RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM APRIL 2021 YEAR SEVEN EVALUATION REPORT

Ad Hoc Report Submitted by Spokane Falls Community College

September 2022

Contents

INTRODUCTION

Spokane Falls Community College (SFCC) is one of two comprehensive public, independently accredited colleges that comprise the Community Colleges of Spokane (CCS), District 17. The largest community college district geographically in Washington State, CCS supports a six-county service area in eastern Washington that includes Spokane, Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Lincoln, and Whitman Counties. The district serves approximately 19,000 students annually with roughly 6,000 students attending SFCC. SFCC awards Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Science, and Bachelor of Applied Science degrees, and several certificates.

In March of 2021, SFCC submitted its Year Seven Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation by the Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). The College then hosted a virtual comprehensive Year Seven visit in April of 2021. The evaluation team proposed three commendations and four recommendations. In their formal notification and record of action, the Commission found that Recommendation 3 indicated that that SFCC was out of compliance with the NWCCU Standards for Accreditation. In reaffirming the College's accreditation based on the Year Seven Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Evaluation, the Commission requested that SFCC submit an Ad Hoc Report in Fall 2022 to address all recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS OUT OF COMPLIANCE

The Commission determined that Recommendation 3 represented an area where Spokane Falls Community College was out of compliance with the NWCCU Standards for Accreditation. The Commission compelled SFCC to take appropriate action to ensure that the recommendation be addressed and resolved within two years.

RECOMMENDATION 3

> Complete financial audit processes in a regular and timely manner. (2020 Standard(s) 2.E.1; ER 20)

The relevant standard and eligibility requirement are included for reference.

> **2.E.1** *The institution utilizes relevant audit processes and regular reporting to demonstrate financial stability, including sufficient cash flow and reserves to achieve and fulfill its mission.*

> **Eligibility Requirement 20 - FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY**: *For each year of operation, the institution undergoes an annual, independent financial audit by professionally qualified personnel in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards or International Financial Reporting Standards reconciled to US-GAAP. The audit is to be completed no later than fifteen months after the end of the fiscal year. Results from the audit, including findings and management letter recommendations, are considered annually in an appropriate and comprehensive manner by the administration and the governing board.*

In the Peer-Evaluation Report, the committee noted ongoing challenges associated with SFCC serving as a pilot for Washington state's implementation of a new statewide enterprise resource planning (ERP)

system commonly known as ctcLink. As a consequence of challenges associated with the implementation, SFCC had not completed annual financial statements and audits since 2015. While acknowledging that the district had acquired the services of Moss Adams, LLP to complete financial statements, the report expressed a concern that the lack of current audited statements compromised the college's ability to demonstrate financial stability. This concern was then expressed as a recommendation representing noncompliance.

Action Taken

Audited financial statements have been completed for the fiscal years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 and have been posted on the CCS district web page for [Financial Information](#). In addition, the financial ratios required in the NWCCU Annual Report have been updated through 2021. However, as the ratio calculations were completed after the deadline for submitting the Annual Report, the NWCCU Financial Dashboard includes information only through 2019. All five statements and a summary of financial ratio data through 2021 are included as appendices to this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUBSTANTIALLY IN COMPLIANCE BUT IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

RECOMMENDATION 1

> Formalize an inclusive, systematic planning and evaluation process, which informs and refines institutional effectiveness, assigns resources, and improves student learning and student achievement. (2020 Standard(s) 1.B.1; 1.B.3)

The relevant standards are included for reference.

> ***1.B.1*** *The institution demonstrates a continuous process to assess institutional effectiveness, including student learning and achievement and support services. The institution uses an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement.*

> ***1.B.3*** *The institution provides evidence that its planning process is inclusive and offers opportunities for comment by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.*

While acknowledging the significant turnover in cabinet level administration over the previous four years and the significance in scale of SFCC's Guided Pathways implementation, the evaluation committee noted the college's efforts to build systematic planning and develop assessable institution level outcomes of student achievement through that implementation. However, the committee expressed a concern that "An inclusive process of evaluation and planning, based on indicator data, is not formalized and systematically used to inform the assignment of resources and to improve institutional effectiveness, student learning, and student achievement."

Action Taken

In response to a report drafted by consultants Dr. Helen Benjamin and Dr. Debbie DiThomas in February 2020, SFCC formed an ad hoc task force (Governance Steering Committee) charged with reviewing the

recommendations contained within the report and proposing next steps to President Messina. The Steering Committee presented its final recommendations to the president in June 2021. A primary recommendation of the report was to reorganize the college committee structure into two committee types:

Operational Committees – Operational committees are formed based on the participating individuals' job description or role at the college and are concerned with the daily operational jurisdiction of a division, department, or unit.

Governance Committees - Participatory governance committees are formed to cultivate participatory governance and focus on areas such as establishing institutional policy, developing procedures that involve multiple units in the college, and planning initiatives required for the college to meet its mission, vision, and goals.

In affirming participatory governance at SFCC, the Steering Committee recommended the formation of three governance committees: Governance, Budget, and Diversity, Equity and Global Awareness, with the Governance Committee serving as the primary governance body of the college.

Given the important role of the Budget Committee in the implementation of a planning process that is inclusive while supporting the allocation of necessary resources and improvement of institutional effectiveness, the following charge was approved by the Governance Council and SFCC Cabinet for the Budget Council in Spring 2022:

> *The SFCC Budget Committee is a governance committee that supports the college mission, goals, and values through the comprehensive evaluation of data relevant to the college annual planning process to recommend resource allocation and development of strategies to maximize funding.*
>
> *Duties of the Committee*
>
> - *Review and assess the impact of select budget activities.*
> - *Provide input and impact on financial decisions regarding accounts determined in partnership with Cabinet.*
> - *Recommend professional development activities that support the college community's knowledge of budget.*
> - *Collaborate with the Program Assessment Taskforce and other relevant committees on budget processes and resource allocation.*
> - *Promote transparency and information literacy on budget and financial aspects of the college.*
> - *Committee members serve as the liaison between committee and groups represented to bring inquiries, requests, and concerns forward for discussion.*

With a governance structure in place, in the fall of 2021 President Messina asked the Governance Committee to form a Program Review Task Force with the following charge

> *Research and recommend a program review process that includes instruction and student affairs. The expanded program review will be integrated with a new integrated resource*

allocation processes to satisfy the accreditation recommendation. (Note - the goal is a meaningful process that supports reflection, improvement, and student learning that is efficient and respectful of workload).

In the spring of 2022, the Program Review Task Force presented the Governance Committee with a set of *Program Review Guiding Principles* (in appendices). The set of principles were reviewed by the Governance Committee with consultation from the SFCC Cabinet, and a final document was approved by the committee in June of 2022, with a request for Cabinet to draft a program review process based on these principles during the summer of 2022 to be reviewed by the Governance Committee and implemented in Fall 2022.

Working with the SFCC Director of Planning, Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (PIER), SFCC's cabinet has outlined a Program Review process (see *Program Review Process cabinet draft 8_17* in appendices). The resulting draft process:

- Is designed to support continuous improvement, highlighting the successes of the programs and identifying areas for growth and development while providing avenues for resources and support to improve programs
- Will influence strategic planning and provide a consistent set of data that will be used to support resource allocation requests, staffing decisions, annualized schedule, etc. and will inform investments in infrastructure such as professional development to increase student success and student equity for all programs
- Will be reviewed by departments, deans/directors, Budget Governance Council, and SFCC Cabinet

The program review process will be based on a 3-year cycle with the first cohort of programs beginning review in 2022-23.

Format of Program Review in Instructional Programs:

For instructional programs, the academic department will serve as the program unit.

Year 1 comprehensive:

Relevant data related to program maps and map program learning outcomes associated with the department will be provided and auto populated via a program review template. Reports will include institutional effectiveness data such as enrollment trends, course fill rates, course success rates, student awards, etc. as well as course and program learning outcomes assessment data. All needed data will be provided by PIER - there will be no need for faculty or the dean to search or input data. All data will include disaggregated data in support of SFCC equity goals.

A reflection section will provide guided prompts for the faculty to provide short narratives that highlight the strengths and successes of the program and identify areas of growth. There will also be a reflection section for the dean to address the relevant data, highlight strengths, and identify any areas of concern.

The dean and department chair/lead will meet to determine the area of focus that will serve as the primary content of the Year 2 program review (examples could include curricular revision based on outcomes assessment, strategies for increased enrollment or retention, a focus on a particular student population based on the outcomes assessment or institutional data, researching a new program, etc.)

The Vice President will review the document and provide comments. The final review will be forwarded to the Budget Committee and to Cabinet for use in decision making.

Year 2:

Programs will review their current data and be provided with an opportunity to comment on any significant changes in the data. The primary emphasis in year two is to document progress on the focus area that was identified in Year 1.

Year 3:

Programs will review their data and be provided with an opportunity to comment on any significant changes in the data. The primary emphasis of year three is to document the changes that were made because of efforts in the focus area identified in Year 1.

Format of Program Review in Student Affairs:

Student Affairs will consist of four programs: Admissions and Registration, Disability Access Services, Financial Aid/Veterans, and Student Support Services. Each program will use 2022-23 as a baseline year.

Program Review Cycle

- 2022-23 will be a baseline year used to identify the institutional effectiveness, outcomes assessment, and equity data supporting Student Affairs program review.

- All four Student Affairs programs will complete a comprehensive year 1 review in 2023-24, followed by a Year 2 and Year 3 shorter focused review.

- The focus areas will include a review of how the programs are supporting and engaging across the college, with an emphasis on pathways support.

Format of Program Review in unique Program Review Areas:

The library, MESA, Instructional Support Services (workforce, career services, peer services, etc.), Pullman, the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (which includes student support centers for focused student populations and faculty development) will also use 2022-23 as a baseline year and follow the same schedule as Student Affairs.

Resource Requests:

The program review process allows for requesting new resources as part of strategic planning and data informed decision making. All requests for new resources (defined as expenditures that exceed existing

departmental resources or new classified positions.) will be made through the program review process on an annual basis.

New faculty position (defined as a request for a growth position or new position) requests will also be made through the program review process and prioritized during the spring quarter. Departments can request additional positions due to a retirement or resignation in the fall, and cabinet will integrate those requests into the list of prioritized faculty positions. The decision on how many positions or which positions to hire will be made in the fall quarter and will be drawn from the list of prioritized positions.

Each year, the finalized review of resource and position requests will be forwarded to the Budget Committee and to Cabinet for use in decision making.

SFCC's Cabinet is currently working with the PIER Director to develop reporting templates supporting the program review model, with an assumption of implementation of the program review process in Fall 2022.

RECOMMENDATION 2

> Identify and publish expected program and degree learning outcomes and engage in regular and ongoing assessment to evaluate quality of learning in its academic transfer programs. (2020 Standard(s) 1.C.3; 1.C.5)

The relevant standards are included for reference.

> ***1.C.3*** *The institution identifies and publishes expected program and degree learning outcomes for all degrees, certificates, and credentials. Information on expected student learning outcomes for all courses is provided to enrolled students.*

> ***1.C.5*** *The institution engages in an effective system of assessment to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs. The institution recognizes the central role of faculty to establish curricula, assess student learning, and improve instructional programs.*

While the Peer-Evaluation Report noted that SFCC had published course learning outcomes for all courses and that program-level learning outcomes were published for Fine Arts degrees, career technical degrees and certificates, and the applied baccalaureate degrees, the college's transfer programs do not have published program learning outcomes. In addition, the committee found no established process for ongoing assessment of academic learning outcomes.

Action Taken

Toward a sustained, faculty-led effort in assessment, SFCC established the roles of Learning Outcomes Assessment Coordinators (LOACs) in February of 2022, providing 50% release time each for two instructors to design, develop, and implement learning outcome assessment. The LOACs started with a renewed focus on course learning outcomes (CLOs) but with an intention to move beyond the cycles of revision in outcome language and towards the development, implementation, and documentation of CLO assessment, including an emphasis on alignment between CLOs and program-level learning outcomes.

In March 2022, the LOACs proposed a model for learning outcome assessment based on a pilot model for CLO assessment. Approved by SFCC Cabinet, the pilot assessment will run in Fall 2022 and include

courses representing programs from across the college. The LOACs recruited faculty support for the pilot through a combination of spring quarter interactions:

- Presentation at the April 2022 All-Faculty meeting,
- Workshop during Campus Development Day in May 2022,
- Workshop by Sandra Bailey from National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, and
- Email reach-out to faculty.

Summary LOACs Feb-June 22 included in the appendices of this provides early 2022 LOAC activities in greater detail.

Pilot Assessment for Fall 2022:

- Faculty sign-up to participate in the pilot. Each faculty member who participates in the pilot will be provided an Excel spreadsheet roster for their Fall Quarter classes.
- Faculty will be asked to assess either an artifact that aligns to all CLOs or multiple artifacts to address each CLO. For the pilot, assessment is whether the student's submitted artifact met the CLO. It is a yes/no selection.
- The completed Excel sheet roster for each Fall Quarter class section is sent to the LOACs who will work with PIER to generate results. provide details on the assessed artifact and save the working Excel file when finished.
- Faculty will also have the option to submit the artifact(s) used to conduct the CLO assessment. In this case, the artifact is what was assigned to the student rather than the student work. This will allow the LOACs to build an archive of artifacts.

Connection to Program Learning Outcome Assessment

In SFCC's Guided Pathways implementation, program maps represent a specific plan of study (for example, Chemical Engineering or Drama) within one of SFCC's six pathways (Business, Health, Humanities, STEM, Visual/Performing & Applied Arts, and Education/Social & Behavioral Sciences). In this model, transfer degrees may be associated with multiple maps. Reasoning that program level learning outcome assessments should align with student achievement in the student's chosen path, program learning outcomes (PLLOs) are associated with program maps rather than degrees.

Comprised of faculty and dean liaisons, a sub-committee of the Clarify the Path Guided Pathways workgroup designed a three-stage process to scaffold faculty through the college's initial development of program maps: 1) Learning inventories, 2) Program Level Learning Outcomes, and 3) Program Map Design. Through this initial process, several program maps had corresponding PLLOs.

Since the original development of program maps in Fall 2019, the maps have gone through revisions including the removal and addition of maps. Unfortunately, PLLOs were not consistently maintained as new and revised maps were being developed. SFCC recognizes that this is a bottleneck in the system and has formed a Map Revision team that will coordinate with the SFCC Curriculum and Graduation Requirements Committee to manage procedures for both map revisions and PLLOs to be reviewed in a similar fashion as other curriculum material.

There are currently sixty-eight main maps (those leading to an associate degree) and twenty-eight certification maps identified. Of these ninety-six maps representing programs and certifications, 79

(82%) have developed PLLOs. However, not all program maps have their developed PLLOs published on the website. At this time, PLLOs for 55 program maps and certifications are published on the SFCC website, primarily from Career/Technical pathways. SFCC's Office of Planning, Institutional Effectiveness and Research is working with Instruction to affirm that all PLLOs are accurately posted on the SGCC website. SFCC will create a procedure for the PLLOs not in the catalog to be populated on the program website. See *Pathway PLLOs Summary* in the appendices for a summary of PLLO development by pathway and *Division and Department PLLO Summary SU22* for a summary of main maps by department and division.

The launch of the CLO pilot in Fall 2022 will be accompanied by a process of aligning CLOs and PLLOs and populating PLLO assessment through CLO assessment. Through the pilot, faculty who assess CLOs will also be asked to collaborate with their colleagues to align the CLOs of the course to at least one PLLO for the program map. By affirming that every PLLO is associated with at least one CLO, this alignment will allow PLLOs to be assessed as CLOs are assessed.

While program review will be built on 3-year cycles, CLO and PLLO assessment will be ongoing and separate. PLLO assessment review will be embedded into the program review process developed in response to Recommendation 1. The program review process will emphasize a reflection upon assessment results at the program level while the learning assessment structure will manage the assessment process.

RECOMMENDATION 4

> Demonstrate all faculty, staff, and administrators are evaluated on a regular and systematic basis. (2020 Standard(s) 2.F.4)

The relevant standards are included for reference.

> **2.F.4** *Faculty, staff, and administrators are evaluated regularly and systematically in alignment with institutional mission and goals, educational objectives, and policies and procedures. Evaluations are based on written criteria that are published, easily accessible, and clearly communicated. Evaluations are applied equitably, fairly, and consistently in relation to responsibilities and duties. Personnel are assessed for effectiveness and are provided feedback and encouragement for improvement.*

SFCC's Peer-Evaluation report found that processes, practices, and standards are defined in the district's Policy and Procedures manual and included in collective bargaining documents. The evaluation team noted that college could not affirm that evaluations were consistently completed across all employee classifications on a regular and systematic basis.

Action Taken

SFCC and CCS Human Resources recognized that the SFCC's ability to meet the expectation of the standard was compromised by the lack of a means for managing and tracking evaluations at the institutional level. While Administrative/Exempt evaluations (E-PAS) and Classified staff evaluations (C-PAS) are managed by applications developed by Human Resources, faculty/adjunct evaluations have been tracked only at the department or division level. To address this inconsistency, the CCS Human

Resource office has engaged in the development of an application for tracking evaluations for faculty in three categories: full time, associate adjunct, and adjunct (See *Faculty Appraisal Tracking* in appendices). This project included the following components:

- Compiling an audit of evaluations for all adjuncts and full-time faculty, maintained in an Excel spreadsheet until a certification structure was completed. Human Resources collected the latest evaluations on hand at the department/division level from corresponding deans.

- Building out an evaluation certification structure for faculty evaluations into the district's Online Training and History Report System (OTHRS). This certification structure was completed in August of 2022 and will allow deans to run reports to see when their faculty are due for an evaluation. All evaluations will be sent to HR for OTHRS tracking as well as inclusion in their personnel file.

- Upon completion of the certification application, HR will begin inputting evaluations received by the start of Fall term 2022 and thereafter.

At the time of this writing, the evaluation certification structure has been completed, creating capacity for tracking Exempt, Classified and Faculty evaluations at an institutional level. While Human Resources has reached out to supervisors toward an audit of the state of faculty evaluations, the results of the audit have not yet been forwarded to the SFCC Cabinet, and the college is unable to affirm the extent to which evaluations are current. In the 2022-23 academic year, SFCC's cabinet will use the expanded certification structure and audit results to affirm that evaluations are current for Exempt, Classified and Faculty employees.

CONCLUSION

This Ad-Hoc Report has provided an update on the progress Spokane Falls Community College and the Community Colleges of Spokane has made in the past year to address the recommendations result from the Year Seven Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Evaluation in April 2021.

Recommendation 1 – SFCC has drafted a practice and process of program review integrated within its recently implemented governance structure. In implementing this model in 2022-23, the college believes it will have addressed the recommendation.

Recommendation 2 – SFCC has built a solid foundation of course learning outcomes and a model of assessment developed and facilitated by faculty to be implemented in the fall of 2023. The college will need to complete the creation of program learning outcomes for all maps and the process of mapping course learning outcome assessment to program learning outcome assessments. The college expects that at a minimum, all program level learning outcomes will be drafted and a pilot set of results for program learning outcome assessment will be achieved in 2022-23.

Recommendation 3 – The college believes that the concern has been fully addressed and SFCC is no longer in a state of noncompliance.

Recommendation 4 – CCS has developed a process for mapping and managing faculty evaluations, addressing the historical challenge of managing and recording evaluations only in dean/director offices. As a result, SFCC can confirm that all employees (Administrative/exempt, classified and faculty) are evaluated on a regular and systematic basis and believes that recommendation has been fully addressed.