Summative Essay, Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

Decision-making roles and processes are the drivers of an institution. Purposeful management of student learning and institutional effectiveness requires a clear vision and the determination to take responsibility for creating and directing the processes fundamental to the educational enterprise. Board members, administrators, faculty and staff acknowledge the designated responsibilities of each member of the institution, demonstrating ethical and effective leadership for the sake of continuous improvement of district and campus processes.

Institutional Commitment

All constituencies involved in the processes of decision-making at Norco Campus are actively committed to providing a high quality education congruent with the campus mission and goals. The active participation of staff in shared governance and on strategic planning and decision-making committees and councils reflects Norco’s commitment to the educational process. Norco’s president and administrators have created a positive environment for empowerment of staff, faculty and students by encouraging strong participation in the various strategic planning groups which help to drive the mission of Norco Campus. In turn, faculty, staff and students demonstrate their commitment to the improvement of the institution by actively and creatively contributing to the governance of the campus. Evidence of institutional commitment is shown not only through the active contributions of all constituencies, but also through clear and openly published delineations of the rights and responsibilities of faculty, staff and management and the use of established processes to work together collegially for the good of the institution.

Evaluation, Planning and Improvement

Norco Campus has embraced specific decision-making processes through which faculty, staff, students, and administrators govern the institution and work for the improvement of student learning. The Strategic Planning Committee and its nine specifically designed subcommittees dealing with all aspects of institutional planning, along with the President’s Cabinet, the Norco Academic Planning Council, and the Academic Senate, guide the development of the Academic Master Plan. Through the process of shared governance and participation on these committees and councils, faculty members have a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning and budget relating to their areas of expertise. Particular responsibility for learning programs and curriculum resides with the faculty and is demonstrated through membership on the District Curriculum, Program Review and Assessment Committees. The president and her cabinet provide strong leadership in the budgetary, resource allocation, and planning arenas and make recommendations about student learning programs and services. The leadership processes at Norco Campus are regularly evaluated in order to assure their integrity and effectiveness. Decision-making, planning, and evaluation are directed toward student learning and institutional improvement.

Student Learning Outcomes

Having ultimate responsibility for educational quality, the governing board supports institutional development of course, degree, program, and campus level student learning outcomes. The Norco Campus President and other institutional leadership groups are responsible for guiding and supporting collegial processes leading to improvement of teaching and learning. The development and refinement of student learning outcomes are supported by the strategic
planning model which is at the core of the governance structure of Norco Campus and Riverside Community College District.

General education SLOs at the district level are communicated to faculty and staff through participative, dialogue-based processes of comprehensive program review and assessment, in a cycle of evaluation, improvement, and re-evaluation directed towards the goal of enhancing student learning. Faculty leadership on the Norco Strategic Planning Committee and its subcommittees, the Norco Academic Planning Council, and the Academic Senate illustrates the role and processes of campus governance in promoting student learning outcomes.

The good of the institution is based on commonly agreed-upon goals of enhanced student learning and improved institutional effectiveness; all constituencies at Norco Campus – administrators, students, staff, and faculty – are unified in meeting this goal.

**Organization**

*Organization* is the key theme related to governance and decision-making processes at an institution. Governance processes at Norco Campus are consciously and deliberately directed toward full participation of all stakeholders in the institution. Through the Norco Strategic Planning Committee, the Norco Academic Planning Council, the Academic Senate, the President’s cabinet, and Associated Students of Norco campus all constituencies are involved in developing, discussing, evaluating, revising, and re-evaluating institutional mission, goals, and SLOs for the sake of supporting student learning.

The president oversees the administrative structure and serves as the chief executive officer of the Norco Campus, reporting to the district chancellor and advising the Board of Trustees on all matters related to the administration of the Norco Campus. The president also shapes values, goals, and priorities for the Norco Campus and communicates them to all constituencies on the campus. Norco Campus administrators serve on the President’s Cabinet and Administrative Planning Council and participate either directly or in a supporting role in other governance processes on campus and in the district.

Norco has a shared governance process that promotes inclusion in decision-making at all levels. Institutional leaders ensure that faculty, staff, students, and administrators communicate openly and freely on a regular basis. The various organizational structures in which faculty, staff, students, and administrators participate provide appropriate forums in which to do so. Articulation between and among these various components is evaluated and revised when necessary.

The Chancellor serves as a liaison between the Norco campus and the governing board. The District Assessment Committee supports the efforts of the campuses in coordinating student learning outcomes for a shared district curriculum through its efforts in helping disciplines define SLOs and in taking the lead in developing general education SLOs. The District Academic Senate and its curriculum committee provide oversight for shared curriculum and resolve curricular issues. Fundamental to all organizational structures at Norco Campus and in the district is the commitment to support student learning and improve institutional effectiveness - and to ensure that resource allocation is tied to these goals.

**Dialogue**

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**NORCO CAMPUS ACCREDITATION SELF STUDY**
The Norco Campus Mission Statement summarizes the campus commitment to dialogue as follows: “As a continuing process, we listen to our community and respond to its needs while engaging in self-examination and ongoing dialogue, planning, and improvement.”

Shared governance at the Norco Campus supports the participation of all members of the campus in a process of self-reflection and conversational exchange about student achievement, student learning, assessment of SLOs, and the effectiveness of policies, processes and organization. The leadership of the campus has supported dialogue through a variety of means including a dialogue workshop in February 2007, a vibrant campus culture of open communication and collegiality, and ongoing support of governance processes that are inclusive of all constituencies. The president consults with faculty and engages in dialogue with the community as part of the process of ensuring that the educational goals and mission of the Norco Campus are being achieved and that the campus serves the needs of its identified student population.

Strategic planning processes associated with the transition to a three-college district provide evidence of the importance of meaningful dialogue to the institution. All campus constituencies have similarly participated in formal and informal discussions as part of an intensive examination of the effectiveness of participatory governance mechanisms on a rapidly growing Norco Campus.

The Board of Trustees also engages in self-evaluation which includes reflective dialogue, further indicating the extent to which all the parts contribute to the whole: an institution committed to ongoing review and self-reflection with the goal of institutional improvement.

**Institutional Integrity**

Norco Campus demonstrates institutional integrity in its leadership and governance roles and processes in a variety of ways. Established policies embody the Board and chief administrators’ commitment to guiding educational quality with consistency and integrity. The campus president is dedicated to providing a model of leadership for the Norco Campus through a clearly defined process of planning, organizing, budgeting, and assessment of institutional effectiveness.

The Board of Trustees and Chancellor similarly fulfill their primary responsibilities for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity of the district and its campuses. Commitment to the appropriate governance of the district includes published evaluation processes for assessing and monitoring the performance of board members, the chancellor, the campus president, and management personnel.

The transparency and inclusiveness of district and campus strategic planning processes, the decision-making which takes place through the Strategic Planning Committee and other governance entities, the written processes governing institutional procedures in the institution, and fiscal responsibility are strong evidence of Norco’s unflinching commitment to honesty, truthfulness, and institutional integrity.