

To: ACCJC Peer Review Team
From: Peter Blakemore, Executive Dean of Arts & Sciences / ALO
Re: Following up on the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report

5 August 2024

Dear President Rodriguez and Peer Review Team members,

Greetings! As we prepare for your visit in mid-September, I thought it might be useful for you to hear about what we've done to implement some of the changes we mentioned preparing for in our ISER. We have specifically focused our attention on improving our Information Technology department, on developing a succession planning process, and we have also begun reviewing our accreditation oversight process to align the institution with the revised 2024 standards. This is just a brief report on our progress toward those improvements.

As we engage with the new 2024 Standards, we are evolving the college's Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) to include the chairs of all critical integrated planning committees so that regular focused discussion will occur around continuous improvement based on the new Standards. The College has also planned for professional development opportunities focusing on disaggregating data for all constituencies. This should help people across the institution understand the value of such data in planning processes. We have already begun the process of reviewing the IEC to consider what role the committee could play in offering oversight and possibilities for institutional improvement. During a summer meeting of the IEC, the idea arose of reviewing executive summaries from our Program Review, Budget Advisory, Facilities Planning, Student Equity, and Technology Planning Committees to locate overlapping ideas and possible compass headings for improvement. Additionally, during our annual year-opening event, Convocation, where all constituencies across the College come together to engage in dialog and set the direction for the year's initiatives, we plan to focus on the 2024 Standards and how our college will interpret and begin to implement them. When they first came out, the institution's leadership reacted with excitement to the Commission's revised 2024 Standards, and we believe we can spread this excitement and interest throughout our institution.

At the same time we shift to the new Standards, we have been keenly aware of the importance of planning for succession as long-term employees in the College's leadership structure near retirement, and we are faced with how to adopt and adapt in ways that foster both stability and continuing innovation. Although the College implemented a revised Administrative Procedure to guide us through the succession process (AP 7120-9) which we reported on in our December 2024 ISER, we have since had cause to perform a test run due to several changes in administrative roles and retirements. As administrative leaders moved into new positions and others announced pending retirement, it became clear that some reorganization was called for, including a review and alteration of the academic division structure. To better align with our innovative ten-year Education Master Plan (EMP), we will regroup disciplines based on predictable changes that should better align College of the Redwoods with the newly created Cal Poly Humboldt just up the bay. It was also clear that some innovations, such as the recently awarded grant creating our Native American Student Success and Support Program and the proposed creation of a Native American Language Institute, would require housing such

programs in academic divisions where they would fit best and where innovation in student services and serving local communities would be most readily accomplished. Along with the process laid out in the AP, institutional leaders met to reconsider the breakdown of the divisions and how coming changes could be turned to our advantage by seeking to streamline and better group disciplines and administrative duties. The proposed changes will be offered to the college community for review and will be in place in 2025.

As we described in our ISER, the institution engaged an information technology consulting firm, Vantage, to perform an intensive survey and review of IT services after our institutional server infrastructure collapsed in the summer of 2023. Constituencies across the college participated in months of group-interview sessions led by the consultants. The firm then provided comprehensive findings and recommendations for improvement, which our President and Executive Cabinet implemented, with all proposed actions to be performed over the summer and fall of 2024. New policies and procedures will guarantee continuous improvement and resolution of issues arising out of the server collapse. New refresh and replacement cycles have been identified, and new server backups and a completely new data architecture are currently being created. Engineers have been hired and a continuous extraction and backup process will also be implemented before the end of this year. Changes in the oversight structure for our Information Technology department have also been implemented. Even though no institution can guarantee complete safety from hardware failures, the process leading to our IT improvements does give us clear backup systems and ensures we won't experience data loss of the kind we did last summer.

I realize that this brief report may go outside of the typical formal processes for Commission review and reporting, but President Flamer thought it would be a good idea to let you know what has happened over the past 7 or 8 months, and I agreed with him. There are, of course, a lot of other irons in the fire as we set new directions and chart paths forward, but these few shifts speak directly to ideas brought up in our ISER, so we decided to focus on them.

Please let me know if you have questions about anything contained in this follow-up. We look forward to seeing you and the other members of our Peer Review Team in September.

Sincerely,

Peter Blakemore
Executive Dean of Arts & Sciences / Accreditation Liaison Officer