

Edmonds Community College Commendations and Recommendations from the Spring 2008 Comprehensive Evaluation

The following are the commendations and recommendations received by Edmonds Community College from a Spring 2008 Comprehensive Evaluation (April 23-25, 2008). Specifically, the commendations and recommendations were received from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) in a letter dated July 24, 2008.

The seven commendations Edmonds Community College (EdCC) received from the NWCCU are as follows:

Commendations

1. The college is commended for its entrepreneurial spirit both in the credit and non-credit programs. This dedication to innovation in responding to the needs of the community is evident in numerous programs, such as Materials Science, the Creative Retirement Institute and partnerships with Edmonds School District, Central Washington University and local business and industry. It is notable that the college has been effective in procuring grants and other funds to diversify its offerings, support students and supplement operations.
2. The college is commended for celebrating and embracing diversity in its campus programs and services. This is a clearly stated component of the mission statement as well as a strategic focus area. The college's efforts have had a significant positive impact on the level of understanding and attitude of employees and students.
3. The college is commended for its exemplary commitment to the planning process of teaching and learning through its course and program approval process. The curriculum committee's thoughtful and comprehensive evaluation puts the needs of the students at the forefront and serves to integrate departments and programs as they think about linkages and connections with each other.
4. The college is commended for the development of "mediated classrooms" and other IT related instructional support that facilitates pedagogical currency and best instructional practices.
5. The college is commended for the innovative, student-friendly redesign of the library and the creation of a successful learning commons.
6. The college is commended for its participative process for facilities planning including consultation on planning and building design, office and program relocation assistance, and responsiveness to instructional and student needs.
7. The college is commended for its financial management and program strategies that allowed it to endure a multi-year period of reduced tuition revenue without any employee reductions in force.

The seven recommendations Edmonds Community College (EdCC) received from the NWCCU are as follows:

Recommendations

1. The committee recommends that the college a) more fully integrate its evaluation and planning processes to identify institutional priorities for improvement, and b) more clearly use the results of its systematic evaluation activities and ongoing planning processes to influence resource allocation and to improve its instructional programs, institutional services, and activities.(Standard 1.B.4, 1.B.5)
2. The committee recommends that the college more clearly identify and make more readily available to its constituents, expected learning outcomes in all educational programs and degrees. (Policy 2.2; Standard 2.B.2, 2.B.3)
3. The committee recommends that the college provide evidence that it regularly and systematically evaluates student achievement of all program-level learning outcomes and uses those results to improve instruction. (Policy 2.2; Standard 2.B.2, 2.B.3)
4. The committee recommends that the college develop a three year financial planning model for major sources of income and expenses. (Standard 7.A.2)
5. The committee recommends that the college develop a policy, adopted by its Board of Trustees, which identifies the uses and limits of debt. (Standard 7.A.4)
6. The committee recommends that the college develop a policy, adopted by its Board of Trustees, which identifies cash management and investment procedures. (Standard 7.C.4)
7. The committee recommends that the college provide regular and systematic evaluation of part-time faculty. (Standard 4.A.5 and Policy 4.1)

Of the seven recommendations, three (recommendations 4, 5 and 6) did not meet the criteria for accreditation. A progress report dated October 10, 2008 was submitted to the Commission. EdCC was informed on February 17, 2009 that the report was accepted. According to the Commission's letter,

"The Commission was satisfied that progress had been made regarding Recommendations 4, 5, and 6 of the Spring 2008 Comprehensive Evaluation Report. This matter was the subject of Commission correspondence dated July 24, 2008. The Commission determined that Recommendations 4, 5, and 6 of the Spring 2008 Comprehensive Evaluation Report now substantially meet the Commission's criteria for accreditation."

The remaining four recommendations (1, 2, 3 and 7) were found to be, “substantially in compliance with Commission criteria, but in need of improvement.” A focused interim report was submitted October 9, 2009 and will be followed by an October 29, 2009 visit. The October 9, 2009 report summarizes the actions taken by EdCC to address the remaining four recommendations.

It is important to note that recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 7 had already been identified by the college as areas in need of attention before the visit by the external evaluators in April, 2008. In fact, the college's self study was so comprehensive and thorough that the majority of a Title III grant addressing the recommendations was written before the external evaluation. This grant proposal was submitted in May, 2008, just a few days after the evaluation visit, and it was awarded to EdCC in July 2008. In addition, through the biannual negotiations process, recommendation 7 was being discussed and acted on before the self study was completed.