
SUMMARY

The preparation of this Self-Study has given Central Piedmont Community College's faculty, staff, and students the opportunity to ask some serious questions about how the College fulfills its mission and how it can improve.

The Self-Study, with its proposals and recommendations, reflects the College's commitment to meeting the *Criteria* of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, but it also reflects a commitment to achieving excellence in the programs and services the College offers.

Although there are many faculty, staff, and administrators who were at the College during the last Self-Study, there are many more employees who are new. Working on the Self-Study has given them an opportunity to become more knowledgeable about the overall operations of the College and the standards for accreditation. In most cases, faculty and staff reviewed areas different from their usual areas of expertise and responsibility. Their objectivity has enabled them to recognize and appreciate not only the strengths of the College but also to suggest areas that need improving. By researching the College's compliance with specific criteria, section committee members came to recognize that accreditation is the hallmark which certifies the College's quality and is one measure by which the public can determine that Central Piedmont Community College maintains high standards and achieves a level of excellence.

As we began this work, the challenge of investigating and documenting compliance with hundreds of *must* and *should* statements and of producing a report that is accurate and well-written was daunting. For the many employees involved in some way with the preparation of the Self-Study, there is now a sense of pride and accomplishment. Preparing the Self-Study has in many ways united the College behind a common effort, has strengthened professional relationships, and has certainly educated the College community.

Members of the Steering Committee are particularly proud of the way the section chairs and committees utilized technology to keep track of multiple drafts, to safeguard documents, and to reference sources.

From the outset, the College determined that as soon as areas of weakness were identified, they would be brought to the attention of the College leadership and assigned for corrective action at the vice-president level. Because of this, several

improvements were put into place and Central Piedmont Community College is richer for their implementation. For the few areas of non-compliance, the College is already addressing these issues in an effort to achieve compliance by the time the Visiting Committee arrives in late fall.

Perhaps the most rewarding part for individuals working on the Self-Study has been acknowledging the College's strengths and celebrating the many examples of excellence that the Self-Study revealed:

- Provision of strong administrative support for the continuous cycle of institutional effectiveness;
- Response to the needs of the large segments of the community who are under-served and under-prepared;
- Use of innovative approaches in serving over 11,000 students in non-credit programs offered at over 200 sites throughout Mecklenburg County;
- Assessment of general education competencies beyond those required by the *Criteria*;
- Development of an exemplary advising website;
- Strength of the infrastructure of the College network and centralization of computing hardware and software upgrades and support;
- Provision of creative and resourceful support services to students at all campuses;
- Use of Student Life activities to expand the teaching and learning process outside the classroom and to contribute to students' becoming more responsible citizens;
- Service to students and the community through versatile and innovative Career Services;
- Completion of a multi-campus infrastructure;
- Addition of and improvement of facilities;
- Development of a website easily navigated by students, staff, and visitors;
- Maintenance of financial systems resulting in exemplary ratings by outside auditors;
- Implementation of an efficient system for inventory

control and procurement of small-ticket items; and

- Alignment of the budget process with the College mission and goals.

The Steering Committee is indebted to the hundreds of employees who worked together on this Self-Study and maintained a professional attitude with each other during the long months of the project, who kept the work on schedule, and who made sure that the final document is accurate in every detail. The collective efforts of all involved in the 2000-2002 Self-Study have helped to make Central Piedmont Community College a better place to work, to teach, and to learn.

