Mid-Cycle Evaluation (Year 3)

Peer-Evaluation Report

Shoreline Community College

Shoreline, Washington

April 18-19, 2024

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A confidential report of findings prepared for the

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

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Introduction

The Mid-Cycle Evaluation team conducted a campus visit at Shoreline Community College on April 18-19, 2024. Prior to the visit, the College provided a self-study report and numerous documents related to the four Recommendations addressed in prior reports.

This Mid-Cycle review was delayed due to a ransomware incident at Shoreline Community College in March 2023. This incident had a significant impact on College data systems needed to address these Recommendations. The rescheduled visit was granted and moved to spring 2024 based on correspondence dated April 23, 2023.

The following Recommendations were in place at the time of this visit and the institution was considered non-compliant with these cited NWCCU Standards. A Letter of Action to Shoreline on February 27, 2023 indicated the College was given a two-year timeline for coming into compliance with these Recommendations.

- Recommendation 1: Fall 2022 Ad Hoc Report with Visit (1.C.5; 1.C.6; 1.C.7)
- Recommendation 1: Fall 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability (1.B.1; 1.B.2)
- Recommendation 3: Fall 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability (1.D.2; 1.D.3; 1.D.4)
- Recommendation 5: Fall 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability (2.E.2; 2.E.3)

These recommendations were first noted in a Fall 2012 site visit report for standards related to assessment for which the institution was found to be in need of improvement. As a result of a Fall 2020 comprehensive visit, the two recommendations below addressed standards for which Shoreline Community College was found to be out of compliance. The 2012 and 2020 visits were conducted using 2010 standards, however, in the more recent visit, the recommendations were updated to reflect 2020 standards.

As a point of context, Shoreline Community College had four presidents in an 18-month period from 2021 through 2022. Two of those were interim. There are also a number of critical administrative roles that have been or are filled with acting or interim staff. The College has recently hired two new administrators, one a Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the other an Associate Vice President – Planning, Institutional Effectiveness, and Project Management. There was a major data system update to Washington State's ctcLink data system and a ransomware breach in March of 2023.

Visit Summary

Over the course of the well-organized, two-day visit, the evaluation team met with 70 faculty, staff, and administrators including the President and Executive Team, Planning & Institutional Effectiveness, members of the Transfer Program Outcomes Team, Strategic Planning and Budget Council, Accreditation Committee, Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee, Equity &

Social Justice department, Math department, International Education, Human Resources, student support services, and academic leadership. Meeting topics included mission fulfillment and strategic planning at the executive level, strategic institutional planning at the operational level, assessment of institutional effectiveness and student achievement data, student learning outcomes assessment, programmatic assessment, institutional budgets, data collection, academic leadership, and student support and advising.

Since the Fall 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability visit was completed virtually, an evaluation team member completed the USDE Virtual Visit Follow-Up Certification as well as toured all campus facilities including the library and Cedar, which opened in November 2023 and houses the manufacturing program, as well as visited the dental hygiene program located on the University of Washington campus.

Part I: Mission Fulfillment

Shoreline Community College's Mission, Vision, and Values statements have recently been updated. The College's new Mission Statement reads:

"Shoreline Community College offers accessible, high-quality education and workforce training that empowers students for success. Rooted in our commitment to diversity, equity, and community engagement, we foster a dynamic educational environment that contributes to the enrichment of both our local and global communities."

Feedback from the President and the Executive Team, as well as from the Strategic Plan Taskforce was compiled into multiple drafts and reviewed by the College Council. A participatory governance body with broad representation from all constituencies, including students, faculty, classified staff, and administrators--as well as the DEIA Advisory Committee before being sent out to the entire campus for feedback in the form of a survey. The Board of Trustees approved the final plan at the February 28, 2024 meeting. Although the mission, vision and values statements of the College are relatively new it is clear that the changes are embraced and accepted by the College community.

The College's updated mission statement reflects a broader focus on success. It now goes beyond student achievement and learning to encompass diversity, equity, community engagement, and regional and global impact. To track progress towards this expanded vision, the College has implemented multiple continuous improvement processes. These processes use various metrics, including institutional effectiveness, student success rates (persistence, completion, retention, and post-graduation outcomes), and program-specific assessments. This comprehensive approach supports the goal that the College remains on track for successful accreditation renewal in years 4-7.

Part II: Student Achievement

Consistent with its mission, Shoreline identified two lagging and three leading indicators of student achievement to help promote student achievement and close equity gaps. All five indicators – persistence, completion, retention, post-graduation success, and student learning – are disaggregated by race/ethnicity, age status, gender, first-generation status, and Pell eligibility. Except for student learning each indicator is compared with and benchmarked against its regional peers using data from the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) First-Time Entering Student Outcomes (FTESO) dashboard.

Shoreline's definitions for its indicators of student achievement are clearly defined and published on the Student Achievement Benchmarks webpage. In alignment with data readily available from the SBCTC FTESO dashboard, Shoreline defines:

- persistence as completing the first 15 College-Level credits in Year 1;
- completion as completing a credential within three years of entry;
- retention as first fall to second fall; and
- post graduation success as post-College employment or post-College transfer.

Shoreline defines student learning as 75% of students meeting expectations related to a Shoreline Student Learning Outcome (SSLO) which is Shoreline's new name for a general education outcome. Currently, two of the five SSLOs have been assessed; namely, Critical Thinking and Equity and Social Justice. Communication is scheduled to be evaluated later this year while the remaining two SSLOs – Information Literacy and Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning – will be reviewed in 2025.

Shoreline identified three regional and two national peer institutions. The regional peer institutions – North Seattle College, Skagit Valley College, and South Puget Sound Community College – are located within 75 miles of Shoreline and are similar in FTE and student demographics. Additionally, the peer institutions offer a comparable mix of transfer and professional/technical programs.

The two national peer institutions – Diablo Valley College and Orange Coast College are located in California. The Shoreline selected these colleges as national peers based on the size of their international student programs since it is a strategic priority for Shoreline to increase its international student enrollment to pre-pandemic levels. Shoreline considers Orange Coast College as an aspirational College since its international student program is significantly larger than Shoreline's current international enrollment. With limited national peer comparator data available Shoreline is exploring a data-sharing agreement with both Colleges.

Shoreline's disaggregated indicators of student achievement are widely published and easily found on the College's website. Shoreline provides the rationale for the selection of their regional and national peers in their self-evaluation and online, but does not identify the names of its peers on the Student Achievement Benchmark webpage.

Although the use of comparative data is still in the early phases, the evaluation team heard and saw several examples during the Mid-Cycle Visit of how student achievement and peer comparison data are being used for continuous improvement, to close equity gaps, and to inform planning and resource allocation. For example, peer comparison data is included in the Annual Area Reviews and the disaggregated, benchmarked student achievement indicators are incorporated in the 2024 Equity-Centered Strategic Plan as equity-based mission fulfillment indicators.

Moving Forward

The evaluation team encourages Shoreline to update its student achievement data regularly to identify trends and progress made toward closing its equity gaps as well as continue the development of internal dashboards for more readily available data.

Since disaggregated national peer data is limited, the evaluation team also encourages Shoreline to pursue a data-sharing agreement with its national peer institutions and to keep going with existing strategies.

Lastly, the evaluation team encourages Shoreline to identify its peer institutions on its website.

Part III: Programmatic Assessment

Shoreline's continuous improvement work is envisioned as part of an assessment cycle framework with three steps: plan, act, assess. The Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office (PIE) supports the work at each step. The evaluators reviewed programmatic assessment examples from three areas: the math department, international education, and human resources. The examples were framed in the context of the assessment cycle, and connected to annual area reviews, which are a key element of institutional planning and assessment.

During the site visit, the evaluation team discussed the three examples with representatives from the respective areas and found them to be indicative of continuous improvement efforts across campus. In each, data were collected and analyzed to create a plan to improve, action was taken to implement a change, and results were considered for evidence of improvement.

PART IV: Moving Forward

The Mid-Cycle visit and report serve as our team's observations and perspectives in reviewing progress identified key areas of focus and recommendations as the College prepares for the EIE visit in several years. The institution has created a campus culture through its President and leadership team that is engaged, collegial, and committed to student achievement and success. The College has demonstrated a strong shared governance model that is collaborative among campus stakeholders who are committed to communications and decision-making processes of the College. Considerable thought and effort have been dedicated to establishing plans and frameworks for measuring and advancing mission, vision and institutional effectiveness. These structures provide a strong foundation for moving forward into a cycle of improvement including measurement, analysis, action and reflection.

The College leadership welcomed the team and was well prepared to address a number of out of compliance and documented recommendation issues identified through the Ad Hoc Evaluation of October 14, 2022. The team focused efforts on determining if Shoreline is making satisfactory progress in standards 1C.5, 1.C.6, and 1.C.7. It was clear from a combination of the College's Mid-Cycle Report and numerous interviews with a broad array of faculty, staff and administrators that the College has selected strategic outcomes for programs and transfer degrees and that these outcomes have strategies and systems in place to collect, analyze, and revise planning for improvement and allocation of resources.

The team found that the College has recently revised the mission, vision, and values of the institution in addressing 1.B.1 and 1.B.2 standards. Through interviews there appears to be strong acceptance that the new mission statement was collaboratively revised and is in concert with the culture of Shoreline. There was a newly revised (2023) regional environmental scan and Shoreline Equity-Centered Strategic Plan. There is evidence of initial systematic collection, storage, planning and resource allocation toward the College Mission. The mid-cycle report defines mission fulfillment as tied tightly to the elements of the Mission Statement with 17 pages of evidence of successful mission fulfillment which begins on page 12. Although significant documentation is present and plans for ongoing assessment were documented, there was no clearly defined gauge of how the College defines mission fulfillment. The evaluation team is confident the collection and measurement of many indicators are present, but there was no clear definition of mission fulfillment presented in the materials.

The team reviewed College progress in response to standards 1.D.2, 1.D.3, and 1.D.4 related to collecting disaggregated data relevant to student achievement in areas of persistence, completion, and post-graduation success. Clearly, there is a lens of DEIA in review of equity gaps. The team has seen excellent progress being made given the observations from the Ad Hoc Report. The team has seen evidence to indicate many of the issues inherent with the past visits

have been addressed and systems are being implemented to complete a robust planning cycle. The suggestion of the team would be that the College follow through now with collecting and utilizing the data for each of the program areas to ensure longitudinal data can be collected annually and processed prior to the EIE future visit. Past deficiencies appear to have been addressed at the time of this visit, ongoing collection and use of the results from these changes will be essential for the success of the seven-year visit.

The team reviewed current institutional systems addressing the transparency of financial resources and methods used for setting policy, process and budgets were demonstrated during the visit. Stakeholders felt heard and good follow through was described for the budgeting processes. Processes are in place to satisfy issues identified in standards 2.E.2 and 2.E.3.

Overall, this evaluation team has seen evidence that Shoreline has adequately recovered from past issues of significant data loss through a ransomware incident in 2023, significant and complex transition to the statewide ctcLink data system, and significant changes in senior leadership over the past two years. President Kahn has clearly provided the vision and leadership needed for the College to address the issues identified in the Ad Hoc Report. It is evident from numerous meetings and interviews there is a rebuilding of trust throughout the College, the mission of the College is at the forefront of the direction for the College, there appears to be a healthy culture in place, and a leadership team willing to act on the many initiatives outlined in the Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report.

The issue for the future will be for the institution to keep these many improvements in sight and ensure that there is ongoing data collection, analysis and revision to demonstrate at the EIE visit that the institution has embraced and embedded the use of data into its culture. Also, the sheer numbers of measures, outcomes, improvements and performance indicators may ultimately prove to be too distracting for ongoing performance improvement and sustainability.

PART V: Addendums

Recommendation 1: "Engage in a systematic assessment process for all college programs, including transfer degree programs, through the use of programmatic and institutional outcomes to gather data that will be used for academic and learning support program planning and resource allocation." Recommendation 1: Fall 2022 Ad Hoc Report with Visit (1.C.5; 1.C.6; 1.C.7)

Observations

Overall, Shoreline is on track with learning outcomes assessment at the course, program, and institution levels. The College has provided the structure and process to support meaningful learning outcomes assessment across campus. There has been good support and training from

the PIE office and the Learning Outcomes Assessment Team, which provides toolkits and other support. There is an online learning module to support faculty in using TILT (transparency in learning and teaching) for assignments.

The structure, process, and support provided has resulted in a shift in culture around learning outcomes assessment on campus and increased collaboration to improve student learning and the student experience at Shoreline. The evaluation team heard several examples of learning outcomes assessment results being used to improve courses and programs, and some examples of resource allocations made to support the improvements. Examples from physics (moved to inquiry-based labs), music technology (introduced key concepts earlier), and clean energy (added blueprint reading skills) demonstrate a broad understanding of continuous improvement as it relates to student learning.

Several faculty members commented that they are having meaningful conversations about outcomes assessment, collaborating across the curriculum, finding value in the work, and seeing real improvements. In some cases, resource requests have been tied to results of learning outcomes assessment. For example, an equipment request was made to support a new approach to teaching inquiry-based labs in engineering mechanics that helps more students meet the learning outcomes. One faculty member commented that learning outcomes assessment is "part of what we do to get the resources we need to support our students."

Standard 1.C.5 The institution engages in an effective system of assessment to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs. The institution recognizes the central role of faculty to establish curricula, assess student learning, and improve instructional programs.

Observations

Shoreline has established both Course Learning Outcome (CLO) and Program Learning Outcome (PLO) / Transfer Program Outcome (TPO) assessment processes. Instructors map CLOs to activities and assessments in their courses, PLOs are mapped to degree-required courses using a curriculum matrix, and TPOs are mapped to courses that meet distribution and core requirements for transfer degrees.

Learning outcomes assessment was integrated into ongoing institutional planning in the form of Area Reviews, which allow for tracking of improvement efforts and resource allocation requests. Departments and programs review assessment plans annually, and each instructional department and program complete learning outcomes assessment on a 3 – 4 year cycle, with updates incorporated into annual Area Reviews. At the time of the site visit, all instructional departments have implemented an assessment plan and assessed at least one course within their department.

Assessment of professional-technical programs has expanded since the Fall 2022 Ad Hoc visit. Shoreline established ongoing assessment plans for all professional-technical degrees, to assess all Program Level Outcomes on a 3- 4-year cycle. In 2022-2023, 26 out of 29 degrees engaged in program learning outcomes assessment.

To assess Shoreline's general transfer programs, the Associate of Arts-Direct Transfer Agreement (AA-DTA) and Associate of Science-Transfer (AS-T) degrees, 25 key courses were identified to assess on a 3–4 year cycle. Transfer Program Outcomes were developed for the AA-DTA and AS-T during 2022-2023, and 7 out of 7 transfer programs were assessed in Summer 2023.

The assessments reviewed by the evaluation team were authentically tied to the outcome being assessed, and reflective narratives contain concrete ways the instructor can use the results of assessment to improve instruction and student learning.

Standard 1.C.6 Consistent with its mission, the institution establishes and assesses, across all associate and bachelor level programs or within a General Education curriculum, institutional learning outcomes and/or core competencies. Examples of such learning outcomes and competencies include, but are not limited to, effective communication skills, global awareness, cultural sensitivity, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, problem solving, and/or information literacy.

Observations

Shoreline completed a collaborative process to update its institution-wide learning outcomes, known as Shoreline Student Learning Outcomes (SSLOs). Five SSLOs have been formally adopted by the College, and a matrix was created to show where the SSLOs are embedded within curricula. An institute model was used to assess two of the five SSLOs in Summer 2023, Critical Thinking and Equity and Social Justice. Individual faculty submitted student work from a representative set of classes, and small teams used holistic rubrics to assess whether students demonstrated the learning described in the outcome during a two-day Summer "assessment institute." After this model yielded minimal useful results, Shoreline moved to a distributed model for assessment of the SSLOs, similar to TPOs, whereby individual faculty will assess student work themselves using a common rubric.

Shoreline is in the first full year of implementation of the SSLO assessment process, and is encouraged to follow through on assessment plans that allow the College to assess SSLOs as part of the regular assessment workflow. Results of SSLO assessment should result in actionable data that can be used to improve instructional programs and student support services.

Standard 1.C.7 The institution uses the results of its assessment efforts to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes.

Observations

This standard has two essential elements. The first is using the results of student learning activities to inform and improve academic programs. Shoreline's assessment cycle allows a structure for recommendations based on student learning outcomes assessment to connect to resource allocation processes to inform academic and program planning and improve instructional programs. The evaluation team reviewed several examples of changes made to courses and programs as a result of assessment efforts, some of which involved direct allocation of resources in support of newly adopted pedagogies.

The second essential element is that the results of student learning assessment are used to inform and improve learning support practices. Shoreline has revised the College-wide Area Review and planning cycle over the last two years, incorporating outcomes assessment data into Area Reviews to allow for meaningful and integrated planning. Each instructional department and program Area Review includes a section on student learning as well as SSLO assessment results.

Moving Forward

It is clear that College leadership has thought deeply about student learning and intends to create a structure for outcomes assessment that is meaningful and leads to improvements in student learning and achievement. The revised process is in the initial stages of implementation. The evaluation team encourages further development and clarification of outcomes assessment processes that are systematic and scalable, while maintaining the action-oriented focus on using results of assessment cycles to improve student learning.

As the College continues to implement a comprehensive assessment system, it will be important to make data broadly available. The College plans to create a dashboard of results in order to facilitate the use of learning outcomes assessment results.

Recommendation 2: "Provide evidence of a systematic method for collecting, storing, accessing, using and sharing data for the purposes of on-going and systematic evaluation, planning, resource allocation and informing decision-making toward improving institutional effectiveness and achieving mission fulfillment." Fall 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability (1.B.1; 1.B.2)

Observations

The College provided the team with a very complete Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report with many supporting documents including their newly revised Equity Centered Strategic Plan and Environmental Scan. Additionally, website documentation served as evidence addressing the recommendations within 1.B.1 and 1.B.2.

The College provided the team with Mission, Vision and Values statements which were recently revised, but appeared to be well communicated and supported by faculty, staff and administration throughout the visit. The team was presented with a united vision for a commitment to DEIA with emphasis on the Equity-Centered Strategic Plan. Noteworthy was reference to the President's Goals for 2022-23 and six College-wide goals that seem to be

embedded in the culture of the College. The Integrated Planning and Assessment Framework on p. 52 of the College report was referenced through numerous interviews as the approach to planning. The flow chart was a graphic representation of the discussions the team heard through multiple sessions with College leadership and staff.

Shoreline measures Mission Fulfillment using a variety of measures which are reflected as components of the Mission Statement. The College is measuring factors such as: Diversity and Equity, Community Engagement, Regional Impact, Global Impact as well as the elements of Student Achievement as described in the "Student Achievement" section of the Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report. Documentation is included in the "Student Achievement" section of the report.

The College seems to be on the right track. The report identified numerous systems in place to gather information, store, and plan how to use resources to achieve their stated mission. Their Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report, starting on page 12, was a testament to this. There was a wealth of evidence showing how well the institution was fulfilling the College's mission, all tied back to the key points of their mission statement. It was impressive how much documentation had been compiled, and their plans for ongoing assessment showed a commitment to continuous improvement.

However, the College hadn't defined a clear method of measurement which clarifies successful mission fulfillment. There was no discernable, clear target they were aiming for. The team reviewing the report felt confident the College is on the right path, but without a defined goal post, it was hard to tell exactly how well they were doing.

Recommendation 3: "Use disaggregated student achievement data including persistence, completion, retention, and post-graduate success for continuous improvement to inform planning, decision making and allocation of resources. Performance on these indicators should be widely published and continually used to promote student achievement, improve student learning, and close equity gaps." Fall 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability (1.D.2; 1.D.3; 1.D.4)

Observations

The evaluation team confirmed Shoreline's ongoing use of disaggregated student achievement data including persistence, completion, retention, and post-graduate success for continuous improvement to inform planning, decision-making, and allocation of resources as described in its self-evaluation through interviews with faculty, staff, and administrators and through a thorough review and analysis of multiple artifacts including several Annual Review documents, the 2024 Equity-Centered Strategic Plan, the President's Planning Memos, the Strategic Planning and Budget Council's Guiding Principles rubric, and Shoreline's website.

As previously noted in Part II, Shoreline widely publishes its benchmarked, disaggregated student achievement indicators online on the Student Achievement Benchmarks webpage. Shoreline's student achievement indicators also appear in the 2024 Equity-Center Strategic plan

(also published and easily accessible online) as one of the College's five mission fulfillment indicators. Moreover, each student achievement indicator and identified equity gaps are mapped to one or more strategic plan goals. Corresponding targets to close each equity gap are also transparently listed in the plan.

Although it is too soon to identify trends or measure progress made since setting the benchmarks, a framework and structure are in place for the College to move forward to promote student achievement, improve student learning, and close equity gaps through the Annual Review process and Strategic Action Plans with support from Planning & Institutional Effectiveness.

Recommendation 4: "Manage financial resources transparently by defining, developing and sharing financial processes, policies, and budget development decisions, including ongoing budget management and annual financial statements. Stakeholders should have opportunities for meaningful participation in the budget development process." Fall 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability (2.E.2; 2.E.3)

Observations

In response to this NWCCU recommendation, Shoreline established the College's Strategic Planning and Budget Council (SPBC), a participatory governance group of stakeholders from across the College including faculty, classified staff, exempt employees, and students. The purpose of the Strategic Planning and Budget Council is to advise the President and Executive Team on alignment of resource allocation with the College's mission and bring transparency in the budget development and execution process.

The SPBC developed "Guiding Principles" and a rubric to guide budget decision-making. The rubric is used by Deans and Executives to evaluate and prioritize budget requests that come through the Area Review process. Decisions about how budget requests are prioritized using the Guiding Principles rubric are reported to the College community through the President's Planning Memos, which are posted on the SCC website.

The SPBC Fiscal Subcommittee continues to meet monthly throughout the academic year to learn more about the College's budget assumptions, revenue sources, and expenditures, and has recently made minor revisions to the Guiding Principles rubric.

SCC administrators and staff report a much more transparent and participatory budget development process as a result of the work of the SPBC.