



ACCREDITATION

LETTER

*“Rising to the Challenge: Road to Accreditation”*

The entire SIPI community has diligently been engaged in efforts to regain accreditation and tremendous progress has been made. This news letter will go over some of the highlights of the past month’s accreditation work and some of the upcoming important events. One of the most important upcoming goals is to complete the Self Study report by December 31, 2010. Other key dates for accreditation activities either recently past or coming up include:

December 1, 2010: subcommittees submits chapter drafts to Steering Committee Chair.

December 3, 2010: final draft of SIPI’s strategic plan will be completed.

December 8, 2010: all staff and student meetings to report progress

December 17, 2010: mail self study to mock review team.

December 31, 2010: final draft of the self study completed.

January, 4-6, 2011: mock review to be conducted.

January 7, 2011: staff meeting to report finding of mock review.

January 18, 2011: onsite visit by the US Department of Education.

January 24, 2011: final Self Study document mailed to HLC.

March 21-23, 2011, onsite visit from HLC.

Another important component to accreditation is to maintain all necessary evidence for accreditation in one area. In order to accomplish this task, a permanent “Accreditation Repository Room” was established here at SIPI. The repository is available for any faculty/staff/committee member to use.

As part of our continuing mission to update and educate the SIPI community about accreditation, SIPI will be discussing the Higher Learning Commission’s 5 Criterion which each institution is to follow– In this issue, Criterion 2 is highlighted:

Criterion Two “Preparing for the Future” addresses the need for a college to know itself well enough that its multiple planning efforts will result in realistic and achievable plans. The Core Components address planning efforts based on effective evaluation enabling the college to maintain and strengthen its quality in educational programs and enhancing its capacity to fulfill its mission in the future. Such efforts are essential to the future health of the organization.

Criterion Two ties the capacity to meet the future requirements to perform ongoing evaluation and assessment. These processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness and inform strategies for continuous improvement.

Each Criterion has three elements; Criterion Statement, Core Components and Examples of Evidence.

2a. The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

2b. The organization’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future

2c. The organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

2d. All levels of planning align with the organization’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission. SIPI recognizes and values the need to reflect and to plan for a dynamic future to better meet the needs of the communities we serve.

Strategic Planning Update, December 8, 2010

During the first stage of work on the strategic plan, SIPI and its Board of Regents completed a review of its current local, political, social and economic environment. This review was accomplished by an environmental scan activity called a “SWOT” (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. The SWOT analysis identified SIPI’s needs, challenges and opportunities. As a result, SIPI and the Board of Regents now have a better idea of how to respond and address each of these issues.

On the basis of its environmental scan, SIPI has positioned itself as a campus-wide community to make strategic decisions to respond to the major issues and opportunities it faces. Some of the first steps taken in response to addressing the major issues were to revisit the institution’s mission statement and the strategic goals and activities of the Operational Work Plans. The mission statement (the reasons why SIPI exists) was reviewed and revised. Strategic goals and action strategies of the Operational Work Plans have been designed to be specific, measurable, and realistic.

The Operational Work Plans are constructed to make SIPI’s Strategic Plan a roadmap and working document that will guide faculty and staff in making data-based instructional decisions. The Operational Work Plans are a detailed description of the activities used to implement an action strategy or an objective. The President’s Cabinet will prioritize the action strategies and their associated activities. The work plans break the strategic goals into manageable parts for coordinated implementation of the Strategic Plan. Task specification includes staff assignments, material resource allocations, and schedules for completion. The Operational Plans specify expenditure information as well.

Operational Work Plans were drafted by nearly all departments, programs or units and the Board of Regents during the spring of 2010. Development of program-based budgets that were aligned with the Operational Work Plans began shortly thereafter. SIPI and the Board of Regents realized that the work plans were a critical part of its strategic plan and that the action strategies and activities will move SIPI forward in realizing the goals and outcomes within the strategic plan.

The work plans capture the ‘big ideas’, not daily or monthly tasks, as many of the first drafted plans did. It was determined that campus-wide focus group discussions by department, program, or unit would be established in order to review, revise or develop work plans.

Each focus group met during November, 2010 and:

- Reviewed existing or drafted operational work plan
- Determined whether Action Strategies and Activities were strategic or ‘big ideas’ that would help the college meet its goals or, if the Action Strategies and Activities were daily or monthly tasks
- Revised Action Strategies and Activities to be strategic in nature
- Reviewed and confirmed ‘Who is Responsible’
- Reviewed and confirmed the Time Line
- Reviewed and/or revised the Success Factor or Evaluation Measure
- Reviewed and/or revised the Resources Requested (Budget needs)
- Reviewed and/or revised the Data Source used to Identify Activities

This process also ensured that all faculty, staff, and Board of Regent members had input and ownership into this critical operational component of the strategic plan and a better understanding that the intent of the work plans was and is to take the strategic planning document to the ‘operational level’. It also allowed faculty, staff and board members to revisit budgetary needs.

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SIPI understands that institutions can spend substantial time, effort and resources to develop strategic plans and then fail to translate their strategic vision and objectives down to operational level plans and actions.

To ensure that the strategic plan, along with the operational work plans are executed, the President's Cabinet established monitoring procedures which required numerous reporting documents, continual data collection and formative/summative assessment measures.

A President's Cabinet also serves as the oversight body for implementing and monitoring the success of SIPI's planning efforts. The Cabinet members are in the best position to evaluate planning efforts across the total institution because of their college-wide responsibilities. Members are:

Sherry Allison, President's Office
Val Montoya, Academic Programs
Monte Monteith, College Operations
Joe Carpio, Registrar & Admissions
Dorothy Wester, Advanced Technical Ed.
Chris Harrington, Business & Liberal Arts
Ray Gachupin, Housing & Student Services
Karlisa Shomour, Facilities
Kathryn Akipa, Academic Support & Developmental Ed.
Joan Goodman, Board of Regents
Ronnie Paquin, College Operations
Noah Billie, Student Senate
SIPI Union Representative
Institutional Effectiveness Specialist

It will be the Cabinet's role to distinguish strategies that have sustainable impact across the whole institution and those strategies that simply reflect good work that ought to be pursued as a matter of course but are not part of the strategic plans. This level of planning requires managers to consider all activities within their units and how they contribute to SIPI. The programs also decide whether such activities should continue, be modified, or deleted. Accordingly, the goals in this process are then evaluated to make sure they are strategically aligned to continuing excellences at SIPI.

The President's Cabinet will provide oversight of the number of goals and strategies pursued. A limited set of goals and strategies (perhaps no more than three or four goals, for example) that are truly pivotal will be considered. This does not mean that if strategies do not make the annual plan that they are unimportant. Careful attention to which strategies are truly strategic and which are operational will serve SIPI well as a dividing point.

When these decisions are made, it will be critical to convey the strategic nature of how strategies and success factors were selected to all parties involved in the

A major task of the Cabinet is to work with employees, students, and the Board of Regents to bring forth the best strategies to support the Strategic Plan and its goals. Each department/program has developed an operational work plan that is linked to the strategic plan, which flows from the SIPI's mission, vision and goals. Along with operational work plans, the academic program division has created and implemented a program review process and cycle. The process includes developing a 1 and 5 year academic plan and assessment plan models. Each academic department is currently creating assessment plans utilizing this model.

Further, the Facility Master Plan will also be updated to reflect the Strategic Plan. All existing and future documents (Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, policies, etc.) will be aligned with SIPI's Strategic Plan. The Cabinet will continue to review all documents and assure this alignment.

The link to budgeting process is also critical. Although SIPI receives congressional appropriations, its resources are not likely to grow. The current downturn in the economy is a challenge, but the very essence of planning and tying resources to planning will help SIPI with budget issue. At the same time, all departments must take a very long look at costs and specify the resources that are necessary to accomplish each strategy.

Some of the questions which SIPI will continue to use in guiding departments and programs in operational implementation are:

1. Is SIPI setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resourced, Timely) short term (6 to 12 monthly) goals for its operational work plan groups?
2. Do all staff and faculty have ready access to and ownership of these short term goals? And can they express them in their own words?
3. Are employees receiving meaningful and timely feedback on progress toward these goals?
4. Are these goals adequately resourced in annual budgets? and in staff resourcing?
5. Do students and stakeholders know what SIPI is trying to achieve and are these stakeholders providing meaningful feedback to SIPI on its successes?

