Recommendation number and topic:
Recommendation #2 Effective Planning Process

Full recommendation text:
To fully meet Standard I.B Institutional Effectiveness, the team recommends the college to develop a strategy for fully implementing its existing planning process to look at each campus and site, examine revenues and expenses, and systematically address instructional program planning, staffing requirements, provision of student and library services, including facilities needs and competing priorities. The planning process should include clearly prescribed roles and scope of authority for all governance stakeholders involved in each component of the planning process (I.A.3, I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.4, I.B.6, II.A.1, II.B.3.a, III.A.2, III.A.6, III.B.2.a-b, III.C.1.a-c, III.C.2, III.D.1.a-c, III.D.2.a-c, III.2.g, III.3, IV.A.3, IV.A.5, IV.B.1, and IV.2.a).

Related standards:
Effective planning relates to all Accreditation Standards (i.e. Standard I Institutional Mission and Effectiveness, Standard II Student Learning Programs and Services, Standard III Resources, and Standard IV Leadership and Governance).

In terms of the 14 recommendations, nearly all have implications for planning.

- Recommendation #1 Mission Statement is essential for informed and goal-directed planning.
- Recommendation #3 Assessing Institutional Effectiveness calls for the full implementation of program review (the college’s mechanism for unit-level planning) and completing assessments of SLOs (recommendations #4 and #5) in order to develop and report performance metrics to measure institutional effectiveness. On an annual basis, these measurements “close the loop” and inform the next cycle of planning.
- Several recommendations identify resource-related areas where integrated planning is needed (#7 human resources, #8 physical resources, and #9 technology resources).
- Since effective planning requires meaningful connection to budget process, recommendations #10 and #11 are also related.
- Finally, effective planning requires decision-making, thus the latter recommendations (#12, #13, #14) on leadership and governance have clear implications for planning.

Work group members:
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Provide the dates and times of all meetings held to date. For each meeting, please briefly describe the primary focus of the discussion that took place (1-2 sentences per meeting).
July 19, 2012 – During the first half of the first meeting, participants for both recommendation #2 and recommendation #3 met together to review the recommendations and related accreditation standards and to identify characteristics exhibited by an institution with effective integrated planning processes. Given current exigencies, the initial focus of participants for recommendation #2 was on annual planning. The group discussed in detail an Annual Assessment, Planning, and Budgeting timeline which would reflect these characteristics of effective planning: (a) directed by Board priorities and the College’s Mission Statement; (b) informed by data and assessments; (c) supported by unit-level planning that addresses Board priorities, references data trends, and is sufficiently timely so as to inform the following year’s annual plan and annual budget; (d) transparent and efficient in prioritizing allocation and resource decisions, including resource reductions when necessary, for the upcoming year; and (e) characterized by broad communication and dialogue at several critical junctures. The group also began to discuss the types of reports and metrics which might be most useful to inform planning.

July 25, 2012 – The group revisited the Annual Assessment, Planning, and Budgeting timeline, particularly with regard to adjusting due dates to ensure that unit-level plans can inform a draft annual plan developed in conjunction with the preliminary budget. The group acknowledged that program review has historically been viewed as a mechanism for new allocations and must now be used to identify areas for reductions. The group discussed the need for a visual which could accompany the narrative for the annual process.

August 2, 2012 – The group briefly revisited the Annual Assessment, Planning, and Budgeting (APB) timeline to acquaint new members. The group then spent some time reviewing and discussing the draft visual flowchart which reinforces the 12 month schedule and includes topical overlays making it easier to see where various items occur (e.g., where assessment occurs, where dialogue occurs, etc). In addition, the group discussed when and how the entire annual APB system would be evaluated to inform further refinements and adjustments. Then the group “shifted gears” to discuss longer-range plans. In particular, the group discussed when and how the College could complete a new Education Master Plan which would strengthen the process of continually connecting annual planning with enrollment, staffing, technology, facilities, and other resource-related plans.

August 21, 2012 – This upcoming meeting will focus on the APB visual, the timeline and process for evaluating and continually improving the APB system, and a proposed process and timeline for developing a new Education Master Plan.

Describe your plans for addressing the recommendation. Include a brief paragraph describing each activity included on your timeline along with key dates for accomplishing those activities.

The workgroup developing the following plans to address the recommendations:

1. Develop a narrative that clearly outlines the Annual Assessment, Planning, and Budgeting timeline which is characterized by the following: (a) directed by Board priorities and the College’s Mission Statement; (b) informed by data and assessments; (c) supported by unit-level planning that addresses Board priorities, references data trends, and is sufficiently timely so as to inform the following year’s annual plan and annual budget; (d) transparent and efficient in prioritizing allocation and resource decisions, including resource reductions when necessary, for the upcoming year; and (e) characterized by broad communication and
dialogue at several critical junctures. (Discussed 7/19 and 7/25. Final comments on 8/2 for distribution by 8/30 and Board review on 9/11.)

2. Develop visuals which reinforce the 12 month process for Annual Assessment, Planning, and Budgeting (APB). These visuals would allow various components (e.g., assessment, communication) to be clearly identified in terms of their frequency and connection to the other components. Both the narrative and visuals will facilitate broader understanding of the APB process. (Discussed 7/25 and 8/2. To be revisited 8/21. Initial drafts can be shared by 8/30 and on 9/11.)

3. Draft process and timeline for evaluation and continuous improvement of APB processes (i.e. when and how the entire APB system will be reviewed). (Discussed 8/2. Final comments on 8/21 for distribution by 8/30 and Board review on 9/11.)

4. Draft process and timeline for creating a new Education Master Plan (EMP) in 2013-2014. The creation of a new EMP will be time-consuming and significant, thus it cannot be undertaken during the current semester. However, the College should begin pre-planning activities this year to lay a foundation for a robust EMP process proposed for 2013-2014. (Discussed 8/2. Final comments on 8/21 for distribution by 8/30 and Board review on 9/11.)

5. Draft a process and related visuals for other mid-range and long-range master planning, including technology, staffing, and facilities. The process and visuals will clarify the conceptual relationships between these plans, the EMP, and annual planning processes. In addition, sequencing and proposed frequency will be addressed. (Preliminary discussions occurred in August. To be discussed in detail during September.)

6. Assemble and draft materials which promote understanding of annual indicators and benchmarking. (Preliminary discussions occurred in August. To be discussed in detail during September. This activity is connected to recommendation #3, as well as recommendation #2.)

7. Identify data needs related to planning and program review. (To be discussed in detail during September. This activity is connected to recommendation #3, as well as recommendation #2.)

Summarize your progress to date on carrying out the activities described above where applicable. If you have completed any of these activities, please note the date on which it was completed and append the evidence or any products relating to the activity.

A draft Annual Assessment, Planning, and Budgeting (APB) timeline has been discussed in detail, refined several times, and is ready for Board review. See appended item.

Several other items are in development, some of which will be ready for Board review by September 11. These include the APB visuals, the process and timeline for evaluation and continuous improvement of APB processes, and the process and timeline for creating a new Education Master Plan.

List any challenges you have encountered or anticipate facing with respect to addressing the recommendation.
A primary aspect of addressing this recommendation is not only outlining an annual process that connects assessments and planning to budgets, but also implementing that process this academic year. The first challenge will be sticking to the annual timeline, especially in this first year. The second challenge will be making difficult and perhaps unpopular budget-related decisions, particularly reductions. However, these challenges must be faced for the college to show a connection between planning and budgeting, including using assessments and data in the planning and budgeting processes. A related challenge is making sure all necessary data are available, widely discussed, and sufficiently accurate to support decision-making.