

Fifth-Year Interim Report
For
The New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Three Rivers Community College

Norwich, CT

August 2007



The long awaited new campus for Three Rivers Community College

Table of Contents

Statement of Report Preparation	3
Institutional Overview	4
Special Emphasis Area - Services for distance learners	5
Special Emphasis Area - Construction of the new campus	8
Special Emphasis Area - Levels of full-time faculty	11
Standard 1: Mission and Purpose	14
Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation	17
Standard 3: Organization and Governance	20
Standard 4: The Academic Program	23
Standard 5: Faculty	27
Standard 6: Students	32
Standard 7: Library and Other Information Resources	35
Standard 8: Physical and Technological Resources	38
Standard 9: Financial Resources	41
Standard 10: Public Disclosure	44
Standard 11: Integrity	46
Plans	49
Academic Programming Offered through Distance Education	50

Appendices

Appendix A: Construction project timeline and overview	
Appendix B: Report Preparation Committee Memberships	
Appendix C: Report Preparation Timeline	
Appendix D: Marketing Campaign example advertisements	
Appendix E: CIHE Data Form regarding Public Disclosure	
Appendix F: CIHE Enrollment and Fiscal Data Forms	

Statement on Report Preparation

In September 2006, a committee was convened at Three Rivers Community College to discuss the development of an accurate, evidence based Fifth-Year Report. President Grace Jones reviewed the proposed report development plan. Fourteen small committees were assembled to address the new standards as well as areas the Commission designated for special emphasis. Committee composition was cross divisional. For example, the group which authored the chapter on the campus construction project was chaired by a member of the information technology division and included faculty members as well as a representative from the continuing education division. The committees' architecture was intended to stimulate interdepartmental alliances and augment institutional knowledge throughout the ranks. Volunteers worked assiduously and adhered to an unyielding report production timeline. Committee memberships and the report timeline are appendices.

Members of the report team attended a workshop hosted by the Commission in the early Fall of 2006. Information garnered resulted in: renewed emphasis on the new standards, and the creation of narrative and evidence templates for each working group. A single employee was designated to oversee information germane to the priority area of institutional effectiveness. An intranet site was developed to support the committees' efforts and share information resources. In early Spring 2007, extensive revisions of the initial draft were made by the report editor. The chapters were then reviewed for accuracy by functional area managers. In late Spring 2007, the report was forwarded to the President's Cabinet and members of the academic division for examination. Resultant input was integrated into the draft. Commissioner Froh provided indispensable feedback in June 2007.

In keeping with the spirit of ongoing evaluation, this report aims to inform the Commission of: progress made by Three Rivers Community College since the 2002 comprehensive review, the current status of the institution and areas of focus for the next five years.

Institutional Overview

The Connecticut Community Colleges are established under Connecticut General Statute 10a-71. The community college system, comprised of twelve regional community colleges and a system office, is the largest unit of public higher education in Connecticut. All colleges are governed by a state Board of Trustees which appoints a Chancellor to implement policies. Each regional college operates as a separate entity within the larger community college system. Three Rivers Community College is guided by an ambitious mission statement carefully crafted by the college community.

Three Rivers serves Southeastern Connecticut, a region in transition from an industrial and manufacturing-based economy to one rapidly becoming service based. Pfizer Inc. and General Dynamics/Electric Boat, the area's top employers, have been laying off thousands of workers. The college's proximity to the world's two largest gambling casinos and reservation lands of the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan tribes presents the college with an ever-changing student body. As a result of these changes, enrollment at Three Rivers has reflected an increase in first generation college students, ethnic minorities (up 41% in the past five years) and recently arrived immigrants. In addition, approximately nine out of ten students work at least part-time and registrants are increasingly younger (median age is 24 years or younger). As an intellectual community, Three Rivers is challenged to meet the shifting needs of these diverse populations.

While responding to regional needs, the other facet of the college mission is serving as an entry point for students transferring to state, national and international four-year institutions. The majority of Three Rivers' students pursue degrees which provide a seamless transition to baccalaureate institutions, such as University of Connecticut and Eastern Connecticut State University.

Just as the region is facing new and exciting challenges, Three Rivers itself is at a crossroads as a community college. In 2007, the college held an official ground-breaking ceremony to launch its \$85.6 million campus facilities renovation and expansion project. These new facilities will greatly assist the institution in meeting its mission objectives well into the 21st century.

Response to Area Identified for Special Emphasis

Services for students studying at a distance

The Commission requested that the college give particular emphasis to providing appropriate advising and other services for students studying at a distance. In 2002, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Visiting Team recommended the college increase web-based support services to students studying at a distance, such as appropriate advising and technical support.

Retrospective

As Three Rivers Community College has become technologically savvy, new challenges have arisen for an increasingly diverse student population. Recognizing these challenges, the college hired a Director of Distance Learning in 2005. Later that same year, the college hired a Technical Support Specialist who provides direct service to students studying at a distance. The Technical Support Specialist's responsibilities are orientating students in the WebCT environment (which is the on-line course management system utilized by all Connecticut public colleges), troubleshooting computer problems, in-class student orientations about WebCT, and teaching students technical readiness on all levels. The Director of Distance Learning creates strategic plans, trains faculty regarding students' needs, and provides assistance to students. Additionally, the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC), an independent enterprise, provides an array of support services that supplement the college's own services. CTDLC is responsive to students when they call the Help Line or utilize the on-line Help Desk for technical assistance within the WebCT environment.

Over the past five years, Three Rivers has made remarkable progress in providing support services to students studying at a distance. Academic advising of distance learners now is done remotely via e-mail or telephone as well as in person. E-mail addresses and telephone numbers for faculty are made available to all students and found on the college's web site http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/stu_services/Counseling_services/AcadAdvis.pdf. Once a student has met with an academic advisor and earned 12 credits, students may register for

classes via the Internet. This access is restricted to returning students as they have a fundamental familiarity with the college. Distance learners who have not earned 12 credits can utilize e-mail or fax to apply and enroll in courses.

A positive development for students studying at a distance has been the smoother integration between the financial aid offices of Three Rivers and other institutions e.g., University of Connecticut, Mitchell College, etc. This has resolved registration difficulties for students taking on-line courses at multiple institutions simultaneously. Three Rivers students are also able to make their tuition payments online as well as review their billing and financial aid information. Moreover, students can update their e-mail addresses online, locate their advisors, download their unofficial transcripts, view their demographic information and check final grades each semester.

Present

According to the college Registrar, distance learning courses are growing. In Fall 2002, 208 students were enrolled in 12 distance learning classes and in Fall 2006, 344 students were enrolled in 18 classes. The Registrar believes the supply of courses has not met the demand. A major challenge facing the college now is enrollment caps for online and hybrid courses, relative to on-site courses (20 versus 35 student seats).

Services for distance learners are now comparable to services received by on-site learners. For example, students can peruse Three Rivers' course offerings online via <http://www.online.commnet.edu>. Individuals who wish to enroll can do so via the internet and access registration forms at: <http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/SecTier/stuserv.html>. An icon for WebCT is found on the Connecticut Community College's home page (www.online.commnet.edu); the icon generates student friendly instructions about WebCT. Last year, 50 entering students participated in an online, new student orientation. The official college catalog and student handbook are web-based.

Learner support services also are offered to students studying at a distance. The college's Writing Center and Tutoring and Academic Success Center (TASC) offer web-based services. For example, students submit drafts to The Writing Center via e-mail and receive a response within two business days.

Student course withdrawals are a concern for the college. In response to various faculty and administrators concerns, the college's Educational Technology Committee built a web-based presentation to help students determine if distance learning is the right venue for their computer equipment, learning style and personal lifestyle. The orientation can be found at http://www.comnet.edu/academics/webct_student/docs/Ed-Tech_eLearning.html

Future

The Connecticut Community Colleges developed a document entitled, "Effective Teaching Practices for Web-Enhanced, Hybrid and Online Classes." The Three Rivers' Educational Technology Committee hopes to use the document and formulate "best practices" for the college.

Three Rivers plans to offer an online, virtual tour of the college on its home page which will aid all students, especially distance learners. A Welcome Center website is being developed with Frequently Asked Questions, and academic information that is easy to navigate.

Institutional Effectiveness

Three Rivers has not developed any specific goals directly related to student support services for distance learners. We are currently in the midst of a comprehensive analysis of these services. However, information from program reviews, student and graduate surveys and student focus groups has been used to make service improvements. For example, distance learners are now able to apply for admission and financial aid online. Goals related to support services for distance learners will be incorporated into the institution's future assessment plan.

Response to Area Identified for Special Emphasis

Construction of new facilities that will unite the campuses of the merged institution

The Commission requested that the college give particular emphasis to the construction of new facilities that will unite the two campuses of the merged institution. In 2002, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Visiting Team strongly recommended the college “secure a single [campus] location with suitable facilities”

Retrospective

In 2002, the NEASC visiting team observed that the college possessed many strengths. However, it also faced many challenges associated with being located on two campuses which are four miles apart. Consolidating the two campuses was seen as the solution to the majority of the problems that were brought to light in the 2002 report. The most critical problems are addressed in the “Future” section below. After 20 years of planning, debating and waiting, Three Rivers Community College officials broke ground on a new consolidated campus site in June 2007. President Emeritus Booker DeVaughn described ground breaking as "a day of jubilee.”

Present

At the time of this writing, the intellectual life at Three Rivers is impacted most by the multi-layered elements of the campus facilities renovation and expansion project. A timeline of the construction project is included with the appendices. The \$85.6 million renovation and expansion at the Thames Valley Campus will move classes and departments now housed at the school's Mohegan campus to the Thames location, merging the two campuses. The consolidated campus will consist of 179,027 square feet of new space, 101,159 square feet of renovations and an additional 15,458-square-foot new space to house the central utility plant. While construction is ongoing at the Thames Valley site, the Mohegan facility is being renovated, demolished and expanded in preparation for Norwich Technical High School to assume the property.

Future

Even though Three Rivers has functioned well as an institution, merging the two campuses will improve the college in a number of ways:

- enhanced core services and eliminated duplication of services,
- improved use of physical space to address students' scholarly and holistic development,
- specialized educational opportunities via continuing education and allied health,
- enhanced technological capabilities in classrooms and academic support areas.

Student services will become a comprehensive one stop center once they are located on the same campus. At this time, the Thames Valley campus has no Counseling staff, Registrar, or Admissions personnel. This leaves a significant number of students, namely 581, at a considerable disadvantage. The new facilities will place all services in a single area and will afford equitable access for all students.

The 2002 NEASC visiting team identified as a hardship the space constraints of the Learning Resource Center (LRC) and Tutoring and Academic Success Center (TASC). Presently, the TASC is housed *within* the LRC. While the consolidated facility has the same approximate square footage as the existing LRC and TASC, the new property will allow for better delivery of these vital functions. Personnel scheduling problems will be allayed because employees will not need to shift between two locations. In the new facility, the TASC space will adjoin the LRC so that the two departments will operate independently, while remaining in convenient proximity.

The new campus will also provide physical space which is conducive to students' holistic development. The new campus will have gathering areas designed as informal meeting spaces. A planned recreational room, in addition to the meeting space, will include a pool table, television and more. In addition, the new facility will have student lounge spaces in multiple locations, such as cyber cafés.

In the 2002, the visiting team expressed concern that space limitations might diminish workforce development programs, which are vital to southeastern Connecticut. In response to

this concern, the Continuing Education Department is proactively planning the use of increased space in the new facility. New facilities will allow the college to expand its entrepreneurial endeavors that blend both credit and non-credit offerings and partnerships that embrace programming in both industry, such as General Dynamics/Electric Boat and academia.

Additionally, the college has developed a strategic plan in response to the nationwide demand for healthcare professionals. Appropriate training facilities are integral to the plan. New Allied Health programs will provide career lattices designed to expand educational opportunities for life long learners. For example, Medical Billing and Coding training can lead to an Advanced Coding credential and onto certification as a Medical Transcriptionist. In partnership with local hospitals, nursing continuing education units will be offered to upgrade skills of the current workforce.

The new facilities promise new technological capabilities as well updated computer technology and adaptive technology. The 2002 Evaluation Team Report describes frustration among the technical faculty at the Thames Valley campus because of deferred maintenance and limited updating of equipment. Deferrals will soon end. The technologies department will add hardware and software which allow cross-discipline teaching in instrumentation, circuits, and embedded design. The consolidated campus provides better facilities to house new equipment for engineering technology students. The college has made progress in acquiring adaptive technologies and plans to maintain this momentum. The Tutoring and Academic Success Center (TASC) has installed several programs that facilitate learning for students with special needs, such as wheelchair users and the sight impaired. In a centralized location, the college will provide with greater efficacy learner assistive technology and adapt more rigorously to ADA standards.

Response to Area Identified for Special Emphasis

Ensure appropriate levels of full-time faculty

The Commission requested that the college give particular emphasis to ensuring appropriate levels of full-time faculty. In 2002, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Visiting Team urged the college to “respond to the challenge presented by the small numbers of faculty in some programmatic areas.”

Retrospective

The college’s 2002 Self-Study Report noted “there is still a heavy reliance on adjunct faculty, especially in the areas of English and Mathematics.” In addition, “the ratio of full-time to part-time instructors is approximately one-third to two-thirds which, although consistent with national trends creates program coordination and scheduling difficulties.” The college has recognized that reliance on adjunct faculty needs attention.

Present

The college’s Banner information management system contains data about the number of hours of instruction provided by full-time and part-time faculty. From the 2000-2001 academic year to the 2006-2007 academic year, the contact hours of instruction delivered by full-time faculty rose by 3% while the contact hours delivered by part-time faculty fell by 5%. The proportion of instruction (as measured by contact hours) changed over this period from 56:44 full-time to part-time in 2000-2001 to 58:42 full-time to part-time in 2006-2007. These data indicate the college made progress in reducing its reliance on part-time faculty, albeit limited. English and Mathematics courses, however, showed a different trend. While the contact hours of English and Mathematics instruction by full-time faculty rose 12% from 2000-2001 to 2006-2007, the instruction delivered by part-time faculty rose by 69%. This increase is largely driven by the exponential increase in the numbers of sections of developmental courses, up 81% in English and 69% percent in Mathematics between 2000-2001 and 2006-2007. The forthcoming Title III grant aims to better educate faculty members regarding the needs of developmental students.

The Chairperson of the Humanities Department who oversees English courses at the college reports that the department has 14 full-time and 44 part-time faculty members in 2006 - 2007. More than half (71%) of the Composition sections are taught by adjuncts, a practice that the Chairperson believes is not optimal for the intellectual health of the college. To address this organizational weakness, the college will hire additional full-time faculty to teach English courses beginning in August 2007. The college will continue to monitor the number of Composition sections taught by part-time faculty.

The Chairperson of the Mathematics Department reported that many of the part-timers are well experienced. Still, keeping track of all the part-time faculty is challenging as is keeping part-time faculty on-track. The problems with using part time faculty, while challenging, are not insurmountable. Both the Humanities and Mathematics chairpersons find it increasingly difficult to recruit new qualified and reliable adjuncts.

The college continues to work on the balance of full-time to part-time instructors. Three Rivers' Dean of Administration points out that the college has maintained a high proportion of full time faculty relative to other schools in the Connecticut Community College system. Specifically, Three Rivers' levels of full-time faculty are greater than nine of the twelve Connecticut Community Colleges. The college is funded based on enrollment and must pay for all positions out of this funding. Funding lags enrollment, so in the short term an increase in enrollment must be met by using more part-time faculty.

The Connecticut Community College System is working to increase the proportion of instruction by full-time faculty (FTF) above that which is possible with the existing budgetary structure. According to the system Chief Academic Officer (CAO), the Chancellor's office and the Board of Trustees of the Connecticut Community Colleges has set sixty-five percent (65%) of teaching lines filled by full-time faculty (FTF) as an achievable and appropriate goal for all twelve Connecticut community colleges. The current average across the system is about 50%. At Three Rivers, the proportion is about 63%. Last year, the legislature approved funding in the "roll-out budget" for 33 new positions during the last biennium. The system apportions these positions to the colleges with the lowest proportion of full time instructors. Three Rivers did not receive any of these positions since it is close to goal already.

Future

The number of full-time faculty at the twelve community colleges is increasing, but not as fast as enrollment. The Chancellor's Office, with Board's endorsement, attempts to secure additional funding through the Governor's Office of Policy and Management (OPM) or directly from the legislature as necessary. If the number of full-time faculty in the system remains the same and enrollment continues to increase as expected, the proportion of instruction by full-time faculty will drop below 50% system-wide.

Standard One

Mission and Purposes

Retrospective

The mission statement and goals, consistent with NEASC standards, were adopted by Three Rivers Community College in 2001. By remaining faithful to its mission, the college has substantially complied with NEASC standards.

Over the past five years, the mission statement of Three Rivers Community College (TRCC) has been:

Three Rivers Community College meets the diverse educational needs of the community by creating an environment that stimulates learning. The college provides educational opportunities that are affordable and accessible. Additionally, Three Rivers develops regional partnerships and initiatives that contribute to the educational, economic, and cultural growth of Southeastern Connecticut.

In fulfilling its mission, Three Rivers Community College assists individuals in developing:

- A capacity for critical thinking.
- The ability to communicate effectively.
- An appreciation of the sciences and humanities.
- An understanding of the technological nature of modern society.

Subsequent sections of this Interim Report amply demonstrate Three Rivers' commitment to its stated mission. Taken as a whole, the activities set forth in this report also demonstrate that mission is at the forefront of virtually all major undertakings at the college.

Present

The President created a taskforce of faculty and administrative personnel during the 2005-2006 academic year to review the college mission. The purpose of the task force was to evaluate the content and pertinence of the mission as well as assess its usefulness in providing direction in planning and resource allocation. Meeting over the course of several months, an

extensive review of the mission was conducted offering a wide range of viewpoints from taskforce members. Ultimately, the task force concluded that while the stated mission was fundamentally sound, it would be both helpful and healthy to redraft and update the language. The task force produced a final draft for consideration by the college community as a whole.

As expected, the task force draft produced considerable debate. However, the revised mission statement served its purpose by acting as a catalyst and focusing discussions. After proceeding through the Governance process, involving the President, Governance Council and the President's Cabinet, the newly revised mission statement was adopted.

Future

The President endorsed the new Three Rivers Mission Statement and Vision in Spring 2007. The revised Mission Statement is as follows:

Three Rivers is an accessible, affordable, and culturally diverse community college that meets varied educational needs by creating an environment that stimulates learning.

To accomplish its mission, Three Rivers Community College:

- Offers post-secondary educational opportunities;
- Encourages life long learning;
- Provides a well-rounded and rewarding educational experience with an emphasis on critical thinking, effective communication, and the College's institutional values;
- Fosters an appreciation of the natural and social sciences, humanities, technology and the arts;
- Helps students achieve their goals;
- Serves as a community resource for people and institutions within its service area;
- Delivers its services efficiently and measurably; and
- Contributes to economic development of this region and the state.

The Vision Statement: Three Rivers Community College will be a college of choice with a reputation for innovation, quality, and accessibility, serving a dynamic student population.

Institutional Effectiveness

Three Rivers' process of examining the mission statement, charging a task force to assess its relevance and providing the opportunity for college-wide dialogue reflects a spirit of periodic review and continuous improvement. The community's discussions resulted in a revised mission statement which incorporated improved language and also incorporated a vision statement. The college will continue to evaluate its mission statement on a regular basis.

Standard Two

Planning and Evaluation

Retrospective

Three Rivers Community College has a planning process which is guided by a one page strategy map which graphically represents the strategic plan itself. It depicts five strategic themes for the college: Academic Best Practices, Communications, Workforce Development, Innovation, and Excellence in Core Functions. The college has made numerous adjustments to resource allocations and operational plans to align priorities with these strategic themes.

The State Legislature authorized funding to build and renovate college facilities; the work is underway with a completion date during the 2008 – 2009 academic year. Since the 2002 NEASC visit, Three Rivers has engaged in extensive discussions and planning processes to support the new consolidated campus. Garnering external funding to support programs and new strategies became an important focus. The College Foundation began a major gifts campaign to capture five million dollars over a five year period. At this time, the campaign has three million dollars in donations and pledges. The campaign will go to the public in September 2007. These funds are investments and endowment for the future of the college.

The college received a Title III Planning grant in 2004 and this allowed the college to embark on a two year process of assessing organizational strengths and weaknesses. Through the involvement of approximately 50 people, including community stakeholders, a Title III grant proposal, “Strengthening Learning Initiatives for Student Success” was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. In 2006, the college was notified that its grant application (\$1.5 million over 5 years) was successful; the grant program will commence in late 2007.

The Title III grant planning and analysis process allowed the college to develop goals and objectives in the areas of: 1) Academic Programs 2) Institutional Management and 3) Fiscal Stability. One problem identified in the analysis process was relevant to standard two; the lack of a formalized plan to ensure that the institution follows a model of continuous process improvement. The problem is discussed in greater detail below.

Program reviews, student, graduate and computer literacy surveys are part of the college's culture, but too often little action is taken as a result of the information gleaned from these sources. The 2002 NEASC report noted that Three Rivers uses regular and systematic evaluation of its educational objectives in three areas:

- evaluation of specific courses, including the teaching of the courses;
- evaluation of academic programs that include the courses;
- evaluation of college-wide initiatives that directly affect the educational objectives.

However, the data obtained remains isolated and is rarely connected with other existing information. Feedback loop processes are not in place currently, however the college realizes they are needed. In addition, faculty and staff knowledge about assessment is limited. A stated objective of the Title III grant is developing a further understanding about assessment methods and purposes. Namely, data is collected not to report; rather data is collected to learn.

Since the NEASC team visit in 2002, Three Rivers was able to hire the current Institutional Research Director. The presence of this position has made data more readily available to the college community. It has also fostered broader participation in initiatives such as the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). This has resulted in improved data driven decision making. For example, data regarding student parking needs was sent to the Connecticut Department of Public Works to defend the college's request for expanded parking areas on the new consolidated campus.

Present

Short and long term planning is presently dominated by the construction of the consolidated campus. This process hinges on the allocation of resources that is consistent with planning priorities. A building oversight committee was created to insure that realistic priorities were established, relative to the new facilities.

In addition to fiscal impacts of building a new campus, the college has considered the impact that the campus will have on policies, scheduling, and programs. Over the last two years, the Governance Council has performed a review of college policies to insure they are consistent with a consolidated physical campus. Additionally, a taskforce has been examining college

scheduling practices to insure class scheduling at the new facility will meet the needs of all stakeholders. This includes addressing classroom instruction as well as student activities.

Ongoing planning efforts to improve student success have resulted in the award of several grants, such as a National Science Foundation “TLC” grant which fosters students’ preparedness for college level work and provides industry-based cooperative employment.

Future

Three Rivers looks ahead to establishing a vision for planning and evaluation at the college, creating an inclusive culture for data driven decision-making. The short term logistical requirements associated with providing high quality services while construction and renovations are ongoing at both campuses are expected to present challenges through 2010. Additionally, the resources necessary to outfit the new facility will also present temporary obstacles as increasing construction costs are expected to require the majority of the funding allocated to the project.

Institutional Effectiveness

In the past, the organization has not attempted a college-wide, coordinated systematic review of operations. Previously, various college divisions have completed independent evaluations. For example, the academic division has executed academic program reviews.

In order to establish awareness of the importance of institutional effectiveness measures, the college plans to do the following:

1. Increase faculty and staff knowledge of and participation in assessment activities.
2. Increase availability of information on student success and outcomes assessment.
3. Increase the number of work units having an assessment plan.

These college-wide initiatives are meant to support existing divisional planning and evaluation by encouraging increased systematic inter-divisional and institutional analysis of data and dialogue for the purpose of improving overall institutional effectiveness

Standard Three

Organization and Governance

Retrospective

The organization and governance structure of the college and its relationship to the State Board of Trustees was established first in 1970 and revised in 1992. In 1992, the merger of state community colleges and state technical colleges was mandated by the Connecticut Legislature. Mohegan Community College and Thames Valley State Technical College merged to become Three Rivers Community College.

The former Mohegan and Thames Valley colleges have operated as a single institution since 1992 except in two important ways. As reported in the 2002 NEASC report, the physical facilities were not brought together in a timely fashion. Consolidating the two campuses has been an expectation since the merger and a pressing need for all these years. Secondly, two faculty unions continue serve as a remnant of the two colleges being brought together without benefit of legislative acts that would have effected a change.

Present

Three Rivers Community College enjoys the system of governance which serves the twelve public community colleges in Connecticut. The State Board of Governors is a coordinating agency for the Department of Higher Education. The governing board for all twelve community colleges is the Board of Trustees of Community-Technical Colleges. Trustees are appointed by the Governor. Primary responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are approving policies related to: academic programs, finance, facilities, personnel, students and information technology. The Board appoints the Chancellor and college presidents.

The college President serves at the pleasure of the Board and is accountable to the Chancellor. She serves as a member of the Council of Presidents with her 11 president colleagues. The Council meets monthly and cogent information is disseminated to the President's Cabinet. At Three Rivers, the President's Cabinet includes deans, directors of human resources, institutional advancement, institutional research, the executive assistant to the president and the Governance Council Chairperson. Members are encouraged to discuss information with

their constituent groups. Additionally, Cabinet minutes are placed on the intranet for access by the college community.

The Governance Council is the college body with representatives from all constituent groups, including students. The process of selection is by vote or position. The chairperson of the Council is elected by the entire college community. Faculty and other groups often seek volunteers rather than conducting an election. The Council receives proposals and recommendations for policy and procedural changes affecting the college. After they have had an opportunity to discuss them and vote, recommendations are sent to the President's Cabinet for final resolution. If an issue needs further clarification, Cabinet returns the recommendation to Governance Council. The Council reviews it, attempts to elucidate it and returns it to Cabinet. This process has worked well over the past five years.

The governance structure of the college addresses mission, vision and strategic planning. Strategic planning begins at the Chancellor's level with latitude for the college to develop its own. The college mission is developed at the college level and approved by the Chancellor. The mission statement, recently revised and approved by Governance Council and the Cabinet, is found on the college web site (http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/About_3Rivers.htm#Mission). The review of the college's mission statement began nearly two years ago. This evaluative process commenced in the spirit of periodic review and continuous improvement; it was also related to the need for a college seal that would represent Three Rivers. The college has continued to use the seal from Thames Valley for all ceremonies.

Strategic plans are reviewed each year during the President's Cabinet summer planning session. The current plan is in effect for 2005 - 2008. Each year a status report is prepared and emphasis of the plan is adjusted accordingly. Examples of emphases recommended for the coming year are: communications at every level of the college and the wider community; expanding resources beyond state funding; and workforce-focused education and training. The present recommended emphases will be discussed with the Governance Council in Fall 2007.

Future

The college will continue to consider communications as an essential ingredient for the community especially now as the construction creates a level of confusion, even disorientation. In addition, last year a survey investigating perceptions about organizational governance was created by a committee and responded to by about one-fifth of the employees. The methodological process involved is unclear, but the survey indicated that maintaining a solid governance structure is extremely important. There will be need for further discussion.

Faculty will continue to have primary responsibility for curriculum, academic programs and the intellectual welfare of students. At the same time the forthcoming Title III grant, “Strengthening Learning Initiatives for Student Success,” requires faculty participate in professional development activities germane to student learning. As we embark on this five-year grant program, the sense of excitement and perhaps a bit of trepidation is acknowledged.

The Title III deliverables include embedded assessment procedures that will affect the entire college community. The assessment will help the college quantify actions, evaluate services and make changes. In doing so, planning and governance, core systems of college life, may change or look different.

Institutional Effectiveness

The College has utilized the current governance structure, the mission statement and the strategic plan as guides for work accomplished. The Board of Trustees governance continues to drive our fiscal, personnel and academic planning. New policies regarding student conduct and emergency response procedures have been smoothly integrated into operating procedures. From the periodic review, changes have been accommodated.

Standard Four

The Academic Program

Retrospective

In 2004, the college hired the current Academic Dean to provide leadership to the academic division. The academic division consists of all academic disciplines, as well as the Learning Resources Center (library), Tutoring Center (TASC) and Continuing Education. Currently there are 25 Associate Degree programs and 24 certificate programs offered at Three Rivers with others under development. Career programs such as Business Administration, Montessori Education, Nursing, and Engineering Technologies are accredited by external professional agencies ensuring integrity. Additionally, the college employs an internal program review process for each of the career programs. Beginning in 2008, this will be extended to discipline review on a five-year cycle.

Subsequent to the 2002 Self-Study Report, an initiative regarding General Education was implemented. A General Education Task Force was established with the purpose of identifying and assessing the core of General Education requirements across the curriculum. The core of knowledge which students should acquire is being assessed to determine common, acceptable general education outcomes, thereby assuring consistency in general education for all degrees offered. The general education requirements of our three main transfer schools (Eastern Connecticut State University, Central Connecticut State University and the University of Connecticut) provide a framework for the curricular requirements of the Three Rivers Liberal Arts and Sciences degree. After this framework is articulated, Three Rivers will decide which General Education components are priorities for our community.

The college has also seen substantial progress in the realm of learning outcomes, specifically composition skills and oral communication. In an effort to assess writing outcomes, a review group was established. The review group evaluated the quality of students' writing to assure writing competency as students near the end of their degree programs. During the 2003-2004 academic year a sample of 74 papers was assessed. Using this sample (n=74), it was determined that 84% of students in Liberal Arts and Sciences as well as General Studies can

write competently by the end of their degree programs. From this evaluative process, a myth was dispelled. One surprising learning outcome was that General Studies degree program graduates write equally as well as Liberal Arts and Sciences degree graduates.

Three Rivers has also made strides in assessing oral communication. A panel was established resulting in the initiation of two new assessment projects. The first initiative was directed at the ways in which instructors used oral presentations in the classroom. The second initiative was intended to assess grading consistency by employing the use of videos of ten randomly selected speeches given by students in Public Speaking. The Humanities Department has utilized these data to better standardize the assessment of student learning.

Programmatic emphasis has also been given to developmental programs in both English and Mathematics. The Humanities Department has established a Developmental Task Force and has been successful in creating a challenge exam for two sequential, developmental writing courses. They also have piloted “Writeplacer”, a computer generated writing test and plans for an additional ELL course are underway. A Mathematics Department Review Committee was established to improve developmental mathematics offerings and to support increased student retention. The Math Department, focusing first on a developmental course entitled “Pre-algebra”, created a hybrid class with students spending half of their contact hours in a traditional classroom setting and the other half in a supervised computer lab setting. The lab portion of this class allows for individual help and small group instruction. In order to insure that all developmental students are prepared to take the next course in the sequence, a departmental final exam has been standardized for two courses, so that students who do not grasp the appropriate fundamentals will not be allowed entry into higher level courses. Rather they will be offered repeat courses.

Present

Distance learning and educational technology are areas of growing interest. The college hired a Director of Distance Learning and an Instructional Technology Specialist to guide and support faculty. A mentor program has been established in the educational technology department where more experienced faculty work with less experienced faculty to encourage the use of online tools. This has worked successfully to encourage cross fertilization of

teaching styles and aptitudes among many academic disciplines. Currently a strategic plan for distance and technology enhanced education is being drafted for the college.

Non-credit courses and programs, offered through the Continuing Education, are also expanding. Continuing Education meets regional workforce and community needs. Programs and courses offered through continuing education are completely market-driven; therefore, they are current, relevant, and effective to their target populations. The Department is in the process of reconvening its Continuing Education Advisory Board, comprised of external and internal stakeholders.

Future

As the college anticipates its eventual expansion and physical consolidation, faculty and staff are involved in the planning and execution of the new campus through a Building Oversight Committee. Faculty and staff have worked side-by-side to handle issues related to the academic program including design, technology, the blend and use of general-purpose classrooms and laboratories, and the configuration of faculty offices and conference areas.

Concurrently, the college is making important decisions about the viability of its existing academic programs and areas of possible growth and new program development, planning cautiously and factoring in the potential created by the new campus as well as evolving regional needs. The appropriateness and effectiveness of degree and certificate programs are measured by the college's program review process. The college is assessing the need for expanded English for Language Learners (ELL), healthcare and hospitality industry courses.

Institutional Effectiveness

Three Rivers has implemented several initiatives aimed at measuring, reporting, and documenting institutional effectiveness. These initiatives address both holistic and specific assessment perspectives. It is worth noting the accomplishments as they relate specifically to the academic program.

At a holistic level, the college analyzes institutional effectiveness through the Program Review process which will soon be extended to discipline review. A review of each program is prepared by the Program Coordinator who reports on such areas as:

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- Congruence with the college Mission,
 - The program's description, policies and professional affiliations,
 - The program's curriculum, outcomes and evolution,
 - Program faculty, resources, and support services,
 - Program enrollment and constituency satisfaction,
 - Assessment of program outcomes,
 - A single student learning outcome,
 - Conclusions and directions for the future.

Additionally, the college has made preliminary efforts to identify performance measures that directly link to the strategic plan in the areas of Academic Best Practice and Student Success. These initial measures include the Fall-to-Fall Persistence rate, the Four-year College Transfer Rate, and national benchmarks such as the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and the CCSSE Student Satisfaction Rate.

At the specific level, coordinators accumulate data through questionnaires and other instruments that report on faculty performance, course content, and curriculum effectiveness. The review then often results in adjustments to course delivery, content, and outcomes, all of which are reviewed and discussed by appropriate advisory boards.

Standard Five

Faculty

Retrospective

Three Rivers Community College has recruited and developed a faculty body that is well suited to fulfill the institution's mission. The faculty have rendered instruction competently and have successfully performed responsibilities outside of the classroom.

Since the 2002 NEASC visit, 20 full-time faculty have been hired. Some filled vacancies were created by retirement, while others evolved in an effort to staff high demand areas such as Nursing and English for Language Learners (ELL). New and continuing faculty have striven to maintain currency in their discipline and have utilized new pedagogy to enhance learning experiences. Faculty members have participated in professional development activities, such as training on the use of web-based platforms for instructional use and institutional effectiveness conferences.

As noted in the 2002 NEASC Reaccreditation report, the physical separation of the campuses remains problematic. Some faculty offices have been relocated; the college expects most faculty and staff will be moved one or more times before the consolidation of the two campuses is completed. The educational process has been disrupted, but the quality of the teaching/learning process has not been diminished.

Another issue the 2002 NEASC visiting team noted was that faculty and staff are represented by two different unions: the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges (4Cs) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). This is largely due to the 1992 merger of the Community College system with the Technical College system. The two labor contracts provide disparate working conditions, promotion opportunities, and compensation. Sixty percent of the faculty are covered by the 4Cs, and forty percent are covered by the AFT. These ratios were set by a legislative mandate.

The Board of Trustees of the Connecticut Community Technical Colleges engages in collective bargaining negotiations with the two faculty unions, and has advocated for harmonization of the contract agreements to reduce inequities.

Since 2002, harmonization has been achieved in a number of areas:

1. Compensation grids have been harmonized
2. Academic year has been modified to reflect same start and end dates
3. Promotion deadlines have been harmonized (now January 5)
4. Value of a promotion has been equalized
5. Periodic evaluation of faculty now observes the same standards
6. Sabbatical Leave provisions have been made the same
7. Program Coordinator/Department Chairperson compensation now is the same

Present

In spite of the challenges generated by a two union environment, the college continuously seeks the common ground that is within its control. While the consolidated campus will not solve the two union issue, it will unite the faculty body in other important and intangible ways.

The 2002 NEASC visiting team observed Three Rivers struggles to recruit faculty from diverse ethnic backgrounds. It is important to note the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities for the State of Connecticut is the agency responsible for setting hiring goals for all state agencies. Three Rivers is in compliance with the given goals, which are based on demographic information for the entire state. According to Connecticut Municipal Profiles (<http://www.informationpublications.com>), the diversity of our faculty exceeds the cultural and ethnic background of our local labor pool. In the future, the college will pursue the recruitment of faculty from diverse backgrounds based on a combination of system goals and college goals.

However, the college recognizes its responsibility to identify and hire faculty from varied ethnic backgrounds. A minority fellowship for an instructor position is awarded each year. At Three Rivers, the Affirmative Action Officer ensures that faculty searches are charged

with affirmative action hiring goals. The Affirmative Action Committee has been recently reconstituted with a renewed charge regarding college activities. In addition, faculty searches are advertised in several minority publications, including Northend Agent and Global Minority News.

The availability of money to fund faculty promotions was an additional concern raised by the 2002 NEASC visiting team. Last year, 100% (6 out of 6) of AFT promotion applicants were successful. In the 4C's bargaining unit, the success rate was 88% (7 out of 8).

Another concern raised by the NEASC reaccreditation team was the small number of faculty in some program areas, such as Civil Engineering, resulting in student instruction being received from one or two faculty members in the specific discipline. This continues to be a problem, the college is addressing it by undertaking a targeted recruitment program to increase faculty enrollment in small programmatic areas.

The Faculty Handbook states that elections are held to determine faculty membership on college committees. The 2002 NEASC team did not observe elections happening consistently. This continues to be a challenge at the college and needs to be addressed.

During the 06-07 academic year, there were 76 full-time faculty, and 164 adjunct faculty. The departmental composition of faculty is as follows:

Discipline	Full Time	%	Part Time	%
1. Business	8	10.5	10	6.1
2. Engineering	17	22.4	26	15.9
3. Humanities	13	17.1	50	30.5
4. Mathematics	7	9.2	25	15.2
5. Nursing	11	14.5	12	7.3
6. Science	7	9.2	8	4.9
7. Social Science	13	17.1	33	20.1
Total	76	100.0	164	100.0

The members of the faculty body of Three Rivers Community College meets the Board of Trustees requirement of advanced academic preparation in the discipline in which the member teaches. The faculty is committed to the intellectual life of the college and to providing a quality education to students. Faculty bring a wealth of academic expertise, many bring current active practice of their discipline to the classroom, and new faculty create enlivened environments in the classroom. Of the 76 full-time faculty at Three Rivers, 39% have been employed for less than five years. Approximately 81% of the faculty is 45 years of age or older, and the total faculty to student ratio is twenty to one.

Following requirements of collective bargaining agreements and the System policy, faculty receive evaluations regularly based on date of hire and time in rank. Faculty evaluations include such components as: classroom evaluations and professional development plans. Student evaluation of faculty are incorporated into overall performance appraisals. The evaluation tools are a mix of essay, short answer and multiple choice student evaluations.

Future

The forthcoming award of a five-year Title III grant, several initiatives will be undertaken to strengthen the existing capacity of this scholarly community at Three Rivers. At all levels, faculty will experience professional development aimed at increasing their understanding of the complexities associated specifically with developmental education and a holistic learner-centered approach to the college experience. The grant includes funding for activities designed to stimulate new ideas about curriculum development and delivery, such as “Theory to Action” Grants awarded to participating faculty, attendance at the Kellogg Institute, and a four week advanced professional training program sponsored by the National Center for Developmental Education.

Institutional Effectiveness

The college evaluates the professional performance of faculty members each semester. Information concerning the effectiveness of faculty in teaching and advising are evaluated in multiple formats including student surveys such as CCSSE, graduate surveys and student focus groups. Over the next five years, as the college implements a formal institutional effectiveness plan, the faculty assessment efforts will become more formalized and changes

implemented clearly documented. The college's Institutional Assessment Committee will be responsible for overseeing this process.

Standard Six

Students

Retrospective

Student Services at Three Rivers Community College (TRCC) have included recruitment and enrollment, placement testing, academic advisement, registration and records, career counseling, job placement, student activities, co-curricular programming, child care, financial aid and specialized learning services for students with physical or learning disabilities. Three Rivers followed a systematic admission and advisement model to ensure new and continuing students receive timely and appropriate information and guidance.

The 2002 NEASC visit to Three Rivers found many strengths within student services: the quality of programs and services as well as the manner in which the student services division has met the ever-increasing demands created by growth. Three challenges were noted and corresponding recommendations were made:

- reexamine services due to demographic and socioeconomic changes within the student body
- increase staffing and space
- overcome obstacles associated with the existence of two campuses

Three Rivers is in proximity to the tribal land of the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Indian nations. The growth of tourist attractions in the region has resulted in more ethnically diverse families relocating for employment. Student services has responded by tailoring services to meet individuals' needs. The college is fortunate to have counselors who speak Spanish and Mandarin Chinese because of the dynamic growth of non English speakers who now comprise our student body. Students from varied socioeconomic strata as well as those who do not use English as their primary language have been offered avenues to achieve academic and personal aspirations.

The physical structure housing student services on the Mohegan campus was remodeled shortly before the 2002 NEASC team visit, but a request for additional square footage was denied. The remodeled facilities have offered a more service-oriented atmosphere, greater

student privacy and improve interdepartmental communication. Moreover, wheelchair users have had easier access the new space.

Present

In philosophy and practice, student services personnel believe that a comprehensive educational program addresses not only the curricular needs of the student, but the holistic needs as well. Students pursuing academic and personal goals are supported in numerous ways. Paths to goal attainment are facilitated by admission counseling prior to entry or reentry, new student orientation, short-term personal counseling, transfer credit evaluation, course equivalency examinations, child care services, student organizations and special workshops. The college also recognizes that resources invested in the child care center are imperative to student success.

Three Rivers admits all students who apply and meet the admission requirements stipulated by the Connecticut Community-Technical Colleges Board of Trustees policy 5.1 (http://www.commnet.edu/doc/BPM_COMPLETE_MASTER.pdf). The college also admits students into competitive admissions programs and recruits specific populations. Recruitment includes, but is not limited to, the 23 local high schools. Non-traditional students are recruited by a variety of mediums and minority students are recruited in targeted areas. For example, in 2005, the student services staff created a one-stop, cohort recruitment experience in the New London area. Of the 50 New London High School participants, 24 are currently attending Three Rivers.

Student financial aid continues to be provided through a well-organized program. There is a low default rate on financial aid due to the stringent measures instituted by the Director of Financial Aid. The college's financial aid default rate has decreased significantly from five years ago to one percent for the academic year 2005 - 2006.

Scholarly success is facilitated by a variety of services, many of which are directed by student services and conducted synergistically with academic services. For support, the college offers peer mentoring, a writing center, and a math center. Tutoring center personnel and counselors are available days and evenings. For students who have learning differences,

individualized educational plans are implemented. The college continues to train personnel who provide academic advising. The part-time Academic Advising Coordinator, with the aid of the Academic Advising Committee, provides faculty with ongoing direction. Group and individual advising training is provided for all advisors.

The institution measures rates of retention and graduation. Rates of retention and graduation are separately determined by any group that the institution specifically recruits, and these rates are used in evaluating the success of specialized recruitment and the services provided.

Future

With the new campus consolidation scheduled for fall 2008, the college anticipates an increase in traditional age students (18 to 22 years). The student services division forecasts this demographic shift will correlate with a rise in the college's retention rate. At present, Three Rivers' retention rate is 47%. The Title III grant addresses initiatives to strengthen retention.

Three Rivers Community College will be better able to service all students in a more efficient manner in the newly expanded facility. Student services offices and support facilities for the students will occupy the entire first floor of the south wing. This area will serve as the main entrance to the college. We envision that as the new incoming student enters the south wing, s/he will first encounter student services. Immediately the full breath of student aid and assistance will be located in a single, central location. With great enthusiasm, the student services division looks forward to receiving and embracing future students.

Institutional Effectiveness

As in other areas, Three Rivers utilizes available information to make improvements to student services. During the planning process for the Title III grant, we learned that the faculty/staff knowledge of assessment methods was limited. It is anticipated that over the next five years specific goals along with associated measures will be developed to more systematically evaluate Student Services and improve student success.

Standard Seven

Library and Other Information Resources

Retrospective

The Library has fulfilled the institution's and Library's mission statements by providing to faculty, students, staff and the surrounding community resources that are current, diverse, educational and intellectually stimulating. Since 2002, library budget allotments for information resources have been progressively better supported with an increase of 6% to \$230,272. There are now two computer labs in the library with thirty computer stations available for use by patrons.

Information Resources

The institution has been distinguished by its strong support for classroom technology aided by the availability of the course management systems. Classrooms have been equipped with computers that are integrated with document projectors, audio and video capabilities, and many are also equipped with Smart Boards (electronic whiteboards). An aggressive faculty technology training program has been strength of the institution. Since 2001, Information Technology personnel have offered faculty and staff 204 classes regarding the use of classroom technology, course management systems such as WebCT and software programs.

Three Rivers utilized the Connecticut community college system policies and procedures regarding the monitoring of and response to the illegal use of its technology resources and applied the appropriate security around personally identifying information.

Library

Since 2002, the library has kept pace with students' expectations of remote electronic access to materials. In order to address concerns raised in the 2002 Self-Study Report, the Library has added full-text subscriptions to several online databases: Academic Search Premier, Business Source Premier, ERIC, Health Source: Nursing Academic, Newspaper Source, MasterFile Premier and Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center.

In light of the new national standards on information literacy competency in higher education, published by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), the Library hired its first Reference/Instruction Librarian. The Reference / Instruction Librarian coordinated the library instruction program and offered group, individualized and peer instruction classes. Since hiring a Reference/ Instruction Librarian, the number of reference questions and library instruction classes markedly increased. In 2003, 14 instructional classes served 231 students and in 2006 31 classes served 800 students. The ultimate goal has been for all students to receive library instruction before graduating.

Present

The library offers several services to students which enable them to successfully use the library resources. A Library Information Literacy Program is geared towards sequential nursing courses. The Reference/ Instruction Librarian coordinates the program utilizing physical library tours, activities, orientation with competency testing, and course related library instruction including online instruction. The college recognizes such services rendered equip students with fundamental skills for collegiate success.

The Library on each campus is open approximately 59 hours per week during the fall, spring and summer sessions. Hours decrease when classes are not in session. The goals of both the professional and paraprofessional staff is to assist and instruct students with their academic work. The Library serves approximately 4,000 students, faculty and community users.

Electronic book collections have also been created; the collections include 750 titles. Students have access to InfoAnytime, a 24/7 reference service. Students can access online databases remotely or on campus.

The Library tries to ensure the quality of materials purchased by collaborating with faculty and reading reviews in journals, books and brochures. The faculty continue to play a direct role in the ordering process: each department is given \$5,000 per year from the library budget. Faculty submit requests for purchase of library materials and the library notifies them when the materials are received and makes provisions to expeditiously catalog and process newly arrived materials. The Library Director serves on the Curriculum Committee in order to keep informed of changing curricula and new programs. The Library holdings include

42,208 books, CDs, and DVDs. The Library subscribes to 338 journals in both paper and microfilm format. The Library added 1,521 new items to the collection in 2005. Resources are current, diverse, educational and intellectually stimulating and available to all students, staff and the surrounding community.

Future

Staffing remains an urgent issue for the Library. To service 3,868 students on two campus locations, the Library has 7.5 employees. This includes 2.5 *full time* professional staff with master's degrees in library science, 2 *full time* paraprofessional staff who have associate's degrees, and 3 *part time* paraprofessionals who have associate's degrees.

The college's library committee was reactivated in 2007. Members of the library committee and the library staff will work collaboratively on problem identification as well as using the new standard seven as a framework for outcomes assessment.

At this time, the Library continues to lack seating and quiet study areas. These issues will be remedied upon the completion of the new consolidated campus where the library is a cornerstone of the architectural design and the heart of our scholarly community.

Institutional Effectiveness

The college currently collects information about the adequacy, utilization, and impact of its library, information resources and services through student and graduate surveys, the library annual report, and informal feedback from faculty.

Over the next five years, the college will be implementing a formal institutional effectiveness program to be overseen by a college wide Institutional Assessment Committee. This process will ensure that the college systematically evaluates the adequacy, utilization, and impact of the library along with other areas of mission performance at the college to ensure that the library is providing the most effective services possible.

Standard Eight

Physical and Technological Resources

Retrospective

Since the 2002 NEASC accreditation visit, Three Rivers has faced the demanding task of spreading its limited resources between two time consuming facility challenges – “maintaining and operating the old” while “planning and making way for the new.” We are pleased to report noteworthy successes in both areas.

Over the past five years, maintaining smooth operations within existing facilities has been frustrating due to the extended periods of uncertainty about when and where the new consolidated campus would be built. In spite of this, the institution’s dedicated maintenance and support staffs have continued to take great pride in college facilities. They have managed to keep aging buildings at both campuses operating efficiently, code compliant, and looking clean. Even with the knowledge that the new campus is “just around the corner,” Three Rivers has continued to invest time and resources in existing facilities and to ensure quality services for students and staff. This is evident in numerous enhancement projects that have taken place over the last five years:

- Complete remodeling of all Student Services offices and support areas at the Mohegan campus. Upgrade of equipment and furniture in over 60% of faculty offices.
- Extensive expansion of college technological resources throughout the institution including:
 - Addition of 4 enhanced classrooms, 210 student computers, 65 faculty computers, and 88 staff computers bringing college totals to 42 enhanced classrooms, 248 student computers, 75 faculty computers, and 118 staff computers.
 - Upgrade of 12 science and technology labs, other specialty labs, and 10 computer science labs.
 - Creation of a new state-of-the-art Data Center to handle the expanded technology requirements and voice communications required for the new consolidated campus.

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- A comprehensive maintenance, upgrade and phased replacement program was implemented for information technology equipment. This plan will enable the college to support the new levels of technology required at the consolidated campus and to retire outmoded information systems.

At the same time, Three Rivers has also devoted its energy and resources to planning for construction of the new campus. The planning and implementation process has involved virtually everyone in the college community in a wide range of activities:

- A highly qualified architectural design team has been hired.
- The college academic master plan has been reviewed and updated by the architects to insure that new facilities fully meet the needs of all ongoing programs and provide flexibility to meet the anticipated growth in southeastern Connecticut.
- The design for the expanded and consolidated Three Rivers campus was completed and successfully bid by the State Department of Public Works in November 2006. This was followed shortly thereafter by the Connecticut State Bonding Commission's approval of over \$85.6 million dollars to begin the project -- the largest capital project to date within the Connecticut Community College System.

Present

A Building Oversight Committee, composed of representatives from all areas of the college, provides comprehensive planning, evaluation and project coordination. Because of the magnitude of the project, Three Rivers is benefiting from strict, comprehensive code compliance reviews in areas such as safety, security, and environmental health. Such compliance reviews are present at every level of design and construction along with considerations for other environmental, ecological and energy concerns. The Three Rivers' Environmental Health and Safety Committee continues to do an exceptional job in these complex fields. However, pending improvements will mean a welcomed fresh start in many areas such as waste management and fire safety which are currently problematic in the existing old facilities.

Future

With renovations, demolition and construction underway at both campus locations, Three Rivers' students, faculty and staff are aware of the disruption which accompanies progress. Hence, we are focused on the future. Even with another two years of greater disruptions ahead, the attitude of most seems optimistic. The Three Rivers community has shared a long time dream of building a new college; now we are witness to the dream becoming a reality.

Institutional Effectiveness

The college currently evaluates its physical and technological resources by monitoring ongoing maintenance efforts. As the consolidation of the campuses has moved forward, the college's Master Plan has been updated thus allowing the college to develop realistic plans for the future. As the college develops and implements a formal institutional effectiveness program over the next five years it will be critical that the information obtained from the assessment process informs both the planning and budgeting process.

Standard Nine

Financial Resources

Retrospective

The Connecticut Community College System consists of twelve regional community colleges and a centralized system office. The responsibility for the administration and management of the system, including the oversight and control of financial operations, rests with the Board of Trustees (BOT) of Community-Technical Colleges.

The community college system has two statutory funds: the general fund and the operating fund. General fund appropriations are provided by the state, while operating fund revenues are generated locally by student tuition and fees, government and private grants and contracts. In addition, the system receives state bond fund appropriation which provides funding for infrastructure upgrades, deferred maintenance, and new construction projects. The state Department Of Public Works manages most major capital projects, such as the construction project currently underway for the new consolidated campus.

For fiscal year 2006, the State of Connecticut's general fund represented 67% of the total college funding and covered the cost of all of the full-time positions and roughly half of the part-time teaching positions. Three River's operating funds are used to cover most other operating and maintenance expenses.

The Board of Trustees distributes operating fund budget authorizations to each college based on established formulas. After establishing revenue goals for all of the colleges, the system office distributes funds based on formulas that incorporate different parameters such as plant size, number of staff, number of students and program mix. Funding methodologies are constantly being fine-tuned to give each college a more equitable share of the resources. Larger schools contribute monies back to the system office to support smaller schools and shared system office expenditures. Three Rivers Community College is currently the seventh largest school in the Community College System. For fiscal year 2006, our planned contribution to the system was \$319,720.

Present

Because of the nature of the state budgeting process and the limited flexibility available in the college budget, the process for developing budgets and allocating resources at Three Rivers is handled primarily by the President's Cabinet. Although members of each college division have input through their respective dean, the limited discretionary flexibility and overall complexity of the state budget process necessarily limit significant participation. Yearly budgets are allocated to divisions based largely on historical spending needs and on available current services funding. Deans are assigned primary responsibility as fund managers and may delegate some of this responsibility to division members. Budget allocation and expenditure information is not disseminated to division members. Deans have authority to shift dollars within their respective divisions and the President may occasionally reprogram resources between divisions. Typically, proven historical need takes priority.

The institution is in very good financial shape and able to respond to most any eventuality. Three Rivers was able to continue to improve its financial position during fiscal year 2006. While the overall increase in net assets for the year of \$446,000 and may seem less impressive than prior years, this reflects the investment by the college of over \$826,000 in college operating funds to pay for a new roof for its Thames Valley campus and to create a new state-of-the-art server room to support all information technology services for the forthcoming consolidated campus. These investments either will be reimbursed from future construction funding or will enable the college to avoid significant future costs during construction. Even with this substantial investment of college operating funds, year-end unrestricted current assets of \$6.8 million compared to current liabilities of \$3.2 million show a solid current ratio of two to one. The Board of Trustees' benchmark for assessing short-term financial health and flexibility for a college of Three Rivers' size is 2:0.

Financial reports prescribed by the State and Board of Trustees are available to the public upon request. Three Rivers is audited by state officials who review local records for compliance with state regulations. Since 2002, external audited financial statements have been produced and are available for review. At present, there is no long-term or short-term indebtedness.

Future

Although Three Rivers has been successful in maintaining a solid financial position throughout fiscal year 2006, this may not be an easy task in the next two fiscal years. Energy costs promise to be very unpredictable and will affect virtually every commodity purchased. As Three Rivers looks forward to the newly expanded and consolidated campus, there is a growing awareness of the numerous complex steps still ahead before the completion of new facilities in academic year 2008-2009. The task of outfitting 300,000 square feet of new laboratories, classrooms, offices and other support facilities is daunting in and of itself. Additionally, the construction underway at both campuses is imposing new unfunded operating costs over which the institution has virtually no control. For example, significant additional security and snow removal costs have been incurred because of non-college related construction being performed at the Mohegan Campus. Three Rivers continues to argue unsuccessfully that these expenses should be funded by the construction monies managed by the State Department of Public Works (DPW), but to date, the college is still being forced to absorb these added expenses.

On a positive note, the Connecticut Community College System is currently implementing a Web based self-service finance module. This module will provide electronic requisition capabilities and on-the-fly reporting capabilities to both finance and non-finance users. We expect that this enhancement will permit more of the college community to be actively involved in the budget process and greatly improve the dissemination of budget information across the campus.

Institutional Effectiveness

Over the next five years as the college implements a more formal institutional effectiveness plan, an effort will be made to make fund reporting more accessible to a broader cross section of the college community so that the integration of budgeting with planning and assessment will be a more visible and deliberate process.

Standard Ten

Public Disclosure

Retrospective

In response to the 2002 NEASC visiting team's concern, changes were made to publicized degree program information with the goal of full disclosure was the goal. To give accurate information regarding the number of credits required for particular degrees, the program curricula now identify courses that may be prerequisites to the required courses. The prerequisites are listed for reference so there are no surprises in the number of credits that are required to complete the particular degree. The change was made systemically; it now applies to all degree plans

Over the past five years, Three Rivers has implemented an aggressive marketing and recruitment campaign which has raised the visibility of the college. The recruitment staff visits area high schools, attends high school college fairs, invites local high school counselors to build relationships with Three Rivers, and holds open houses for perspective students and their parents. The marketing campaign has included radio advertisements, newspaper advertisements, and ads on public transportation stops as well as on the buses themselves. Sample advertisements are included as appendices in this report. New programs and certificates have been implemented responding to the needs of industry; information germane to initiatives has been published in area newspapers and trade magazines. These efforts have helped to increase enrollment as well as promote public awareness of Three Rivers.

Present

Three Rivers provides information to the public through a variety of publications and electronic media. The completed NEASC Data Form regarding public disclosure is included as an appendix. Online and print publications contain accurate information about: classes, cost of tuition, financial aid, admissions, academic policies, directories for faculty, and the college mission statement. The college catalog and course schedule may be viewed online or in print. Print copies of publications can be requested either by phone, online, or in person by stopping at any of our campuses or satellite facilities. The Three Rivers catalog is published and updated every two years; course schedules are published for every semester and contain updated information as well as a timeline of college

deadlines. A student handbook is published annually with information about students' rights and diverse student activities. The Three Rivers website <http://www.trcc.commnet.edu> reflects information which is continuously updated. Updates regarding all aspects of the construction associated with the campus consolidation can be found on the institution's homepage. In addition, information about the 2002 NEASC accreditation is available on the college website.

Additionally, the institution's website is designed for ease of utility. Users can search for information with the home page "quick links" option to access information on: financial aid, registration, career counseling, alumni, the Three Rivers College Foundation, online learning, academic programs, learning resources center, security as well as general information. Users can also access information through drop down menus and searches by a particular department. The general public can link to credit free courses, various news articles, and a newsletter published through the Student Programs Office summarizing campus activities. A new student /parent orientation link has been added to the home page which allows new students and prospective students to access information that will acquaint them with Three Rivers. News regarding cancellation of classes or the closing of the school is available from the home page. To ensure accuracy of the information located on the website, each department has an individual appointed to keep their particular area's information updated and current.

Currently, each of the publications produced by Three Rivers is reviewed for accuracy on its own publication schedule. The college has hired a full-time publicist in an effort to create a single publication point for college materials. Three Rivers provides consistent and accurate information to all constituencies through print and electronic media. The efforts of the marketing and recruitment teams as well as the implementation of new programs designed for a particular workforce have allowed Three Rivers to more efficaciously reach prospective students, their families, and the community.

Future

With regard to public disclosure of information, plans for the future are ambitious. The institutional research office is looking at implementing an institutional research web site for long-term, strategic plans. Discussions are underway about streamlining the tiers of the college's web page for ease of navigation and information retrieval.

Institutional Effectiveness

As in other areas, it is anticipated that the systematic review and follow-up of results will be improved with the implementation of the college's institutional effectiveness plan. Specific goals and measures will be developed relative to public disclosure so that assessment results can be used to make improvements to the availability and accuracy of all college publications.

Standard Eleven

Integrity

Retrospective

Three Rivers has continued its effort to maintain high ethical standards through the policies and procedures encapsulated in the 2002 Self-Study Report. All Three Rivers personnel are required to maintain the same ethical standards regardless of whether they are dealing with students, faculty, staff, the general public or organizations. The institution has systematically published information regarding student rights and responsibilities and the process for students to file a grievance. Institutional policies address the rights of the organization as well as faculty, staff and students. All personnel are required to participate in diversity training which the Human Resources office has implemented. Newly appointed faculty are required to verify in writing that they will uphold standards of ethical professional practice. As a result of the 2002 Self Study Report, a Faculty Handbook was created. The handbook is easily accessed via the college's internet site

<http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/Academics/FacultyHandbook.htm> .

The Connecticut Community College system has also changed to a comprehensive information management system: Banner SunGard. The system allows students and faculty secure access to confidential information, such as grades, financial aid, and other personal information. With the Banner system, security and confidentiality issues are top priorities.

Present

Three Rivers personnel are encouraged to attend conferences, and trainings that will promote an understanding of issues relevant to ethical professional practice. Three Rivers has biannual professional days for faculty and staff, which address among other topics, issues related to ethics. As a community, the college is concerned about ethical professional conduct and the professional treatment of faculty and staff.

The investigation of student grievances is handled, initially, at the level of instructor and student. If a resolution cannot be found, the Department Chairperson attempts to mediate.

Finally, the Dean of Student Services or the Academic Dean will resolve an outstanding issue. The number of issues raised has been limited. All such proceedings are confidential.

The college's varied student organizations provide activities related to diversity awareness for students, staff and faculty. Examples of such activities are Black History Month celebrations, information about the Hispanic culture, and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues. Instructors are encouraged to bring classes to such activities. The college also promotes several courses that explore diversity. For example, the college offers: Race and Ethnicities, Women Writers across Cultures, World Religions, and African American History.

Future

The Connecticut Community Colleges' Deans Council is revising the Policy on Student Conduct. This effort was initiated by and received input from the Student Services Deans of the twelve community colleges. The Deans Council will present the revision to the Presidents Council and then to the Board of Trustees for approval. These new processes and procedures, if approved, will be implemented in late 2007.

Institutional Effectiveness

A complete inventory of all institutional policies was conducted by the college Governance Council during the 2006 - 2007 academic year. The Council's effort resulted in a college webpage that compiles hyperlinks to all appropriate college and Connecticut Community College Board of Trustees policies. This effort allows policies dealing with issues covered under the new standard on integrity to be accessed in one location. Three Rivers does review integrity at the college, but over the next five years a systematic approach to evaluating cogent policies and the conditions that support these aims will become more formalized.

Plans

Consolidation of the two campuses

According to the President, the relocation and consolidation of the college campuses is the most important challenge over the next five years. A timeline of the upcoming project work is included in the appendices. Institutional planning and fiscal resource allocation will be driven by the construction process. The Connecticut Department of Public Works projects the two campuses will be united in January 2009 and numerous adjustments are expected through 2012.

The forthcoming United States Department of Education Title III grant

The forthcoming Title III grant, Strengthening Learning Initiatives for Student Success, will energize and focus the college's operations over the next five years. After arduous analysis, the grant planning process indicated objectives for improved organizational efficacy should include:

- providing opportunities for professional development to faculty/staff, and educate faculty about the needs of the underprepared student
- implementing alternative course delivery methods and interventions
- streamlining student support services
- improving institutional effectiveness knowledge and processes

The Title III evaluation plan will determine how well the project is progressing by:

- measuring progress towards the attainment of project goals using quantifiable data germane to project outcomes
- guiding project management by quantifiable data related to outcomes for project activities
- providing accurate and complete summative reports annually

Conclusion

Three Rivers Community College anticipates a time of unprecedented opportunity for student learning and renewal of our intellectual community.

Academic Programming Offered through Distance Education

Previously, Three Rivers Community College offered a certificate program whereby 100% of the credits toward the certificate could be earned through technologically mediated instruction to students studying at a distance. Three Rivers' online Laser and Fiber Optic Technology certificate program evolved from existing course offerings and a demand for online corporate training. The academic Program Coordinator reports there are no students currently enrolled in the on-line certificate program and the college no longer offers some of the requisite courses. The college, working in partnership with the Fiber Optic Industrial Advisory Committee, recently re-examined the viability of the on-line certificate. This assessment led to recommended changes in order to revitalize the online certificate. In the spirit of continuous improvement, the suggested modifications will be proposed to the college's Curriculum Committee during the 2007-2008 academic year.

At this time Three Rivers does not offer a sufficient number of on-line courses to meet the requirements of a degree program. However, the college participates in a System-wide distance learning initiative which enables Connecticut Community College students to earn a General Studies degree on-line. Because Three Rivers' distance learning courses are limited in number (18 in fall 2006), a student pursuing the on-line General Studies degree must take courses at multiple colleges. Over the next five years, the college's intention is to continue providing distance learning opportunities at essentially the same level that is being provided currently.