

## **Themes Summary**

### **Of the Self Study**

Cañada's process of the self study studied the themes and referenced them to the Standards. Theme Captains reviewed and pulled out the material that related to each theme. These themes can be references throughout this self study with specific references in Standards I, II, III, and IV.

### **INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT**

Cañada's Institutional Commitment to provide a high quality education is stated in our mission statement. Cañada College has a comprehensive mission statement, complemented by a vision and values statement, that expresses its broad educational purposes, defines its intended student population and conveys its commitment to achieving student learning. The college has gone through an intensive process and has also created a Strategic Plan that will guide the college and compliment the mission.

There are various practices and programs in place that reinforce the college's commitment to student learning and student success.

The College Council is the primary body entrusted with advising the President on college-wide matters concerning budgeting, planning and governance issues.

The Budget and Planning Committee is a subcommittee of the College Council. This group uses quality data to make fiscal decisions in a shared governance setting.

The Strategic Planning process was reinstated to update the previous plan. This committee has reviewed the mission, values, vision and goals of the college.

The Curriculum Committee is a subcommittee of the Academic Senate. Their function is to coordinate and monitor Cañada's curricular offerings so that they uphold the California Education Code and be consistent among the divisions of the college.

Program Review is a yearly institutional process. Detailed assessments of programmatic outcomes are provided as central elements of review. These

include assessment of student classroom success, student learning outcomes, and comprehensive department review.

The Faculty Evaluation process is for full and part-time faculty. This process includes administrative, peer and student evaluations focused on quality of instruction and professional growth.

Cañada is constantly searching for ways to integrate instructional and student services. This institutional commitment is most visibly expressed in the opening of the new Library Learning Center Building at the center of the college. This symbolizes and realizes Cañada's determination to making integrated Student and Instructional Services available to every student.

### **INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY**

Institutional integrity concerns a commitment to honesty, reliability, and ethics and to practices that demonstrate this commitment. The theme of institutional integrity is apparent throughout Cañada College's publications and is demonstrated at college meetings. Institutional integrity is evidenced in the vision, mission and values statements, the academic integrity policy, program review documents, and in the Associated Students of Cañada statement of core values. The academic policies and practices that are in place to ensure integrity and ethical practices are reliably communicated to students. Student perceptions of Cañada College are reflections of a commitment to integrity in academic practices.

Cañada College's vision "to ensure student success" conveys a commitment to student learning; this is reflected in the mission statement to "ensure that students from diverse backgrounds achieve their educational goals by providing quality instruction." Values such as "personalized instruction and service, active learning ... high standards of excellence, increased student access," and community partnerships are promulgated through the catalogue and web site. Descriptions of how the mission of quality education is accomplished can be found in the catalogue, the web site, campus policies, senate constitutions, and

program review documents. The information disseminated through these publications is clear, accurate and current.

A commitment to ethical practices is found in the institution's statement on academic freedom which encourages "the sharing and cultivation of a wide variety of viewpoints. Academic freedom expresses our belief in inquiry, informed debate, and the search for truth; academic freedom is necessary in order to provide students with a variety of ideas, to encourage them to engage in critical thinking and to help them understand conflicting opinions." Ethical practices are described in an academic integrity policy which was developed in 2004 when faculty identified the need for a formal policy. The catalogue communicates the expectation that students are to "demonstrate integrity in all academic endeavors ... and be proud of their achievements. General principles of academic integrity include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted."

Institutional integrity is seen in practice during meetings and in the shared governance processes. For example, the current mission and values statements were created through an open process which included extended discussions at faculty, classified and student senate meetings and during open forums on campus. College Council, Curriculum Committee, Planning and Budget Committee, senate meetings and division meetings are examples of forums for dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning. The Program Review and peer faculty evaluation are processes during which the integrity of curricular offerings is assessed.

Student needs are identified through the Program Review process, satisfaction surveys, counseling, the Campus Ambassador program, outreach activities and the matriculation process. Success at addressing identified student needs and achievement of the goal to provide quality instruction is demonstrated in the results of the Noel-Levitz survey which shows high student levels of satisfaction with the instruction and support services they receive. Through this survey students conveyed their perceptions that they receive an excellent quality of

instruction, that class times are convenient, that they experience intellectual growth, that faculty are knowledgeable, that policies are clear and well-publicized, and that staff are caring and helpful.

The faculty and staff at Cañada College express confidence that this institution demonstrates integrity; this is stated throughout Cañada College's accreditation self-study document. Descriptions and evaluations within each standard describe philosophies and practices that speak to a commitment to honesty, truthfulness and ethics. The intention to provide quality education, the ways in which this is accomplished, and evaluation of what is done well and areas for improvement are described. Staff, faculty, students and administrators agree that institutional integrity is highly valued and practiced at Cañada College.

## **DIALOGUE**

Cañada College engages in purposeful dialogue intended to inform planning, decision-making, and consensus building. Intentional opportunities to involve broad-based dialogue occur in all shared-governance bodies and frequent all-College meetings facilitated by the College President and others. As evidenced throughout the self-study document, this open and encouraged communication and reflection methodology has not always been promoted. Over the past two years, significant progress in creating venues for students, staff, faculty, the administration, and community members to participate in insightful and on-going dialogue have flourished. As the College engages in a comprehensive strategic planning process, opportunities to provide input and respond to data has fostered a culture of rich, reflective dialogue and a climate where critique is productive in guiding institutional planning processes to better serve students, assess student learning and fulfill our mission to our community at large and as a California community college.

Central to supporting a culture of dialogue is the College's shared governance structure; those bodies include the Academic Senate, Associated Students of Cañada College, Curriculum Committee, Classified Senate, Instructional Student

Services Council, Planning and Budget Committee and College Council. The Planning and Budget committee and College Council are both comprised of constituent representation membership. Information flowing to and from these shared governance bodies by student, staff and faculty senates, divisions, and administrative councils is critical to decision-making that is based on college-wide discussion and recommendation.

Formalized shared governance bodies are forefront in fostering a climate of deliberate dialogue through additional venues relying on consultative discourse inform decision-making. They include the following:

- All-college meetings to discuss important information in an open and participatory manner are held each semester. Meetings with the strategic planning consultant have occurred as well as two-part information gathering and feedback sessions with the District's Educational Master Planning consultants in 2005-06. These meetings ensure that n-hall meetings were also conducted to gain broad input on recent data that has illuminated areas of high need in serving and retaining students.
- Evaluation and revision of the College Mission Statement is under consideration by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. These meetings have facilitated discourse, discussion, and dialogue about our mission in terms of institutional commitment to program integrity. Consistently, these meetings are well attended and evoke a high degree of thoughtful participation. This method of deep and systematic evaluation was last conducted in 2003 during the development of the last Strategic Plan. The Mission should be more deliberately referred to as a touch stone for institutional planning, evaluation, improvement and student learning.
- Dialogue inculcated in faculty collaborations, workshops and forums guides the development and assessment of Student Learning Outcomes and informs Program Review, program planning, and shared governance decisions. Students have a relatively high opinion of student learning as evidenced by the Noel-Levitz SSS. At this time only the math department has completed the SLOAC cycle. While discussions are broad and reflective, implementing and evaluating student learning remains in early

developmental stages across the curriculum and in student services programming.

- The *Olive Press*, the College's monthly newspaper, provides information to College staff, the district at large, and in the community. Information is disseminated beyond college boundaries to inform the greater community of pertinent College information.
- Institutional research provides quantitative and qualitative data to inform and guide strategic planning, Program Review and program development. Strides have been made to interpret and discuss much of this data with constituent groups on campus and district administration as a means of identifying ways to strengthen programs and enhance student learning. Quality data generated by state MIS reporting and the Office of Institutional Research at the College is increasingly being relied upon to inform decisions and allocation of resources and assess overall institutional program completion.
- Regular faculty peer review evaluates and assesses all instructional programs regardless of location or delivery method as a means of informing planning and program improvement.
- Collaborative relationships with our sister colleges, local universities, and high school districts have been developed after extensive dialogue with broad constituencies as a means of addressing identified needs that serve the community at large. For example, the University Center was established as mutual needs were identified for serving students in San Mateo County with local access to public university programs. The Middle College Program was developed in partnership with the Sequoia Union High School District to address articulated needs of local high school students that did not fit in the traditional high school setting.
- The development, implementation and institutionalization of the Freshman Success Program (now First Year Experience) was a result of consultation and networking between Cañada staff and program staff at Santa Ana College, also an Hispanic Serving Institution.
- Long range capital planning utilizes data from facilities master planning, annual updates of the five year construction plan and information on the

condition of the facilities to identify priorities. This information and cyclical evaluation of the Colleges facilities informs District-College decision making.

Even though dialogue and the commitment to open and accessible information sharing is strongly advocated, concern that the District Office is less than open and inclusive in sharing information or soliciting input when budgetary decisions that affect the colleges are under consideration is evidenced by responses to the Employee Accreditation Survey. There is mixed reaction and concern that resource allocation is equitable. Extensive meaningful dialogue about budget allocation is not experienced as broadly as it could be.

### **ORGANIZATION AND DECISION MAKING**

Cañada College benefits from a logical organizational structure and an employs open and inclusive decision-making process through the shared governance system that has been discussed throughout this self-study document. Student learning is at the forefront of decision making, resource allocation and staffing concerns. Curriculum Committee discussions have expanded to cover Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment, Program Review and articulation between our local high schools, our sister colleges and our UC and CSU partners. New facility construction and facility planning displays a clear commitment to providing the finest learning environments possible; this commitment to the learning environment acknowledges that student learning will occur best when the whole student is considered and supported.

Standard I outlines the institutions commitment to continuous evaluation and program improvement as noted in college and district mission, vision, values statements. For example, the College mission states that "It is the mission of Cañada College to ensure that students from diverse backgrounds achieve their educational goals by providing quality instruction in transfer and general education courses, professional/technical programs, basic skills and activities that foster students' personal development and academic success."

In 2004 the Academic Senate Governing Council undertook an extensive revision of the Program Review process. The new process encourages faculty in each discipline to do extensive of statistical data that documents program effectiveness and currency of courses. With data in hand, faculty members make recommendations for strengthening programs and present this both in a written document that is posted on Inside Cañada, and at a Curriculum Committee meeting to which the entire community is invited to attend. Increasingly Program Review recommendations inform the allocation of resources for instructional equipment and supplies as well as the acquisition of new faculty and staff positions.

Standard II outlines the comprehensive process by which courses and programs are developed. Faculty, staff, Advisory Committee Members and administrators collaborate to identify courses and programs that will meet the need of the Community College service area. Once identified, faculty develop appropriate courses and they are brought forward to the Curriculum Committee by the division dean. Once receiving Curriculum Committee approval, they proceed to the Matriculation Coordinator for appropriate articulation with our CSU and UC partners. Student learning is at the heart of this process and is identified defined through the Course Outline of Record and Student Learning Outcomes.

Faculty are continuously evaluating student learning at the course level through appropriate assessment activities. Summative and cumulative assessments are used to assess satisfactory completion of courses. All new and revised courses must include specific student learning outcomes. A significant percentage of faculty members are working to link meaningful student learning outcomes to appropriate assessment at both the course and program level. Additionally, the faculty is working on developing institutional student learning outcomes for the Associates Degrees.

The road toward developing and implementing student learning outcomes and assessments has been broad-based and inclusive. Many faculty members have participated in college and district sponsored training events, while others have attended conferences and training off campus; these activities have been



coordinated by the faculty Student Learning Outcomes Coordinator. Information from these events and other resources regarding SLO's is made available on the SLOAC website. In general the College communicates effectively with both the student body and the broader campus community through Inside Cañada, the Cañada web page and printed catalogues and course schedules. In addition, agendas and minutes of key shared governance bodies are posted online for public review and as an historical archive.

Standard III addresses the physical, personnel, and fiscal resources. For example:

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Standard IV examines the depth and breadth of the committee structure that ensures full participation by all constituency groups involved at the institution: students, faculty, staff, administrators, and the community. For example, the revised hiring process for staff, administrators and faculty are based on accessible data, information from available program reviews and comprehensive community input.

## Summary

Because Cañada College values the diverse voices that students, faculty, staff, administrators and community member contribute to the rich and reciprocal process of shared governance, the institution has designed full participation into the decision making process. Vertical and horizontal communication systems are in place to ensure that individuals are notified of important opportunities to participate and contribute. Students participate through the Associated Students CC, positions on key shared governance bodies, and through various co-curricular activities. Faculty members participate in their departments and divisions, through membership in the Academic Senate and AFT, and on all shared governance bodies. Staff members participate through participation in the Classified Senate, CSEA, janitors and on all shared governance bodies. Administrators and supervisory staff participate at the division level, ISSC, Cabinet and on all shared governance bodies. The community is invited to participate on advisory committees and through strategic planning study groups.

College Council is the primary shared governance body. Its mission is to advise the college president on matters of college interest including student learning and the learning environment. Members of College Council base their recommendations on consultation with their constituency groups and recommendations from the Planning and Budget Committee. The President takes further council from the President's Cabinet and Presidents Advisory Committee. In the process of this broad consultation, decision making at the College responds the educational hopes and dreams of our community and student body.

### **EVALUATION, PLANNING, AND IMPROVEMENT**

Canada is working to incorporate the steps of evaluation, planning and improvement clearly into all processes at the college. For several years in the past, the position of college research was either not filled or filled by individuals for only a short period of time. As a result, the data and data analysis needed and used in the evaluation, planning and improvement steps for all processes were not readily available. In 2003, a college research was hired who is still working at the college, so it is now easier to get the data necessary for the steps of evaluation of student achievement, student learning, and the effectiveness of processes, policies and organization.

In Standard One the theme of evaluation, planning, and improvement is seen in the new Strategic Planning Process, which began with the 2006-2007 academic year. The college is in the process of evaluating extensive data on the complex demographics and learning needs of the student population of the area. At the same time through the Strategic Planning Process, the College's Mission Statement is being evaluated in terms of this data and other data. The College developed a Strategic Master Plan in 2002-2003, but it has not consistently evaluated and improved this Plan; the new 2006-2007 Strategic Planning Process offers the college the opportunity to incorporate the steps of evaluation, planning, and improvement consistently from the beginning.

The Program Review process is a place where the steps of evaluation, planning and improvement are seen in Standard Two. Beginning with student achievement, Canada incorporates the evaluation of student achievement in the Program Review process by providing data to the college community on student success, retention, and persistence. This data is used by faculty in Program Review to evaluate student achievement in department programs in terms of success, retention and persistence. The process of Program Review for Instructional Programs has become well-established with the new instrument introduced in 2004, and the presentation of the Program Review documents by each department has become part of the Curriculum Committee calendar in the spring semester. The Student Learning Outcomes section of Program Review focuses attention on student learning and provides faculty with the opportunity to evaluate student learning at the course and program level. In Program Review evaluation, faculty uses this student achievement data and SLO information to plan and improve their courses and programs to serve students better.

After the faculty in the departments with help from the division deans has evaluated all aspects of their programs and made plans for program improvement, the entire campus is invited and all the constituencies of the college represented on the Curriculum Committee are informed of the Program Review summary information. In Standard Two in Student Services (see what they have written there about evaluation, planning and improvement.)

In terms of Standard Three, Resources, the information from Program Review is used by Budget and Planning Committee and the ISSC Council to consider and rank requests for new faculty and classified positions at the college. This process was updated this academic year. One change was to create a document which lists the criteria by which all positions will be evaluated, and the second change was to include two faculty members in the process to rank faculty positions and two classified staff to rank classified positions in addition to the administrators on the ISSC Council. All college constituencies have been very pleased with the transparency and fairness of this new process which clearly incorporates evaluation, planning and improvement in the hiring process. (See

Standard III pg.5 I think this process is in place now.) Furthermore, evaluation, planning and improvement are also seen in the systematic, regular and equitable evaluation of all college employees. (I don't understand the comment on page 6 about a "lottery method" of evaluation. Doesn't the contract state specifically what type of evaluation for faculty based on the previous type of evaluation? I don't know about administrators or classified employee evaluations.) In terms of financial resources, the college's Planning and Budget Committee is working with a new District resource allocation model developed in Spring 2005, quality data, Program Review recommendations, and in the near future, a new Strategic Plan to evaluate and plan how best to use the college's financial resources. Filling the positions of College Budget Officer and Financial Analyst has strengthened the evaluation and planning process involving financial data and resources.

In Standard Four, Leadership and Governance, the role of leadership and the college's governance and decision-making structures and processes are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. (Do we do this?) Results from the college survey indicate that the majority (62%) agreed or agreed strongly that all groups work collaboratively to achieve the college's goals, and 76% are satisfied with the opportunities that they have had to participate in college-wide planning. At the level of the Board of Trustees, the evaluation, planning and improvement process can be seen clearly in the Board's response to a recent evaluation suggesting a need for more information regarding program planning. In response, the Board has requested more presentations on teaching and learning, and in January, the Board had a presentation on Intradistrict Articulation, highlighting the ways the three colleges can remove some obstacles that may impede students' progress toward graduation and transfer.

The hiring of a researcher, College Budget Officer and Financial Analyst, the adoption of a new Program Review document and process and a new District allocation model, and the formation of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee have all contributed in beneficial ways to the cycle of evaluation, planning and improvement to help serve students better.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Canada College's approach to Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Assessments gives the faculty the flexibility and freedom to develop their own strategies for implementing student learning outcomes. The precondition for this development is to realize that the idea of SLOs have long been in practice. For instance, the college's course outline of record already asks faculty to identify objectives and list what "students will be able to" do. In general, faculty have always been trying to improve their teaching for the sake of student learning. The new language of SLOs shifts the ideas from teaching to student learning point of view and deepens the importance of collecting and analyzing data. It is here that we begin our journey to institutionalize SLOs.

The first step was the administration's support to give release time to a Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Cycle (SLOAC) coordinator. Once identified in late 2004, the SLOAC coordinator participated in state-wide sponsored workshops to gain more information regarding implementation of SLOs in other community colleges.

In the process, the SLOAC coordinator has networked with other SLOAC coordinators; the strongest and most effective collaborations are with the counterparts in Canada's sister colleges, College of San Mateo (CSM) and Skyline College of the same San Mateo Community College District. During a flex day in fall of 2005, the SLOAC coordinators teamed up to present the colleges' commitment to SLOs. Since then, this collaboration continued to make speakers and workshops available to all the faculty in the three colleges.

Progress within the Cañada has been few, but significant. One major move toward institutionalizing SLOs is to establish a SLOAC Philosophy; this document was approved by the Academic Senate in October of 2005. Among the points made in this philosophy is the fact that SLOs in curriculum must stay within the faculty prevue. And so, with the Academic Senate's consent, the college

revised the program review process to include reports of SLOs and assessments within the programs. This displayed the institution's commitment to SLOs, with the hope of expanding the use and effectiveness for improvement in student learning.

Another big stride in this SLO journey is the submission of SLOs along with new and modified course outlines. When a department proposes a new course or would like to submit a course outline modification, they need to submit a list of SLOs attached to the course outline. Cañada's approach to this process exemplifies our flexibility and freedom for developing SLOs. We purposely did not incorporate our SLOs as part of our official course outlines, but rather to be submitted separately. The college sees SLOs as a dynamic list of outcomes that can easily be modified in the SLO and assessment cycle.

Our college is not without those who oppose SLOs. For reasons such as standardization or ineffectiveness, some faculty are resisting the investment of time and effort in developing SLOs. Regardless of their viewpoint, our requirements in course outlines and program reviews will, at least, keep the dialog among faculty members active as they prepare to defend their courses and programs. We can only hope that the few faculty and departments that have taken on this endeavor will set good examples that show effective results for others to follow suit.

To date (Jan 2007), we have about 30% of our courses that have associated SLOs for their courses or programs. Further, only 2-3 programs have begun the assessment process. We believe that the SLO requirements for the course outlines will continue to add to our SLO database and the program review process will encourage faculty to examine the assessment cycle.

Also underway is the college-wide discussion about institutional SLO's at the degree level. Our first draft was formed in the fall of 2006 and we continue to discuss these college values in the following spring. We hope to have a

resolution at the end of the academic year that would seal our commitment to the SLOAC.

Evidence can be found at <http://www.smccd.net/accounts/canslo>

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