

I. INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND FOR SBCC'S FOCUSED SELF STUDY

A. Compatibility of Objectives among Accreditation, Project Redesign and a Model Community College Framework

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), through the accreditation process, seek "to strengthen institutions through self study, peer evaluation, and appropriate follow-up. The Commission seeks to sustain the quality and integrity of institutions." Santa Barbara City College (SBCC), with its Model Community College framework, demonstrates the emphasis on quality and commitment to the advancement of student achievement. The Accrediting Commission's primary focus is to foster educational quality -- a purpose shared by SBCC and emphasized through the Model Community College framework, which builds on the work done through Project Redesign.

As Dr. Barbara Beno noted in her response to SBCC's request for a second experimental self study, "The ACCJC supports experimental self studies as vital means of enhancing the region's knowledge of how colleges can achieve educational excellence. The Commission anticipates learning a good deal from Santa Barbara City College's efforts" (November 2, 2001 Letter from Dr. Barbara Beno to Dr. Peter MacDougall).

B. ACCJC Approval for SBCC to Conduct an Experimental Re-accreditation Process (Self Study and Accreditation Team Visit)

On November 13, 2000, Dr. Peter R. MacDougall, Superintendent/President of SBCC, wrote to Dr. David Wolf, Executive Director of ACCJC, to request that Santa Barbara City College be allowed to conduct an experimental self study. As noted in the letter, SBCC was allowed to conduct such a study and host a subsequent team visit for its last accreditation in 1996. Dr. MacDougall expressed his belief that the 1996 visit was beneficial to both the college and the Commission. "A second such visit would allow us to capitalize on our earlier work and look deeply and in a more focused manner at our institution than the regular self study process may allow. Specifically, we want to focus on the aspirations we have outlined for SBCC through Project Redesign and produce a College Plan that will more effectively identify how we can attain the outcome of developing a model community college for the 21st century" (November 13, 2002 Letter from Dr. Peter MacDougall to Dr. David Wolf). The letter outlined the structure of the proposed self study and a full proposal was attached detailing the process and major sections of the study.

On behalf of the ACCJC, Dr. David Wolf informed the college that the Commission approved SBCC's petition in January 2001 subject to the following general conditions:

1. The College may follow the process of its choosing to conduct the self study.
2. The process should yield a product which a visiting team and the Commission can evaluate.

3. The product should present evidence that the Standards for Accreditation are met or exceeded” (January 19, 2001 Letter from Dr. David Wolf to Dr. Peter MacDougall).

Throughout the development of the self study, the college maintained close contact with the ACCJC, providing regular updates on the progress made and actions taken related to the self study. In a letter dated April 30, 2001, Dr. David Wolf indicated that “from the Commission’s standpoint, an experiment that generates a self study with a clear separation of 1) quality assurance information and 2) institutional improvement information will be very helpful” (April 30, 2001 letter from Dr. David Wolf to Dr. MacDougall). Dr. MacDougall reiterated the approach to the experimental self study to Dr. Barbara Beno, who replaced Dr. David Wolf as Executive Director of ACCJC (letters from Dr. MacDougall to Dr. Beno dated September 11, 2001 and October 3, 2001, respectively). In all efforts associated with the self study, the college has tried to maintain effective communication, both within the institution and with the Commission staff.

C. Areas of Departure from the Traditional Accreditation Process

There are two areas of departure from the traditional accreditation process. The first divergence from the usual practice involves the writing approach within the ten accreditation standards. The college has elaborated on each standard focusing on describing the current status within each area. The college has not included sections on appraisal and planning that are typically found in traditional self studies. Nevertheless, the college has followed a focused and thorough process to verify that each of the accreditation standards is being met.

Standard leaders have worked diligently, first with their respective advisory groups, and then with campus-wide consultation, to ensure that the depth of the college's treatment of the standards is comprehensive and reflective of SBCC's compliance with Dr. Wolf's letter authorizing the experimental self study.

The second divergence involves the inclusion of sections on a Model Community College and Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness, which represent the experimental portion of the self study. The self study has been designed to incorporate tradition and innovation in a readable format, the development of which will be described in the next section. In addition, the 2002-2005 College Plan (sent in conjunction with this self study) is a product of the self study process.

D. Means for Ensuring that the Ten Standards for Accreditation Are Met or Exceeded

Upon confirmation of the authorization granted to SBCC to conduct an experimental self study, the college's first task was to develop a framework for the document that would clearly and substantively address all accreditation evaluation criteria to the satisfaction of readers internal and external to the college community. A major aim centered on the clarity necessary for members of the visiting team to understand the conceptual framework of a Model Community College, its relationship to Project Redesign (described in the next section) and its role in developing and shaping the 2002-2005 College Plan. These included

1) why SBCC decided to develop and adopt such a framework, 2) what defines and makes operational a Model Community College, 3) what benefits are expected and what results are accruing and 4) what methods are being used to assess our institutional effectiveness related to the new model.

The structure of this self study report represents SBCC's best judgment on how to meet the needs described most effectively. It was determined that approaching the self study in two phases would be most effective. Phase 1 would focus on certifying that the college was meeting the standards, and Phase 2 would describe and illustrate the framework of a Model Community College that the college has adopted.

The next step in the process of constructing the self study was to identify and recruit key members of the campus constituents to serve as chairs for each of the ten standards. Once involved and oriented on the approach SBCC would be taking to accreditation for the 2002 self study, these SBCC leaders contacted the advisory groups and individuals on whom they would rely for preparing information and documentation. As in our first experimental self study, a hallmark of the experimental methodology is its reliance on existing governance structures for review and comment on the self study report.

Working collaboratively with the College Superintendent/President, the Accreditation Liaison and the Executive Vice President of Educational Programs composed instructions for the chairs of each standard to be carried out in two phases. The first phase focused on the traditional ACCJC standards with the modifications noted in Section I.C above. The second phase of the experimental accreditation review provided the college with an opportunity to carry out a thorough planning process in which the college defined what is meant by a Model Community College, identified the action steps necessary to enable the college to achieve the definition of a Model Community College, and developed measures for assessing the college's effectiveness in accomplishing what we defined. Over the past several months, drafts of the accreditation documents have been distributed throughout the institution for consultation and edited for final copy. In addition, as major components and sections of the self study were completed, they were submitted to the Board of Trustees for discussion and approval as follows:

May 24, 2001	Approval of the Vision Statement for a Model Community College
January 24, 2002	Approval of 2002-2005 College Plan
February 28, 2002	Approval of Sections IV and V
April 25, 2002	Approval of Section VI
May 23, 2002	Approval of complete self study