CHICKEN LITTLE WAS RIGHT

News travels fairly quickly at the College of Marin so I assume you know that WASC (the Western Association of Schools and Colleges) paid us a visit last week and the news they brought is not good. The college is in very serious trouble, mainly because WASC expected us to have completed a full program review of all our programs by spring 2008 rather than developing a phased in process.

In January of 2007, we informed WASC through our addendum report that we were launching a program review beginning with a three phase pilot; after which we would cycle programs in through a four year process. We based this decision on best practices. Community colleges generally use a four or five year cycle for program review.

We expected we would hear from them if they did not approve our plan. We received no response. The WASC team showed up last week and informed us that they wanted all programs to go through review immediately and that this process had to be completed by May of 2008.

We asked the obvious question: Why didn't you tell us that last January? We received an obtuse answer about how WASC does not interfere in college planning.

They didn't want to interfere in January so waited instead until November, giving us far less time to meet their deadline. Right now, WASC controls our destiny, so no matter the logic or the lack thereof. In order to meet their expectations we must complete a program review for every academic program and student service on campus and these must be done by the first of May, 2008. This will be a Herculean effort but I am certain we can do it.

In order to facilitate the process, we are revising the Program Review Handbook so that programs can use a "fill in the blanks" format for quick reporting. And we will be bringing on research help to get all the data gathering and reporting done for each program. In addition, Patrick and I will be taking time away from our teaching obligations spring semester to help each and every one of you prepare the reports we need for the reviews.

Programs that have gone through review in Phase I and Phase II will need to add data for the needs assessment portion of their review. Other than that, they are done. The programs with outside evaluation and licensing will also need to meet the requirements for the needs assessment portion of the review but can use much of their licensing review as their program review.

Phase III programs are beginning their reviews now and will be completed spring semester.

Programs and services that have not yet begun program review will launch reviews in January with a May 1 completion date.

The last page of this newsletter lists the programs that have completed, or are completing, review and lists the programs that will need to begin reviews in January.

A few things to keep in mind:
0   Program review will replace discipline review.   If your department was scheduled to do a discipline review, you will not need to.   You are doing a program review instead.

0   No faculty member is required to participate.   However, programs that do not complete a program review will have no needs assessments or measures for justification of budget allocations. We are abandoning "roll over" budgeting as of the 2009-2010 budget cycle and every program will need a program review in order to receive funds for such things as technology, equipment, units, staffing, facilities, program promotion and other resources.

0   Program review is an opportunity to argue for what your program needs in order to better serve students. However, you need to back your needs assessment up with qualitative and quantitative data and you will need to indicate what assessments you will use to determine if you met your goals.

0   Once all of our programs have gone through review, we will launch our four year model beginning fall 2008.   This does not mean programs are only reviewed once every four years. It means that each program begins a review cycle every four years and each year has program review reporting expectations.

Please remember, program review is a faculty responsibility. No one can or should do this for us.   Faculty designs, controls and evaluates all program reviews.   Most college faculties began this process fifteen to twenty years ago. Somehow our college slid through about three WASC reviews before we got caught with an obsolete Educational Master Plan, a set of outdated goals, and absolutely no program reviews. We are pedaling as fast as we can to catch up but fifteen to twenty years of no faculty action on this and no administrative support is an enormous deficit to compensate for. It will take the concerted effort of all of us to meet this daunting deadline. We have no choice.   WASC has made that clear.

The good news is that like our students, we are at our best under a serious time crunch and this kind of pressure should remind us of what it was like to write a masters thesis or Ph.D. dissertation. If we could do that, we can do this.

Yolanda Bellisimo, President
Academic Senate

Academic programs that have completed/are completing review:

English as a Second Language (Credit, Noncredit, and Intensive Programs)
English Skills (Assessing and Skill Building Courses)
Journalism (A.A. Degree Program)
Multimedia Studies (A.S. Degree Program, Career and Local Skill Certificates)
Nursing (A.S. Degree Program, Nursing Degree)
Biology Field Program
English Basic Skills
English/Humanities
Social Sciences (History, Ethnic Studies, Political Science)
Architecture
Landscape Design
Modern Languages

Programs that will need to begin reviews in January:

Transfer Programs

Life and Earth Sciences
Biology, Physical Geography, Geology
Mathematics
Physical Sciences
Astronomy, Computer Science, Physics, Chemistry, Engineering
Communications
Communications, Speech, Film/Video
English/Humanities
English, Humanities, Philosophy
Fine and Visual Arts
Art
Performing Arts
Dance, Drama, Music
Physical Education/Athletics
Health Ed., Rehabilitation Fitness, P.E., Intercollegiate Athletics
Behavioral Sciences
Anthropology, Behavioral Science, Psychology, Sociology

Business and Information Systems
Business Office Systems, Business, Computer/Information Systems, Real Estate, Statistics
Social Sciences
Economics, Education, Cultural Geography
Library
Counseling

Career and Occupational Training

Automotive Collision Repair
Automotive Technology
Electronics Technology
Machine and Metals Technology
Dental Assisting
Medical Assisting
Early Childhood Education
Administration of Justice
Court Reporting
Fire Technology
Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
Work Experience

Community Education/Life Long Learning

Art	Foods & Wine	Parenting
Business/Careers/ Professional Dev.	Health & Well Being	Philosophy
Computers	Health Sciences	Photography
Cultural Studies	Home Arts	Physical Fitness
Current Events	High School Equiv.	Real Estate
Dance & Drama	Literature	Travel
Film Appreciation	Marin Adventures	Trips & Tours
	Music	Writing