

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Stone Child College
Box Elder, Montana

Focused Interim Evaluation Report

May 4th-5th, 2010

A report prepared by David C. Mitchell for the Northwest Commission on Colleges
and Universities

Introduction

Stone Child College (SCC) is a public, two-year tribally chartered and controlled community college located on the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation. The Reservation is located 30 miles south of Havre, Montana. SCC was established in 1984 by the Chippewa Cree Business Committee. In the Spring of 1993 SCC received accreditation from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

In July 2008 the NWCCU reaffirmed the accreditation of Stone Child College. In reaffirming accreditation, the Commission found that Recommendations 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 and 9 of the spring 2008 Comprehensive Evaluation Report were areas where the college was substantially in compliance with Commission criteria, but in need of improvement. The Commission requested that the institution prepare a Focused Interim Report and host a Commission representative in spring 2010 to address Recommendations 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 and 9 of the spring 2008 Comprehensive Evaluation Report.

This is the Focused Interim Evaluation Report based on the spring 2010 Focused Interim Evaluation visit and spring 2010 Focused Interim Report. Specifically this report addresses recommendations 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 and 9 of the spring 2008 Comprehensive Evaluation Report.

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Report, Supporting Materials and Visit

It is clear that SCC took the process of preparing a Focused Interim Report seriously. The report was thorough and responsive to the recommendations. Available support materials were adequate to provide the information necessary to do the evaluation. The report was organized by standards with the response to each recommendation falling under the standard referenced in the recommendation.

The visit itself was well organized and very informative. I would like to thank Stone Child College for their hospitality and support and for sharing their beautiful campus during the visit.

The methods utilized to verify the contents of the SCC's Focused Interim Report included interview meetings with students, faculty, staff, administrators and Board members and review of support materials relevant to the recommendations. Individuals who participated in the various interviews/meetings included Board members, the college President, the Student Government President and other student leaders, Dean of Academics, several faculty from various programs, assessment coordinator and assessment committee members, Information Technology staff and Dean of Student Services.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

- 1) The committee recommends SCC review its mission statement to ensure that the statement exclusively articulates institutional purpose rather than the process to achieve that purpose. (Standard 1.A)**

December 2009 the SCC Board of Regents approved a New Mission statement. (See Appendix I) This new Mission Statement and along with the accompanying five Guiding Principles were arrived at through a comprehensive and participatory process which is to be commended. The Mission Statement and the five Guiding Principles, which together can be considered the institution's goals, articulate institutional purpose. (Standard 1.A)

Recommendation 2

- 2) The committee recommends that the college review all its certificate programs to ensure that they demonstrate a coherent design, and are characterized by appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, synthesis of learning, and the assessment of learning outcomes.**

(Standard 2.A.3)

All certificate programs at SCC have been reviewed. Supporting materials confirm separate student learning outcomes exist for all certificates. However, assessment plans for all certificates need to be finalized. The current catalog will expire spring semester 2010; the new catalog will include all certificates along with associated courses and student learning outcomes. Scope and sequence certificate brochures are also being created.

Related instruction is clearly listed in publications as a required component of certificate programs.

It is too early to determine if the concern over whether certificate programs are offered as a coherent sequence as presented in publications has been completely addressed with sustainable practices. It is recommended that strategic course scheduling and enrollment management strategies be further developed. It is a concern that assessment plans for all certificates have not yet been completed. (Standard 2.A.3)

Recommendation 3

- 3) The committee recognizes the college's multidimensional assessment efforts and recommends that the college take steps to go beyond data collection to a comprehensive and systematic plan for analysis of the data in terms of the impact of activities on students, programs, and services and accomplishment of the mission. (Standards 1.B, 2.B, and Policy 2.2)**

There are multi assessment activities occurring at the College. It is clear that assessment is taken seriously as evidenced by the Assessment Report Form. However, a review of those forms revealed that the section entitled Use of Results to Improve Programs or Services is generally left blank. This indicates that the analysis of assessment data for the purpose of developing strategies for improving programs and services through a continuous quality improvement model is not occurring in a regular and systematic way. (Standard 1.B, 2.B and Policy 2.2) There is evidence that it occurs in certain programs, but, documentation confirming that it is consistently occurring throughout the college was not evident.

Specifically, General Education Learner Outcomes for the associate degree are identified in the catalog, but, in their current form they would be difficult, if not impossible to access. It is recommended that the general education learner outcomes be written so they can be more easily assessed. The expected learner outcomes for the degree program options are currently written in that way and could serve as an example. Also, a method for assessing the general education learner outcomes needs to be developed.

(Standard 2.B.2 and 2.C)

Recommendation 4

- 4) The committee recommends that SCC consider developing more articulation agreements with appropriate colleges or universities in transfer areas.**

(Standard 2.C)

At least four new transfer articulation agreements have been developed and formally approved by SSC and the transfer institution. SCC is to be commended for securing those articulation agreements and for pursuing additional agreements and not waiting for a statewide process outside of the college's direct control. (Standard 2.C)

Recommendation 5

- 5) The committee recommends that SCC develop a more comprehensive faculty evaluation plan that includes a variety of methodologies. (Standard 4.A.5 and Policy 4.1)**

Since the spring 2008 comprehensive evaluation visit SCC has developed a comprehensive full-time faculty evaluation plan that includes student, peer and

administrative evaluations, evaluations by the Dean of Academics and the President and a portfolio including professional development, community involvement and cultural activities. A concern is whether such a comprehensive evaluation process will be sustainable. It is slated to be implemented fall 2010 after faculty, assessment committee, President and Board approval. All full-time faculty are on annual contracts and evaluations are considered during decisions regarding those contracts. Part-time faculty are evaluated by faculty and administrators. Those evaluations are filed and documented. Evidence that this is done consistently is the fact that students interviewed stated that they had an opportunity to evaluate faculty in all of their classes.

The college is to be commended for progress to date on the faculty evaluation plan. It now needs to be successfully implemented. (Standard 4.A.5 & Policy 4.1)

Recommendation 6

- 6) The committee recommends that the core collection, electronic resources, and supplementary material be acquired in adequate and sufficient quantity to support the educational programs of the college. The print collection should be evaluated, weeded, and updated to reflect the academic components of the college mission. Funding for all types of library materials and additional technical support to assist with launching databases; securing the print collection, especially the tribal archives; and fully utilizing Winnebago (or another Integrated Library System) should be stabilized regardless of the availability of other funding sources. (Standards 5.A, 5.B and 5.D.6)**

Since the spring 2008 comprehensive evaluation visit several new electronic databases have been acquired. Additional technical support to launch and support the databases has been secured. The budget to support the library appears to be sufficient to provide for a core collection, electronic resources and supplementary materials that are adequate and sufficient in quality and quantity to support the educational programs of the college. (Standard 5.A, 5.B, 5.D.6)

There has been a change in administrative leadership of the library that has facilitated the commendable improvement in services and support provided by the library.

Recommendation 7

- 7) The committee recommends the institution's computer centers, telecommunication facilities, and network operations are adequately staffed to insure that computers are readily available for use by the institution's students, faculty, and staff. (Standards 5.A and 5.B)**

Since the spring 2008 comprehensive evaluation visit the college's information technology (IT) department has received one new full-time position. Additional training for IT staff has also been provided. New computers and additional servers have been acquired.

Interviews with the IT staff revealed that they felt adequately supported to do their jobs. Students interviewed stated that their IT needs were being met. This is a more positive student response than the evaluation team received during spring 2008 visit. Feedback from interviews and observations of facilities indicate that IT operations are adequately staffed and equipped to ensure that computers are readily available for use by the institution's students, faculty and staff. (Standard 5.A & 5.B)

Recommendation 9

- 9) The committee recommends that SCC review its nepotism policy and take necessary steps to ensure the policy is applicable to all programs and services throughout the college. (Standard 9.A.4)**

The college's Policies and Procedures 2010 Handbook contains a Nepotism Policy and a section on Code of Conduct. Within the Code of Conduct section there is language on ethics and conflict of interest. The Nepotism Policy together with the language in the Code of Conduct on ethics and conflict of interest that are found in the Policies and Procedures Handbook support institutional integrity. (Standard 9.A.4)

The college should clarify how the ethics and conflict of interest language in the Code of Conduct section of the Policies and Procedures Handbook relate to members of the Board of Regents. (Standard 9.A.4)

Concluding Statement

Stone Child College has made substantial progress in many of the areas referenced in the eight recommendations that this Focused Interim Evaluation Report addressed. Their mission statement along with the Guiding Principles now articulates institutional purpose; their certificate programs demonstrate a coherent design, they have developed new articulation agreements and are working on several more; although yet to gain final approval and be implemented a comprehensive faculty evaluation plan has been drafted; support for the library and information technology has been enhanced and user satisfaction improved.

There are areas addressed in this report where improvement is still needed. Assessment plans for certificate programs need to be finalized; assessment data needs to be analyzed in a more consistent and structured manner and used to improve services and programs; general education learner outcomes need to be accessible and assessed.

Commendations

- 1) SCC is commended for the significant capital projects that have been completed over the past few years – most recently a new Wellness Center that opened a few days before the interim visit. The new learning spaces are functional, aesthetically pleasing and improve learning opportunities.
- 2) SCC is commended for creating a learning environment where students feel supported and cared for and where they have access to the resources, human and capital, that they need to meet their education and training goals.
- 3) SCC is commended for the significant progress that has been made in addressing the recommendations in the 2008 Comprehensive Education Report regarding library and informational technology support and services. (Recommendations 6 & 7)
- 4) SCC is commended for the work and progress on creating articulation agreements.

Recommendations

- 1) It is recommended that SCC finalize assessment plans for all the certificate programs. (Standard 2.A.3)
- 2) It is recommended that SCC analyze and utilize assessment results in a more consistent, structured and documented manner to improve programs and services. (Standard 1.B, 2.B and Policy 2.2)
- 3) It is recommended that the General Education Learner Outcomes be accessible and assessed. (Standard 2.B.2 & 2.C)
- 4) It is recommended that the faculty evaluation plan gain final approval and be implemented fall 2010. (Standard 4.A.5 & Policy 4.1)

MISSION STATEMENT

STONE CHILD COLLEGE (SCC), A TRIBALLY CONTROLLED COMMUNITY COLLEGE, EXISTS TO OFFER POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE ROCKY BOY COMMUNITY. SCC WILL PROVIDE STUDENT ACCESS FOR EDUCATIONAL TRAINING NEEDS THROUGH ACCREDITED CERTIFICATES AND DEGREE PROGRAMS FOR TRANSFER, WORKFORCE ENTRY, CONTINUING AND DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION.

CORE VALUES:

PRESERVING THE PAST, EDUCATING THE PRESENT, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

TO PROVIDE FURTHER SPECIFICITY TO THE MISSION STATEMENT, THE SCC BOARD OF REGENTS HAS COMMITTED THE COLLEGE TO THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

1. PRESERVE AND PROMOTE THE LANGUAGES, CULTURES, AND HISTORIES OF THE CHEYENNA CREW.
2. ASSIST TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS IN START DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING, RESEARCH, AND OTHER NEEDED SERVICES.
3. COLLABORATE WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES IN FURTHERING THE INTERESTS OF THE COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY.
4. CONTINUALLY ASSESS INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT FOR INCREASED EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS.
5. MAINTAIN A STUDENT-CENTERED, LIFE-LONG LEARNING ORIENTED ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY SERVICE.

