FOLLOW-UP TEAM REPORT

COLLEGE OF THE REDWOODS

Eureka, California

A Confidential Report Prepared for

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the follow-up team's visit to
College of the Redwoods, November 12, 2013

William T. Scroggins, Chair

ACCREDITATION FOLLOW-UP VISITING TEAM

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<div align="center">**SUMMARY OF FOLLOW-UP REPORT**</div>

DATE OF VISIT: November 12, 2013

INSTITUTION: College of the Redwoods

TEAM CHAIR: William T. Scroggins
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The two-member team conducted a follow-up visit to College of the Redwoods on Tuesday, November 12, 2013. The primary charge to the team was to verify the contents of the Follow-Up Report. Specifically, the team reviewed evidence that College of the Redwoods has fully resolved the deficiencies associated with Recommendations 6 and 7 of the 2011 Evaluation Report and has implemented and sustained its program review and planning processes associated with Recommendations 1 and 2 from the 2011 Evaluation report and Recommendation 1 from the 2008 Follow-Up Report such that the Standards ennumerated in these Recommendations are fully met. In addition, the team was charged with reviewing evidence that College of the Redwoods meets Eligibility Requirement 17 and Standards III.D.1.b and III.D.2.c based on observations in the 2012 Show Cause Team Report.

The team reviewed the Follow-Up Report dated October 15, 2013 provided by College of the Redwoods, the 2011 Evaluation Report, the 2012 Show Cause Team Report, and documentation provided by College of the Redwoods to support statements in the Follow-Up Report. The team requested and reviewed additional evidence provided by the College and extensively viewed evidentiary information provided by the College on its web site. The team also conducted on site interviews with administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

The team found the Follow-Up Report to be well written, thorough, and sufficiently documented. The links to online documentation worked well. Requests for additional information were followed up satisfactorily both in advance and on site.

The team used interviews with key College personnel for four distinct purposes. The first was to verify with a range of individuals that the referenced events and stated conclusions in the Follow-Up Report were accurate and complete. The second objective was to verify that activities, reports, and processes related to planning and program review that were initially underway as of the November 2012 team visit took place satisfactorily and in a manner that continued to meet the Standards. Third, through review of documentation and interviews with relevant personnel, the team sought to verify that hiring practices and professional development were in place and functioning sufficiently to meet, respectively, Recommendations 6 and 7 and associated Standards. Finally, the team reviewed evidence of fiscal stability and evaluated specific changes the College has made to date with respect to budget policy and procedure as well as personnel changes, actions by the governing board, and results of negotiations between the College and exclusive representatives of employee groups.

This report begins with the team's summary of the College's continuing practices in the areas of planning and program review. The report then presents the team's observations, findings, and conclusions with regard to Recommendations 6 and 7. The report concludes with a dicussion on compliance with Eligibility Requirement 17 and Standard sections III.D.1.b and III.D.2.c.

<div align="center">3</div>

**EVALUATION OF THE COLLEGE USING ACCJC STANDARDS
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS**

PART I. Sustained Implementation of Program Review, Budgeting and Planning Processes

Recommendation #1 – Student Learning Outcomes
In order to meet the standards and improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the college: maintain an on-going, sustainable process of assessing student learning outcomes at the course, program, certificate, and degree levels; promote widespread dialogue on the results of the assessments; and use assessment results to improve programs and institutional processes including resource allocations. (IB.1, IIA.1.c, IIA.1.b, IIA.1.c, IIA.2.b, IIA.2.f, IIA.2.i, IIB.4, IIC.2, IIID.1, IIID.2.a, IIID.3)
(a) In order to meet Standard IB.1, the team recommends that the college include student learning as one component in assessing institutional effectiveness;
(b) In order to meet Standard IIA, the team recommends that the college fully and meaningfully assess all certificate and degree programs using student learning outcomes assessment to improve student learning and ensure that faculty and staff fully engage in the student learning outcomes assessment process. Additionally, the team recommends that the college develop a streamlined process and accountability measures for student learning outcomes assessment.
 (c) In order to meet Standard IIB.4, the team recommends that the college complete measurable student learning outcomes for all appropriate student services programs, utilize a variety of assessment methods, and use the results to improve the delivery of support services. Analyses of the actual student learning outcomes for students support services should be fully integrated with institutional planning and resource allocations.

Recommendation #2 – Strategic Planning
In order to attain sustainable continuous quality improvement in institutional planning, the team recommends that the College: integrate its component plans into a comprehensive strategic plan to achieve broad educational purposes and improve institutional effectiveness; establish and assess measurable, actionable goals to improve institutional effectiveness; include educational effectiveness as a demonstrated priority in all planning structures and processes; and promote on-going, robust and pervasive dialogue about institutional effectiveness;. (IB.1-4, IIIA.6, IIIB.1.a, IIIB.2.a, IIIB.2.b, IIIC.2, IIID.1.a, IIID.2.g, IIID.3)

Recommendation #1 - 2008
The College should determine a template for student achievement data and related analyses that is to be included in all program reviews and should use the institutional research staff and others knowledgeable about data analyses to guide the faculty and ultimately the College in discussions of what these data show about student success; these discussions should become part of the culture and practice of the institution. (IIA.1a and c, IIA.2.a, IIA.2.e)

Significant Changes since the Comprehensive Visit
The positions of Vice President for Instruction and Vice President for Student Services have been combined into one position. The number of deans has been expanded from two to five. The college has significantly reorganized the committee structure utilized for the planning and budgeting process. Three committees, Budget Planning, Facilities Planning, and Technology Planning, have been combined into the Budget and Planning Committee. That committee now has a Facilities Subcommittee and a Technology Subcommittee that continue many of the same processes. In addition to regular Executive Cabinet meetings, the President now holds Expanded Cabinet meeting which include leaders of constituent groups.

Findings and Evidence
With respect to program review and Recommendation 1-2008, the 2011 Evaluation Report states, "The team found evidence that the college has adequately addressed this recommendation in that the Office of Institutional Research provides a populated data template in instructional program reviews and has provided training in data interpretation. However, it is not clear that there is the necessary widespread dialogue of the analyses of these data. Although there is evidence of improvement, the team suggests that college discussions of what these data show have should become fully institutionalized as part of the culture and practice of the institution. This recommendation has still not been fully addressed." The 2012 Show Cause Team Report states, "The team was able to validate that the program review datasets are central to institutional planning and that the College community has engaged in an authentic and meaningful dialogue related to these datasets and their relationship to student success."

Through review of documentation and direct interviews, the team found adequate evidence that the College continues the institutionalized use of student achievement and student learning data to inform decision-making and so continues to address Recommendation 1-2008 and meet the associated Standards. The College continues to regularly evaluate its decision-making process and make appropriate improvements. For example, the program review format has been made simpler, and the program review template now includes detailed examples on linking planning to resource requests.

With respect to strategic planning and Recommendation 2, the 2012 Show Cause Team Report states, "Going forward, the College will need to follow through on its plans to incorporate the results of this objective data in its planning and improvement processes as it has done with Key Performance Indicators and qualitative assessments used in previous cycles."

Through review of documentation and direct interviews, the team found adequate evidence that the College has followed through on its plans and has incorporated the use of objective data in its planning processes and so has addressed Recommendation 2 and fully meets the associated Standards. The College continues to evaluate the planning and budget process and make changes based on that input. The program review form now gives examples to guide the linking of resource requests to strategic planning objectives, and timelines have been adjusted so that the completion of program review now leads more closely to budget allocation decisions. For at least the third time in the planning-and-budgeting cycle, a template was used by the Budget and Planning Committee to rank program review resource requests and document that these requests link to planning agendas developed in each unit's program review plan.

With respect to using the results of student learning in institutional planning, Recommendation 1, the 2012 Show Cause Report states, "the College has institutionalized regular College-wide discussions of what student achievement and student learning outcomes data mean in terms of evaluating student success and has integrated these discussions into all levels of institutional planning …."

Through review of documentation and direct interviews, the team found adequate evidence that the College continues to assess student learning and use the results to inform institutional planning. The College has incorporated user evaluation of the outcomes assessment process to make regular incremental improvements. Since the team's last visit, the student outcome assessment reporting tool has been simplified, the form now requires documentation of the link between student outcome assessment and the improvement of teaching and learning, and the program review timeline has been shifted to earlier dates to align more effectively with the student outcome assessment timeline. These changes have been facilitated by an improvement in the student outcome assessment tool which has been used for several years. The tool now captures faculty dialog about how outcome assessment results are to be used to implement changes for program outcome improvement. The College continues to utilize the Institutional Effectiveness Scorecard to monitor the extent to which this student outcome assessment process is utilized uniformly and extensively throughout the College.

Conclusions
The College continues to address Recommendations 1 and 2 from the 2011 Evaluation Report and Recommendation 1 from the 2008 Follow-Up Report. The College continues to fully meet Standards IB.1-4, IIA.1, IIA.2, IIB.4, IIC.2, IIIA.6, IIIB.1, IIIB.2, IIIC.2, IIID.1, IIID.2, and IIID.3.

Part II. Resolution of Deficiencies Related to Hiring and Professional Development Processes

Recommendation #6 – Strategic Hiring Plan
In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the College develop and implement a strategic hiring plan which analyzes demographic data to address employee equity and diversity. (IIIA.4.b)

Significant Changes since the Comprehensive Visit
The former Executive Director of Community & Economic Development moved to become the Interim Director of Human Resources/EEO/ADA Compliance Officer in January 2011 and became permanent in the position in January 2013. An Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee has been formed and meets regularly.

Findings and Evidence
In September of 2012, the College adopted both a Strategic Hiring Plan and an Equal Employment Opportunity Plan. Minutes from committee meetings and agendas and minutes from governing board meetings were reviewed by the team. Leaders of the classified and faculty unions as well as the faculty senate and Managers' Council were interviewed by the team. From these documents and interviews, the team verified that the steps in the Strategic Hiring Plan have been carried out over the last year including data collection and analysis, revision of hiring policies and processes, broader advertising of positions, and training of those on search committees. The team also found that the Equal Employment Opportunity plan has been similarly implemented including data collection, analysis, and training. Input and updates for both plans are accomplished through an advisory committee with representative

membership. The reviews and revisions to both plans are annual, done first in 2012-13 and underway in 2013-14.

Conclusions
The College has demonstrated through policies and practices that it has addressed Recommendation 6 and fully meets Standard IIIA.4.b by annually assessing its data and performance in employment equity and diversity based on its mission.

Recommendation #7- Professional Development:
In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the College develop a comprehensive professional development program which is linked with the College mission and the strategic plan and which encourages opportunities for leadership growth within the College. The program should be regularly evaluated based on needs assessment data, outcomes, and relationship to mission. (lllA.5.a, lllA.5.b)

Significant Changes since the Comprehensive Visit
The former Executive Director of Community & Economic Development moved to become the Interim Director of Human Resources/EEO/ADA Compliance Officer in January 2011 and became permanent in the position in January 2013. This individual has oversight of the college's professional development efforts.

Findings and Evidence
Through review of web posted documents and meeting minutes, the team confirmed that the College Professional Development Committee continues to meet monthly and is funded through the College budget. The College conducts an annual training needs survey, most recently in the spring of 2013. The team reviewed evidence that the results of these needs surveys substantially inform training provided subsequently. The team confirmed through training schedules that staff development opportunities are provided through constituent professional development groups that coordinate with the Professional Development Committee. These include the Academic Senate's Faculty Development Committee, the Distance Education Committee, the Associated Faculty of College of the Redwoods, Community Education, classified employees training programs, the sabbatical program, and Career and Technical Education faculty training. Interviews with leaders of the classified and faculty unions as well as the faculty senate and Managers' Council verified wide involvement with professional development and the relevance and effectiveness of the training.

Through analysis of program reviews, committee minutes, and training schedules, the team verified that the College has modified the program review process to include requests for professional development to support action plans proposed by each unit. A proposed action plan must demonstrate a connection to the College Strategic Plan. These requests are reviewed and prioritized by the Professional Development Committee, blended with items from the annual needs survey, and included in the annual training plan. Interviews with senior administrators, leaders of the classified and faculty unions, as well as the faculty senate and Managers' Council established that professional development resources and activities are prioritized following the strategic plan in alignment with the college mission. This alignment is summarized in the Training Matrix, a table that shows the specific relationship between each training activity and the objectives within the Strategic Plan and Educational Master Plan.

The 2011 Evaluation Report stated, "The College would benefit from training that supports leadership development and internal growth." The team found that the training schedules for the last two years featured workshops on skills related to leadership development such as communication, conflict resolution, budget, contracts, supervision, and employee evaluation. Data evaluated by the team showed that internal promotions increased threefold over the last three years.

The team saw evidence that participants in training activities had an opportunity to evaluate their experience and that the presenters had access to evaluation summaries. Meeting minutes showed that these evaluations were also reviewed by the Professional Development Committee and at least indirectly used to improve future offerings. The committee also prepares and distributes an annual report.

Conclusion
The College has addressed Recommendation 7 by completing two cycles of needs assessment and implementation of a comprehensive professional development program, by linking professional development to strategic planning and the mission of the College, and by providing relevant and effective leadership training that has resulted in significant employee advancement within the organization. The College fully meets Standards IIIA.5.a and IIIA.5.b by providing all personnel with appropriate professional development programs, consistent with the College mission and based on identified needs, evaluating those programs, and using the results for improvement.

Part III. Financial Resources, Development, and Stability

Eligibility Requirement #17
The institution documents a funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development adequate to support student learning programs and services, to improve institutional effectiveness, and to assure financial stability.

Findings and Evidence
The College has made significant changes and improvements in its financial position as well as its policies, procedures and especially the financial outlook for the College's future. The College has secured its financial resources and substantially improved immediate financial stability. Review of documents and interviews by the team established the following elements of the College's current fiscal status.

The College ended the 2012-13 fiscal year with a 5.0% ending balance in the unrestricted general fund without tapping into its post-retirement benefits reserve. The governing board has adopted a policy that plans for gradually increasing the reserve in the unrestricted general fund to 10%. This is policy has been implemented in the 2013-14 budget which will increase the reserve from 5.0% to 5.3%.

The College has negotiated permanent salary rollbacks for all employees including governing board members that led to an adopted budget for 2013-14 which is balanced. The employee agreements include provisions that will allow the College to keep compensation at a level that provides significant assurance for balanced budgets in future years. Specifically, the contracts include language that limits future increases to an amount less than the state cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) received by the

College. This ensures that compensation increases will not exceed increases in revenue and that state COLAs, up to 1.6%, are reserved for increases in costs other than compensation. While the College has neither capped benefits nor instituted a policy to have all employees pay a share of health and welfare benefits, the governing board and administrators now pay a share of their benefits.

The College has instituted new policies and procedures that have reduced student bad debt and increased collections of outstanding student accounts. The College has been using both the Chancellor's Office Tax Offset Plan and an outside collection agency for collections and will be using Nelnet for a payment plan. Students who have not completed the financial aid application packet, enrolled in a payment plan, or paid in full prior to the start of classes are being dropped from class. Students who enter into a residence hall contract must provide a fiscal plan showing the ability to pay the total cost of attendance including the residence hall and fees. The College is recording an allowance for bad debt for any debt over six months old. Instituting these new policies has increased the accuracy of enrollment projections because fewer students are registering for a class and then not showing up.

The governing board has authorized the transfer of funds in the Post Retirement Reserve to the unrestricted general fund in the event that the fund drops below the 5% required ending balance. The College transferred funds from the Reserve into the General Fund in 2011-12 but did not need to do so in 2012-13. The College contracted with Total Compensation Systems to review a plan for funding the College's Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) liability. In the opinion of Total Compensation Systems, "the funding approach described above appears to be viable to fully fund the District's obligation within a time period that is reasonably consistent with the transition period included in GASB45, i.e., by FY2039." The College implemented that plan in 2012-13 by transferring $100,000 into the reserve. The governing board adopted the 2013-14 budget including a transfer of $150,000 into the reserve. This transfer amount is planned to increase over the succeeding three years to $300,000 a year which, along with the projected interest income, would establish sufficient funds to pay the retiree premiums. The governing board has approved an irrevocable trust for OPEB liabilities that has not yet been created.

The College has a Financial Aid Default Prevention Plan that educates students about the grants and loans that they may receive. The College has hired a financial literacy advising specialist who works with students receiving financial aid. The College's three-year default rate has gone from 28.6% in 2009 to 29.9% in 2010. The 2011 rate has not yet been released. While these numbers appear large, they represent a small number of students relative to other similarly sized community colleges. The default rate is also a lagging indicator, and actions that the College is now taking will not show up in the default rate for up to three years. The actions that the College is now taking include early financial literacy training, especially for all residence hall residents whether or not they are borrowers. Counseling for students at risk of not achieving satisfactory academic progress also includes financial checkups. The College has also instituted a maximum loan limit for all indebtedness by students. The College is tracking the results of many of its new activities to see which prove the most effective. These actions are among those used by many institutions to keep their default rates under 30%.

Conclusion
The College fully meets Eligibility Requirement #17.

Standard III.D.1.b
Institutional planning reflects realistic assessment of financial resource availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements.

Findings and Evidence
Based on review of documents and interviews with key administrators as well as faculty and staff leaders, the team found that the College has improved and integrated its planning mechanisms to ensure realistic revenue and expenditure budgets. The College's budget assumptions are considerably more conservative than in past years and are informed by the active involvement of the Vice President of Administrative Services in state activities that provide up-to-date and accurate revenue projections for state determined revenues. In addition, the College has developed procedures that ensure that managers and the governing board are informed of changes to the financial outlook on a regular and timely basis.

Budget assumptions have been changed to conform to the state Chancellor's Office projections of enrollment growth as tempered by the local projections of the ability of the College to obtain that growth. While the 2013-14 budget includes enrollment growth, the College has reserved revenue in case the projected enrollment does not materialize. The budget assumptions include restoration and growth available but acknowledge that the College will not get back to its earlier enrollment levels for a long time. The Enrollment Management Plan, while generally more optimistic than the financial plan, does include a worst-case scenario that includes plans for being unable to reach desired enrollment targets.

The Vice President of Administrative Services has created networks within the state to ensure that he receives the most up-to-date information, including attending the Northern California Chief Business Officers' meetings, budget workshops, budget conferences, and organizational emails. The College anticipated a 2.2% deficit factor in state revenue for 2012-13 and recorded a liability for that amount at year-end. The College has also budgeted a 1.5% deficit factor for 2013/14.

The Budget and Planning Committee has taken an active role in developing the budget plans, developing best-case and worst-case scenarios for 2013-14, and linking all of the budget decisions to the College's Strategic Plan. These scenarios have been projected for the current and two succeeding years and include revenue and expense reductions commensurate with the possible reductions in enrollment. While the details of the possible future expense reductions have not been fleshed out, it is clear that the governing board and administration are fully aware of the potential for additional reductions and are prepared to implement them.The governing board receives regular updates on the current financial situation of the College. The governing board receives a Financial Status Report monthly and approves the quarterly as well as the annual state financial reports.

Each year the Vice President of Administrative Services updates a State Chancellor's Office Sound Fiscal Management Self-Assessment Checklist to ensure that the College is maintaining a conservative position relative to fiscal stability. The President and the Executive Cabinet review and discuss at length the contents of this analysis. Also, the Budget Planning Committee reviews the updated checklist each year. The governing board approved the updated checklist as part of its October 1, 2013 approval of the accreditation follow up report.

The unrestricted general fund ended the 2012-13 year with revenues at 99% of budget and expenditures at 94% of budget, showing that the budgets are conservative and accurate, that is, expenditures are under budget and revenues are within 1% of budget projections.

The College has several unused buildings, some of which are not Field Act compliant, for which it has the responsibility and liability to maintain. The College has succeeded in renting several of them in long-term leases, including a five-year lease with Pacific Gas & Electric for the former administration building. The net income from these rentals is being dedicated to the upkeep and deferred maintenance of the buildings.

Conclusion
The College fully meets Standard III.D.1.b.

Standard III.D.3.a (formerly Standard III.D.2.c)
The institution has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability, strategies for appropriate risk management, and realistic plans to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences.

Findings and Evidence
Based on review of reports and conversations with key personnel, the team determined that the College has taken appropriate steps to ensure adequate cash flows, including participating in the Community College League's Tax Revenue Anticipation Note (TRAN) program. A TRAN provides short-term cash to the College at a relatively low financing cost. As a result, the College's unrestricted general fund cash flow has remained at an appropriate level to allow for timely payments and transfers. The College uses a two year cash flow report prepared twice a year for consideration of a TRAN as its cash flow analysis report. The report includes twenty-four months of cash flows with a column for general fund only, general fund plus the employee benefits fund, and general fund, employee benefits fund plus the TRAN. Additionally, the College tracks the secondary sources of liquidity which are primarily centered in cash balances in the auxiliary programs: dining, housing, and bookstore. The College uses its local bond funds to assist in the cash flow of state bond funds which are paid in arrears. The College has appropriately prepared to stop work when the state delayed payment of state bond invoices. The College participates in the Community College League's annual TRAN and is prepared to participate in a mid-year TRAN as needed to address state revenue deferrals. The College's unrestricted general fund balance was at 5% as of June 30, 2013. These reserves are augmented by the reserves in the post-retirement fund. These reserves, along with appropriate insurance, allow the College the ability to respond to emergencies.

Conclusion
The College fully meets Standard III.D.3.a (formerly Standard III.D.2.c).