed these outcomes, revised course outlines of record, and used the results of assessment to improve pedagogy. Linking student learning outcomes and assessment to resource allocation and prioritization indicates the importance Norco Campus and its constituencies place on student learning outcomes and demonstrates the link between enhanced student learning and institutional effectiveness.

**ORGANIZATION**

Norco Campus has developed an organizational infrastructure that affords it the capacity to make campus-based decisions and participate fully in district decision-making in a shared governance environment that provides meaningful opportunities for participation by all stakeholders. With respect to organization structure, the addition of vice presidents of business services and educational services has increased the capacity of the campus to develop and implement strategic
plans, identify and measure student learning outcomes and assist the district in prioritizing the allocation of human, physical, technological and financial resources. With regard to processes, the means by which institutional needs are identified and prioritized and resources are allocated to address these needs have been clarified and enhanced. While the campus remains proportionately small in relation to overall district enrollment, faculty, staff and administrators from the Norco Campus play an increasingly influential role in district decision-making.

**DIALOGUE**

Hand in hand with collegial shared governance at Norco Campus is ongoing, self-reflective dialogue centered on student learning. All constituents are invited to participate in all levels of planning, evaluation, and improvement, and this has been increased through the process of developing the accreditation self study document. As institutional strategic planning becomes more delineated, campus constituents continue to dialogue in determining future needs and resources. The dialogue occurs at all levels of the planning model and covers multiple issues, both simple and complex. At this time in the history of Norco Campus, it is still small enough to provide access to one’s colleagues and opportunities for self reflection. The processes and policies of the institution are transparent and accessible to all stakeholders.

**INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY**

The theme of integrity runs consistently throughout Norco’s policies and practice, particularly when hiring, evaluating, and helping to develop campus stakeholders who facilitate student learning. Following guidelines established by the state and district policy, Norco works with the district Office of Diversity and Human Resources to recruit and hire candidates who meet minimum qualifications and who will be ethical and appropriate in utilizing physical, technical, and financial resources. Great care is taken from the initial step in the hiring process to continued evaluation and professional development for all employees. When forming hiring committees, Norco strives to include appropriate constituencies, to ensure participation by tenured faculty where appropriate, and to reflect the diversity and range of interests of the department or discipline doing the hiring. Norco consistently strives to select the most highly qualified candidates who can contribute to the climate of high performance and integrity inherent at Norco Campus.

Financial integrity is vital for institutional integrity, and Norco’s financial plan, allocation of financial resources, and financial management system are indicative of the high integrity required by the institution. Currently, financial integrity is reviewed as the district’s annual budget, finances, and expenditures are audited yearly by external auditors. These audit reports are submitted to federal, state and local oversight agencies and to the district Board of Trustees. To further support continued appropriate resource allocation, the district has recently initiated the Three Colleges Project, to assess appropriateness and effectiveness of financial and administrative procedures as we move to a multi-college model. The creation and staffing of a new campus position, Vice-President, Business Affairs, has added additional oversight and advocacy for the campus in district financial planning and allocation.