



March 6, 2015

Dr. Dianne Van Hook, Chancellor
College of the Canyons
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Re: IEPI Technical Assistance Team Visits

Dear Dr. Van Hook:

Taft College is very interested in the opportunity to participate in a Technical Assistance project through the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI). The initiative is an innovative strategy for improving the overall institutional effectiveness of our system and will be of tremendous value to the each individual college that participates in it.

The West Kern Community College District is a single-college district located in the city of Taft, a rural community in the southwestern corner of the San Joaquin Valley, about 30 miles west of the population center of Bakersfield. The district contains 735 square miles primarily consisting of oil fields. The College is one of the smallest colleges in the state and serves approximately 2500 FTES annually. Through a partnership with the Westside Energy Services Training and Education Center (WESTEC), the College offers short-term training and education programs relating to the petroleum industry and administration of justice. The College has an unduplicated headcount of over 10,000 students annually due in part to our short-term training of oilfield employees.

The College's strengths rest with its innovative instructional programs and strong partnerships with business and industry. Located in the heart of the Midway-Sunset Oil Field, the College has established strong ties with the petroleum and natural gas industry. The College offers an Energy Technology Program to prepare technicians for employment in this industry sector, and has recently launched a new Engineering Program articulated with California State University, Bakersfield, and strongly supported by major corporations including Chevron. The Taft College STEM initiative is a model program recently highlighted in [Advancing the Jobs Driven Economy](#), a new publication created through the STEM Connector national organization. We also created Water Treatment courses in response to the on-going need to preserve our water resources.

Taft College also values the education and independence of individuals who were not previously served by community colleges. Taft College's Transition to Independent Living Program (TIL) is a national model for teaching independent living skills to students with developmental and intellectual disabilities. The program is unique in that no other community college in California offers an intensive independent living skills educational experience for a population of students which is growing at an exponential rate.

The College has developed systems to track SLO's and their assessment using the software program-eLumen. ELumen is a repository for both quantitative and qualitative SLO data at the course, program, and institutional levels with a mapping mechanism. Taft College was one of the original colleges to use eLumen. Since its implementation, eLumen has grown to be a robust repository for the past several years. In order to draw a stronger connection between the SLO data and resource allocations, we most recently instituted a change in the qualitative portion of the reporting. Faculty describe success and areas of gaps in student learning, including statements of possible changes within each course section. We now include an estimate of the cost of the resource requested. They also describe any changes outside of the course, for example, additional tutoring, and they estimate the cost of the tutor. We anticipate that when faculty write their program reviews, a report is run in eLumen to see what additional resources have been requested to assist students to master the learning outcomes.

The College has also developed its planning system, including an updated Educational Master Plan and Strategic Action Plan with an integrated planning model allowing users to see the planning and evaluation cycle for each sub-area within the Educational Master Plan. The detailed sequencing of the integrated planning model facilitates the implementation and evaluation of realistic strategies; however, the planning system involves several different review cycles that are not fully integrated. There is a review cycle for Curriculum and General Education, Institutional Student Learning Outcomes, Student Services, and Budget Allocations. Resource decisions are not timely, and may take up to a year-and-a-half to make. This creates major inconsistencies in our overall planning system.

The College has a strong interest in an Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI) grant that would help us further integrate these systems to create a stronger direct link between student learning outcomes and resource allocations. Our current program review process takes a holistic view of resource allocations, considering student achievement data along with student learning outcome data. With too many specific learning outcomes at the course level, we miss the larger institutional picture to make systemic changes. Most of our resource allocations are made based on student achievement data.

We have researched how other districts handle this need, and have not yet found models that are comprehensive and integrated enough to successfully meet our needs in this area.

To summarize, our priority is technical assistance regarding integrating SLO's and planning systems. Taft College has a gap between using the SLO data to drive institutional change, and effectively aligning institutional priorities with resources. The ideal timeline for us is to launch a technical assistance project is fall 2015.

Dr. Dianne Van Hook

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We look forward to a review of this request and wish you every success as you undertake the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative.

Sincerely,



Dena P. Maloney, Ed.D.

Superintendent/President

West Kern Community College District/Taft College