



Internal Institutional Processes
for
Level II Program Review
A Level III Program Review

Prepared by:

Office of Student & Academic Success

December 2004

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGES & WORKFORCE EDUCATION



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

CHAIR
F. Philip Handy

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION
John Winn

Chancellor
FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGES & WORKFORCE EDUCATION
J. David Armstrong, Jr.

Linda J. Eads, Ed.D
Miami

Charles Patrick Garcia
Boca Raton

Linda K. Taylor
Ft. Myers

T. Willard Fair
Miami

Julia L. Johnson
Orlando

Donna Callaway
Tallahassee

Preface

In Chapter 1001.02(6) of the Florida Statutes (F.S.), the State Board of Education (SBOE) is mandated to provide for the review of all academic programs at least every five years. The Florida Department of Education, State Board of Education Administrative Rules, in addressing Accountability Standards in Rule 6A-14.060 (5), state that each community college shall, “Develop a comprehensive, long-range program plan, including program and service priorities.”

Program review in the Florida Community College System (FCCS) is conducted on three levels. The first level is the annual generation by the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Education (DCCWE) of descriptive data about each program and its students for evaluation. The Level I program reviews satisfy the five-year cyclical requirement in the Florida Statutes and provides the data used for the selection of programs requiring additional review. Level II program reviews provide further evaluation of designated programs by the individual community colleges with the assistance of outside agencies. A major component of the Level II reviews is the joint meetings held between the discipline faculties of the community colleges and the neighboring universities. Level III program reviews are systemwide reviews of selected programs or disciplines by DCCWE to address areas of concern in those programs. These reviews are policy-driven and contain recommendations for action based on findings of the review.

This program review studies the internal procedures that the community colleges use when conducting institutional Level II program reviews. This review examines the materials that were sent to DCCWE from the Florida community colleges in response to a request for any printed or documented Level II program review materials or information that the individual

institutions use in conducting internal Level II program reviews. All 28 community colleges responded to the Division's request for information and have program review procedures in place; however, three of the community colleges have no formal or written procedures. Thus, results in this study reference the materials sent by the 25 community colleges that do have written procedures.

The Level II program reviews are conducted at the individual college level with the institution seeking the cooperation and expertise of outside agencies. This study summarizes the descriptive information of the Level II program review processes currently conducted on the Florida community college campuses. It focuses on the aspects of program review models employed by the community colleges and describes the procedures used by the community colleges to address pertinent areas of program effectiveness. Those areas are program profiles, student learning outcomes, program strengths and weaknesses, recommendations to improve programs, future issues for programs, and program efficiency. This review also studies the approaches that the colleges use to address the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) criteria when reviewing programs. Examination of the program review processes used by the community colleges reveals distinguishing features that could be designated as best practices when developing a program review model. Finally, recommendations are made for the purposes of establishing and maintaining an effective program review process.

Table of Contents

Preface.....	i
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Tables	v
Executive Summary	vi
Introduction.....	1
Status of Program Review in the Florida Community College System.....	1
Program Review Process	2
Purpose of Level II Program Reviews	3
Benefits of Program Review	5
Review of the Literature	6
Description of Current Processes for Level II Program Review	13
Administration of Program Review Process.....	14
Time Line for Procedures	15
Involvement of Internal and External Members	15
Responsibilities of Members.....	16
Program Review Schedule or Cycle	16
Substitution of External Accreditation.....	17
Areas to be Addressed by Program Review Process	18
Program Profile.....	18
Student Learning Outcomes.....	27
Strengths and Weaknesses	38
Recommendations to Improve Programs.....	40
Future Issues	44
Program Efficiency or Productivity	46
Addressing SACS Criteria	48
Defined Purpose Linked to the College’s Mission	50
Educational Goals Support Purpose of Institutional Units	50
Implementation of Procedures to Meet Objectives.....	50
Evaluation Results Used to Improve Programs and Services.....	51
Continuous Learning and Improvement Cycle	52
Distinguishing Features Used as Best Practices	55
Brevard Community College	55
Central Florida Community College.....	55
Florida Community College at Jacksonville.....	55
Palm Beach Community College.....	55

Santa Fe Community College	57
Recommendations.....	59
References.....	61
Appendix A.....	63
Table 1	64
Table 2	65
Table 3	66
Table 4	67

List of Tables

Table 1	Current Processes for Level II Program Review	64
Table 2	Program Profile.....	65
Table 3	Outcomes, Strengths, Weaknesses, and Recommendations	66
Table 4	Future Issues, Productivity, SACS, and Best Practices	67

Executive Summary

This review of the Internal Institutional Processes for Level II Program Review focuses on the internal procedures that the community colleges use when conducting institutional Level II program reviews that address pertinent areas of program effectiveness. All 28 community colleges responded to the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Education's request for information and have program review procedures in place; however, three of the colleges have no formal or written procedures. Thus, results in this study reference the materials sent by the 25 community colleges that do have written procedures.

Nationally, program review remains relevant to the development and viability of effective programs and thus successful educational institutions. A comprehensive program review process that includes the assessment of student learning outcomes and the use of assessment results to improve programs is vital to maintaining effective programs. Guaranteeing the best academic programs supports the goal of a successful educational institution and ultimately helps to provide accountability for education at all levels.

The descriptions of the current processes for Level II Program Review used by Florida's community colleges vary considerably. However, most colleges appoint one division or office to administer the functions of program review for the entire college. Program review teams or committees are formed and trained in the necessary procedures for conducting program review. The individual programs or departments then execute the procedures for the process in their respective areas.

In order to conduct a comprehensive review of any program, structured procedures must address all areas dealing with program structure and performance. Those areas are *Program Profile*, *Student Learning Outcomes*, *Strengths and Weaknesses*, *Recommendations to Improve Programs*, *Future Issues*, and *Program Efficiency or Productivity*.

The first area to be addressed when reviewing a program is the development of a *Program Profile* detailing all crucial characteristics of the program. To determine program quality, such a program profile must include many descriptive aspects. Twenty-three (23) of the 25 community colleges with written procedures indicate in their program review materials that they require their program review teams to address some aspects of a program profile. Those aspects are *Statement of Purpose of the Program*, *Definition, Content or Curriculum*, *Student Data*, *Faculty and Staff*, *Community and Workforce Needs*, *Facilities and Educational Equipment*, and *Marketing and Recruitment Efforts*.

One of the most important aspects of program review is *Student Learning Outcomes* and many of the community colleges place their strongest emphasis in this area. Twenty (20) of the 25 community colleges include a section on student learning outcomes in their program review material that the review teams address when conducting their internal program reviews. Nineteen (19) colleges indicate that their review teams are required to determine if student learning outcomes are identified and how they are identified. Eighteen (18) of the colleges include information on the assessments they use to measure progress on student learning

outcomes. Fourteen (14) of the community colleges indicate that their review teams are required to verify that assessment results of student outcomes are used to improve programs.

Twenty-two (22) of the colleges indicate that they identify program *Strengths and Weaknesses* and 17 colleges require internal and external sources in determining program strengths and weaknesses. Twenty (20) colleges require the review teams to address *Recommendations to Improve Programs*. When considering recommendations for program improvement, 17 of the colleges require their review teams to consider *Future Issues* affecting programs. Finally, 20 of the community colleges state that the review teams must address the issue of *Program Efficiency or Productivity* by including program costs. Thirteen (13) colleges indicate that they tie the college budget to program outputs.

Also being studied in this review are the approaches that the colleges use to address the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) criteria when reviewing programs. SACS includes their approach to program review or the planning, evaluation and improvement of educational programs as a crucial element in their philosophy of institutional effectiveness. The expectation is that successful institutions develop and implement a systematic process of planning, evaluation, and improvement. Seventeen (17) of the community colleges state in their program review materials that they require their review teams to address SACS accreditation criteria when conducting their program review activities. Some colleges briefly mention SACS accreditation while others elaborate on the college's application of SACS criteria to their program review activities. Six (6) of the community colleges that specifically address the SACS criteria mention an emphasis on a continuous learning and improvement cycle that permeates every aspect of their institutional environment.

Examination of the program review processes used by five of the community colleges reveals distinguishing features that could be designated as best practices when developing a program review model. Those five colleges are Brevard Community College, Central Florida Community College, Florida Community College at Jacksonville, Palm Beach Community College, and Santa Fe Community College.

Finally, recommendations are made for the purposes of establishing and maintaining an effective program review process.

Recommendations

- 1. It is recommended that all community colleges develop and maintain a comprehensive system for program review providing planning, assessment, and improvement through formal structured procedures for the purpose of evaluating all institutional programs on a regular, scheduled time cycle.**
- 2. To fully validate the existence of program review activities, it is recommended that all community colleges document their formal structured procedures for program review.**
- 3. In order to guarantee the quality and effectiveness of institutional programs, it is recommended that all community colleges address SACS criteria in their written policies for reviewing educational programs.**

- 4. It is recommended that all community colleges place an emphasis on student learning outcomes when conducting their program review activities in order to attain the highest student achievement.**
- 5. To establish a continuous learning and improvement cycle, it is recommended that all community colleges document what was done to address a deficiency identified by assessment activities, thereby demonstrating actual use of assessment results to improve programs.**
- 6. In order to promote an inclusive academic environment surrounding the entire college, community colleges should encourage all faculty, administrators and staff to participate in program review activities, resulting in a program review process that permeates all areas of the institution.**
- 7. It is recommended that all program reviews include the following: Program Profile, Student Learning Outcomes, Strengths and Weaknesses, Recommendations to Improve Programs, Future Issues, and Program Efficiency or Productivity.**

Introduction

Status of Program Review in the Florida Community College System

On July 1, 2001, the State Board of Community Colleges was abolished and its powers and duties were transferred by a type two transfer to the Florida Board of Education¹ (FBOE) or devolved to the individual community college boards of trustees. Thus, statutes dealing with program review were subject to change. During the 2002 Legislative Session, the new Florida School Code was approved and went into effect on January 7, 2003. The Florida School Code was rewritten to reflect the changes in statute due to the reorganization of the Department of Education (DOE) and the transition to a K-20 education system. Much of the existing language was obsolete and required amendment, clarification or repeal. Effective January 7, 2003, with the implementation of the new school code, the State Board of Education (SBOE) replaces the Community College System (CCS) in assuming the responsibility of providing for program review.

In Chapter 1001.02(6) of the Florida Statutes (F.S.), the State Board of Education is mandated to provide for the review of all academic programs.

(6) ...The programs shall be reviewed every 5 years or whenever the state board determines that the effectiveness or efficiency of a program is jeopardized. The State Board of Education shall define the indicators of quality and the criteria for program review for every program. Such indicators include need, student demand, industry-driven competencies for advanced technology and related programs, and resources available to support continuation. The results of the program reviews must be tied to the university and community college budget requests.

¹ In January 2003, the Florida Board of Education was changed to the State Board of Education.

In addition to the statute, in addressing Accountability Standards, Rule 6A-14.060 (5) states that each community college shall:

Develop a comprehensive, long-range program plan, including program and service priorities. Statements of expected outcomes shall be published, and facilities shall be used efficiently to achieve such outcomes. Periodic evaluations of programs and services shall use placement and follow-up data, shall determine whether expected outcomes are achieved, and shall be the basis for necessary improvements.

Program Review Process

This program review examines the institutional procedures that the community colleges employ when conducting Level II program reviews of their programs or disciplines. Level II program review is a comprehensive process conducted by institutions, with or without the assistance of outside agencies, examining their programs and disciplines for educational quality and effectiveness. This evaluation is done in terms of defined goals and objectives, identification of student learning outcomes, assessment of progress on those outcomes, measures used to assess results, recognition of strengths and weaknesses, recommendations for program improvement, and future issues for the program.

This review examines the program review materials that were sent to the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Education (DCCWE) from the Florida community colleges in response to a request for any printed or documented Level II program review materials or information that their individual institutions use in conducting internal Level II program reviews. All 28 community colleges responded to the DCCWE's request and have program review procedures in place; however, three of the community colleges have no formal or written procedures. Thus, results in this paper reference the materials sent by the 25 community colleges that do have written procedures.

Purpose of Level II Program Reviews

Level II program review serves many purposes, but one of the most important purposes is to assist students transferring from the community college to an upper-division institution or from the community college into the workforce, making their transition as smooth as possible. A critical element in achieving this purpose is to maintain constant communication between the interested parties. The discipline faculty of the community college and their counterparts at the local universities should meet on a regular basis. By conducting articulation meetings and referencing minutes from those meetings, the two faculties are able to address any problems that may arise hindering the normal progression of students through the educational phase of their lives. In addition, involving members of the local business or industry community in advisory roles can further aid the transition of students into the workforce. Any areas of concern or recommendations discussed in these meetings may develop into program review papers or Level II program reviews. Rule 6A-10.024 of the Florida Administrative Rules deals with articulation between universities, community colleges, and school districts.

(1) Each state university president, community college board of trustees, and district school board shall plan and adopt policies and procedures to provide articulated programs so that students can proceed toward their educational objectives as rapidly as their circumstances permit. Universities, community colleges, and school districts shall exchange ideas in the development and improvement of general education, and in the development and implementation of student acceleration mechanisms. They shall establish joint programs and agreements to facilitate articulation, acceleration, and efficient use of faculty, equipment, and facilities.

The Level II program reviews are conducted at the individual college level with the institution seeking the cooperation and expertise of outside groups. Level II reviews of programs are selected for analysis based on varying factors. They may occur due to data results produced from Level I program reviews of certificate or degree programs indicating a necessity for

additional evaluation. Level I data from the Associate in Arts degree programs reveal and compare the performance of community college transfer students in upper-division programs to the performance of students in the State University System (SUS) in those same upper-division programs. Grade point averages, graduation rates, average course loads, and credits earned for a degree, are some of the performance measures considered during a Level I program review. Areas of low performance may be flagged for further analysis in a Level II or Level III program review.

Analyses from Level II program reviews result in program review papers, which are further covered by Rule 6A-14.029 of the Florida Administrative Rules, as approved June 2004, dealing with Staff and Program Development. Subsection (1) states that, “Each community college shall adopt policies on staff and program development.” In addition, subsection (2)(a) defines staff development as “the improvement of staff performance through activities which update or upgrade competence specified for present or planned positions. Staff includes all college employees.”

Subsection (2)(b) states:

Program development is the evaluation and improvement of existing programs, including the design of evaluation instruments to establish bases for improvements, as well as the designing of new programs.

Thus, through planning and evaluation, Level II program reviews lead to program improvement as a result of curriculum additions, deletions, or revisions.

In the program review materials received from the Florida community colleges, the purpose of program review is defined a little differently by each community college. Manatee Community College (MCC) states in its program review manual, “The purpose of the academic program review is to improve programs through a systematic cyclical process that is consistent

with the most recently developed standards for re-accreditation adopted by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)” (2001, p. 1, para. 1).

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) is the regional accreditation agency in the eleven southern states, including Florida, for educational institutions that award associates, baccalaureate, master’s or doctoral degrees. Thus, SACS is responsible for the accreditation process for the 28 community colleges in Florida. SACS maintains in their *Criteria for Accreditation* manual that the planning and evaluating of educational programs is essential to the attainment of established goals and improvement results desired for successful quality education. The planning and evaluation process should involve as much of the institution as possible and requires the development of procedures for reviewing programs. It also requires actions taken on recommendations made by faculty, students, completers, leavers, or employers for improvement to programs (1998, pp. 17-18).

Brevard Community College’s (BCC) manual states that, “Program evaluation is the vehicle through which BCC can attain its goal related to the evaluation, cost effectiveness, improvement, and expansion of programs and the efficient management of resources in the vocational/technical curricula areas” (n.d., p. 3, para. 2).

Benefits of Program Review

Brevard Community College also explains how it benefits from program review or program evaluation. “Program Evaluation is worthwhile in itself for it initiates a process of self-examination among administrators and faculty and assists in the formulation and clarification of program goals and objectives” (n.d., p. 3, para. 3). The college feels that program evaluation leads to knowledgeable decisions regarding programs and assures consumers of a quality

education. Information obtained through program evaluation also helps personnel at BCC decide how they will:

1. *compare business and industrial standards with institutional vocational/technical program standards;*
2. *inform, involve, and utilize expertise of representative from related businesses and industries;*
3. *inform former students of the institution's commitment to self-improvement and excellence;*
4. *identify needed changes or modifications in physical facilities;*
5. *identify instructional equipment needs;*
6. *identify needs in the learning resources area;*
7. *provide data relative to decisions in expenditure of funds;*
8. *inform business and industry about the institution and the vocational/technical programs;*
9. *improve job placement opportunities for students;*
10. *identify future occupational trends;*
11. *identify any existence of gender bias; and*
12. *identify unmet needs of disadvantaged handicapped students*
(n.d., p. 4).

SACS, in its *Principles of Accreditation, An Overview*, states succinctly what the program review process can provide for an institution.

The internal review provides an institution the opportunity to consider its effectiveness in achieving its stated mission and its compliance with the accreditation requirements established by the Commission's membership. Furthermore, it helps an institution to evaluate its efforts in enhancing the quality of student learning and the quality of programs and services offered to its constituencies as well as challenging itself in examining its successes in accomplishing its mission (2001, p. 4, para. 1).

Review of the Literature

On the national scene, program review remains relevant to the development and viability of effective programs and thus successful educational institutions. The importance of having a comprehensive, structured process for program review activities is acknowledged. A systematic process requires the implementation of a continuous cycle of planning, assessment and improvement procedures to achieve its purpose of offering effective, academic programs.

Reviews involve systematic procedures designed to identify strengths and weaknesses of academic programs. They result in recommendations for program development and modification. The ultimate goal is promoting and maintaining high-quality academic programs that are administered efficiently, consistent with the Institution's role and mission (University of Colorado at Boulder, 2002, Section I.A.).

Ideally, a continuous improvement cycle for program review permeates the entire environment of a successful educational institution. In the 1996 manual, *Program Review: Developing a Faculty Driven Process*, written by the California Community Colleges Academic Senate, it states:

If the purpose of the process is to promote educational excellence and better serve the students, no function of the college should be exempt. The effectiveness of the ancillary units and administration of the academic divisions, instruction, student services, the executive offices, and the governing board all have an impact on the academic integrity of the programs and on the college's ability to serve the students (California Community Colleges Academic Senate, 1996, p. 11, para. 1).

In order to accomplish this, there are key elements that are crucial to developing and implementing an effective program review system. *Program Review in the State University System of Florida* (2002), the components of a continuous improvement cycle for the program review process are defined. The planning and implementation of these components help to establish a continuous improvement cycle.

- *Mission*
 - *Goals and Objectives*
 - *Program development, modifications, and description with curriculum/degree requirements*
 - *Data collection*
 - *Data analysis*
 - *Identification of strengths, opportunities, and barriers*
 - *Recommendations*
 - *Plans for continuous improvement*
- (State University System of Florida, 2000, pp. 57-61).*

Nationally, there are several recent developments that have had an influence on program review. One of those developments is an increasing emphasis on accountability at all levels.

The necessity for developing a program review process that includes designated standards for performance measurement is vital to the recognition of successful programs which leads to establishing institutional accountability. At the institutional level, all staff, faculty and administrators need to be aware of the importance that program review can play in the viability of their educational programs and thus the integrity of the institution.

The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (“the Pennsylvania System”) maintains that it is necessary for their system to broaden its level of accountability. In an effort to accomplish this, the Pennsylvania System initiates additional actions in four relevant areas:

...insuring assessment of student learning outcomes in all academic programs, developing Systemwide core accountability measures, institutionalizing the principles and processes of continuous improvement, and enhancing communication with internal and external constituencies (Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, 1997, para. 2).

To further expand its accountability level, the Pennsylvania System applies the continuous improvement process to all institutional units including administrative and support staff units. Their theory is:

[n]ot only will it enhance how we serve various internal and external clientele, the continuous improvement “ethic” also will increase motivation, hone the professional skills, and improve the job satisfaction of our managerial and support staff. Like outcomes assessment in academic units, the continuous improvement process will insure management accountability (Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, 1997, para. 10).

If accountability must apply to all units of an institution, then the continuous improvement theory of program review must include faculty. Faculty, representing another unit of the institution, must be involved in the program review process to ensure accountability at their level. With their professional expertise and academic background in the program curriculum, faculty members are essential in developing and conducting the program review process.

Nevertheless, a comprehensive, systematic appraisal effort can assist the faculty and the institution's leadership in making judgments regarding academic strength. A focus both on the program's process and outcome is needed.

The evaluation needs (1) to be comprehensive and (2) to have broad participation. Chaired by a person of recognized stature, a review committee should include senior and junior program faculty, academic administrators, and faculty from other departments. A subcommittee of program faculty should prepare a self-study to serve as the foundation for the program review (Marcus, 1984, Section 4).

Just as faculty participation in the program review process is a critical component, so should faculty be aware of current national trends in program review. The higher education environment calls for the faculty of the discipline departments to realize the relevance of program review activities, namely assessment, to their daily work, as another vital element for the development of an efficient program review process. The role that faculty plays in the assessment of programs, including self-assessment and peer review, is an important aspect of the program review process (State University System of Florida, 2000, p. 6, para. 3).

Douglas Eder, in his article entitled, "Why Do Assessment?" gives three reasons for faculty to conduct assessment activities at institutions.

First, assessment is what we faculty members can do in order to demonstrate to ourselves that we actually do what we say we do. It is our source of in-process feedback. As opposed to grades..., assessment decomposes the curriculum (or an assignment, class, or course) into component parts and makes those parts visible. Second, assessment satisfies the demands for accountability by external agencies (Eder, n.d., para. 1).

The third reason deals with justifying the quality of the faculty's product to the public. Even though faculty members know the quality of the work that they produce, the public does not always know. He states that we conduct assessment activities in order to answer the following question. "What is the quality of our product, how do we measure it authentically, and

how do we communicate it effectively to those who are buying it or making policy decisions?”
(Eder, n.d., para. 5)

The program review process can provide accountability or assure the public that their demands are being met in regard to academic quality and services for all citizens. The California State University at Monterey Bay (CSUMB) has three purposes for conducting program review and providing accountability at all levels. The first purpose fulfills the university’s desire for quality assurance. The university feels that “Program review is on[e] way for CSUMB to fulfill its responsibility to assure the public, the Board of Trustees, WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges), and its students and parents that it is providing quality academic programs” (California State University at Monterey Bay [CSUMB], 1999, Section 1). The other two purposes meet the university’s requirements for Program Improvement and Program and Resource Alignment.

Program Improvement: program review should provide individual program faculty and staff, as well as university administrators, with information and feedback that will assist in their responsibility to continuously improve program quality and cost effectiveness.

Program and Resource Alignment: program review should help university faculty and administrators ensure that CSUMB is offering an appropriate array of academic programs and that resources are effectively aligned with those programs (CSUMB, 1999, Section 1).

The program review process helps to reflect the level of performance of the educational system for the entire state and thus provides accountability at the statewide level. State legislators must make informed decisions regarding statutes and other legislative matters dealing with the academic environment of our communities. The program review process is used to educate policy makers, enabling them to make informed decisions regarding the future of education. Legislators must make financial decisions affecting education; however, financial

resources have become increasingly more difficult to acquire. Program review can serve as a form of accountability justifying expenditures for academic programs offered by educational institutions.

Student learning outcomes have always been important in the academic culture but with recent national emphasis on accountability, those learning outcomes have become increasingly significant to everyone. It is critical that students have access to and receive the necessary instruction for skills and knowledge that are required when articulating to the next phase of their lives. Procedures conducted during program review can determine if sufficient institutional materials, physical facilities and other resources are adequately provided for all students. Program review activities, such as articulation meetings between discipline faculty of local institutions, can also assist in providing a smoother transition for students transferring to upper-level institutions.

Northern Virginia Community College uses program review to determine if its programs are effective in producing the desired learning outcomes demanded of students in order to be successful. The college determines to what degree:

- *students are learning the knowledge, skills, and habits of thought necessary to achieve the program/discipline goals and objectives*
- *the program/discipline goals derive from and support the college mission and goals, the general education goals, and the purpose of the program/discipline*
- *the curriculum is coherent, current and consistent*
- *the instruction is effective in enabling student learning*
- *the resources are adequate for the production [of] an environment conducive to student learning (Northern Virginia Community College, 2000, para. 1).*

The assessment of student learning outcomes is another important component of the program review process that also aids in establishing accountability. Developing appropriate assessment measures to determine if student learning outcomes have been achieved is a way of documenting how successful programs are with the instruction of desired objectives. Thomas

Angelo's article in the November 1995 issue of the *AAHE Bulletin*, summarizes how assessment can provide accountability for student learning and positively affect the entire academic community.

Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. When it is embedded effectively within larger institutional systems, assessment can help us focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education (Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, 1997, para. 4).

Accountability is also being emphasized on a national level regarding the use of assessment results for the improvement of student learning within the programs. Many institutions feel that using assessment results to improve programs and services is the most important aspect of program review. Northern Virginia Community College extends its program review process to applying the assessment results for program improvement.

Additionally, through the inclusion of action plans, program/discipline reviews demonstrate that assessment results will be used in the improvement of student learning within the program/discipline. Finally, program/discipline(s) reviews provide information essential to effective planning and budgeting as well as to [the] process of evaluating our effectiveness as an institution (Northern Virginia Community College, 2000, para. 2).

A comprehensive program review process that includes the assessment of student learning outcomes and the use of assessment results to improve programs is vital to maintaining effective programs. Guaranteeing the best academic programs supports the goal of a successful educational institution and ultimately helps to provide accountability for education at all levels.

Description of Current Processes for Level II Program Review

This section describes the various processes for Level II program review that the individual community colleges in Florida currently conduct internally. All 28 of the community colleges responded to the Division's request for copies of their internal written procedures that they use when conducting Level II institutional program reviews. All 28 of the community colleges conduct extensive program review activities; however, three of those colleges do not have official written forms for their program review procedures. Thus, this review deals with the information gathered from the materials that were sent by the remaining 25 community colleges.

Each community college takes a slightly different approach to program review activities. The colleges vary in the depth of involvement or the extent that their program review process plays in the administration of the colleges' activities. The program review process normally begins with the designation of a specific office or division to administer the entire process. The colleges form program review teams or committees and schedule retreats or workshops to train program/discipline staff and faculty in the necessary procedures for conducting program review. The members of the program review teams or committees must learn what their individual responsibilities are in the entire process. In some cases, the program review process takes a high priority and permeates the entire institution, thus affecting the performance at each campus, center, or site. Most of the community colleges appoint one division or office to administer the functions of program review for the entire college. The individual programs or departments then execute the procedures for the process in their respective areas. Thus, the approach or the process taken by the different community colleges for Level II program review varies.

SACS includes their approach to program review or the planning, evaluation and improvement of educational programs as a crucial element in their philosophy of institutional

effectiveness. In their manual, *Criteria for Accreditation*, program planning and evaluation is included in Section III on Institutional Effectiveness. SACS acknowledges that each institution may approach program review in a different way. However, they do maintain that quality education demands excellent programs that require constant evaluation and improvement. Such actions result in viable programs that are a necessary element of institutional effectiveness. “Although evaluation of educational quality and effectiveness is a difficult task requiring careful analysis and professional judgment, each member institution is expected to document quality and effectiveness by employing a comprehensive system of planning and evaluation in all major aspects of the institution” (1998, p. 19, lines 9-15). Thus, successful institutions develop and implement a systematic process of planning, evaluation, and improvement.

Administration of Program Review Process

Of the 25 community colleges that sent their program review information to the Division, most responded that a certain division or office at their college is responsible for the administration of the program review process. That office initiates the process by organizing the paperwork, planning a time line for the entire process, assigning individuals to serve on the review committees, and completing other necessary steps. That office facilitates the program review process and receives all necessary paperwork at the conclusion of the process. The program deans, cluster chairs, department heads, or faculty members conduct the actual program review procedures.

The designated offices or divisions vary from Academic Affairs or Institutional Research and Planning to Parallel Programs or Strategic Resources. (For the complete list of administrating offices, see Table 1 in Appendix A on page 64.) Three (3) of the responding

community colleges state that their program directors or deans of the individual departments are designated as facilitators of the program review process.

Some community colleges divide their curriculum into two groups for review. Palm Beach Community College (PBCC), for example, has Vocational Program Review and Discipline Program Review. Vocational review applies to programs awarding degrees or certificates that prepare students for the workforce. Discipline review applies to programs providing courses for transfer such as general education. Individuals from the program areas then conduct the procedures of the program review process. Similarly, Florida Community College at Jacksonville (FCCJ) divides their curriculum into College-wide Arts and Sciences and College-wide Workforce for the purposes of program review.

Time Line for Procedures

One of the duties of the facilitating office is to set up a time line spanning several months for the execution of the procedures. Twenty (20) of the 25 responding community colleges use an established time line for completion of their campus procedures. Appearing on their time lines is a schedule with approximate dates for completion of the different activities. This helps to keep the review teams focused and on schedule when conducting their individual responsibilities.

Involvement of Internal and External Members

The community colleges acknowledge that a comprehensive evaluation is essential for the quality performance of their programs. Such an evaluation must include both internal college participants and external participants. Internal participants would include community college deans, division heads, department chairs, faculty members, and students. External participants may include members of the business community, individuals serving on advisory committees,

employers of college graduates, future employers, and former students. Sixteen (16) of the responding community colleges indicate that both their faculty and outside advisory committees or focus groups are involved in their program review process.

Responsibilities of Members

Each member serving on the program review team or committee must be familiar with his or her individual responsibilities. It is very important for the efficiency of the process that each person follows through with those responsibilities or duties in a timely manner. Eighteen (18) of the community colleges outline the responsibilities of each person serving on the program review committee or team in their written program review procedures.

Program Review Schedule or Cycle

Chapter 1001.02(6) of the Florida Statutes states, “The programs shall be reviewed every 5 years or whenever the state board determines that the effectiveness or efficiency of a program is jeopardized.” In order to maintain compliance with this statute, most community colleges develop a schedule for their programs to be reviewed.

Nineteen (19) of the responding community colleges submitted actual program review schedules or cycles with the information that they provided for this review. Eight (8) community colleges state that their programs are reviewed once every five years and four (4) community colleges said their programs are reviewed every three years. Some schedules are more detailed than others, providing a listing of the actual names of programs to be reviewed in a given year. In some cases, program review is an ongoing process without a year-by-year specification. For instance, Florida Community College at Jacksonville uses a flagging system to determine the schedule for their annual reviews. Based on certain predetermined standards for enrollment,

placement of graduates, student success rate, and average class size, program areas are flagged as needing additional analysis or corrective measures.

Substitution of External Accreditation

Success in some programs necessitates accreditation by a specific outside agency. Ten (10) of the responding community colleges note in their program review materials that they allow an external, national or regional accreditation review to substitute for a college evaluation. For example, Nursing Programs are accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) and the Florida Board of Nursing (FBN). The Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). Dental Programs are accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association (CDA of ADA). These reviews are conducted at the appropriate campus prescribing to the requirements stipulated by the accrediting agencies.

Another activity that is an ongoing program review of various disciplines is done by the Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS) Field Review Committee. SCNS is the statewide system for numbering and equating courses offered in community colleges, universities, and area vocational-technical centers. The SCNS Review Committee selects, for review, areas of curriculum changes, areas of upper- or lower-level classifications, or areas that have not been reviewed in four years. The SCNS Field Review Report is generated from these committee meetings and offers suggested changes. As a result of the SCNS reviews, colleges are made aware of curriculum changes, course duplication, and articulation issues. (For additional information, see Table 1 in Appendix A on page 64.)

Areas to be Addressed by Program Review Process

In order to conduct a comprehensive review of any program, structured procedures must be developed and followed before and during the actual process. These procedures must address all areas dealing with program structure and performance.

Program Profile

The first area to be addressed when reviewing a program is the development of a program profile detailing all crucial characteristics of the program. To determine program quality, such a program profile must include many descriptive aspects. Twenty-three (23) of the 25 responding community colleges indicate in their program review materials that they require their program review teams to address some aspects of a program profile.

Statement of Purpose of the Program

First, a program must have a statement of purpose. Nineteen (19) of the community colleges include a statement of purpose in their program review material as a requirement for their programs when being reviewed.

Mission

This statement may align the purpose of the program with either the department mission or, if the department does not have a separate mission, with the college's mission. Seventeen (17) of the community colleges require, in their program review material, that the program mission be defined and the association be made between the program purpose and the mission of the college. Those colleges state in their program review material that it is required that the role the program plays in the college mission be explained as part of the program review procedures.

Goals and Objectives

In order to support the mission of the college, the statement of purpose should define goals and objectives. These goals and objectives should be measurable and lead back to the mission and to an obvious end result. Eighteen (18) of the community colleges define goals and objectives as part of their statement of purpose for the program. Palm Beach Community College (PBCC) gives the following examples of broad goals in their Program Evaluation Instrument for Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.), Associate in Science (A.S.), and Postsecondary Adult Vocational (P.S.A.V.) programs.

- *Preparation for employment*
- *Support for specific economic development initiatives in the Palm Beach County Area*
- *Response to specific needs emerging from rebuilding efforts*
- *Support for training in a new area of technology or industry retraining (G. L. Pedersen, personal communication, October 3, 2001).*

Definition

As part of the program profile, a definition or description of the program needs to be included in the program review materials. This may be the college's catalog description, characteristics of the program, or the program's background development. Normally, it states if the courses in a program are meant to fulfill general education requirements or if the courses are designed to grant certificates or degrees. The definition indicates if the courses or services provide training for an occupation that students entering the workforce might need to find employment. Twenty-three (23) of the 25 community colleges require that the definition of the program be included as part of the program profile in their program review materials.

Content or Curriculum

The nature of the program curriculum should also be included in the program profile. Some community colleges require that the course content be consistent with the standards required by the Florida Department of Education's *Curriculum Frameworks*. The curriculum may be coursework for the general education core. Twenty-one (21) of the community colleges require that the content or the curriculum of a program be included in the program profile with several of them mentioning the *Curriculum Frameworks* as a defining tool.

Brevard Community College's *Procedure Manual Level II Review* for Technical and Vocational Programs has samples of their evaluation team reports to be filled out by the appropriate individuals. The Internal Evaluation Team Report contains a section on Program Curriculum that asks the evaluators to rate program and course content. The evaluators are asked to determine if the program and course content is consistent with standards required by the Florida Department of Education (*Curriculum Frameworks*) and if it is consistent with the accreditation criteria of SACS and other external agencies.

If the curriculum has changed from that of the previous years, it should be reflected in the description of the program profile. Most importantly, the curriculum needs to demonstrate that it is progressive and addressing the changing needs of the students and the community. The SCNS discipline committees, as part of their review activities, study course descriptions and curriculum changes due to content, practice, or technology. The results of their meetings are passed along to the colleges in their Field Review Report.

Accreditation Criteria

Within the content or curriculum area there are several topics that should be addressed when considering the program profile. If there is a need for accreditation, the criteria should be

addressed in the description of the program content or curriculum. The description should describe the process for accreditation, the accreditation requirements, the length of accreditation, and explain what agency is responsible for the accreditation process. If it is a SACS accreditation, then all SACS concerns must be addressed. Eighteen (18) of the community colleges mention accreditation criteria in their program review materials. Palm Beach Community College includes a list of accrediting agencies in their *Program Review Manual*.

Employer Needs

The description should address the concerns of employers, especially if the program is a vocational or workforce program that trains for a particular occupation. Input from members of business partnerships and councils that may be serving on review committees or in advisory roles should also be considered. The course content should be reviewed by the program advisory committee so that it is consistent with business and industry needs. Nineteen (19) of the community colleges emphasize the importance of curriculum being consistent with employer needs by addressing that topic in their program review materials.

Articulation Agreements

The curriculum should correspond with any articulation agreements that exist between different institutions. These agreements are reached through faculty to faculty articulation meetings between neighboring institutions. In these meetings, faculty members discuss various topics such as transfer, articulation, course content, instructional materials, and teaching methods. Faculty members also discuss important skills that are required for Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree graduates to be successful at the upper-division levels. These meetings are a very important part of the Level II program review process. Adding to the importance of the meetings is the necessity for these articulation agreements to be reviewed regularly and revised to reflect

any program changes. Fifteen (15) of the community colleges mention in their program review information that they have articulation agreements and/or conduct articulation meetings with other institutions.

Adequate Instructional Materials and Resources

The adequacy of available instructional materials and resources should be included in the description of the program content. Instructional materials and resources should be adequate enough for students to attain intended learning outcomes and for faculty to effectively instruct their classes. The description may include library and media resources, an explanation of the delivery method for instruction, or technology used for course instruction. Resources should be sufficient for instructional methodologies that are appropriate for the curriculum. Technology should be used creatively in teaching programs to enhance student learning. Students should have access to and training in the use of technology. The curriculum should be relevant and reflect state-of-the-art approaches whenever possible. Seventeen (17) of the community colleges, in their program review materials, address the necessity for the program content or curriculum to have adequate instructional materials and resources.

Library and other Learning Resources

Libraries and other learning resources should be of high educational quality and relevant to course curriculum. Staff trained in the use of the library and other information resources must be available to instruct students and faculty. Educational services should offer a broad range of learning resources with orientation to innovative strategies readily available for students and faculty. The contents of libraries should support all aspects of educational programs. All educational services, including library and learning resources, must be accessible and able to support courses that are offered via distance learning. Twelve (12) of the community colleges

indicate, in their program review materials, the importance of library and other learning resources being addressed by their program review committees during the program review process.

Student Data

An important aspect of the program profile is to define the type of student that the program is intended to serve. Program curriculum may be designed for one specific type of student or it may be intended to serve a diverse group of students. The program may be structured for students who have declared their major or for those who have not declared majors. The program may have prerequisites that students are required to have taken before enrolling in the program. When conducting program review activities, the review team members need to be familiar with the characteristics of past, present, and future students that have enrolled in or will enroll in the program. Institutional Effectiveness Offices or Level I program reviews may supply the necessary information for the review committee members to make informed decisions when reviewing programs. This information might include ethnicity of students; number of students served or full-time equivalents (FTE); demographic information on students (race, gender, age); degrees, certificates, or diplomas awarded; and credit hour loads of students.

Twenty (20) of the 25 responding community colleges include a section on the type of student served in their program review materials that the reviewing team must address. In Central Florida Community College's program review manual, *Annual Program Review*, it states, "The important issue here is that programs have an understanding of who they serve and how characteristics of those they serve impact programs (offerings, outcomes, etc.)" (n.d., p. 7, para. 1).

Faculty and Staff

Another important aspect of any program is the faculty and staff involved in the functioning of the program. Information about the faculty and staff who organize and manage the courses should be included in the program profile. It is essential that the faculty be qualified and have the required credentials. Some programs may use more part-time faculty than full-time faculty in their classrooms. Another consideration is the size of the classes or the ratio of faculty to students in the classrooms. There should be ample faculty and staff available to support program offerings. Professional development and training opportunities should be provided for both faculty and staff. Faculty members should be able to participate in conferences, workshops, and computer classes. Technical support staff should be well trained and available to assist faculty and staff. Twenty-two (22) of the 25 community colleges indicate that they require their review committees to address faculty and staff information while conducting their program review activities. There are several aspects addressed by the colleges concerning faculty.

Faculty Qualifications or Credentials

Twelve (12) of the community colleges include faculty qualifications or credentials in their program review materials as a required element for their review teams to consider when conducting their internal reviews.

Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty

Fourteen (14) of the community colleges include the number of full-time and part-time faculty as a requirement to be addressed by the members of the review teams at their colleges.

Contact Hours

On a similar subject, some of the community colleges (10) also ask that the number of contact hours taught by full-time and part-time faculty be included in the questionnaires and surveys that are used by the review teams.

Faculty to Student Ratios

Sixteen (16) of the community colleges address the acceptable ratios of faculty to students in the classroom by including related questions in their program review materials.

Staff and Professional Development

Seventeen (17) of the community colleges state that they require their review teams to address the issue of staff and professional development.

Community and Workforce Needs

In order to meet the demands of the local community and its workforce needs, business partnerships and councils must be organized and utilized for their expertise. Community colleges should collaborate with local employers and economic development agencies so that workforce program curriculum may be structured appropriately to address business and industry needs. Workforce programs must also be student-centered with emphasis on relevant training and skill preparation for employment in the current economy. Twenty-three (23) of the community colleges emphasize the importance of review team members addressing community and workforce needs in the program review process.

Advisory Committee Involvement

Advisory committees, focus groups, business partnerships, and business councils can all serve a very important role in assisting the community colleges with addressing the workforce needs of the economy of the local community. Their involvement and recommendations for

program planning are essential when considering the instruction necessary for students to meet the requirements of employers. When community colleges use the expertise of business and industry representatives, their students benefit from the suggestions made relevant to their training for employment. The local community and its businesses also benefit by increased services provided by skilled workers trained at the community colleges. Twenty (20) of the community colleges mention that they ask their program review committees to see that advisory committees or business partnerships are involved in their program review activities.

Current Employment Trend

Important to the success of a program may be the urgency of the program to the current economic situation or employment trend. The enrollment, completion and placement numbers of workforce and associate in science degree programs should be assessed in light of economic needs of the local community. Sixteen (16) of the responding community colleges note that they require the reviewing teams to consider employment trends when conducting program review activities and when making recommendations regarding course offerings.

Facilities and Educational Equipment

In order to offer a series of successful programs, adequate physical facilities and educational equipment must be available. Classrooms, faculty offices, and specialized learning facilities, such as laboratories, should all be in sufficient supply to adequately support program demands. Equipment should be safe and in good operating condition. Ideally, when training for workforce employment, equipment should meet industry standards and relevant upgrades made when necessary.

In order to supply and maintain essential facilities and up-to-date equipment, community colleges need to allocate sufficient funds. This gets more difficult every year as the colleges,

faced with restricted funding, try to keep up with changes in technologies that affect programs. Information technology resources such as computer hardware, databases, and communication networks must support educational programs. However, the appropriate use of technology in the development of programs can be economical and beneficial for enhancing learning. Twenty (20) of the 25 community colleges state that they require their program review teams to address the adequacy of facilities and equipment used by the program.

Marketing and Recruitment Efforts

There are thirteen (13) community colleges that indicate in their program review materials that they employ some kind of college promotional activities in the way of marketing or recruitment efforts. Those colleges use marketing efforts to help maintain or increase their enrollment in certain programs. Some community colleges want to determine if their faculty has been involved in their promotional and recruitment activities. In order for marketing efforts to be successful, appropriate resources need to be made available for that purpose. (For program profile information, see Table 2 in Appendix A on page 65.)

Student Learning Outcomes

One of the most important aspects of program review is to identify what essential skills or knowledge students are expected to acquire upon completion of a certain course or program and whether the students have been successful at mastering those student learning outcomes. Many of the community colleges place their strongest emphasis on the student learning outcomes requiring that their programs and services, first and foremost, help students achieve their personal and professional goals. In Santa Fe Community College's *Institutional Effectiveness Manual*, the college states, "The quality of student learning is the major focus for all academic, administrative, and educational support units" (2001, Preface, para. 2). The SACS manual

states, “The institution must evaluate its success with respect to student achievement in relation to purpose, including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates” (1998, p. 21, lines 4-8).

Student learning outcomes should be ones that benefit students; that is, students should be able to integrate those outcomes or benefits into their personal lives. The student learning outcomes should meet the needs of students and contribute to their life-long learning skills. The achievement of those outcomes should aid students in finding employment or transferring to upper-division institutions. There should be increased knowledge or improved skills leading to advancements in position or status. The development of ethical reasoning skills may produce changes in values or morals that could result in behavior modification. Twenty (20) of the 25 community colleges include a section on student learning outcomes in their program review material that the review teams address when conducting their internal program reviews.

Are student learning outcomes identified and how are they identified?

The intended student learning outcomes for a program and how they will be measured need to be identified from the initial conception of the program. The community colleges state many different ways to identify such outcomes and to measure their effectiveness. Some colleges rely on the Florida Department of Education’s *Curriculum Frameworks* that are published with student performance standards for every program. Many colleges seek advice from advisory committees who recognize the benefits that students achieve after successfully completing programs. A course syllabus done by a faculty member is often the best indicator of expectations for a program. Also, former students can share what they feel have been the outcomes of the most benefit to them when joining the workforce. Nineteen (19) of the community colleges indicate that their review teams are required to address the identification of

student learning outcomes as part of their program review process. Most community colleges use a combination of student learning outcomes and measurements as indicators of successful programs.

Florida Community College at Jacksonville (FCCJ) describes the college's student learning outcomes in their College Program Revitalization (CPR) manual entitled *Instructional Program Review and Revitalization Process*. The manual contains a chart with Effectiveness Indicators and the corresponding Measurement Methods. The chart defines five goals that FCCJ would like to achieve in order to be effective as an educational institution. For example, the first goal is to prepare students. To determine if the college has been successful in achieving this goal, they monitor program completions, the performance of A.A. graduates at upper-level institutions, the employability of their graduates, and the pass rates on examinations. The corresponding methods of measuring the success that the college has in these areas would be: to determine the percentage of students enrolled in a program who actually complete the program; to compare the grade point average (GPA) of both the college's A.A. graduates and the GPA of native State University System (SUS) students; to determine the percentage of student completers that are employed; and finally to compare the number of students passing an exam to the number of students attempting the exam (2001, p. 25).

Santa Fe Community College's general education outcomes are called the *21st Century Learning Outcomes* because the college's general education program's purpose and goal are consistent with those of the 21st Century Learning Outcomes Project. This document was composed by the Learning Outcomes Taskforce that was organized for the college's participation in the 21st Century Learning Outcomes Project. The project is a strategy to improve the effectiveness of the general education program that has been given high priority due to the part

that it plays in educating students. The document defines eight broad student outcomes which are communication skills, community skills, digital technology skills, information management skills, interpersonal skills, mathematical skills, personal skills, and thinking and problem-solving skills (2002, Santa Fe Community College web site).

Additionally, as stated in Chapter 1008.45(1) and (2) of the Florida Statutes, the State Board of Education and the community college boards of trustees are required to develop and implement an accountability plan that helps determine just how successful the Florida Community College System is in achieving student learning outcomes.

- (1) It is the intent of the Legislature that a management and accountability process be implemented which provides for the systematic, ongoing improvement and assessment of the improvement of the quality and efficiency of the Florida community colleges. Accordingly, the State Board of Education and the community college boards of trustees shall develop and implement an accountability plan to improve and evaluate the instructional and administrative efficiency and effectiveness of the Florida Community College System. This plan shall be designed in consultation with staff of the Governor and the Legislature and must address the following issues:*
 - (a) Graduation rates of A.A. and A.S. degree-seeking students compared to first-time-enrolled students seeking the associate degree.*
 - (b) Minority student enrollment and retention rates.*
 - (c) Student performance, including student performance in college-level academic skills, mean grade point averages for community college A.A. transfer students, and community college student performance on state licensure examinations.*
 - (d) Job placement rates of community college career students.*
 - (e) Student progression by admission status and program.*
 - (f) Career accountability standards identified in s. 1008.42.*
 - (g) Institutional assessment efforts related to the requirements of s. III in the Criteria for Accreditation of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.*
 - (h) Other measures as identified by the Council for Education Policy Research and Improvement and approved by the State Board of Education.*
- (2) The State Board of Education shall submit an annual report, to coincide with the submission of the agency strategic plan required by law, providing the results of initiatives taken during the prior year and the initiatives and related objective performance measures proposed for the next year.*

The next few pages address the question of whether or not the community colleges require that their program review committees address, in their program review materials, the identification of student learning outcomes and how those student learning outcomes are identified.

Job Placements

One of the student learning outcomes is the placement of a student in a job following completion of a degree or certificate. A program's success with student learning outcomes may be determined by the number of students getting jobs upon completion of their degree or certificate. Seventeen (17) of the community colleges indicate that they require the members of the review committee to consider how successful their students are in finding jobs or being placed in jobs after completion of a degree/certificate.

Palm Beach Community College's Office of Institutional Effectiveness measures such results and publishes them in the college's annual *Accountability Measure Outcomes* report that compares the college's performance to that of the whole FCCS. As part of their program review process, PBCC requires data displays containing statistics provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the faculty of the program or discipline under review. Included in such displays may be enrollment trends, job placements, graduates, completion rates, transfers, licensure passage rates, etc.

Transfers

Still another indicator of successful student outcomes is the performance of A.A. student graduates transferring to upper-division institutions. Fourteen (14) of the community colleges indicate that they expect their review teams to consider the performance of transfer students to senior institutions when they are reviewing academic programs.

PBCC's *Accountability Measure Outcomes* report contains data on the performance of their A.A. degree transfer students. The college's *Program Review Manual* also addresses A.A. degree transfer student information that is provided in the *Florida Community College System Accountability Report*. This systemwide report contains the five Accountability Measures that were originally developed by the community college system in the 1994 *Accountability Plan* in response to legislative issues. Outcome Measure Two assesses the performance of A.A. degree students transferring to the SUS by studying their GPAs. The goal is for 70% of the A.A. graduates transferring to the SUS to have at least a 2.5 GPA. PBCC also mentions the *Florida Articulation Summary* in their college manual. This summary, available on the DCCWE web site, gives an overall context for the transfer activities to Florida's state universities. Such reports give validity to a review and address the ever-increasing need for institutions to comply with the state legislature's requirement of meeting the five accountability standards or measures that are essential as discussed in the *FCCS Accountability Report* (2002, pp. 4, 6, 13).

Completion and Licensure Rates

The completion rates and the licensure passage rates for students are other indicators of student success or benefits that students receive. Eighteen (18) of the community colleges indicate that they require their review teams to study the completion and licensure rates as indicators of student success. For example, Florida Community College at Jacksonville's first goal, as shown on the FCCJ Effectiveness Indicators chart in their manual, is to prepare students. To achieve this goal, FCCJ monitors the A.A., A.S., A.A.S., P.S.A.V., and Postsecondary Vocational Certificate (P.S.V.C.) program completions. The college determines the percentage of program completions by comparing the number of program completers to the number of students enrolled in the program (2001, p. 25).

As explained in Palm Beach Community College's *Program Review Manual*, one of the requirements for program review is a Program Discipline Data Display. The information shown on this display, gathered by the Institutional Effectiveness Office, shows course and program completion rates and licensure passage rates (2002, p. 8).

Licensure passing rates may apply in particular to the law enforcement, corrections and health areas. The best measurement for licensure rates is the success that students have with accrediting agencies. Many professions require such accrediting before students are able to find jobs in those fields. PBCC includes a listing of the accrediting agencies and their requirements for vocational programs in their *Program Review Manual* (2002, p. 10).

Knowledge and Skills

An excellent indicator of student learning outcomes is students actually applying their knowledge and skills in the performance of their jobs. Displaying increased performance due to enhanced skills invariably leads to achievement and success in future employment, which are true benefits for students. Increased knowledge that leads to lifelong learning skills benefits students for their entire lives. Any form of knowledge that leads to the practice of improved morals or values is beneficial to both students and society as a whole. Thirteen (13) of the community colleges include a section on the acquisition of knowledge and skills in their program review materials that is to be addressed by the review committees when conducting their program review procedures.

Retention Rates

When examining how successful students at community colleges are with their coursework, the student retention rates can be an important indicator of success. Twelve (12) of the community colleges indicate on their surveys that they use retention rates as indicators of

student learning outcomes. Florida Community College at Jacksonville states in its *Instructional Program Review and Revitalization Process* manual that it considers retention to be the percentage of first-time-in-college (FTIC) students who are still active after one year. The college determines its retention rates by comparing its Summer/Fall FTIC cohort to those actively enrolled at FCCJ after one year (2001, p. 25).

What assessments are used to measure progress on student learning outcomes?

When determining what assessments are used by the community colleges to measure progress on their desired outcomes, their individual definitions of assessment must be considered. In Santa Fe Community College's *Institutional Effectiveness Manual*, the college defines assessment as, "the method by which the college and its units determine if there are effective, accessible, and responsive educational services in a multi-cultural environment related to the mission of the college" (2001, p. V-1. para. 1). The college applies the Nichols Five-Column Model for planning and assessment. The process includes planning, determination of outcomes, designation of assessment measures, conducting assessment, and using the results. The third step, designation of assessment measures, requires the selection of a measurement tool. Santa Fe uses available data whenever possible such as surveys, *The Fact Book*, *The Accountability Report*, or *The Equity Report*. Eighteen (18) of the community colleges include information on their assessment measures as part of their program review process.

Most community colleges indicate that they use a combination of assessment instruments to measure progress on student learning outcomes. Some of the assessment instruments that the colleges use are:

- State exam results
- State Nursing Board exam results
- End-of-year test scores
- Number of A.A. degrees

- Standardized tests
- Surveys of students, graduates, faculty, and employers
- External feedback from advisory committees, focus groups, employers, and supervisors of internships or apprenticeships
- Florida DOE's *Curriculum Frameworks*
- Licensure exam pass rates
- Completion rates
- Job placement rates
- Performance of transfer students

Outside Agency Accreditation

One of the best assessment instruments to measure progress on student learning outcomes is the success that the community college and the students have with outside accrediting agencies. Some community colleges consider the time frame of their SACS accreditation when developing their program review schedule. In so doing, they can allow reviews conducted by SACS or other external accrediting agencies to replace their own internal procedures. Broward Community College reviews their Associate in Arts degree requirements following each SACS reaffirmation of accreditation so that SACS recommendations affecting the college's mission are taken under consideration. At the least, most colleges require that their programs satisfy their own criteria of excellence and the requirements of SACS.

Many professions require some form of accreditation or credentialing before students are able to find jobs in those fields. Some of the community colleges mention that the credentialing boards their programs use measure student outcomes in the form of accreditation or credentialing. PBCC includes a listing of the accrediting agencies and their requirements for vocational programs in their program review manual. Examples would be the Florida Board of Nursing (FBN) Licensing Board; the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC); and the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs

(CAAHEP) which is required for the Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic Program, the Respiratory Care Program, the Medical Assistant Program, and several other programs.

Palm Beach Community College's Office of Institutional Effectiveness annually publishes the *Accountability Measure Outcomes* report that compares the college's performance to that of the rest of the FCCS in areas of enrollment, retention, transfer performance, completions, vocational placements, and state licensure passing rates.

Florida Community College at Jacksonville explains the college's measurement methods for determining success on student learning outcomes in their College Program Revitalization (CPR) process manual entitled *Instructional Program Review and Revitalization Process*. The manual displays a chart with Effectiveness Indicators and the corresponding Measurement Methods. The chart names five goals that the college wants to achieve in order to be an effective educational institution. To determine if the college has been successful in achieving these goals, the chart lists several areas to be addressed in order to achieve each goal. It also lists several methods of measurement for all areas under each of the five goals (2001, p. 25).

For example, the second goal is to optimize access and participation. To accomplish this goal the college concentrates on five areas. First, the college looks at the market penetration or the percentage of eligible people enrolled. Then the college monitors the unduplicated headcount enrollment. The unduplicated FTE enrollment is also considered. Next, the college monitors the completion of preparation programs. Finally, the college considers retention or the percentage of first-time-in-college (FTIC) students who are still active after one year.

The corresponding method of measuring the success that the college has in these areas first compares the number of students enrolled in a program to the number of eligible people in the service area. Second, the college monitors the number of unduplicated students enrolled.

Next, the college determines the number of unduplicated FTE enrollment. Then the college compares the number of students enrolled in a preparation program to the number of student completers. Finally, the college computes the percentage of Summer/Fall FTIC cohort still actively enrolled at FCCJ after one year. The college approaches the other four goals used to promote effectiveness in the same manner. The other goals are:

- Prepare Students;
- Elevate Customer Service;
- Respond to Employer Needs; and
- Enhance Performance and Accountability (2001, p. 25).

What constitutes success on measures?

To identify what constitutes success on certain measures depends on what the measure is and how it is determined. For example, accrediting boards have a certain score that is acceptable before licensing can occur. A designated number of job placements are considered sufficient for justification in offering certain programs. A certain number or percentage of students passing end-of-the-year tests is required in considering the success of courses or programs. Fourteen (14) of the community colleges mention some of these indicators as constituting success on measures and request that their review committees consider these indicators when conducting program review activities.

Santa Fe Community College conducts their assessment activities to determine results by administering their designated assessment instrument or evaluating the existing data, which is step four of their Nichols Five-Column Model. The college determines the extent to which outcomes are achieved and records the results (2001, p. V-2).

Are assessment results of student learning outcomes used to improve programs?

In their *Annual Program Review* manual, Central Florida Community College states, “Using outcome assessment results to improve programs and services is the most important

aspect of annual review” (n.d., p. 9, section IV, para. 1). Community colleges use the data that they acquire from assessment in different ways. Fourteen (14) of the community colleges indicate that they require their review teams to verify that assessment results of student outcomes are used to improve programs. There may be curriculum additions, deletions, or revisions as a result of those individual assessments.

Part of Florida Community College at Jacksonville’s program review process requires that they report the results of their planned corrective actions after they have been applied. Thus, there are definite indicators that the results of assessment are being used to improve the performance of programs. An excellent way of determining if assessment results are used to improve programs is to survey students that have actually been served by the program.

Santa Fe Community College’s planning unit teams employ the Nichols Five-Column Model to support the college’s institutional effectiveness. Step five of the model is to use the results of assessment to determine if the desired outcomes were achieved or, if not, how results will be used to achieve the desired outcomes. The planning units are required to show how results are used to accomplish objectives and improve programs. The college’s review material states, “It is important to document what was actually done to address a deficiency identified by the assessment activities to demonstrate actual use of assessment results” (2001, p. VI-3, step 5). (See Table 3 in Appendix A on page 66.)

Strengths and Weaknesses

Program strengths and weaknesses become apparent after discovering the results from assessment activities. Recognizing strengths is easy and gratifying, but the real purpose behind program review is to acknowledge weaknesses and areas that require improvement. If the college’s true commitment is to excellence then self-improvement is vital. Twenty-two (22) of

the 25 responding community colleges state that their review committees are required to emphasize the importance of identifying program strengths and weaknesses while following through with their procedures for program review.

Are they identified by external sources (employers) and students?

In order to recognize the areas of strength and weakness, the community colleges need to request input from both internal and external sources. Past and present students of the community college qualify as internal sources, as would faculty and staff of the college. External sources are employers of college graduates or completers and members of local business and industry. Input may come in the way of student and employer surveys or interviews and recommendations of business members of local advisory committees or focus groups. Seventeen (17) of those 22 community colleges indicate that they require their review teams to see that strengths and weaknesses are identified by internal and external sources while conducting their program review activities.

Are strengths and weaknesses used to make changes?

Once identified by internal and external sources, these strengths and weaknesses need to be utilized to make changes that lead to improvement. Sixteen (16) of the 22 community colleges that survey individual satisfaction levels state in their review materials that they require their review teams to confirm that the strengths and weaknesses identified by internal and external sources are used to make changes for improvement.

Is satisfaction measured for students, graduates, faculty, and employers?

After changes are made resulting from the identification of both strengths and weaknesses, it also needs to be determined just how satisfied students, graduates, faculty, and employers are with the improvements to the programs. Faculty especially, with their curriculum

knowledge, must be involved in this segment of evaluation. Twenty-two (22) of the community colleges state that the satisfaction of students, graduates, faculty, and employers must be measured and noted during the program review process. Nine (9) of those 22 community colleges that measure satisfaction state that they survey all four of these groups (students, graduates, faculty, and employers) and six of the 22 community colleges measure three of these groups of individuals. It needs to be verified, on a regular basis, that students and graduates of programs are satisfied with the quality of the programs. The programs need to prepare program graduates and completers for additional education or to join the workforce. The performance of these students and graduates needs to meet employers' standards if the college programs are to serve the local community effectively. Thus, employer satisfaction levels should be sought.

Is student and employer satisfaction used to make changes?

The results of monitoring satisfaction levels should be used to make improvements in order to maximize service provided to the students and the community. Sixteen (16) of the 22 community colleges that survey individual satisfaction levels state that they require their review teams to make certain that the results from these surveys are used to initiate reform and modification of program content and curriculum. Relying on their satisfaction level, both students and employers can offer suggestions and recommendations for modification and improvement to programs. (See Table 3 in Appendix A on page 66.)

Recommendations to Improve Programs

Suggestions or recommendations for improvement should be viewed as possible remedies for any concerns with the program that may have been exposed during the survey process. Twenty (20) of the 25 responding community colleges require their reviewing teams to address recommendations as a means of improving programs during the conduction of their program

review process. These recommendations for improvement may be suggested for the program curriculum or they may apply to the facilities and equipment used for the program. They may involve the program personnel or the operating costs of the program. Some of these recommendations may offer excellent strategies for development into an action plan for program improvement.

Is an action plan for improvement developed?

Eighteen (18) of those 20 community colleges that use recommendations as a means of improving programs state that they require the development of an action plan for program improvement. Three of the community colleges insert a table in their program review materials exhibiting columns with categories such as recommendations, improvement activity, responsible person, and completion date.

Are outcome assessment results used to improve programs?

Sixteen (16) of the 20 community colleges state that they require their review teams to make certain that the outcome assessment results are used to improve programs when conducting program review activities. Several of the colleges emphasize the importance of the outcome assessment results being used to improve programs. Central Florida Community College states that the college considers this the most important aspect of program review (n.d., p. 9, section IV, para. 1).

Are strategies for improvement based on student and employer follow-up?

Twelve (12) of the 20 community colleges state that their program review materials contain sections in which the review teams are to address the strategies for improvement that are based on student and employer follow-up when they conduct program review activities. Florida Community College at Jacksonville has five goals as determining factors of program

effectiveness. With each goal are related effectiveness indicators and comparable measurement methods. Goals three and four supply the documentation that the college requires showing that FCCJ addresses the necessity of strategies for improvement being based on student and employer follow-up.

Goal Three, Elevate Customer Service, has two indicators to determine if the college is successful with this particular goal. Those two indicators are:

- Student satisfaction level with program area and support services (currently enrolled and graduates/completers)
- Percentage of active FCCJ members

The corresponding Measurement Methods are:

- Percentage of students satisfied with FCCJ's programs and services
- Number of FCCJ members enrolled in courses in last 12 months/Total number of current FCCJ members

Goal Four, Respond to Employer Needs, also has two indicators and two measurement methods. The indicators are:

- Employer satisfaction with program graduates/completers
- Employer satisfaction with college programs and services

The measurement methods are:

- Percentage of employers satisfied with FCCJ program graduates/completers
- Percentage of employers satisfied with FCCJ programs and services (2001, p. 25).

Are the changes made relevant to labor market demands?

Fifteen (15) of the 20 community colleges stress that any changes that are made should be relevant to labor market demands. These colleges discuss certain issues that should be addressed by the reviewing committees such as training to match industry needs, equipment meeting industry standards, and current wages.

Do advisory committees provide input on major modification to program curriculum?

A good way to be certain that changes made to programs are relevant to workforce demands is to involve local advisory committees. Advisory committee members can provide input and recommendations for essential changes to programs. The members can determine if course content, facilities and equipment are relevant to local industry needs. If this is not the case, then the members can suggest how to make them more applicable. They can assist with curriculum development or revisions, in identifying work experience and in locating employment opportunities. Advisory committees should be consulted on major modifications to program curriculum. Sixteen (16) of the 20 community colleges state that they require their review teams to consider whether or not the college seeks input from advisory committees on major modification of program curriculum. Broward Community College requests that advisory committee activities be described in their program review reports. The college also requires that the procedures that are followed to implement the advisory committee's recommendations be included.

Is there a follow-up of strategies for change?

Fourteen (14) of the 20 community colleges state that they require their review teams, during their program review process, to consider whether or not the college conducts follow-up procedures of their strategies for change. In some cases, the follow-up procedures are conducted a year after the strategies have been in place. Some colleges are required to document the results of their corrective actions in a report. Florida Community College in Jacksonville states in its *Instructional Program Review and Revitalization Process* manual, "Thinking through how results will be used both ensures that appropriate measures are identified and increases the

likelihood that results will in fact be used to improve the performance shown in the program review data” (2001, p. 27, para. 4).

Do program review committees recommend expansion or deletion?

Normally, upon completion of program review procedures, the review teams or committees recommend continuation, consolidation, deletion, or expansion of a program. Fourteen (14) of the 20 community colleges mention that the college requests that their program review committees consider recommendations made at the conclusion of review activities for future actions to programs. (See Table 3 in Appendix A on page 66.)

Future Issues

When considering recommendations for improvement of programs or disciplines, future issues need to be anticipated. Seventeen (17) of the 25 responding community colleges state that they require their review teams to address future issues. One of those issues is future curricular changes and needs.

Future Curricular Changes and Needs

Fifteen (15) of those 17 community colleges state that they ask the reviewing committees to be certain that future curricular changes or revisions are addressed in the program review process. At the same time the colleges are considering changes in course content, they must consider what the future market or occupational trends in the program area will be.

Market Trends within Program Area

Sixteen (16) of the 17 community colleges also ask that their program review teams make certain that the market trends within a given program area are considered during the program review process.

Equipment, Space and Faculty Needs for Future Growth

When thinking about future occupational trends, the community colleges must also be certain that equipment and facilities remain current to meet the demands of emerging workforce needs. Adequate space must be allocated for future growth or expansion. Sufficient faculty and staff need to be available in the event that additional classes or courses are offered. Sixteen (16) of the 17 community colleges state that they request their reviewers to consider the fact that equipment and space provisions might change in order to meet future demands. The review teams are also asked to consider that additional faculty may be required to support new programs that might be added when attempting to meet future expansions.

Future Plans and Long-Term Program Viability

The community colleges must consider the future plans and the long-term viability of a program during the program review process. Sixteen (16) of the 17 community colleges indicate that they require their review teams to consider the future plans and the long-term viability of a program when conducting their program review activities. The colleges, after consulting their program review results, must determine the viability of a program when considering the future plans for a program. The colleges must consider what is to be done to guarantee the viability of the program. In the workforce area, the colleges must consider if the projected demands in a certain industry will continue to require employees trained in a particular program area. They must determine if salaries will remain stable and sufficient enough to maintain cost of living standards.

Brevard Community College, in their manual for technical and vocational program review, entitled *Procedure Manual Level II Review*, gives an overview of the college's program evaluation process. The second step of their program review process is Information Gathering.

It requires the College-wide Dean of Technical Education to gather, “Labor market data including local, regional and state projections for graduate employment opportunities...” (n.d., p. 10, Section A, v.).

Expansion of Programs

The community colleges, with the assistance of their program review activities, must determine if future plans for a program will include the expansion of the program. Eleven (11) of the 17 community colleges state that they ask their review teams to address program expansion when conducting their program review activities.

When considering program expansion, duplication of programs is a concern for colleges. PBCC mentions the Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS) Field Review of disciplines in its program review manual. One of the benefits for institutions resulting from the SCNS cyclical reviews is the review of courses for duplication. (See Table 4 in Appendix A on page 67.)

Program Efficiency or Productivity

Another issue that needs to be addressed during program review activities is the efficiency of the program. Not only should programs meet student and community needs, but community college resources should also be used in a productive way. Program review data can provide information required to make decisions regarding funds for program expenditures. The community colleges address this issue in varying degrees. Some colleges address all aspects of program budgeting completely while others address them only briefly. Twenty (20) of the 25 responding community colleges state that they ask their review teams to address the issue of program efficiency during their program review proceedings.

Tying Budget to Program Outputs

During the process of reviewing programs for program efficiency, review teams at thirteen (13) of those 20 community colleges ask whether or not the college ties the budget to the program outputs. In the process, community colleges need to consider the cost per full-time equivalent (FTE) in recent years.

Brevard Community College's process does not just allocate funds for program improvement during the next fiscal year but, when necessary, permits reallocation of resources during the actual evaluation year.

Program Cost Information

The community colleges must determine if their budget allocations are adequate to meet the needs of all their programs. In order to make this determination, colleges need to examine their budget allocations and the program expenditures from recent years. The colleges need to determine if the total amount of revenue generated from FTE, Performance Based Funding (PBF), grants, and fees, is enough to sustain the needs of the program. All twenty (20) of the community colleges indicate that they require their review teams to confirm that program cost information is considered during the program review process.

Cost-Effective Management of Resources

When evaluating if the program is being conducted in a cost-effective manner, the community colleges need to consider if the resources are being managed efficiently. Program expenses must include the costs for maintenance and repair of facilities and equipment. Fifteen (15) of the 20 community colleges indicate that they require their review teams to address the cost-effective management or the efficient use of resources for a program as part of their program review process.

Comparison of Program Results to Program Objectives

To determine if programs and disciplines have improved, program review results must be compared to the program objectives, which should be realistically obtainable. Additionally, this comparison needs to be addressed from a financial point of view. To justify the financial investment in a discipline area, the programs in that discipline area must achieve the desired results. Twelve (12) of the 20 community colleges, in their program review materials, require that their review committees address the comparison of program results to program objectives when conducting their program review procedure.

Grant Opportunities

There are many grants available to community colleges that desire to participate in those kinds of opportunities. An additional question that may be asked in program review procedures is whether or not the program seeks out grant opportunities. Some of the community colleges that do participate in grant opportunities describe if the grant monies are used to fund continuing operations or new initiatives. Eleven (11) of the 20 community colleges state in their program review materials that they request their program review committees to consider the college's pursuit of grant opportunities during the program review process. (See Table 4 in Appendix A on page 67.)

Addressing SACS Criteria

SACS addresses Institutional Effectiveness in Section III of their manual entitled *Criteria for Accreditation*. SACS states that the concept of institutional effectiveness “presumes that each member institution is engaged in an ongoing quest for quality and can demonstrate how well it fulfills its stated purpose” (1998, p. 19, lines 5-7). In order to achieve institutional effectiveness, institutions must develop a systematic process of planning, assessment and

improvement. The procedures that must be followed to achieve educational quality and effectiveness should be documented in writing. SACS considers it essential that each institution:

1. *establish a clearly defined purpose appropriate to collegiate education;*
2. *formulate educational goals consistent with the institution's purpose;*
3. *develop and implement procedures to evaluate the extent to which these educational goals are being achieved; and*
4. *use the results of these evaluations to improve educational programs, services and operations (1998, p. 20, subsection 3.1, lines 11-19).*

To what extent institutions apply these activities at all academic levels helps to determine how successful they are in achieving educational quality and effectiveness. To what extent they apply these steps to the development and implementation of their programs determines how successful they are in accomplishing quality student learning and achievement. The SACS manual states, "The evaluation of academic programs should involve gathering and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data that demonstrate student achievement" (1998, p. 20, lines 25-28).

Central Florida Community College, Florida Community College at Jacksonville, Manatee Community College, and Santa Fe Community College actually make reference to Section III, 3.1 or 3.2 of the SACS manual in their program review materials. Section III is entitled Institutional Effectiveness, subsection 3.1 is Planning and Evaluation: Educational Programs, and 3.2 is Planning and Evaluation: Administrative and Educational Support Services. It is evident, as referenced in their program review materials, that the SACS criteria are central to the efforts that these colleges make to achieve program excellence and student success. It is also apparent that other colleges use these criteria as a foundation for their institutional planning and assessment even though they do not mention a particular section from the SACS manual. Thirteen (13) other community colleges reference SACS accrediting criteria in their materials for various reasons. Some colleges mention the criteria in regard to faculty

qualifications or credentials while other colleges mention SACS in regard to visiting SACS accreditation teams. Upon completion of a SACS accreditation visit, some colleges may refer to results from the college's SACS self-study. Finally, some colleges mention SACS in regard to SACS accreditation criteria regarding course content.

Seventeen (17) of the 25 responding community colleges state in their program review materials that they require their review teams to address SACS accreditation criteria when conducting their program review activities. Some colleges briefly mention SACS accreditation in their program review materials while other colleges elaborate on the college's application of the SACS criteria to their program review activities.

Defined Purpose Linked to the College's Mission

Six (6) of the 17 community colleges that address SACS criteria in their program review materials indicate that they require their review committees to determine if programs have a clearly defined purpose linked to the college's mission or that supports the college's purpose and goals. It is not necessary for the program to have a separate mission from the college's mission, but the program goals should align with the college's mission and goals.

Educational Goals Support Purpose of Institutional Units

Five (5) of the 17 community colleges that address SACS criteria in their program review materials indicate that they require their review committees to determine if the educational goals of the programs are formulated to support the purpose of each unit of the institution.

Implementation of Procedures to Meet Objectives

Once the educational goals of the program are formulated, the institution must develop and implement procedures to evaluate the extent to which these educational goals are being achieved. Six (6) of the 17 community colleges that address SACS criteria in their program

review materials indicate that they require their review teams to determine if the colleges have developed and implemented procedures to evaluate the extent to which the educational goals are being achieved.

Manatee Community College is one of those six colleges indicating in their program review materials that they address SACS criteria, and the college establishes procedures to determine if their educational goals are being achieved. The college's program review model aligns with the SACS criteria in Section III of the SACS manual, *Criteria for Accreditation*. Specifically, the college references Section III and supports the criteria that require institutions to define program objectives and determine if they are achieved.

Santa Fe Community College states in their program review materials that the college develops its plans and assessment procedures with the desired results constantly in the forefront. SACS states in their *Criteria for Accreditation* manual that, "Educational quality will be judged finally by how effectively the institution achieves its established goals" (1998, p. 19, lines 25-27).

Evaluation Results Used to Improve Programs and Services

Five (5) of the 17 community colleges that address SACS criteria in their program review materials indicate that they require their program review teams to determine if the results of the evaluations are being used to improve programs and services.

Florida Community College at Jacksonville is one of those colleges complying with this SACS requirement by utilizing their College Program Revitalization (CPR) process which is explained in the college's manual, *Instructional Program Review and Revitalization Process*. The college's administration takes actions immediately in response to new challenges affecting a program or discipline. Annual reviews of programs reveal areas of low performance in

predetermined standards that are flagged for corrective actions. Discipline staff request special funding for program revitalization. Programs then must report, “the results of their planned corrective actions, and how assessment of these results is used to improve programs and disciplines” (2001, p. 1, section B, para. 2). As part of the CPR process, program evaluators are required to fill out the Annual Planning and Assessment Record that has two parts. Part 1 is a form entitled Program/Discipline Revitalization Plan. It asks for the area of concern, a description of the corrective action designed to respond to this concern, the expected outcome or result of the corrective action, data used to determine if the expected outcome was accomplished, and how that data will be used to evaluate the outcomes. Part 2 is entitled Assessment Results and Use of Results and is completed at the end of the year, after the assessment. The two items on this form are essential to seeing that the results are used to improve programs. The form asks for a summary description of the results for the expected outcome and a description of how the results are used. Through the CPR process, FCCJ complies with the SACS criteria of using the evaluation results to improve programs and services.

Santa Fe Community College designates planning units for the purpose of guaranteeing that SACS accreditation criteria are met. Their duties are unit mission and goal planning, establishing outcomes, developing assessment measures, and ensuring results are used for improvement. At the conclusion of their five-step annual process, the planning units submit an Assessment Feeder Report that tells how results are actually used to improve outcomes.

Continuous Learning and Improvement Cycle

After reviewing the application of the SACS criteria to the program review activities of the individual community colleges, it is obvious that several of the colleges employ a continuous learning and improvement cycle. Six (6) of the 17 community colleges that specifically address

the SACS criteria in their program review materials actually mention an emphasis on a continuous learning and improvement cycle. It is evident that a continuous learning and improvement cycle permeates their institutional environment. These colleges are continuously in search of quality and effectiveness, not only in their educational programs, but also in every aspect of their institutional activities.

In Section 3.2 of *Criteria for Accreditation*, SACS addresses the planning and evaluation cycle in an institution's administration and support services. The same four essential criteria that must be addressed when planning and evaluating educational programs must also be considered when planning and evaluating the administrative and support service units of an institution. The institution must continuously apply these criteria and demonstrate that the results of their planning, assessment, evaluation, and improvement are leading to the achievement of their goals.

Central Florida Community College has an annual review outline that institutional units use when reviewing their programs. Certain sections of the outline are required of all programs in order to satisfy SACS criteria. Those sections are Mission of the Program, Student Learning Outcomes and Need for Change. Upon completion of these required sections, notably the Need for Change, Central Florida Community College places appropriate emphasis on the SACS continuous learning and improvement cycle. The college maintains that, "Using outcome assessment results to improve programs and services is the most important aspect of annual review" (n.d., p. 9, section IV, para. 1). By identifying program weaknesses, those areas are targeted for improvement and such efforts for improvement are documented. Further, CFCC recommends a one-year follow-up on strategies for change, thus completing the continuous learning and improvement cycle.

Florida Community College at Jacksonville is one of those colleges emphasizing the continuous learning and improvement cycle by utilizing their College Program Revitalization (CPR) process that is explained in its manual. The process requires programs to report, “the results of their planned corrective actions, and how assessment of these results is used to improve programs and disciplines” (2001, p. 1, section B, para. 2). Program evaluators are required to fill out the Annual Planning and Assessment Record that summarizes the Program/Discipline Revitalization Plan and the Assessment Results and Use of Results. Through the use of the college’s CPR process, FCCJ completes the continuous learning and improvement cycle.

Santa Fe Community College’s effectiveness is measured at the college and the program or unit levels. The college has developed an annual survey that is administered to test the college’s compliance with SACS criteria. At the program or unit level, which the college describes as being the heart of the institutional effectiveness process, the Nichols Five-Column Model is used for planning and assessment.

Santa Fe Community College’s *Institutional Effectiveness Manual* contains two charts depicting the annual cycle of procedures that the college and the individual units follow in order to meet their institutional effectiveness requirements. Employing the Nichols Five-Column Model, each unit conducts annual planning, identifies outcomes, selects assessment measures, determines results through designated instruments, and uses assessment results to improve outcomes or accomplish objectives. This annual cycle is an excellent example of a community college employing the continuous learning and improvement cycle that SACS criteria require. (See Table 4 in Appendix A on page 67.)

Distinguishing Features Used as Best Practices

Brevard Community College

Brevard Community College's *Procedure Manual Level II Review* for Technical and Vocational Programs is a complete overview of the college's program evaluation process involving all components and levels of the process. It contains a 10-page Program Descriptive Data Profile form, a comprehensive 13-page Evaluation Team Report, and numerous other required forms. It also contains the survey instruments utilized by the college to survey the satisfaction level of students, graduates, leavers, employers, and advisory committee members that are involved in the college's activities.

Central Florida Community College

Central Florida Community College places a strong emphasis on identifying and measuring student learning outcomes. The college devotes an entire section of their program review materials to explaining the identification of student outcomes for a program, the identification of assessments used to measure progress on those outcomes, the identification of what constitutes success on measures, and the use of results to improve programs. It states in the college's program review manual, *Annual Program Review*, "CFCC must show how it continually seeks to improve the content and methodology of programs to better meet the changing needs of students and the community" (n.d., p. 7, section III, para. 2).

Florida Community College at Jacksonville

Florida Community College at Jacksonville's College Program Revitalization (CPR) process is an excellent example of an institutional model for internal program review procedures. As described in their *Instructional Program Review and Revitalization Process*, administrative actions are taken instantly in response to new challenges affecting programs or disciplines.

Programs are reviewed annually revealing areas of low performance in predetermined standards that are flagged for corrective actions. Discipline staff request special funding for program revitalization. Program staff are required to report “the results of their planned corrective actions, and how assessment of these results is used to improve programs and disciplines” (2001, p. 1, section B, para. 2). As part of the CPR process, program evaluators are required to fill out the Annual Planning and Assessment Record. Part I is a form asking for the area of concern, the corrective action, the expected result, data determining if the outcome was accomplished, and how that data is used to evaluate outcomes. Part II is a form completed after the assessment that summarizes the results for the expected outcome and describes how the results were used. The two items on this form are essential to seeing that the results are used to improve programs. In completing this process, FCCJ complies with SACS criteria.

Palm Beach Community College

Palm Beach Community College has an excellent manual describing the college’s program review process, *Program Review Manual*. It contains a description of the three levels of program review, a section explaining the Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS) Field Review, the college’s five-year schedule of Level III Program Reviews, and the college’s 10-year schedule of Level II Program Reviews. The manual also has a list of the accrediting agencies and their requirements for vocational programs. The college uses a program review instrument that is an extensive 14-page questionnaire evaluating all aspects of the designated program.

In addition, Palm Beach Community College’s Office of Institutional Effectiveness annually publishes their *Accountability Measure Outcomes* report that compares the college’s performance to that of the FCCS. Data from this report is used in evaluating the effectiveness of

programs or the necessity for further review. The college's *Program Review Manual* lists the measures that the report supplies.

- *Number of prior year high school graduates enrolled the following year*
- *Enrollment, retention, and success rate report for AA, AAS, AS, and PSAV students*
- *AA degree transfer performance*
- *State licensure passing rate*
- *Vocational placement rates of AAS/AS/PSAV and certificate completers and leavers*
- *College preparatory success rate*
- *College preparatory enrollment, retention, and success rate for AA, AAS, AS, and PSAV students (2002, p. 13).*

Santa Fe Community College

Santa Fe Community College publishes their *Institutional Effectiveness Manual* that contains a chapter for instructional units that addresses planning and assessment activities done on an annual basis. Academic departments follow a structured approach designating unit leaders to conduct their individual planning and assessment activities. The units follow the five steps of the Nichols Five-Column Model that are required for the annual process.

1. Planning Step – unit determines its own mission and goals
2. Outcomes or Objectives Step – unit identifies outcomes or objectives to accomplish goals
3. Assessment Measures Step – unit selects instrument of measurement
4. Assessment Activities Step – unit determines assessment results by administering measurement instrument or test
5. Use of Results Step – unit uses results to confirm achievement of desired outcome or takes necessary action to achieve the desired outcome (2001, p. V-2).

Santa Fe's program planning units or college planning units, considered the heart of institutional effectiveness at the college, use these five steps or components of the Nichols Model for planning and assessment.

Santa Fe has also developed the *21st Century Learning Outcomes* document that they recommend for use when identifying student learning outcomes or educational objectives that should be achieved upon completion of programs. This document was composed by the

Learning Outcomes Taskforce that was organized for the college's participation in the 21st Century Learning Outcomes Project. The project provides a strategy to improve the effectiveness of the general education program, emphasizing student learning. The document defines eight broad student outcomes which are communication skills, community skills, digital technology skills, information management skills, interpersonal skills, mathematical skills, personal skills, and thinking and problem-solving skills. (For additional information, see Table 4 in Appendix A on page 67.)

Recommendations

- 1. It is recommended that all community colleges develop and maintain a comprehensive system for program review providing planning, assessment, and improvement through formal structured procedures for the purpose of evaluating all institutional programs on a regular, scheduled time cycle.**
- 2. To fully validate the existence of program review activities, it is recommended that all community colleges document their formal structured procedures for program review.**
- 3. In order to guarantee the quality and effectiveness of institutional programs, it is recommended that all community colleges address SACS criteria in their written policies for reviewing educational programs.**
- 4. It is recommended that all community colleges place an emphasis on student learning outcomes when conducting their program review activities in order to attain the highest student achievement.**
- 5. To establish a continuous learning and improvement cycle, it is recommended that all community colleges document what was done to address a deficiency identified by assessment activities, thereby demonstrating actual use of assessment results to improve programs.**
- 6. In order to promote an inclusive academic environment surrounding the entire college, community colleges should encourage all faculty, administrators and staff to participate in program review activities, resulting in a program review process that permeates all areas of the institution.**

- 7. It is recommended that all program reviews include the following: Program Profile, Student Learning Outcomes, Strengths and Weaknesses, Recommendations to Improve Programs, Future Issues, and Program Efficiency or Productivity.**

References

- Brevard Community College. (n.d.). *Procedure manual level II review*. Cocoa, FL.
- California Community Colleges, Academic Senate. (1996, Spring). *Program review: Developing a faculty driven process*. Retrieved October 16, 2002, from the California Community College, Academic Senate Web site: http://www.academicssenate.cc.ca.us/Publications/Papers/Program_review.html
- California State University at Monterey Bay, Academic Affairs Division. (1999, January). *Program review model, Purposes for program review*. Retrieved October 11, 2002, from the California State University at Monterey Bay Web site: http://policy.csUMB.edu/policies/approved_policies/program_review_model/index.html
- Central Florida Community College. (n.d.). *Annual program review*. Ocala, FL.
- Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. (1998). *Criteria for accreditation*. Decatur, GA.
- Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. (2001, December). *Principles of accreditation, An overview*. Retrieved October 2002, from the SACS Web site: <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/Proposed%20Principles%20of%20Accreditation.pdf>
- Eder, Douglas. (n.d.). *Why do assessment?* Retrieved October 11, 2002, from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Undergraduate Assessment and Program Review Web site: <http://www.siu.edu/~deder/assess/why.html>
- Florida Community College at Jacksonville. (2001, July). *Instructional program review and revitalization process*. Jacksonville, FL.
- Florida School Laws. 1001.03(13). *K-20 governance, Specific powers of state board of education, Cyclic review of postsecondary academic programs*. (2002).
- Florida School Laws. 1008.45(1)(2). *Assessment and accountability, Community college accountability process*. (2002).
- Manatee Community College. (2001). *Manatee Community College, Academic program review model for A.A.S./A.A. degree programs*. Bradenton, FL.
- Marcus, Laurence R., et al. (1984). *Self-Study in higher education: The path to excellence*. ERIC Digest 84-1. [Electronic version]. Retrieved October 16, 2002, from http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed284510.html
- Northern Virginia Community College, Office of Academic Assessment. (2000). *Program review process*. Retrieved October 11, 2002, from the Northern Virginia Community College Web site: <http://www.nv.cc.va.us/assessment/ProgramReviewProcess.htm>

- Palm Beach Community College. (2002, January). *Program review manual*. Retrieved October 4, 2002, from the Palm Beach Community College Web site: http://www.pbcc.cc.fl.us/acad/oiap/curric/program_review_manual%20final1.pdf
- Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. (1997, February). The primary initiatives, The accountability imperative. *Imperatives for the Future: A Plan for Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education*. Retrieved October 16, 2002, from <http://www.sshechan.edu/sppi3.htm>
- Rule 6A-10.024. *Florida Administrative Code, Articulation between universities, community colleges, and school districts*. Retrieved October 2002, from State Board of Education Web site: <http://www.firn.edu/doe/rules/6A-10.htm>
- Rule 6A-14.029. *Florida Administrative Code, Staff and program development*. Retrieved October 2002, from the Division of Community Colleges Web site: <http://www.firn.edu/doe/rules/6A-14.htm>
- Rule 6A-14.060(5). *Florida Administrative Code, Accountability Standards*. Retrieved October 2002, from the Division of Community Colleges Web site: <http://www.firn.edu/doe/rules/6A-14.htm>
- Santa Fe Community College. (2001, October). *Institutional effectiveness manual*. Retrieved April 4, 2002, from Santa Fe Community College Web site: <http://admin.santafe.cc.fl.us/%7Eir/pdf/IEMan.pdf>
- Santa Fe Community College. (2002). *21st century learning outcomes*. Retrieved October 2002, from the Santa Fe Community College Web site: <http://inst.sfcc.edu/%7E21century/LOC.htm>
- State University System of Florida, Office of Academic and Student Affairs, Program Evaluation Unit. (2000, November). *Program review in the state university system of Florida*. Appendix 15, pp. 57-61.
- University of Colorado at Boulder, Office of Faculty Affairs. *Introduction and statement of policies, I. University objectives of program review*. Retrieved October 11, 2002, from the University of Colorado at Boulder Web site: <http://www.colorado.edu/facultyaffairs/intro.htm>

Appendix A

**Table 1
Current Processes for Level II Program Review**

Community Colleges	What department is responsible for the administration of the program review process?	Is there a time line for procedures?	Are internal and external members involved in the evaluation?	Are the responsibilities of the members defined?	Is there a review schedule or cycle for programs?	Does an external, national or regional accreditation review constitute the program evaluation?
Brevard	Review done at program level, Office of College-wide Dean of Technical Education has information	X	X	X	3 years	yes
Broward	AA is VP for Academic Affairs, vocational programs - VP for Technical Education, review done at program level	X	X	X	AS programs - 5 years, AA programs - following SACS review	yes
Central Florida	VP for Instruction, program deans and taskforce conduct review	X	X	X	5 years	yes
Chipola College	VP Instruction & Student Services	X		X	strong programs - 3 yrs, some AS programs - 2 yrs, all others - 1 yr	
Daytona Beach	Office VP for Planning and Development facilitates and the individual instructional units conduct the reviews.	X	X	X	3 year intervals	yes
Edison	Appropriate District Dean of Instruction	X	X	X	5 years	yes
Florida C.C. at Jacksonville	Division of Strategic Resources in collaboration with Office of Institutional Accountability, College-wide Arts & Sciences, College-wide Workforce	X	X	X	Flagging process is used to determine when programs are reviewed	
Florida Keys	Division chair submits to the Curriculum Committee that submits to the Dean of Instructional Affairs.	X		X	X	
Hillsborough	Director Parallel Programs, Accreditation Liaison Manager, VP Education & Student Development	X	X	X	X	
Lake City	Program director					
Lake-Sumter	Program department	X	X	X		
Manatee	Director Occupational & Technical Education with support from program deans and chairs			X	5 yrs for occupational, technical programs	yes
Miami Dade College	Cluster committees from the program area conduct the reviews.		X			
Okaloosa-Walton	Data comes from Office of Technical Education. Individual program areas conduct reviews.				Every 3 years	
Palm Beach	Academic Services has the functional responsibility and facilitates the process, reviews are a cluster/program activity.	X	X	X	5 years, 10-year schedule enclosed	
Pasco-Hernando	EMS Institutional Research Office surveys on yearly basis. Program coordinators and Associate Deans organize reviews so they are different for each division.	X	X	X	Yearly - varies	yes
Pensacola Junior College	Document submitted to Dean of Curriculum Implementation and signed by VP Academic Affairs but individual department has Evaluation Team.	X	X	X	5 year schedule approved by VP Academic Affairs, provosts, deans, department heads	yes
Polk	The Academic Quality Council facilitates and the discipline units or programs conduct the reviews.	X				
St. Johns River	VP Workforce Development, each department does review	X			Workforce programs every 5 years	yes
St. Petersburg College	Program director, Educational & Student Services staff, Forster Research, and a focus group work as a team	X	X	X		
Santa Fe	Program or unit level activity (instructional unit planning/assessment teams use the Nichols 5-column model) and summary submitted to Institutional Research & Planning Office	X		X	Ongoing - not yearly	
Seminole	Information from Educational Services & Programs, individual departments conduct reviews	X	X		X	
South Florida	Dean of the school	X	X	X	X	
Tallahassee	Academic Affairs Committee has oversight					
Valencia	Reviews are done by individual departments using Evaluation Teams composed of program faculty, program deans, Associate VP Workforce Development, Career Program Advisor, Valencia Institute representative, and external business/industry evaluator. Final approval by Learning Council.	X	X	X	5 years	yes

**Table 2
Program Profile**

Areas Addressed by Program Review Procedures	Number of Colleges Addressing Area
Has a program profile been developed?	23
1. Is a statement of purpose for the program included in the program profile?	19
a. Does the statement of purpose include a mission or purpose that is tied to the college mission?	17
b. Does the statement of purpose include goals and objectives that are defined and measurable?	18
2. Is there a definition or description of the program included in the program profile?	23
3. Has the content or curriculum of the program been included in the program profile?	21
a. Is accreditation required and if so what criteria are required?	18
b. Is the program curriculum consistent with employer needs?	19
c. Are articulation agreements arranged between neighboring institutions in joint meetings?	15
d. Does the program have adequate instructional materials and resources?	17
e. Do library and other learning resources adequately support the program?	12
4. Has student data or information describing the type of students served been included in the program profile?	20
a. Has the unduplicated headcount been included in the student data information?	17
b. Have demographics about the students been included in the student data?	10
c. Does the student data include the status of the students, full-time or part-time?	7
d. Does the student data tell if the students have declared a major?	6
5. Has faculty and staff information been included in the program profile?	22
a. Have faculty qualifications or credentials been included in the faculty information?	12
b. Has the number of full-time and part-time faculty been included in the faculty information?	14
c. Has the number of contact hours taught by full-time and part-time faculty been included in the faculty information?	10
d. Have acceptable faculty to student ratios in the classrooms been addressed in the faculty information?	16
e. Has staff and professional development been addressed in the faculty and staff information?	17
6. Have the community and workforce needs been addressed in the program profile?	23
a. Are advisory committees involved in the program planning and development?	20
b. Are the current employment trends for programs considered when addressing the community and workforce needs?	16
7. Has the adequacy of facilities and equipment supporting the program been addressed in the program profile?	20
8. Are marketing and recruitment efforts addressed in the program profile?	13

Table 3
Outcomes, Strengths, Weaknesses, and Recommendations

Areas Addressed by Program Review Procedures	Number of Colleges Addressing Area
Student Learning Outcomes of Programs	20
1. Are student learning outcomes identified and how are they identified?	19
a. How successful are program completers in finding jobs or being placed in jobs after completion of a degree?	17
b. How do community college transfer students perform at the upper-division institutions?	14
c. Are completion and licensure rates addressed when identifying student learning outcomes?	18
d. Is the acquisition of knowledge and skills monitored when identifying student learning outcomes?	13
e. Are retention rates used as indicators of student learning outcomes?	12
2. What assessments are used to measure progress on student learning outcomes?	18
3. What constitutes success on measures?	14
4. Are assessment results of student learning outcomes used to improve programs?	14
Strengths and Weaknesses of Programs	22
1. Are strengths and weaknesses of programs identified by external sources (employers) and students?	17
2. Are strengths and weaknesses of programs used to make changes?	16
3. Is satisfaction with programs measured for students, graduates, faculty, and employers?	22
4. Is student and employer satisfaction with programs used to make changes in programs?	16
Recommendations to Improve Programs	20
1. Is an action plan for improvement developed?	18
2. Are outcome assessment results used to improve programs?	16
3. Are strategies for improvement based on student and employer follow-up?	12
4. Are the changes made relevant to labor market demands?	15
5. Do advisory committees provide input on major modification of program curriculum?	16
6. Is there a follow-up of strategies for change?	14
7. Do program review committees recommend expansion or deletion?	14

Table 4
Future Issues, Productivity, SACS, and Best Practices

Areas Addressed by Program Review Procedures	Number of Colleges Addressing Area
Future Issues that will Impact Programs	17
1. Future curricular changes and needs	15
2. Market trends within program area	16
3. Equipment, space and faculty needs for future growth	16
4. Future plans and long-term program viability	16
5. Expansion of programs	11
Program Efficiency or Productivity	20
1. Tying budget to program outputs	13
2. Program cost information	20
3. Cost-effective management of resources	15
4. Comparison of program results to program objectives	12
5. Grant opportunities	11
Addressing SACS Criteria	17
1. Is there a clearly defined purpose linked to the college's mission?	6
2. Are educational goals formulated to support the purpose of each unit of the institution?	5
3. Are procedures to evaluate if educational goals are being achieved developed and implemented?	6
4. Are the results of the evaluations being used to improve programs and services?	5
5. Is there an emphasis on the Continuous Learning and Improvement Cycle?	6
Distinguishing Features to be used as Best Practices	5
1. Procedure manual	12
2. Surveys	10
3. Evaluation report or questionnaire	11
4. Emphasis on student learning outcomes	4
5. SACS criteria are targeted	4
6. Effectiveness indicator table	1
7. Nichols Five-column Model	1
8. 21st Century Learning Outcomes	1

Florida Community Colleges & Workforce Education

Department of Education • 1314 Turlington Building • 325 W. Gaines Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
www.fldoe.org/cc