

Ohlone Community College District
Accreditation Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)
Western Association of Schools and College (WASC)
2006-08 Accreditation Self-Study Process

Telling the Ohlone Stories
[Updated: December 2006]

Introduction

The heritage of our namesake, the Ohlones, provides a metaphorical roadmap for our everyday work. Our dedication to developing community, especially in support of student and employee learning is an important example of this, as is our commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability. Our accreditation self-study provides an opportunity to model another cultural practice of the Ohlones, the art of storytelling. While engaging in the conventional process of the Self-Study assessment, we will also produce compelling Ohlone Stories of student and employee learning outcomes that give life to our Ohlone College values and strategic goals and the ACCJS/WASC accreditation standards and themes.

The following excerpt from the California Indian Storytellers Association (CISA) website (<http://www.cistory.org/>) provides a rich context for this effort:

Stories as rich as the landscape.....as varied as the People and their tribal traditions

"A long, long time ago, the Creator,
and who knows how many Great Beings
- gave the People language.
At this time stories were born..

...Stories mirror our world,
at the same time they are like rays of sunlight
illuminating the dark places
so that we can see more clearly..

...Without our stories..
...we would be lost."

Georgiana Valoyce Sanchez
(Chumash/Tohono-O'Odham)

From Difficulty to Renewal

Ohlone's accreditation was reaffirmed in January 2002, after a self-study and site visit conducted in 2001. During the following academic year, 2002-03, then Governor Gray Davis announced draconian mid-year cuts for community colleges. These cuts were particularly harsh because many of them targeted categorical funding for services to students with highest needs, including Matriculation and DSPS. This led to layoff notices to those faculty and staff funded in these areas. These mid-year cuts went beyond Matriculation and DSPS and deeper into the general fund leading to layoffs in the management and classified ranks, as well as program closures. The cuts also meant that no faculty positions were filled that year, even those vacant due to retirements. In the midst of all of this, our Vice President announced her resignation. Within days of that news, our President announced his retirement. This would require institutional mobilization to search for successors in the midst of a severe budget crisis.

Although the 2002-03 budget crisis and resulting program closures and layoffs were debilitating, Ohlone survived that dark and difficult year and its aftermath. For the past three years the college has experienced phenomenal renewal, a transformational return to its original roots as a learning college. Ohlone has reinvigorated its core values of excellence in teaching and learning and students success. In pursuing the Learning College Model we have placed student and employee learning outcomes at the core of our strategic plan. We have also made a firm commitment to inclusiveness in shared governance and active outreach to our community. Our strategic plan is focused on measurable outcomes and we have developed activities and resources to support it. The stories associated with this remarkable renewal and transformation will be a centerpiece of our upcoming accreditation Self-Study. We intend that our Self-Study serve as a foundation for continuing renewal in the future.

Weaving Accreditation Standards and Themes with Institutional Values and Goals

Part of the renewal process at Ohlone involved embracing and implementing the recommendations from the 2001 ACCJC-WASC visiting team evaluation. The team urged Ohlone to approach its strategic planning efforts differently than we had. They recommended that through an inclusive process of shared governance, we develop a limited number of achievable goals with measurable outcomes that are linked directly to the support of student learning and resource allocation.

During the 2003-04 academic year, a new shared governance system at Ohlone was born from a college-wide effort to identify institutional values and goals in alignment with the ACCJC-WASC recommendations. At the same time a Title III project was developed to promote the Learning College Model, primarily through instructional reform, in support of student and employee learning outcomes. Thus, the development of the new governance structure and strategic vision, values and goals, and the development of the Title III project were more or less the same process.

Our institutional values and strategic goals, with their concentration on the learning, were created with an institutional awareness of the new ACCJC-WASC accreditation standards and themes. The core of the new standards and themes are student and employee learning outcomes, and institutional commitments and actions that support and enhance student and employee learning. The ACCJC-WASC accreditation standards and themes, and the Ohlone College strategic values and goals have been woven together as an integrated system of planning and assessment.

Integrated Framework for Telling the Ohlone Story

The integrated planning approach described above positions us well to create a framework for our Self Study that will present the Ohlone Story in a way that recognizes the organic relationships between the accreditation standards and themes and the strategic plans and actions of the College. A major outcome is to chronicle Ohlone's journey over the past six years by presenting compelling stories of our accomplishments that reflect an integration of the ACCJC/WASC criteria with the College's own unique framework for planning and assessment.

Elements of an Ohlone Story

Our Ohlone Stories will spring from the review and assessment of our accomplishments and challenges related to our values and strategic goals and the accreditation standards and themes. These stories will come from a variety of perspectives at the College including institutional, program, department and individual. The stories will share a comment fabric of elements:

- Manifestation of our College Values
- Contribution to achieving our College Goals
- Demonstration of meeting the Accreditation Standards
- Expression of the Accreditation Themes

To reinforce the interrelationship between our College Values and Goals and the ACCJC Accreditation Themes and Standards, we have prepared a one-page presentation of these four important components to guide our work. This document is attached.

Building an Ongoing Process of Assessment and Storytelling

Too often self-study and assessment at schools and colleges is externally driven. Caught up in the day to day challenges, educational institutions can overlook ongoing evaluation until required reports to outside entities are due. An important goal of our current ACCJC-WASC self-study is to continue a process that will become an ongoing part of our culture and operations. We believe that the concept of “storytelling” will capture the imaginations of our faculty, staff and students and result in self study and celebration of employee and student learning outcomes that are intentional and continuing institutional endeavors.

Ohlone as a Learning College and Learning Organization

Ohlone College has a strong institutional commitment to being “A World of Cultures United in Learning.” The Learning College focus on student and employee learning outcomes at Ohlone has deep roots, reaching back to the original statement of educational philosophy over 40 years ago and continues to this day. A key component of being a Learning College is to “walk the talk” by being a Learning Organization. A Learning Organization views all members of the organization as learners and recognizes that the learning process is central to effective decision making, problem solving, and continuous organizational improvement and renewal. Our Self Study will be a valuable learning experience for the Ohlone College community and a chance to celebrate student and employee learning outcomes.

Self-Study Assessment and Learning Teams

We will approach our Self-Study from the Learning College and Learning Organization perspectives. We are engaging in ongoing and self-reflective dialogue about student and employee learning outcomes to encourage individual, group and institutional learning. We will document our learning from our Self-Study, along with creating an agenda for future learning. The Ohlone shared governance and strategic planning body, the College Council, will serve as the Accreditation Steering Committee and will create a Self Study Learning and Assessment Team for each section of the Accreditation Standards. We will also create two additional teams. One will concentrate on a Substantive Change Proposal related to our new Newark Center for Health Science and Technology; the other will concentrate on our Distance Learning activities. Team Leaders representing administration, faculty and staff will be selected for each Team to coordinate the learning and assessment work.

At the direction of the College Council, Dr. Treadway will work with the College Leaders group to develop a process for populating the Standards Teams and identifying Team Leaders. Using the “Guide for Evaluating Institutions” published by AACJC/WASC, the Self Study Learning and Assessment action plan will incorporate the following learning and assessment strategies:

- Establish Team membership and Co-Chairs
- Identify ways to create engagement of the college community in reviewing your Standards
- Examples: team meetings, special meetings of existing groups, special focus groups, open forums, surveys, etc...)
- Complete a Team Response for each of your Standards
- Responses should be based on engagement activities and a review of the Questions and Suggested Sources of Evidence in the ACCJC/WASC “Guide to Evaluating Institutions”
<http://www.ohlone.edu/org/instruction/docs/200408accredcommguidetoevaluatinginstitutions.pdf>
- Use the web-based Word template for analysis and reporting on standards
- Prepare interim report and presentation to the College Council

- Encourage the development of “Ohlone Stories” that relate to your Standard areas and demonstrate the integrated nature of our institutional work
- Document outcomes related to the College Strategic Plan and suggest updates to the Goals
- Document new learning by Team members resulting from the Self Study work
- Integrating Values, Strategic Goals and Accreditation Themes

As the Accreditation Steering Committee, the College Council will conduct ongoing dialogue forums during 2006-07 to review and identify evidence of the integration of the College Values, Strategic Goals and Accreditation Themes into the culture and operations of the institution in support of student and employee learning outcomes. In addition to devoting meeting time to this process the Council will also employ a web-log to generate online dialogue on the themes. The Council will also guide the development of the Self-Study Report to assure that the response to the Accreditation Standards and Themes, along with the College Values and Strategic Goals, reflects a systems thinking approach. The systems approach will result in a report and the telling of stories that weave these elements together in an integrated manner.

Components of the 2006-07 Ohlone College Self-Study

Mission Statement

Ohlone College offers instruction for basic skills, career entry, university transfer, economic development, and personal enrichment for all who can benefit from our instruction in an environment where student learning success is highly valued, supported and continually assessed.

College Core Values

1. Lifelong learning opportunities for students, college personnel and the community
2. Open access to higher education and actively reach out to underserved populations
3. Diversity and inclusiveness
4. High standards in our constant pursuit of excellence
5. Trust, respect and integrity
6. Team work and open communication
7. Innovation, risk-taking and entrepreneurship
8. Stewardship for our human, financial, physical and environmental resources

Strategic College Goals

1. International/Multicultural
2. Learning College Model
3. Learning communities, cohort groups, enhanced facilities, and improved course availability
4. Continuous learning for all personnel
5. Promote the health, environmental, cultural, and economic vitality of the communities served
6. Promote and maintain an accessible, clean, safe, and healthy college environment
7. Resource Development
8. District-wide facilities plan

ACCJC/WASC Accreditation Standards

- I: Institutional Mission/Effectiveness
 - A. Mission
 - B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness
- II: Student Learning Programs/Services
 - A. Instructional Programs
 - B. Student Support Services
 - C. Library/Learning Support Services
- III. Resources
 - A. Human Resource
 - B. Physical Resources
 - C. Technology Resources
 - D. Financial Resources
- IV. Leadership and Governance
 - A. Decision-Making Roles/Processes
 - B. Board/Administrative Organization

ACCJC/WASC Accreditation Themes

1. Institutional Commitments
2. Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement
3. Dialogue
4. Student Learning Outcomes
5. Organization
6. Institutional Integrity