

FOLLOW-UP VISIT PEER REVIEW TEAM REPORT

Mount Tamalpais College
(formerly Prison University Project)
P.O. Box 492
San Quentin, CA 94964

This report represents the findings of the Peer Review Team that conducted a virtual visit to Mount Tamalpais College October 21, 2021. The Commission acted on the accredited status of the institution during its January 2022 meeting and this team report must be reviewed in conjunction with the Commission's Action letter.

Dr. Keith Curry
Team Chair

Introduction:

A follow-up peer review team visit was conducted at Mount Tamalpais College on October 21, 2021. The purpose of the visit was to determine whether the College has addressed the requirements of the Commission as stipulated in the Commission Action Letter of January 27, 2020.

The team was comprised of the following members:

Dr. Keith Curry, Team Chair
Dr. Norman Lorenz
Lauren Sosenko

The team was also accompanied by ACCJC Vice President and staff liaison to Mount Tamalpais College, Dr. Catherine Webb. In general, the team found that the College had prepared well for the visit by arranging for meetings with the individuals and groups agreed upon earlier with the team chair. Over the day, the team met with:

Theresa Roeder, Board Member
Dr. Jody Lewen, President
Michael Howe, Chief Advancement Officer
Amy Jamgochian, Chief Academic Officer
Jen Juras, Chief of Institutional Effectiveness and Research
Priya Kandaswamy, Academic Program Director
Jacob Kernodle, Registrar
Nigel Hatton, Faculty
Kirsten Pickering, Research and Program Fellow

The Follow-Up Report and visit were expected to document resolution of the following compliance requirement:

Standards I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.9 (Requirement 1): To achieve initial accreditation, the Commission requires the College develop a sustainable, comprehensive, and systematic approach for continuous outcomes assessment, planning, and program review.

Team Analysis of College Responses to the January 27, 2020, Commission's Requirement Findings and Evidence:

The visiting team reviewed the Follow-Up Report and interviewed Mount Tamalpais College staff, faculty, and leaders to assess how the College has developed a sustainable, comprehensive, and systematic approach for continuous outcomes assessment, planning, and program review. The College has completed extensive work to establish a five-year assessment cycle that culminates with a Program Review process, documented in the Follow-Up Report and the Handbook for Educational and Institutional Effectiveness. The College established six new Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) with vetted rubrics and signature assignments offered and assessed through regularly scheduled course offerings. These PLOs were also aligned with

existing course learning outcomes (CLOs), and a process for ongoing review and alignment of PLOs and CLOs was established. The College also established four personal enrichment outcomes (PEOs) related to student participation in extracurricular activities and student supports. Again, the College established a process and schedule for assessment for PEOs. Although these processes were interrupted by COVID-19 and shutdowns at the College, the planned assessment processes are sufficient to satisfy the requirement as the College resumed face-to-face operations as the prison opened up in fall 2021.

The College established institution-set standards for graduation rates and rates of successful course completion. In addition to setting these standards, the College has invested in data infrastructures, such as a new Student Information System, and data-supporting positions, such as the Registrar and the Chief of Institutional Effectiveness and Research, that will allow for continued, robust data collection and use in future planning efforts. The established five-year assessment cycle adequately demonstrates an institutional assessment data process to support student learning and student achievement.

The College's new Program Review structure that includes an internal and external review displays a process for continuous improvement. The College described how this process would be linked to strategic planning and their overarching goals. The team suggests clarifying how the Program Review findings will be linked to annual resource allocations and evaluation of the newly established processes for long-term sustainability.

Conclusion

The College has addressed the requirements and meets the Standards I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.9.

Quality Focused Essay

The College's Quality Focused Essay and the Follow-Up Visit highlighted areas of improvement for the College. The College proposed three projects through its Quality Focused Essay:

- 1) Continuum of Care;
- 2) Introduction to College Course
- 3) Technology in Learning

These ambitious projects designed to support the unique student population are aligned with the College's mission and focus on specific standards, such as Standard II.B Library and Learning Support Services (related to all three proposed projects), Standard II.C Student Support Services (related to all three proposed projects), and Standard III.C Technology Resources (Technology in Learning).

College leaders explained that these Quality Focused Essay topics were derived from ongoing faculty and staff concerns, reflection on need, and the specific learning context of the College. These brainstorm sessions were described as informal and organic as the College leadership considered areas for improvement.

The Continuum of Care project (II.B and II.C) will provide enhanced student services to students from the beginning of their student experience through graduation to accommodate challenges unique to the prison environment and beyond as students navigate post-release life. Services include comprehensive intake processes to identify “students’ professional goals, physical and mental health needs, and learning styles and struggles” (p. 3) to establish early referrals to services. The project also provides a Learning Specialist position to bolster learning supports for students and one-on-one advising to assess student needs throughout their educational experience continually. Finally, the project will provide services for students transitioning out of the prison environment to ensure they have academic and other social and life wraparound services to succeed in their transition.

The Introduction to College Course is designed to support student readiness for college-level coursework (II.B and II.C). The College acknowledges that most students enter the program below college-level reading and math skill levels, citing legacy impacts of educational and social system failures leading students to underperform. The program will target academic and other needs to position students for success in their college experience. The College notes, “By the end of the course, students will have a greater understanding of what it means to be a college student, a set of tools for academic empowerment, and a clearer sense of their own educational goals and how to achieve them” (p. 6).

The Technology in Learning was the third project highlighted in the Quality Focused Essay (II.B, II.C, and III.C). This project addresses the unique technology limitations of the College by introducing and growing the number of laptops that allow students to improve computer literacy, access library research materials, and communicate electronically with their instructors. The projects outlined a scope of work with anticipated impact on learning and achievement, project outcome measures, and an action plan detailing the person responsible for implementing the project and a timeline for completion. As the College visiting team emphasizes, the College leadership is encouraged to fully evaluate these programs to document processes and outcomes. This program will undoubtedly be a model for any other college operating in a prison setting.