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Chapter One

Introduction
INTRODUCTION

Otero Junior College is a stable, solid performer. It is a lean organization and, perhaps because of that, it benefits from required frequent direct communications between people representing all areas of the college. Otero’s hallmark has always been to hire good people, support them in all ways, and give them the freedom to do their jobs well. Current staff have inherited and adopted this culture of cooperation and mutual support. Long before “appreciative inquiry” became a popular phrase, Otero built upon strengths and capitalized on its ability to innovate and implement to improve all learning environments rather than spending inordinate amounts of time, energy, or money on minor distractions or minority points of urgency. Intelligence and passion combine with a blue-collar work ethic when staff at all levels shoulder the load to serve students.

The self-study report has two purposes. It serves as a formal request for continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. The process has involved the entire college, and the report provides information for both internal and external constituencies. The report represents involvement by the entire college in the gathering, creation, and sharing of a significant set of resources. It, along with numerous other items, should allow the visiting team ample information to conduct an effective evaluation. An introductory chapter provides basic information regarding the college. Chapters Two through Six present information addressing the New Criteria for Accreditation. Chapter Seven deals specifically with assessment issues and satisfying purpose statements. The final chapter presents summary observations and a request for continued accreditation.

This introductory chapter provides information on seven major topics: Profile of Otero Junior College; Mission and Integrity; Preparing for the Future; Student Learning and Effective Teaching; Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge; Engagement and Service; Responses to Concerns of the Previous Evaluation Team; Changes and Significant Developments since the Last NCA Evaluation; and Significant Aspects of the Institution.
INTRODUCTION

Profile of Otero Junior College, its service area, and student population

1. **The College:** Otero Junior College is a modern, rural, state-supported, comprehensive Colorado community college. The college provides Career and Technical Education training and the first two years of academic higher education. The college awards Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of General Studies, and Associate of Applied Science degrees as well as vocational certificates. The college operates on a semester system (Fall and Spring) with limited offerings in the summer.

2. **The Service Area:** Otero Junior College is located in La Junta, a town with a population of approximately 8,000, in the Central Arkansas River Valley. La Junta is about 60 miles east of Pueblo on U.S. Highway 50 in Southeastern Colorado.

The college is charged with the responsibility of providing lower-division, undergraduate educational programs and services for the residents of Otero, Bent, and Crowley counties. Based on the 2000 Census, this geographic area contains approximately 30,000 people within 3,566 square miles. This population is largely located in the towns of La Junta, Rocky Ford, Las Animas, Fowler, and Ordway. Swink, Manzanola, and Cheraw all run smaller schools within the three county service area. Otero’s campus map is included (pg. 3).
1. Macdonald Hall
   OJC and EOSD Administration

2. Humanities Center
   Ed Stafford Theatre - Classrooms
   Faculty Offices

3. McDivitt Center - Gymnasium

4. Koshare Indian Museum

5. Rattler Field

6. Wheeler Hall
   Library - Classrooms

7. Life Sciences
   Nursing - Classrooms - Labs
   Faculty Offices

8. Wunsch Hall Dormitory

9. Student Center
   Bookstore - Cafeteria
   Banquet Room - Conference Rooms

10. McBride Hall
    Student Services - Classrooms
    Computer Center - Faculty Offices
    Educational Assistance Center

11. McDivitt Hall
    Cosmetology - SCORE Center
    Auto Tech. - OJC Fitness Center

12. Maintenance

13. Dormitory Annex

14. Recreation Area

15. Tippy Martinez Softball Field
### INTRODUCTION

3. **The Student Population:** The following information was extracted from registration data on the student population in the Fall of 2005 and is compared to the same information on the student population in the Fall of 1995:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Age:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 &amp; under:</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>+ 16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-29:</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>- 4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39:</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>- 8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49:</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>- 3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 &amp; above:</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>- .02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Sex:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male:</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>- 14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female:</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
<td>+ 4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Race:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White:</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
<td>+ 5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority:</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>- 5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic:</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>- 2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Registration Type:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Time:</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>- 6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer:</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>- .2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing:</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>+ 8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-Admit:</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>+ 2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Residence Status:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-State:</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
<td>+ 2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-State:</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>- 2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Declared Major:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic:</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>73.2%</td>
<td>+ 13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational:</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>- 7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) Educational Background:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate/GED:</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td>+ 15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than GED:</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>- 15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) Economic Information (financial aid recipients):</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>+ 10.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Purposes of the Self-Study

Otero Junior College’s self-study has utilized SharePoint as a method to gather and reference data and ideas. SharePoint offered some assistance in the self-study organization and communication. It will continue to serve as a great resource.

The self-study has two major purposes. The first is to partially fulfill the requirements necessary to secure continued North Central Association (NCA) accreditation for the institution. The second purpose is to engage college staff in a process that enables them to evaluate current programs and practices and provide appropriate direction for the future of the college, confirming existing behaviors that need to be continued and suggesting changes where needed.

People at Otero Junior College are conscientious and have pursued an authentic self-study that should provide the basis for continued NCA accreditation. Those involved have contributed varying perspectives and insightful evaluations of practices in a number of areas. These perceptions indicate a great deal of pride in individual and institutional accomplishments. People generally feel good about what they do and where they work. The college does its best to maintain warranted traditions while inviting attractive innovations. Careful stewards of financial and personnel resources, Otero manages an effective balance.

The Self-Study Process

1. **Timeline:** From the summer of 2003 to November 2006, Otero Junior College conducted its continued accreditation self-study. The timeline for the study was approved as follows:

   A. Summer 2003: appointment of Steering Committee Chair/Self-Study Coordinator
   B. Fall 2003: begin review process with President’s Administrative council
   C. Spring 2004: attend HLC Annual Meeting—prepare timelines
   D. Summer 2004: budget and attend Assessment Conference
   E. Fall 2004: contact HLC liaison, calendar, name Steering Committee, identify work groups, explore templates, electronic resources
   F. Spring 2005: formal kickoff, five including president attend Annual Meeting, assemble Criterion Subcommittees, data gathering, agenda at Faculty Retreat
   G. Summer 2005: initiated SharePoint, template discussions

SharePoint: [http://sharepoint.ojc.edu/sites/nc/default.aspx](http://sharepoint.ojc.edu/sites/nc/default.aspx)
INTRODUCTION

H. Fall 2005: Fall Challenge—all employees are assigned to a Criterion Team, research and information gathering conducted and some drafts started

I. Spring 2006: SharePoint utility is being used along with email and traditional communications, six staff attend Annual Meeting, all five Criterion Chairs have been present at an Annual Meeting, standardizing information coming in, using templates

J. Summer 2006: data and drafts integrated for writing of Self-Study report

K. Fall 2006: final report written, proofread/edited, preparation for team visit, Submitted six to eight weeks prior to team visit

L. Spring 2007: all visit details, Annual Meeting, Team visit

2. Division of Responsibility: Five criterion teams were appointed by the President and Steering Committee Chair. Each committee had representatives from all facets of the college: administrative, faculty, classified and staff. Each group was charged with gathering evidence and report their findings to submit to the Steering Committee. The following is a list of each committee’s respective evaluation criterion responsibilities and its membership.

A. Steering Committee: responsible for overseeing five criterion teams

- Dr. Thomas Armstrong, (Chair) Self-Study Coordinator and Vice President for Instructional Services
- Mr. Mark Allen, Director of Information Technologies
- Mr. Gary Ashida, Vice President for Administrative Services
- Mr. Fred Boettcher, Faculty History and Political Sciences
- Mr. Jeff Paolucci, Vice President for Student Services
- Dr. Joel Gray, Chair Math and Sciences
- Ms. Kim Grimsley, Chair Business Technologies
- Mr. James Herrell, Associate Vice President for Instruction
- Ms. Almabeth Kaess, Executive Asst to the President/ Director of Marketing
- Ms. Jamie Swartz, Director of Head Start
- Mr. Pat Malott, Controller
- Mr. Wayne Beadles, Faculty Math and Science/Faculty Assembly Chair
- Mr. Carl Otteman, Director of Auxiliary Enterprises
- Ms. Jennifer Carrica, Director of Financial Aid
INTRODUCTION

Steering Committee Cont.
Mr. James Rizzuto, President
Ms. Denise Root, Chair and Director of Nursing
Mr. Robert Samaniego, Faculty Business
Ms. Pat Sena, Chair College Advisory Council
Mr. Joseph Cordo, College Advisory Council
Mr. Ernesto Jimenez, College Advisory Council
Ms. Lorene Nelson, College Advisory Council
Ms. Ardeth Sneath, College Advisory Council
Ms. Caroline Wagner, College Advisory Council
Mr. Wayne Stuchlik, Director of Physical Plant
Ms. Ardith Wallace, Chair of Arts and Humanities

B. Criterion One Mission and Integrity: responsible for demonstrating the organization operates with integrity to ensure fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Mr. Robert Samaniego, (Chair) Faculty Business Technologies
Mr. Roger Florez, Physical Plant
Ms. Lynnette Reeves, Faculty Service Occupations
Ms. Susie Turner, Assistant Softball Coach
Ms. Lorie Rae Hamilton, Faculty Nursing
Mr. Miner Blackford, Director Law Enforcement Academy
Mr. Ed Peteque, Physical Plant
Mr. Joe Talmich, Student Center Operations
Ms. Kendra Swope, Director of Library and Learning Resources
Mr. Ernie Martinez, Maintenance Physical Plant
Ms. Maxine Fisher, Cashier Student Services
Mr. Gary Addington, Head Baseball Coach and Assistant Financial Aid
Ms. Amber Garrett, Assistant Softball Coach
Mr. Sam Jarmillo, Physical Plant
Ms. Becci Lease, Administrative Assistant Nursing
Ms. Cindy Karle, Coordinator of Grants & Data
Mr. Ken Pearson, Maintenance Physical Plant
Ms. Elizabeth Mayers, Faculty Math and Science
Mr. Al Zumwalt, Security Guard Physical Plant
Ms. Jamie Swartz, Director of Head Start
Ms. Christina Roberts, Faculty Arts and Humanities
INTRODUCTION

C. Criterion Two Preparing for the Future: responsible for demonstrating the organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Ms. Ardith Wallace, (Chair) Chair and Faculty Arts and Humanities
Ms. Diane LoVette, Faculty Nursing
Ms. Barb Leininger, Faculty Math and Science
Ms. Charlyn Mascarenas, Faculty Service Occupations
Mr. Mike Becerra, Maintenance Student Center
Ms. Tammy Collins, Faculty Business Technologies
Mr. Stephen Simpson, Faculty Arts and Humanities
Mr. Mark Allen, Director Computer Center
Mr. Robert Pena, Maintenance Physical Plant
Mr. Jeff Paolucci, Vice President for Student Services
Mr. Jim McCuistion, Faculty Service Occupations
Ms. Debby Nicholson, Manager of Bookstore
Ms. Melissa Perea, Head Softball Coach
Mr. Wayne Stuchlik, Director of Physical Plant
Ms. Cheryl Tilton, Maintenance Physical Plant
Mr. Daniel Trujillo, Assistant Basketball Coach
Ms. Keri Romero, Administrative Assistant
Administrative Services
Ms. Sara Burwell, Faculty Math and Science
Ms. Marlene Boettcher, Director of Human Resources
Ms. Genia Short, Grounds Physical Plant
Mr. Carl Otteman, Director of Auxiliary Services

D. Criterion Three Student Learning and Effective Teaching: responsible for demonstrating the organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Ms. Denise Root, (Chair) Chair and Director of Nursing
Mr. Brandon Schawe, Assistant Basketball Coach
Ms. Jean Armstrong, Faculty Arts and Humanities
Mr. Houston Reed, Head Men’s Basketball Coach
Ms. Samme Ormiston, Faculty Business Technologies
Ms. Shawn Japhet, Tutor Educational Assistance Center
Mr. Leo Maslov, Faculty Math and Sciences
INTRODUCTION

Criterion Three Cont.
Ms. Nancy Mitchell, Link Coordinator
Mr. Ralph Newby, Faculty Business Technologies
Ms. Tara Elliott, Instructional Technician
Ms. Gildene Dillingham, Administrative Assistant
Student Services
Mr. Mark Salinas, Maintenance Physical Plant
Ms. Denise Mosher, Instructional Services
Programs Coordinator
Mr. Jim Herrell, Associate Vice President for
Instructional Services
Ms. Tami Stephenson, Faculty Service Occupations
Ms. RuAnn Keith, Faculty Arts and Humanities
Mr. Ron Carrica, Physical Plant
Dr. Aaron Reyes, Faculty Math and Sciences
Ms. Judy Hensley, Faculty Math and Sciences
Ms. Donna Jones, Faculty GED
Ms. Susie Mariscal, Administrative Assistant Human Resources
Ms. Emilie Wagner, Manager Residence Hall

E. Criterion Four Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge: responsible for demonstrating the organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

Ms. Kim Grimsley, (Chair) Chair and Faculty
Business Technologies
Ms. Kim Starr, Faculty Nursing
Ms. Kim Juul, Administrative Assistant Student Services
Ms. Lyla Paakkanen, Faculty Arts and Humanities
Mr. Taylor Wagner, Head Women’s Basketball Coach
Ms. Marilyn Tabor, Faculty Nursing
Mr. Jim Allison, Computer Center Technician
Ms. Susan Gale, Tutor Educational Assistance Center
Dr. Joel Gray, Chair Math and Sciences
Mr. Abel Vialpando, Faculty Arts and Humanities
Ms. Terri Encinias, Administrative Assistant Library
Ms. Janet Critchfield, Minority Recruiter
Mr. Patrick Malott, Controller
Ms. Diane McElroy, Faculty Nursing
Mr. Chris Carrillo, Assistant Baseball Coach
Ms. Jan Schiro, Administrative Assistant Student Services
INTRODUCTION

Criterion Four Cont.
Ms. Becky Six, Coordinator Educational Assistance Center
Mr. Butch Guerrero, Maintenance Physical Plant
Mr. John Pena, Maintenance Student Center
Ms. Pam Kasan, Recruiter Educational Opportunity Center
Ms. Lisa Gallegos, Faculty Math and Science

F. Criterion Five Engagement and Service: responsible for showing the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value

Mr. Fred Boettcher, (Chair) Faculty Arts and Humanities
Ms. Tammy Dorenkamp, Faculty Service Occupations
Ms. Jacklynn Johnson, Faculty Nursing
Mr. Mack Myers, Faculty Service Occupations
Ms. Margaret Medina, Faculty GED
Mr. Wayne Beadles, Faculty Math and Science
Ms. Almabeth Kaess, Director of Marketing and Assistant to the President
Ms. Debbie Phillips, REAP and Humanities Center Coordinator
Ms. Sallie Hibbs, Director of International and Intercultural Activities
Mr. Cat Mata, Maintenance Physical Plant
Mr. Rocky Mueller, Coordinator Vocational Outreach
Ms. Dana Cordova, Head Coach Volleyball and Golf
Ms. Darlene Blackford, Faculty Math and Sciences
Mr. Chris Carrillo, Assistant Coach Basketball
Ms. Laurie Gonzales, Administrative Assistant Physical Plant
Mr. Ken Johnson, Electrician Physical Plant
Mr. Ted Freidenberger, Security Physical Plant
Ms. Rhonda Dove, Computer Specialist Computer Center
Ms. Lisa Fritch, Administrative Assistant Library
Mr. Brad Smith, Director of Advising, Guidance and recruitment
Mr. Doug Gabehart, Faculty Service Occupations
INTRODUCTION

Organization of the Self-Study Report

The composite findings of the Criterion Teams are presented in five separate chapters of this Self-Study report. Other introductory and closing chapters reflect responses to the commission and analysis of these data. The title of each chapter is as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Criterion One: Mission and Integrity
3. Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future
4. Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching
5. Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge
6. Criterion Five: Engagement and Service
7. Assessment Discoveries and Responses
8. Summary and Recommendations

History of Accreditation

In 1962, Otero Junior College was a State of Colorado county junior college, and was at that time accredited by the Colorado State Department of Education.

Otero Junior College was granted candidacy status by the North Central Association in April of 1962. During this period, the institution secured the services of a consultant to help meet all requirements in order to secure full accreditation status. Subsequently, Otero Junior College achieved accreditation by the North Central Association as an associate degree granting institution in 1967.

Otero Junior College underwent its first continued accreditation self-study during the 1975-76 academic year. As a result of the evaluation team’s recommendation, the North Central Association granted the College a continued accreditation status for ten years.

The College underwent its second continued accreditation self-study during the 1985-86 academic year. Upon completion of the necessary review, the College received its second continued accreditation status for ten years.

Otero completed the third self-study in 1997 and was again granted a ten year accreditation.
INTRODUCTION

Responses to “Advice and Suggestions” of Previous Evaluation Team

The 1996-1997 NCA Evaluation Team provided a list with eleven items presented under “advice and suggestions” to the institution in its role as consultant during the evaluation visit to Otero Junior College. These eleven items listed as “advice and suggestions” are identified below in italics, immediately followed by the College’s response to the evaluation team’s recommendations.

1. *A student handbook should be produced and distributed*

   Student Services constructed a handbook after consulting numerous other colleges and visiting with students on campus. The handbook reflects policies specific to Otero Junior College and its unique situations including its being a residential campus for many students. Materials, including a planning calendar, enable students to get a clear understanding of expectations and their primary support areas. It provides an orientation to the campus: campus services, offices, and personnel. It spells out student rights and regulations. This handbook also contains system-wide specifics dealing with academic issues regarding degree designations, academic renewal, course audits, calculating GPA, designation of academic honors, “D” grade, S/U grading, suspension, probation, late registration, academic load, repeated courses, residency, and tuition.

2. *Even though the strategic planning process has been recently formalized, it will need to be implemented, closely monitored, evaluated, and modified.*

   Strategic planning is handled primarily by the central offices of the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education, Colorado. Planning documents are developed on campus by an executive leadership team and forwarded to the system office and put into aggregate form for submission to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. The system is held to a performance contract that specifies an established set of criteria each year.

3. *The college should continue its efforts at training faculty members on how to put the new technology resources to their most effective use for instructional as well as support services.*
INTRODUCTION

Otero Junior College has always prided itself in providing a solid basic education. It has moved forward in the last ten years since the school’s last self-study in terms of being even more supportive and being technologically fit. Otero was granted funds of over 3 million dollars through a program in 1997 and Senate Bill 97-197 titled Technology grants and Revolving Loan Funds; this was nearly matched by Southeast Power and Electric in what was termed the Connect Colorado project. Assistance from Dr. Pat Burns at Colorado State University and Dr. Mollie McGill at the University of Colorado enabled the college to implement a plan to deliver high speed, high bandwidth fiber-based internet service to southeastern Colorado. Connecting over twenty one school districts, four hospitals, and number of libraries and other municipal agencies, the grant has served its partners well and has sustained itself over the past nine years under the auspices of the Arkansas Valley Network Association.

With the advent of a powerful technology in place, the college reviewed existing programs and emerging needs and pioneered the use of online courses as a preferred method to delivery by videocassette. This was further motivated when a ruling by the Colorado Commission of Higher Education stated in 2002 that instruction utilizing videocassette would not receive state reimbursement dollars. Knowing teaching and learning can both be enhanced with appropriate technology, college planners were ready to invest in creating an excellent infrastructure. Because planners also knew technology didn’t perform the “magic” by itself, the college hired an Instructional Technician with a blended background in instruction and computer technology.

Course management systems underwent significant review before Otero decided to implement the Blackboard (Bb) course management system. During the fall of 2001, one hundred percent of the faculty received training from Blackboard trainers brought in from California. The training provoked interest, and faculty members volunteered to serve on the online committee. Many faculty members who had distance learning responsibilities volunteered to begin building courses immediately. Others used key features to supplement their traditional courses, utilizing online testing and assuring students they could access basic course content like a syllabus or grades.

In the first year, twelve courses were run with approximately four hundred students. As with most colleges, Otero discovered most of those enrolled were already OJC students and had enrolled in these courses to accommodate schedules. Summer enrollments increased as
INTRODUCTION

well when many students went home for the summer but wanted to maintain a course or two over that time. The college also experienced a slight drop in evening enrollments that may have been attributed to this greater degree of flexibility.

WebCT Vista (now a Blackboard subsidiary) was adopted system-wide during 2005-2006, and all colleges will be transitioning to this platform during the 2006-2007 school year. Small group instruction and the luxury of one-on-one instruction (frequently in a single faculty member’s office, focusing on particular materials and needs) have allowed nearly one hundred percent of the faculty to be comfortable and confident, capable and competent. Most are currently state system WebCT certified instructors.

Along with introducing table and chair configurations in most classrooms to increase comfort and aid in learning, Otero invested in Smart Boards in several computer and business classrooms to enhance instruction. Starting in 2002, the college embarked on a plan to equip major classrooms with Smart Stations. All classrooms today have projectors, DVDs, and internet access with powerful computers to handle any applications created in faculty offices. Many stations are also equipped with document cameras. These have been particularly effective in nursing and art courses.

4. Resurrect and reorganize the college foundation and alumni organization and develop a strategic fundraising plan.

Dr. William McDivitt, Otero president for over forty years, did not feel comfortable asking the community “to dig a little deeper into their pockets” for support. This tradition and philosophy takes a while to change and bears ongoing investigations as to whether or not this initiative is truly one that is value added.

Otero Junior College organized a Foundation that has struggled some developing a true charge. Discussions on purpose and planning have not yet been fully realized. The foundation was initially created with a relatively small business and political base. That has been changing slowly. Raising money has not been accomplished effectively, but managing existing dollars has paid some dividends to the college in that the college is provided greater discretion when utilizing funds separate from state mandates. Conservative budgeting and careful investing has allowed the college to meet all financial challenges to date. Neither
INTRODUCTION

programs nor people “do without.” Work has been done on gathering and disseminating alumni information. A college archives committee has also been formed to capture the rich history of the college. This is a group of current staff, former staff, and emeritus faculty who meet regularly to identify artifacts and information, cataloguing appropriately.

5. **Reduce heavy dependence on state and federal funds and create greater flexibility for accessing funding to meet priority institutional needs.**

Since 2001, Otero Junior College has been awarded more than 6 million dollars in grant funds to start new programs, expand existing programs, to attract and retain students and staff. Qualifying as a Hispanic Serving Institution, Otero has benefited from dollars to increase efficiency at a campus nearly forty percent Hispanic. Dollars granted under these provisions are available to support college programs benefiting all students.

Otero has utilized School-to-Career monies, Caring for Colorado, Colorado Trust, Colorado First, HUD, and others to equip instructional programs, benefit youth in the area, build partnerships with public schools and federally funded Head Start programs. Many smaller grants afford unique opportunities for one-time dollars geared to specific programs like Wal-Mart and International Night, El Pomar and minority recruitment, USDA and soil crop science programs through Colorado State University, making four year degrees available on the OJC campus and the State of Colorado.

One recently awarded HUD grant actually incorporates a grant writer into a position that should help campus and community agencies and non-profit groups while looking to the future to sustain grant writing activities at full capacity. This grant also enabled the college and community to establish the Southeastern Colorado Resource Enterprise (SCORE) Center on the OJC campus. This venture reshaped local agencies and brought them together to offer a synergistic response to economic development. Otero Junior College houses faculty for its entrepreneurial small business management program. La Junta Economic Development, Small Business Development Center, Tri-County Housing, and others also share the facility and services.
6. Much of the science laboratory furniture and equipment needs attention and replacement.

The math and science department has made significant improvements in this area. One new chemistry lab has been built and a second comprehensively remodeled. The physics lab has been reassigned to another room and additional storage assigned to handle growing needs of space and equipment. Another physical science classroom has been updated, increasing student capacity for greater comfort and use of space. Antiquated tables and storage cabinet arrangements have been removed and new equipment purchased.

Microbiology has been introduced into the curriculum, meeting a distinct need for nursing students. Other students will also benefit from this new curriculum and the space designed to house it. Research into a biotechnology program and area interest in alternative energy will be easier to accommodate in the coming years with these upgrades.

Along with the campus safety committee, the department has cooperated with state safety experts in cleaning any items that were suspect and developed policies to insure proper removal and/or neutralization of certain items. Purchasing also reflects a safety-first approach to equipment and materials in all laboratory settings.
INTRODUCTION

7. Administering the interactive technology grant may strain administrative resources unless the college can develop a broader team to approach grant administration.

The Arkansas Valley Network Association is a viable, effective manager of the system. Hiring of an Instructional Technician, an additional computer technician, and supporting a webmaster at least part-time has allowed the college to move ahead with integrating technology into classrooms and creating new virtual classrooms and enhanced classroom experiences via the internet.

8. As an element of its recently initiated community outreach efforts, the college might do well to explore additional vocational education needs that might exist in the service area that it might be able to meet.

Always a priority, program balance is under constant review at Otero. A group of cautious risk takers, administration, faculty, staff, and community members work together to access and act on programs that appear profitable in the terms of student enrollment numbers and workforce needs. Transfer is still Otero’s bread and butter, but the college is responsive to needs in Career and Technical Education (CTE).

CISCO and CAD programs sustained decent enrollments for a short time but have been eliminated. Local school district that offered complementary CISCO programs were unable to maintain programs that worked as a feeder while also offering concurrent classes at host high schools. Costs to upgrade equipment and train personnel finally caught up to and closed three local affiliated programs. This, in turn, helped the college in its decision to eliminate this program offering.

Upon receiving community requests and “running the numbers,” the college implemented a cosmetology program in 2005-2006. State numbers also confirmed this industry could support more entrants into its job market. Otero plans to expand this program to another site sixty miles to the west in Pueblo, Colorado, a much large population base. A linesman program is ready to be housed on campus contingent on grant funding and corporate partnerships.

Cosmetology was added to the set of college offerings after being requested for a number of years. Otero only moved forward with its own program in a partnership with another community college located over an hour away. Shared personnel, pricing, and programming have allowed both programs to continue.
A newly developed Bank Teller certificate has been added in direct response to area employers in the banking and financial areas. This is a complementary program to a suite of business studies, allowing students to work and go to school while continuing additional business training.

Nursing needs in the state continue to grow. Numerous agencies including area prisons require additional nursing positions. The NEW Nursing program (Night, Evening, and Weekend) increased potential capacity by almost one hundred and seventy-five percent. The college serves many students unable to enter nursing programs in their own areas; some commuting from more than one hundred miles away—several from distances ranging between sixty and ninety miles away.

Massage Therapy is another career and technical education program being implemented in the fall of 2006. This program will benefit from connections to the newly created cosmetology program, supporting a spa and hospitality component. Massage Therapy is a rigorous health related program at Otero and also connects with nursing, allied health, and a recently developed Emergency Medical Services and EMT certificate. Small Business Management, Real Estate, Computer Systems Technologies, and Law Enforcement Academy are also programs added within the last ten years.

9. The college might wish to review the enrollment trends in physical science courses and seek to reverse recent enrollment declines.

Otero Junior College has experienced growth in the science areas for a number of reasons. Like most areas of the country, Colorado has placed an increased emphasis on math and science in establishing pre-collegiate requirements, now requiring eight credits of science for an Associate Degree. Advanced students are seeking opportunities at the junior college. Increased science requirements in many areas including elementary education also contributed to higher enrollments. Otero has also acted to recruit and retain qualified positive-minded faculty to deliver content and encourage success in the classroom. Facilities and programs support have also been upgraded to meet needs. Two new labs and expanded scientific storage space will more fully support all science offerings. In fact, the department has needed to add a faculty member even in tough budget times when many colleges around the state have been forced to trim or blend responsibilities or eliminate positions.
INTRODUCTION

10. The nursing program should pay special attention to pass rates for the state board examination for nursing students to determine if the result in 1996 were an anomaly, or if they are an indicator of a need for adjustments to the nursing program.

Otero Junior College nursing students have performed well historically on the state boards. The Colorado State Board of Nursing requires each program to maintain a NCLEX Pass rate of 75%. If any program has a NCLEX pass rate less than 75 for 3 consecutive graduating classes they are placed on probationary status. In response to 2001 pass rate drop, the nursing faculty reviewed the grading procedures, testing procedures etc. and revised the procedure for grading tests. Also curving unit test scores is discouraged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NCLEX Pass Rates</th>
<th>Practical Nurses – % Passed</th>
<th>Registered Nurses – % Passed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/97 – 12/97</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/98 – 12/98</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/99 – 12/99</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/00 – 12/00</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/01 – 12/01</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/02 – 12/02</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/03 – 12/03</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/04 – 12/04</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/05 – 12/05</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/06 – 12/06 (YTD)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2005/06 the Educational Resources Inc. Total Testing Package was purchased to improve student retention through the program and to improved NCLEX test results. It includes coaching material, practice tests, remedial material and progression test. Students were required to take Progression tests for each specialty area after the completion of the related course and pass it with points above the North American Average. Students were allowed to repeat the test after completion of remedial work. The program also implemented an Achievement Coaching program with an assigned RN “Coach” who contacts students who are identified as high risk for failure by their nursing instructors. The coach contacts the students, discusses the success issues, and refers the student to resources that are needed, i.e. tutoring, financial assistance, child care, etc. To date the students who graduated in 2006, 100% have passed the NCLEX exams for both the PN and RN graduates.
The Colorado State System Central Office made a ruling in 1998 to enroll applicants for nursing programs across the state on a first-come, first-served basis. This served to exacerbate the problems of attrition and retention in a tough program. Otero protested this policy, citing the need for appropriate screening to invest wisely, putting those students into the program who demonstrated the greatest chance for success. Unfortunately, it took a period of four years for others to realize the issues created were much more serious than the issues of accommodating waitlists or centralized enrolling. Screenings for fall of 2006 were once again in place around the state.

Otero is only one of two Colorado Community Colleges that possesses national accreditation through the NLNAC. Otero’s Nursing Director has worked with leaders at NLNAC in a national advisory capacity as well, assisting in visits and policy review. She has been instrumental in the state system study of one statewide nursing program. Otero is well represented in curricular issues affecting nursing instruction in Colorado. Courses, clinicals, cooperation reflect beneficial changes to prepare better nurses. Otero does align itself with the common course nursing curriculum. The CCCS system worked toward a single statewide nursing program.

After almost three years the decision was to retain individual college programs. Several areas for suggested system centralization would not have been practical or beneficial. A statewide list of students would be maintained along with some shared procedures like admissions, standards, curriculum, and limited some coordination, but items like background checks and one universal accreditation did not materialize.
INTRODUCTION

11. The full-time faculty may wish to review the merit pay evaluation model to see if it might be revised in such a way to make it more palatable to the majority of faculty members.

A change in evaluation policy was mandated by the Colorado State Board and system offices in 2002-2003 that required all colleges to utilize a four part evaluations process and discard any numerical collection of performance and services rendered based on the previous suggested activities list. The evaluation is based sixty-five percent on Teaching Effectiveness; Professional Development ten percent; twenty percent Service to the college; and Service to the Community at five percent. Each area is rated at one of four levels: fails to meet expectations, meets expectations, exceeds expectations, and outstanding. This has resolved the issue of pay variation being more palatable, but there has been no additional state money used to pay for differentiated performance.

Faculty members work directly with their department chairs to develop individual performance objectives (IPOs). These represent goals for the coming year and help shape specific professional development goals. Strengths and areas for improvements are addressed, student ratings are recorded, and then faculty and chairs both discuss an overall rating for the year.

Responses to “Concerns” of Previous Evaluation Team

The 1996-1997 NCA Evaluation Team identified three concerns in its role as consultant during the last evaluation visit to Otero Junior College. These three items are identified below in italics, immediately followed by the College’s response to the evaluation team’s recommendations.

1. A well-defined and funded professional development system needs to be implemented for all college employees.

   Professional development has been achieved through a combination of department funding, earmarked Perkins Career and Technical Education monies, institutional dollars, and individual grants. Several trainings have been brought to campus to serve a smaller, specific group on campus or sometimes a comprehensive program geared to meet the needs of most personnel and the institution as a whole. Professional development day was designed to offer a collaborative alternative to both college and local area school districts fall in-service needs.

Dollars will be available for investments in warranted professional development
Prior to 2000, professional development was handled by many different groups on campus with primary coordination being handled by the office of Human Resources. A new Professional Development committee structure was established in spring of 2001 that pooled resources and charged the committee with designing appropriate opportunities for all college constituencies and approving individual requests. The group is chaired by the Coordinator of the Educational Assistance Center and consists of three faculty members, three classified employees, and three administrators; these people work together with the Director of Human Resources and the Administrator responsible for overseeing vocational training dollars through the Perkins grant.

Professional development is given a separate line item in the budget. There is a specific process in place for the application and approval of funds. Usually, there have been dollars left in the fund at the end of the year. Faculty members are the ones who have taken greatest advantage of this process. Although limited one-size-fits-all opportunities have continued on campus; most attention has been given to customized training to meet smaller group needs.

2. *The current facility combination of Fine Arts and Computer Aided Design is inadequate. The college needs to decide other space allocations for the Fine Arts program.*

The Art and CAD course shared the same room only because both courses were taught by the same instructor. Drafting tables provided a large useable surface and the instructor always claimed the arrangement was adequate. In response to this stated need by the visiting team, the college retained Wheeler 116 as the fine arts room for drawing and painting. McBride 116 was converted into a CAD classroom and currently functions as a multi-use computer lab. A third classroom has been equipped with Abode Photoshop, 3-D Studio Max, and After Effects, a post-production editing software all of which enable students to work in three separate and expanded areas. Digital Foundations of Art and graphic design courses are also supported in the third room.

3. *The college needs to manage the auxiliary funds for profit, including the bookstore, dormitory, and food service. In addition, there is a need to establish pricing guidelines for non-credit instruction.*

The Otero Junior College bookstore has progressed from a small campus bookstore struggling to pay bills at times to a revenue generator of over one hundred thousand dollars. New management, point of sale
INTRODUCTION

technology and remodeling have all contributed to its expanded success. The college operated a bookstore for CCCOnline for four years. This bookstore serviced all community colleges in the state of Colorado and was listed at third place in total product just behind Amazon.com and Cornell University. This program was implemented and run with only minimal, part-time addition to staff and generated extra dollars for the college until the state system took over control of that operation and centralized it in Denver.

The dormitory has undergone major renovations and continues to run at capacity. OJC uses its “board” for scholarships and relies upon its food service plans to generate the necessary income for attracting and retaining students, for operating the housing and food service systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Year</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>Mens-Replace doors &amp; hardware</td>
<td>$71,030.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>Dorm Roof Replacement</td>
<td>$206,858.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>Women's Restroom Renovation</td>
<td>$139,233.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>Men's-Stairwell Floor Coverings</td>
<td>$18,296.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>Mens-New light Fixtures(all floors)</td>
<td>$8,429.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205-05</td>
<td>Dorm Apt. / Lobby window replace</td>
<td>$8,555.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>Dorm Renovation</td>
<td>$1,406,151.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>Dorm Lobby Floor Coverings</td>
<td>$6,423.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>Dorm Apt. Roof Top Air Conditioning</td>
<td>$4,192.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>Dorm Laundry Rm. Conversions</td>
<td>$38,752.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All areas have experienced major improvements in services and revenue

Hosting large events has become more popular with the new banquet room design. Catering has grown as well. Groups continue to utilize the facilities and take advantage of professionally packaged programs.
INTRODUCTION

Another auxiliary with a companion academic program was the Otero Junior College Early Child Care Center. In order to increase its efficiency and assist two other programs, the center was combined at an elementary school location in East Otero District R-1. Due to lowered enrollments, the district moved students to its two other elementary schools. The third party requiring more space and leaving a city leased facility was the Head Start program. This location housed the Colorado Preschool Program through the district, Otero’s Early Childhood lab school, offices, and classroom, along with the Child Development Services of Head Start. This provided a kitchen facility and gymnasium for activities. Two modular units also allowed age appropriate spaces and security for infants and toddlers. Separate outdoor playground areas were also accommodated.

Over the past several years, neither the college nor the Head Start management has been able to create a revenue generating operation out of this arrangement, and the child care center was decommissioned the fall of 2006, absorbing any feasible components and requiring alternative lab sites for the ECE program.

All non-credit continuing education courses are funded through a formula that provides a sixty-five/thirty-five percent split. The larger percentage goes into the college CE fund or appropriate program fund to cover related costs. The smaller percentage is used to cover instructor expenses and also carries with it a cap on any per hour

Although the Child Care Center provided a lab and assisted some students, the cost benefit did not match

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Year</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>East Patio</td>
<td>$21,512.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>Student Center Banquet Room</td>
<td>$260,136.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>Student Center Roof Replacement</td>
<td>$154,129.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>Replace North Entry Door</td>
<td>$3,596.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>Roof Survey</td>
<td>$2,320.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>Replace East &amp; West Entry Doors</td>
<td>$9,118.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>Electronic Locks</td>
<td>$9,667.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>Replace Food Ct. Carpet / add tile</td>
<td>$10,699.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>Raise Toilets in Restrooms</td>
<td>$2,682.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>Dish Washer Ventilation</td>
<td>$780.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>Replace Kit. Door / Air Curtain</td>
<td>$3,085.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>Masonry Trash Enclosure</td>
<td>$3,700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>Replace Birch Doors and Hardware</td>
<td>$5,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>Replace Toilet Partitions</td>
<td>$3,489.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>Student Center Renovation</td>
<td>$233,539.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$723,652.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
compensation based on required program expertise and experience. This has allowed single course offerings and whole programs a simple method to calculate revenues and budget accordingly.

Tracking Changes Since the Last NCA Evaluation

The following table below identifies six significant numerical, financial factors which the College has tracked over the past ten years and also includes an estimate of each for the current year. The six factors include: annualized student F.T.E. production, average student headcount, instructional F.T.E., annual institutional budget, annual student financial aid appropriation, and the percentage of total student F.T.E. generated by the OJC Continuing Education Program.

Immediately following the table is a chronological listing of significant developments since the last NCA evaluation was conducted and select aspects of Otero Junior College.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>STUDENT FTE</th>
<th>% CHANGE</th>
<th>FACULTY FTE</th>
<th>ANNUAL BUDGET</th>
<th>COST PER STUDENT FTE</th>
<th>% OF STUDENT FTE BY ADJUNCT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>$4,962,970</td>
<td>$6,165</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>854</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
<td>$5,296,281</td>
<td>$6,202</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
<td>$5,411,544</td>
<td>$5,973</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>959</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>$5,936,560</td>
<td>$6,190</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
<td>$6,135,638</td>
<td>$6,299</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>1092</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>$6,414,009</td>
<td>$5,874</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>1141</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>$6,678,923</td>
<td>$5,854</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>1247</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
<td>$6,603,790</td>
<td>$5,296</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>1273</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>91.1%</td>
<td>$6,924,998</td>
<td>$5,440</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>1261</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
<td>90.5%</td>
<td>$7,176,522</td>
<td>$5,691</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07 (est)</td>
<td>1275</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
<td>$7,376,384</td>
<td>$5,785</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Quick Chronology of Change:

**1996-97:**
- Third President for Otero begins three year term
- Instituted Honors Breakfast for graduates and relatives morning of graduation
INTRODUCTION

1997-98:
- Established Summer Academy for K-12 teacher recertification credits
- Instituted Concurrent Credit program with area high schools
- Initiated Law Enforcement Training Academy

1998-99:
- Basic Skills Taskforce makes recommendations on restructuring developmental education
- Procurement Card introduced (P-Card) replacing many requisitions and purchase orders
- Softball Program implemented

1999-00:
- The Colorado State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education initiated CCCNS in 1999 acting on legislation from the Colorado General Assembly that mandated a commonly numbered and described curriculum
- Initial work done on the CCHE Quality Indicator System
- CISCO Academy and program initiated
- Short Courses introduced
- Rural Education Access Program begun with partnership with Adams State College and CCHE support

2000-01:
- New President begins service at Otero mid-year
- NORED study completed, reviewed Higher Education Governance in Colorado
- Fulbright scholar from Russia teaching Science and Mathematics
- New Colorado Community Colleges System President

2001-02:
- Adoption, training, start up of Blackboard web platform for online course delivery and enhancement
- OJC hosts new and improved website
- Compressed Courses (8-10 weeks) introduced

2002-03:
- Governor’s hiring freeze
- Hosted statewide Philanthropy Days

NORED:
INTRODUCTION

2002-03 cont.:
- CCHE meets with Blue Ribbon Panel to determine changes
- Statewide articulation agreements in Elementary Education, Business, Engineering, and Early Childhood Education
- CCCS implements the 2000 CIP revision due to reporting to CCHE

2003-04:
- Second Fulbright Scholar from the Slovak Republic teaching nursing
- Eurasian Undergraduate Exchange (UGRAD) Program brings five students from former Soviet Bloc countries
- The Governor’s Task Force to Strengthen and Improve the Community College System was made up of 16 members appointed by the Governor to seek input and make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature for possible restructuring and changes in the community college system’s governance. Otero’s president was appointed to serve on that taskforce
- All two year colleges adopt Common Course Numbering System

2004-05:
- Child Development Center receives architectural award
- Four students from the same UGRAD program monitored by The International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX)
- Nancy McCallin, CCCS CEO, entered into a contract with Sunguard SCT (i.e. Banner software) for the creation and establishment of a new ERP (Enterprise, Resource, and Planning System) for the System
- Cosmetology Career Academy and programs started
- Otero and CCCS move to ACCUPLACER as college placement exam. The goal is to finance it internally without incurring financing costs.

2005-06:
- Banner Enterprise Resource System work commences
- New webpage posted
- Colorado Opportunity Fund (COF) stipend funding to display state subsidy
- Esthetic skin care program initiated

Blue Ribbon Panel:
http://www.state.co.us/cche/blueribbon/final.html
INTRODUCTION

2005-06 cont.:
- CISCO Regional Academy and program terminated
- Shared president and resources with Lamar Community College

2006-07:
- 25 Mongolian Students register
- Development of SCORE Center on campus
- New Phone system installed Voice over IP
- Two IREX students
- New Massage Therapy program

Significant Aspects of the Institution

1. Otero Junior College has been the leader in bringing topnotch internet connectivity to the Arkansas Valley. This allows communities every advantage to perform well educationally, socially, and economically. Technology has long been an institutional identifier. Enhancements to learning are key and critical. Faculty and students are positioned well to set the bar high and move ahead.

2. The college has invested all necessary resources to maintain existing multicultural diversity and increase its level of international and intercultural diversity. This shows in its creating a directors position, seeking Fulbright scholars, coordinating international student exchanges, recruiting more students, and working closely to develop beneficial partnerships with international agencies to bring more students. This adds a necessary global texture to a small rural campus.

3. The OJC Nursing Program is accredited by the National League of Nursing. Only two community colleges in the state are so accredited. The College is proud of this program’s ability to not only graduate substantial numbers of students in its Nursing Assistant, Licensed Practical Nursing, and Registered Nursing (A.D.N.) programs, but also for its ability to prepare these individuals to pass the Colorado State Board of Nursing examinations.

4. Otero Junior College is well-known for its long established record of excellence in academic transfer programs. Founded as a junior college, this was the original mission.

5. The OJC Student Services Center provides a one-stop center for entering students: admissions, assessment, testing, career exploration, guidance, and counseling, advising and registration, financial aid, and payment of tuition and fees.

6. In spite of the fact that the College has experienced growing student enrollment over the past ten years, the institution still maintains its
commitment to provide high accessibility of students to its faculty. When many colleges across the state have been forced to reduce staff, OJC has managed to expand programs and hire additional positions. Thirty-nine full-time faculty is the most the college has ever employed. A low student-faculty ratio has been and continues to be a hallmark characteristic of the College.

7. A beautiful and well-kept residential campus reflects the pride of the College in itself and its commitment to providing high quality educational programs and services.

8. An appropriately-educated and experienced instructional staff (both faculty and instructors), an experienced and well-qualified administration, and a high quality support staff have kept the College in good standing with all its respective constituencies (sister community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, local businesses and industries, the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, and the Colorado Legislature).

9. A growing, national recognition for OJC Athletic Department for its ability to help graduate student-athletes. Programs are successful.

10. For over twenty-five years, the OJC Dance Program has provided outstanding dance instruction for area children and adults. Every other year, the children enrolled in this program publicly display their talent in a recital.

11. The Colorado Community College System (CCCS) is only the third state in the nation to implement a common course numbering system designed to allow students seamless transfer within Colorado. Previously, CCCS listed more than 14,000 courses and 400 prefixes in its course database that served the 13 system colleges and two local district colleges. The project initially winnowed down those numbers to fewer than 4,000 courses and 184 prefixes. CCCS reviews its courses and provides statewide parameters for how each class is taught; [http://www.cccs.edu/cccns/Home.html](http://www.cccs.edu/cccns/Home.html).
INTRODUCTION

The current organizational chart shows divisions of responsibility. This system appears to work effectively. The college is able to do much of its own maintenance and construction.

Otero Junior College will benefit from its involvement in the self-study process. The college has identified strengths and challenges. All those involved will continue to review current practices and pursue improvements in appropriate areas.
INTRODUCTION

CCCS System Shared Administrative Initiative—
Otero Junior College and Lamar Community College

Because The State Board for Community College and Occupational Education values the unique and vital role that Lamar Community College plays in southeastern Colorado, they committed to maintaining Lamar Community College as a separately accredited institution in January of 2006. Prevailing thought suggested implementing a plan for restructuring a partnership would enable the sharing of administrative resources, thus lowering the administrative costs of the colleges. The money freed up at Lamar Community College would be re-invested in the academic mission of the college and would address some of the key personnel vacancies at the college.

Spurring the move to shared services between LCC and OJC was an enrollment drop at LCC of 8.5 percent between the 2002-03 and 2004-05 fiscal years. In addition, fall 2005 enrollment fell an additional 5.2 percent. The lower enrollment and decreased state funding caused LCC to reduce their budget by $330,100. Budget cuts since 2001 have resulted in almost $500,000 of additional reductions at the college. Lamar Community College’s total General Fund and tuition budget totaled $4.5 million. Relying on Otero’s strengths and senior leadership, the system appointed the current OJC president to a joint presidency over both OJC and LCC.

Although there was initial concern with this new organizational structure, staffs at both colleges have worked together in a positive and constructive manner. The two colleges working together along with the commitment of all involved including the advisory councils and the affected communities are the reason for the success to this point.

Original intentions were to lay the groundwork for financial stability and explore how LCC could save money, be more effective and efficient, and grow enrollment. There was some experimentation with saving dollars through combining positions. Combining positions is not a viable option. Initially, Otero investigated key issues and planned ways to implement daily processes and year end audit and reporting requirements as well as data requests from System Office and KPMG, the independent auditors. Otero did assist LCC in improving their financial process, but a single controller is not adequate.

Otero addressed each of these problems initially by finding out as much as possible regarding current processes, people involved with finance, and perceived areas of responsibility as well as putting together an accurate financial picture. Activities included revamping LCC’s chart of accounts and paring it down from hundreds of cost centers to approximately 35 revenue
and cost center accounts in the general fund as well as combining and eliminating numerous accounts in the auxiliary, restricted, and agency funds. New system wide Banner software has also served to complicate transitions.

Work progressed with recommended revisions, and a budget process was put in place, cost center responsible persons were assigned to present and monitor budgeted funds, athletic funds were decreased. Bookstore practices and procedures were revised and updated, manageable financial reports patterned after those at OJC were implemented and utilized. The procurement card program was initiated, and responsibility was delegated for various compliance requirements to specific individuals familiar with these areas.

Cost savings have been minimal. A stand alone fully accredited institution requires a certain level of full-time staffing to ensure that it can work in a functional manner on a day to day basis. One of the main challenges was trying to free up enough resources for LCC to fill key positions and bring staffing level back to where it needed to be to meet community and student needs. In large part this was accomplished as follows: budget reorganization and prioritization, increasing enrollment, developing efficiencies in LCC operation and jointly pursuing grants. Training of new staff positions has been ongoing.

Morale at LCC has improved due to salary increases and things began moving in the right direction with increased enrollments, better allocations of funds, and the development of better business practices. The President has been responsible for policy and formulating direction, but the CAO was responsible for hiring, firing, and day to day operations.

Sharing of information on better business practices, sharing of staff on a contractual basis, and sharing of costs associated with instructional materials used by like programs at each college have led to positive outcomes. The joint presidency has been successful is that both top administrators, President and CAO, worked well together.

Combining services or finding economies of scale will not benefit either institution in the area of financial aid or the office of the controller. Each college needs to have its own director to be able to provide the best service to its students. LCC, in financial trouble, did make some compensation approximately $12,000. With the new 06-07 fiscal budget, a contract was built into the LCC budget for $48,000 for OJC staff compensation but no presidential salary.

The consensus from the LCC council was to stay with a joint presidency. The president said he is willing to work with LCC to find the right leadership
and retain any progress made. He said LCC needs to be a stand-alone college with their own president.

All council members voiced the opinion that the arrangement with OJC and LCC developed last year has served its purpose and that the continuation of that arrangement should not be extended. They voiced their concern for the added stress on OJC staff, the draw on OJC finances, and the lost opportunities OJC has let pass due to their involvement with LCC. The OJC Advisory Council Chair said she would like to see LCC start looking for a new president, soon…not to start looking in July.

Advisory councils and campus staffs met with state board members and members of the system leadership team at the one year anniversary. An external consultant has been named to study the collaborative effort and help in making a recommendation for continuation or cessation of the project.
CHAPTER TWO
CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY

INTRODUCTION

Otero Junior College’s revised mission and purpose statements are clearly and publicly stated, are appropriate for a modern, rural, comprehensive community college, and are consistent with the overall mission of the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System. The Otero Junior College campus sits on ground that once belonged to Mexico. The college was established to serve a rich multicultural community and respects the dignity and worth of individuals. Otero is small and communications can travel quickly. A real open door policy and no-appointment-necessary approach is true for the president and three Vice Presidents. All four embrace the concept of servant leadership. Chairpersons who are full-time faculty work closely with the Vice President for Instructional Services; physical plant, bookstore, student center, and dormitory personnel work directly with the Vice President for Administrative Services. All coaches, recruiters, and counselors work closely with the Vice President for Student Services. This represents a communicative, webbed network that is virtually horizontal with regard to communications and comfort. The value statement adopted in 1997 speaks specifically to issues of integrity and communications that involve all campus constituencies. This commitment is a personal promise to all students.

Criterion One: Otero Junior College operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Core Component—1a: Otero Junior College’s mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization’s commitments.

The institutional mission and value statements are published in the Otero Junior College Catalog, Faculty Handbook, and the Otero Junior College Student Handbook. Prior to the recent revision, Otero Junior College’s mission and purpose statements read:
**CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY**

### Institutional Mission

As a member institution of the CCCOES, Otero Junior College is charged with the responsibility of providing high quality, lower-division, undergraduate academic and occupational programs, life-long learning opportunities, and educational services to the residents of Otero, Bent, and Crowley counties.

### Purpose Statements

In striving to meet its institutional responsibilities as a comprehensive community college, Otero Junior College sets forth the following purpose statements in definition of its educational program and services. These statements also serve as criteria for the administration, faculty, staff, and students in assessing the college’s effectiveness in meeting its institutional mission. Again, these goals are for all students. The college realizes special sensitivities exist in numerous circumstances such as grant opportunities for Hispanic Serving Institutions, but, historically, every person coming on campus is treated as a special individual student with all the “rights and privileges appertaining there unto.” The college presents and provides a sense of community that allows maximized quality opportunities for all.

1. *Achieving junior level transfer status*

   Students successfully completing either a prescribed Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree program at Otero Junior College will be able to transfer to a Colorado four-year college or university as a junior. The college maintains transfer agreements with Colorado colleges and universities to facilitate the transferability of its academic programs.

2. *Acquiring entry level career and technical skills*

   Students successfully completing the College’s Career and Technical Educational Certificates or Associate of Applied Science degree programs will have acquired the skills necessary to obtain entrance level employment in the field of their educational program.

3. *Promoting the benefits and recognizing the achievement of life-long learning*

   The College provides individuals with the means to upgrade their job skills, improve the quality of their lives, and/or custom-tailor their own degree program. The College recognizes satisfactory student
accomplishment of such activities via certificates of achievement, college transcripts, and the Associate of General Studies degree.

4. *Achieving functional literacy*

Through basic skills instruction, academically deficient students and/or non-high school graduates receive the educational services to help them achieve the basic level of proficiency required for continuance in higher education, for entrance level employment, or for day-to-day communication and computation.

5. *Participating in college and community sponsored activities*

Students attending Otero Junior College are able to participate in a wide variety of activities which aim at broadening their social, political, physical, and cultural horizons. The college sponsors theatrical productions, art exhibits, student government, various clubs and organizations, dance programs, intramural and intercollegiate sports, career awareness activities, dances, movies, political forums, lecture series, fundraisers, and other activities to expand the students’ awareness beyond the classroom.

**Analysis of the previous mission and purpose statements**

In the fall and spring of 1996 and 1997, cross campus groups met in colloquium style to reflect and review changes to both the Institutional Mission Statement and the existing Purpose Statements. Participants were energetic as the Mission Statement was redefined, Purpose Statements reaffirmed, and two new items considered. Much of the former mission statement remains inherent in the new version regarding quality education and basic expectations of any college. The Purpose Statement remains strong. A Value Statement was added, demonstrating individual commitment to learners and institutional goals. Groups also identified Seven Strategic Initiatives that would receive focus and attention well beyond the year 2000 and reflect the culture of Otero and its people.

Changes in each of these documents represent a refocusing of priorities within a strong, effective, and well-established philosophy.

1. Language in the new mission statement included access and an effective education.
2. It recognized the importance of identifying and meeting needs of a diverse population.
CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY

3. The new Mission Statement embraced technology in teaching when appropriate.
4. Attention was given to outreach and collaborations.

Revised Otero Junior College mission and purpose statements, added value statement, and strategic initiatives

Institutional Mission

Unwritten, but clearly implied, are the original concepts from the former mission statement of quality educational opportunities available to any student enrolled at the college whether from the three county service area or beyond:

*We, the faculty and staff of Otero Junior College, are committed to creating and continuously improving accessible and effective learning environments for the lifelong educational needs of the diverse communities we serve. We are committed to offering traditional and alternative approaches to learning, emphasizing teaching excellence, assessing student learning, and building collaborative partnerships to promote education and enrich the lives of our students.*

Purpose Statements

Discussions on well-established purpose statements proved campus personnel were supporting these principles and would continue to do so. Because they are so basic to our nature, they remained essentially unchanged, affirmed and retained.

Value Statement

Through a process involving all campus staff, the college forged and adopted, for the first time, a Value Statement. Over the course of several months, groups asked tough questions about who we were and what we believed in, what we felt mattered in order to maintain our unique characteristics and create an atmosphere for focused performance:

*The special spirit of Otero Junior College celebrates learning as the process that changes and improves lives. By setting standards of excellence for ourselves and by placing a high value on integrity, honesty, teamwork, communication, and innovation, we assist students in realizing their greatest potential. We hold ourselves personally accountable for our stated values and the public trust placed in us.*
CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY

Seven Strategic Initiatives

These seven items were identified by several smaller committees working individually and then an aggregate was constructed representing feedback from every separate committee on campus. They appear as a standing agenda when planning or approving and funding anything new. They are comfortable, meaningful macro goals that introduce ongoing change and invite a focus on the future.

1. Continually seek resources to supplement those provided by the state of Colorado to meet the needs and support the Strategic Initiatives of the College.

2. Develop new and enhance current programs.

3. Enhance and promote the relationship between the College and the communities we serve.

4. Enrich the quality of student life.

5. Provide professional development opportunities for all employees in order to optimize programs and services.

6. Continue to enhance OJC’s leadership position in technology-assisted learning and the development of new technological applications.

7. Maintain and upgrade physical facilities and equipment to meet the needs of students,

Core Component—1b: In its mission documents, Otero Junior College recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

All college-meetings allowed staff to craft statements that reflected its awareness of diverse learners and diverse learning opportunities. Combining items one and two of the initiatives is evident in the internationalization of the campus. This double win allows students to experience a richer cultural setting and, at the same time, adds needed discretionary revenues to the college.

The people at Otero share an attitude of service. Learners and learning come first. Each individual seeks to ensure a quality experience, develops a sense of family and community, while creating and enhancing opportunities for staff and students in all areas.
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The following types of postsecondary structures and processes involve all Otero Junior College personnel in achieving appropriate goals to identify and support all educational programs and services for its variety of learners seeking “lower-division, undergraduate academic, career and technical education programs,” and “life-long learning opportunities.” Other “educational services” include those which students have come to expect and need as a result of their attendance at any qualified community college.

The two major types of academic degree programs (A.A. and A.S.) identified in the first purpose statement are consistent with the mission statement “lower-division, undergraduate academic … programs.” The addition on the A.G.S. Degree allows for a degree at the end of sixty hours that recognizes achievement in a blended scenario of career and technical education with approximately fifty percent of the degree including solid academic transfer courses.

Career and Technical Education programs (Certificate and A.A.S. Degree) identified in the second major purpose statement are consistent with the purpose statement “acquiring entry level career technical skills.”

The Educational Assistance Center was established to provide under prepared students with the support to succeed. Basic skills instructional services identified in the fourth purpose statement are supportive of both the academic and vocational education programs. This program for academically under prepared and/or non-high school graduates is essential in today’s community/junior college due to the ever-increasing number of academically unprepared students entering college.

Area high school consortiums also enable secondary career and technical education students to benefit from Perkins dollars primarily through tutorial services. Professional development is also provided to enable teachers to better address the needs of a diverse student population.

Otero Junior College is one of a select few community colleges to host Fulbright Scholars in Residence. Outreach efforts delivered funds to dislocated workers from a local plant that closed at Christmas. Benefits created dollars for Tsunami relief victims and those from hurricane Katrina. With more than twenty-five percent Hispanic enrollment, Otero qualifies as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Federal funds from qualifying HSI programs have enabled the college to maintain and expand facilities and positions from recruiting to web development.
CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY

So, as much focus as there is on dealing with diversity, Otero is in the process of creating and embracing an even greater diversity. This is represented in the form of attracting more international students, attracting students who struggle with poverty or who are academically unprepared, attracting students who are seeking high school completion, attracting and serving those educationally and socially disenfranchised individuals who need a little extra care.

Otero Junior College is a partner in workforce development and economic development. The college champions the challenges of providing quality employees and helping attract and support quality business and industry to the area. OJC’s Rapid Response Program provides assistance.

Student Services works in conjunction with Colorado Work Force to assist displaced or soon to be displaced workers in their options of future employment. The college has had success with students who have come to OJC after their jobs have either left the area due to business closure or relocation. Students have been retrained in fields such as nursing, automotive technology, CISCO, and elementary education. One has even continued on and earned a BA degree. Overall, the program informs community members dealing with a difficult situation in their lives about the possible opportunities that exist.

Core Component—1c: Understanding of and support for the mission pervade throughout all campus operations.

New Value Statement

Through the development of the new Value Statement, the campus formalizes a belief that has been prevalent since the college began. The entire campus staff at Otero Junior College made a personal commitment to integrity, honesty, teamwork, communication, and innovation in the learning process. The desire is to assist students in realizing their greatest potential.

New Strategic Initiatives

These Seven Strategic Initiatives provide specific direction for the college when making decisions on investments of people and funds. Augmenting financial strength has never been more in evidence with grants and partnerships. Program diversity and balance will continue to drive decisions based on local need and marketability. The college’s focus on international student growth is gaining momentum to plan a healthy future.
CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY

Student focus in the arts is strong, sciences are growing with outreach possibilities, field trips, and new space. Athletics remains a draw and teams continue to stress academic success as well as fielding competitive teams. All staff members have access to designated funds and opportunities through a professional development committee that oversees activities.

Otero Junior College has outfitted most classrooms with smart technologies, faculty and staff are competent in applying knowledge and training. A system move to implement a new Course Learning Management System, WebCT, required faculty to migrate from the previous Blackboard system. The entire college has experienced a major shift with another system mandated move from the previous Legacy system, SIS, to an integrated system-wide SCT Banner ERP. Areas include finance, human resources, scheduling, student records, advising, and student access. Otero Junior College has completed a number of major changes with regard to physical plant and is one of the brightest stars in the Colorado Community College constellation.

The revised mission and purpose statements along with the value statement and strategic initiatives reflect the character of the college.

Core Component—1d: Otero Junior College’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

Otero Junior College is governed by a local college advisory council, a system office, a state board, and the Colorado Commission of Higher Education. Operating as one of thirteen community and junior colleges in the state system, Otero is regulated by common policies and procedures. Further, with the implementation of a new comprehensive software system, scheduling, billing, registration, and other major functions have been centralized. Utilizing SCT Banner software, the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) standardized definitions and practical applications across the board. This one-size-fits-all approach was intended to provide quicker apples-to-apples comparisons in a more businesslike environment. Still relatively untested and a long way from being proven, this process has created several points of contention and, in many cases, compromises for the sake of accommodating a schedule and moving forward.

The college itself operates with a President’s Administrative Council consisting of three vice presidents. Meeting weekly, and usually benefiting from contact on a daily basis, these four individuals are in close contact with staff in their respective areas. It is a rare instance when all four are not aware
CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY

of a campus incident requiring resolution. The president is kept informed of any item that may be awkward, time sensitive, or potentially dangerous.

Governance is provided by seasoned college personnel who are among the first to roll up their sleeves, give time to listen to any compliment or grievance, ask others to help provide workable, meaningful solutions, or frequently “follow from the front.”

A campus that is essentially “paperless” benefits from quick and frequent email communications. A single maintained calendar alerts all campus staff and students to important events. This invites input and participation. A weekly radio spot and newspaper column further enhance communications.

Core Component—1e: Otero Junior College upholds and protects its integrity.

This table reflects a currently enrolled student survey administered mid January 2007. It was designed to capture the student voice on several items taken directly from several NCA Criteria Statements. Students were provided mission and value statements and also copies of the seven strategic initiatives for reference.

Table I
Student Perceptions on Selected Criteria Core Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions based on NCA Criteria</th>
<th>Students Responding “Yes,”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OJC accomplishes its mission</td>
<td>98.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High value on excellence and integrity</td>
<td>92.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High value on teamwork and communication</td>
<td>87.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps students achieve highest potential</td>
<td>81.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps students develop social responsibility</td>
<td>86.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a good overall learning environment</td>
<td>97.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides information about activities</td>
<td>87.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operates consistently and fairly</td>
<td>90.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students rated the college highest on its ability to accomplish its mission and on its ability to provide a good overall learning environment. Students did not rate the college as high on its ability to help them develop social responsibility or achieve their greatest potential. In a few cases, students remarked that those types of things were ultimately “up to them.” Due to the general nature of all categories, specifics determining responses certainly vary. Student written comments offer some insights.
Even though it received a rating over 87%, more activities on campus and better information regarding those events prompted several students to write comments suggesting there could be more activities for all students. While a couple of students said they did not receive the help they needed, more comments said teachers were interested, helpful, and encouraging. Statements like, “I was never turned away.” Or “They help even when you don’t need it.”

Comments were written about OJC being only two years, too small in a small town. One or two singled out least favorite teachers or the limited menu in the food court. Several comments were made concerning rude students in classes and the need to keep them quiet.


Otero Junior College’s revised mission and purpose statements clearly reflect the foundation of decisions much like they would for any modern, rural, comprehensive community college. The College’s mission and purpose statements are simple, straightforward, and understandable. The value statement and strategic initiatives help provide guidance and a clear focus on the future.
INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses four major focus areas that include recognizing multiple societal and economic trends, maintaining and strengthening quality educational programs, utilizing evaluation processes that promote institutional effectiveness and continuous improvement, and planning that aligns and enhances the organizational mission of Otero Junior College. Planning is reflected in annual “budget hearings.” Otero operates in a manner that respects past investments with regard to maintaining stable budgets to support all necessary activities and encourages growth and appropriate change. In addition to handling and processing requests through the three main activity areas of Administrative, Instructional, and Student Services, unforeseen needs are also met through accessing a carefully managed set of reserves, contingency funds, and one-time “special projects” dollars. Appropriate feedback loops are in constant operation on campus through this three-pronged organizational structure with each Vice President equally responsible for disseminating and collecting area and employee specific information. Criterion Two speaks to preparing for the future.

Criterion Two: The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. One prevailing theme that runs through the college and its people focuses on what is best for students. Decisions are easier to make if a solid case is made showing students benefit. In pursuit of that goal, it has frequently been stated that “It’s not so much a question of whether or not we can hit the target, but carefully selecting the targets. Because, institutionally, we know we can accomplish whatever it is we choose.” College leaders are charged with identifying and implementing improvements.

Core Component—2a: Otero Junior College realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

The organization’s planning documents reflect a sound understanding of the Colleges current capacity. Otero Junior College employs professionals in all areas. The college identifies staffing needs and moves


**CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE**

carefully to secure necessary faculty, administrators, and classified staff to fulfill those needs. The college has a long history of budgeting wisely and investing soundly. Capital construction proposals are developed and ready for presentation during opportune times in the state funding process. Preliminary work is done on several relevant grants in order to take advantage of timing on agency established deadlines. Facility utilization has received considerable attention over the last ten years. More square footage has been recaptured and dedicated to instructional space to accommodate new program development and enrollment growth.

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) requires the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) to enter into a Performance Contract that stipulates specific criteria and benchmarks. Because the CCCS is required to develop and submit a strategic plan, each college is represented in that document rather than maintaining a separate college plan. System goals are set and specific goals like enrollment increases are monitored individually and as a system. Details are negotiated annually with CCHE.

For a period of several years that had its beginnings in the late nineties and up until 2003, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education required planning and reporting through a Quality Indicator System (QIS). Colleges were measured against each other and themselves in several critical areas. Many of the same elements surfaced in performance contracts, but one significant difference came into play. Planning documents that were developed by individual colleges were no longer acceptable. As a thirteen member college system, strategic planning needed to be represented by a single plan, coordinated and submitted through the system office. Previously required five year master planning documents and annual academic planning reports have been replaced by a single system contract; individual colleges adhere to all provisions and unique components may be represented by a portion of that document; each is governed by all requirements specified therein. Basic performance contract guiding principles have been presented to assist all higher education entities in defining and meeting goals. These principles cover goal definition and expectation, measurements for true reform, outputs, clear data collection, roles and accountability. Basic Performance Contract Guiding Principles

CCHE and CCCS have entered into a "Performance Contract.” Within this contract is the requirement for the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) to adopt a fully transferable,
CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

foundational general core curriculum that corresponds with the GT Pathways. (Colorado’s statewide guaranteed transfer programs for general education was created and endorsed by the GE 25 Council and CCHE). Key elements are provided as excerpts below; full details on the performance contract can be reviewed at [http://www.state.co.us/cche/performance/final/sbccoel.pdf](http://www.state.co.us/cche/performance/final/sbccoel.pdf). This link also provides language from the General Assembly that speaks to “greater flexibility and a more focused accountability…goals set forth in the performance contract must be measurable and tailored to the role and mission of each institution.”

Additional planning documents relating to the systems contract can be located at the following sites. A General Education council (GE-25) was established and consists of twenty-five representatives from all of the separate governing bodies in Colorado’s higher education system. [http://www.state.co.us/cche/academic/transfer/ccfaq.pdf](http://www.state.co.us/cche/academic/transfer/ccfaq.pdf) This is an advisory council to the director of CCHE. The council also implemented and is charged with maintaining the state’s Guaranteed Transfer process designed to assist students in guaranteeing transfer of 60 credits to a four year college and subsequently earning a four year degree in most cases within 120 hours. [http://www.state.co.us/cche/gened/gtpathways/index.pdf](http://www.state.co.us/cche/gened/gtpathways/index.pdf)

Otero’s planning documents demonstrate that attention is being paid to emerging factors such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization. Otero Junior College is well known for maintaining premium computer systems for both students and staff. The college successfully implemented a high-speed, high-bandwidth infrastructure that brought the highest grade of internet connectivity to an area of southeastern Colorado that needed this enhancement. Early discussions with the lead CIS engineer at Colorado State University helped position the college to be a major player and provider of services. Partnering with the University of Colorado also enabled this project to identify needs in twenty-two school districts. The Arkansas Valley Technology Project was listed as Phase I of the Connect Colorado Education Partnership designed to “combine state-of-the-art technology with visionary applications to lead the way for the future of Colorado.”

This measure suggests those choosing to remain in a rural area do not need to isolate themselves from population and economic centers simply because of the local terrain and their personal geography. Further, it makes a strong statement that enfranchises an entire community, bringing not only hope but actual dollars into an economy that can stabilize and grow populations that have emigrated. Many companies in the area do business worldwide. In fact,
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some companies currently locating in the valley find the economy of the region advantageous. The idea of keeping jobs in the country and actually retrieving jobs that had previously moved overseas is a reality. These types of connections help craft a future.

Connect Colorado is an informal consortium among the state’s public higher education institutions, the Department of Education, State Library and state government that, in 1996, created a plan to work with the private sector and the state to establish a telecommunications infrastructure capable of supporting the data, research, and communication needs of all public entities statewide. Higher educations most experienced professionals in computing, data networking, network management, and network operations worked with educational experts to bring the internet into the classroom and into agencies to support community networks.

Viewed as the initial wedge of a statewide plan, the project targeted seven counties in the lower Arkansas Valley: Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Las Animas, Otero, and Prowers. This area was viewed as an ideal demonstration model for the introductory phase of a long range plan to provide high speed, reliable, and scalable telecommunications connectivity for communities large and small across the state. The Arkansas Valley was selected by Connect Colorado for initial deployment for several key reasons:

- Strong business community support
- Established technological expertise at Otero Junior College
- Technologically underserved school districts in the valley
- Committed leadership roles of Otero Junior College and Lamar Community College
- Technical training and user support availability

Course offerings at Otero Junior College are varied and are planned with sensitivity to tradition and demand. Evening course offerings continue to expand as Otero seeks to meet the needs of students who work full time or need to squeeze in that extra class. College responsiveness to changing demographics helps keep curricula and programs fresh and expanding. By way of illustration, one of the most recent program expansions has been in response to trends in the nursing job market. The full nursing program is now being offered in a part-time evenings and weekends format.

During the summer, a scaled-down more conventional semester schedule is available for students. Course offerings generally revolve around the more
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traditional offerings of English, speech, humanities, math, science, history, social sciences, business, and computers. There is an emphasis on catching up, getting ahead, and/or remediation. This is also a time when a number of students avail themselves of the opportunity to take the increasingly popular online or guided study courses.

Planning documents show careful attention to the organization’s function in a multicultural society. One exciting change within the last ten years has been the development and expansion of extended educational programs utilizing institutions outside the immediate geographic area of the college. Within the state of Colorado, Otero Junior College has a 60 + 60 agreement with every four year college and university in the state. In addition, the Adams State College Extended Studies program was initiated by Otero and currently offers programs in Elementary Education and Business. Sociology and other programs are presently in development stages with Adams State College. Otero maintains some alignment with para-educators and math classes for professional educators and is currently initiating transfer discussions in regard to Outdoor Recreation, Sports Marketing, Business, Nursing, and other disciplines with Colorado State University-Pueblo. Colorado State University-Fort Collins offers direct transfer to Soil and Crop Science, various College of Agriculture majors, and Nutrition/Dietetics. At Otero Junior College planning for the future includes the potential to further expand extended educational programs.

Benefiting from a long history of agriculture, the college and the surrounding areas have grown close. Migrant workers have taken advantage of the rural setting; state and federal dollars have supported preschool and family literacy projects. Because the Arkansas Valley is a low income area, local educational opportunities need to be maximized in order to provide and retain a reliable, skilled workforce. People stay in an area that is economically rewarding and can provide adequate healthcare. The Arkansas Valley Technology Project represents a powerful, long-term partnership between private industry, Otero Junior College, Lamar Community College, twenty-two school districts, eleven libraries, four hospitals, Colorado State University, six CSU extension offices, the University of Colorado, the CU Health Sciences Center, the Connect Colorado consortium, and the Community College System Office in Denver.

Two underlying principles guided the technical design: 1) ability to expand access widely and equitability and 2) furnish the technology to extend and support future state benefits from this system. The plan needed to be viable and flexible. Covering 13,500 square miles in the southeast corner of the state of Colorado required over 600 miles of fiber optic cable.
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The college’s planning processes include effective environmental scanning. The Connect Colorado partnership is representative of many OJC initiatives in that it attempts to resolve issues presented in numerous discussions with interested constituencies. Such projects are developed in response to requests, suggestions, and concerns from individuals and agencies within the area. The technology project was designed to enhance educational opportunities of students, teachers, and residents in a seven county region by:

- Establishing a high-speed network supporting interactive video conferencing and full internet access
- Creating multimedia learning laboratories to support teacher training and student instruction
- Developing centers for technical support and training at the college
- Identifying local training needs and developing partnerships to respond
- Enabling local libraries to expand their roles community learning centers for lifelong learning
- Creating new opportunities for small regional hospitals to exchange information quickly and effectively and to meet their needs for professional education as well as remote delivery of diagnostics and other clinical services

The Connect Colorado grant provided dollars for technology but would not have been successful unless a healthy partnership with local business had been established. The college along with Southeast Colorado Power Association saw a blended future that relied on new communications—a new utility.

A focus on increased enrollments married with a request from area schools and parents led to creation of a women’s softball team. This resulted in approximately thirty new students a year and very quickly a string of regional championships and national attention.

The organizational environment is supportive of innovation and change. Otero is viewed as being a stable feature in the region. Many generational families have received their education at OJC. Several people have worked over thirty years at the college. Changes in people, changes in programs, and changes in the physical layout embrace a rich history. Otero Junior College remains strong, however, from making appropriate changes, not remaining the same in all aspects. The College Effectiveness Council begun in the late nineties proved to be cumbersome and less effective than a return to a smaller
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Administrative Council. Operating with three vice presidents (one serving as interim president) required a new streamlined approach to governance. This arrangement continued with a smooth transition when a new president was appointed.

The Southern Colorado Educational Opportunity Center (SCEOC) is a federally sponsored satellite program that assists low-income and first generation individuals to pursue post-secondary educational goals. Admission application procedures, financial aid preparation, career, and educational planning are some of the services offered through the SCEOC. Otero works directly with Colorado State University-Pueblo to implement this program.

Competing area agencies oftentimes found themselves not collaborating as effectively as they might. Gentle tensions existed and a passive gridlock was not uncommon. Through grant available dollars and over a year’s worth of difficult meetings, representative agreed to allow OJC, working as a neutral broker, to establish and strengthen new relationships, facility and service availability, and sustained support for area entities. The Southeast Colorado Resource Enterprise (SCORE) Center is a one-stop facility that was opened in 2006 to meet the needs of economic development, business, housing and non-profit organizations in the region. SCORE houses the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), La Junta Economic Development Alliance, OJC's Small Business Management Program, the Grant Resource Office, and a satellite office for Tri-County Housing. The facility is designed to allow various entities to pool their resources and work together to help boost economic development efforts in the area. It was funded through a grant by HUD's Hispanic Serving Institutions Assisting Communities program.

SBDC works with future and existing small businesses in Otero, Bent, Crowley, Prowers, Baca and Kiowa counties to develop business plans and create successful enterprises. The La Junta Economic Development Alliance facilitates business retention, expansion and attraction in the region through the formation of partnerships. OJC's Small Business Management Program is an educational certificate program that enables small business owners to learn more about business planning, record keeping, financial analysis and marketing. The Grant Resource Office, operated by Otero Junior College, is designed to assist area non-profit organizations in seeking grant funding and putting together successful proposals. Tri-County Housing, which has its primary office in Fowler, has established a satellite office in the SCORE Center to make meeting more convenient for clients who live in eastern Otero County or in Bent County.
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Southeast Colorado Business Retention, Expansion, and Attraction (SEBREA) is a newly formed six-county group of economic developers, county commissioners, and colleges partnering with the Small Business Development Center to improve Southeast Colorado. This group will work with Enterprise Zones, Southern Colorado Economic Development (SCEED) and to a certain extent, Action 22.

Action 22 is a volunteer-driven membership organization of individuals, cities, communities, counties, associations, businesses and organizations in a 22-county region, banding together for a stronger voice on statewide discussion tables, the State Legislature and in Washington, D.C. Action 22's mission is to serve as a leader for cohesive action to affect change and shape the future of Southern Colorado. The group’s principles and position statement regarding higher education can be found at: http://www.action22.org/pdf/PrinHIGHERED.doc

SEBREA and local economic development leaders are working with experts from Sandia and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) on the six different types of alternative energy sources and how rural Colorado counties can benefit economically from alternative fuel businesses. The project is designed to bring renewable energy experts together with city and county officials, economic developers, and grant funders to create understanding, cooperation, and future opportunities.

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) is a leader in the U.S. Department of Energy's effort to secure an energy future for the nation that is environmentally and economically sustainable. Since 1949, Sandia National Laboratories has developed science-based technologies that support our national security. Today, nearly 300 million Americans depend on Sandia's technology solutions to solve national and global threats to peace and freedom. Sandia's mission is to meet national needs through science and technology, people, infrastructure, and partnerships.

Otero Junior College incorporates in its planning those aspects of its history and heritage that it wishes to preserve and continue. It makes sense to invest wisely in things that matter most. Followers of the college story will proudly recount conversations with former presidents and staff and current administrators, faculty, and staff that center around being thrifty, tight, conservative, cheap, frugal, committed, loyal, family, going the extra mile, being off the clock, respecting fellow professionals. These principles result from and contribute to a belief that education matters. Early mottoes stated: “Education--the right of all men.” Being politically correct, the college rephrased the slogan to: “A little college is good for you.”
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A committee was formed to collect the archives of Otero Junior College’s 64-year-old history. The Otero Junior College Archives Committee was charged with the responsibility of identifying, collecting, cataloging, and safely storing materials that have historical significance to the college. Once organized, the historical memorabilia will be available at the Wheeler Library to anyone interested in learning and telling Otero Junior College’s story.

To accomplish the task of collecting memorabilia for the historical collection, the committee has requested assistance from the public. The committee’s ongoing search includes—but is not limited to—yearbooks, newspapers, college catalogs, photographs, scrapbooks, videos, films, important correspondence, programs, sports memorabilia, posters, recordings, news clippings, oral histories, design and building plans, club minutes, course offerings, college programs, Otero Arts Festival and Otero Players files, issues of Chinook, and Penny Poetry, lists of each year’s graduates, college council information, and biographies of people for whom buildings have been named. Anyone connected with the college over the years—students, faculty, administrators, staff, and their families and friends—have been encouraged to look through their belongings to see if they have items relating to OJC that might make nice additions to the archives. Even seemingly small or inconsequential items might be a part or even the keystone needed to build the whole of any body of information.

The Otero Junior College Archives Committee is made up of both former and current staff members. Representatives from all facets of the staff and student body who have been involved with the college over the years are welcome and encouraged to participate. While the committee’s biggest task is to accumulate historical memorabilia, the addition of recent items will be just as important. Committee members agree that the project will be ongoing and will never be completed as long as the college exists.

The organization clearly identifies authority for decision making about organizational goals. Issues filter through the Administrative Council, a group of leaders who serve in the roles of managers, supervisors, and planners and who, as daily practitioners, work alongside a competent set of directors, coordinators, department chairs, professional technicians, and faculty to determine direction. After pertinent information gathering and thoughtful counsel, final decisions rest with the president.

Core Component—2b: Otero Junior College’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.
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The organization’s resources are adequate for achievement of the educational quality it claims to provide. The college sets clear, reachable goals and has met them in terms of enrollments, technology acquisition and utilization, system compliance and support, and securing provisions with regard to professional development for all staff. Students continue to seek out educational opportunities at Otero; they can and do state their thoughts on instruction and satisfaction with the college, whether or not they feel their needs have been met. Faculty, administrators, and staff members work to improve content and technique.

Otero Junior College has a well developed budgeting process that reflects needs at all levels to support its educational mission. Its assertive approach to gaining additional resources is well complemented by its conservative approach to budgeting fully with occasional frills, maintaining a sensible contingency, investing reserves wisely, and funding when and where needed as the college is able. Battling for and helping to define and develop funding formulas has been a strength of OJC administrators. They are respected throughout the state and often consulted on financial impact within the state system. Student success and learning is the guiding goal, but financial solvency has long been a hallmark of the college—getting out front and staying out front.

Otero has always maintained a practice of strong budgetary control. Within this structure has always been an unwritten conservative policy with regard to spending. The College’s financial records have shown throughout the years a strong financial position with an adequate reserve to sustain the College through good times as well as bad. The College has never been cited in an internal or external audit for any fiscal solvency issue. The reputation of Otero Junior College in the areas of educational and financial strength has always been strong.

Even though requests of this nature are rare, Otero Junior College’s annual budget request and the results of its biennial external audit are public information. As such, these reports are readily available to anyone who requests such information. A copy of the annual OJC budget request is available for public examination in Wheeler Library, and three copies of the annual budget request are also sent to the State Publications Library at the Colorado Department of Education each year.

Plans for resource development and allocation document an organizational commitment to supporting and strengthening the quality of the education it provides. Grant dollars are available to underwrite or provide seed money for specific initiatives like technology dollars for bridging the digital divide. External vendors like CISCO can offer fundamental program costs and

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Otero Junior College 2007 Self-Study
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training to engage colleges and students to produce numbers for qualified employees in specific areas. The college offers bread and butter options and invests in solid choices. Allied health fields are being constantly monitored for affordability and feasibility. Linesman programs for increasing technology and communication fields are in the mix. Small Business Management is a program starting the spring of 2006 to increase enrollments and to meet the economic development needs of the area, providing education and professional consulting for business people to better equip them to plan, start, and maintain a viable business and strengthen existing businesses. Colorado First dollars are available for attracting new businesses, expanding existing businesses, and training incumbent workers in new areas of technology to increase production and competitiveness. The college can provide or facilitate customized training as it handles state dollars to assist.

College financial documents demonstrate the appropriate allocation and use of resources to support its educational programs. Financial reports are monitored on a quarterly basis by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education Budget Office. State Board staff not only looks for accuracy in reporting, but also look for consistency of expenditures in regard to budget categories across the system. The base budget allocations from the State Board is set up to adequately and fairly distribute money to individual community colleges in support of educational programs and services. Otero Junior College has been meticulous in its efforts to fund the educational areas in which the state earmarks funds. The result has been a consistent expenditure pattern in the areas of educational and support services.

On an annual basis the college participates in an external audited as part of the Colorado Community College System. The audit is conducted by an external auditing firm hired by the CCCS system and approved by the Colorado State Controller’s Office. The auditors do some on-site evaluation and sampling as well as a volume of documentation sent electronically and through the mail. The audit is completed in the fall, with a closing meeting with appropriate administrators in the late fall. The final report is approved late in the fall and submitted to various state agencies including the Colorado Community College System, Colorado Commission on Higher Education, Colorado State Controller and the State of Colorado Auditing office.

Due to increases in enrollment, the physical capacity of Otero Junior College is currently at near capacity level. Little available space goes unused during the course of a traditional school week with the exception of afternoon times that have not historically attracted students. This may be an area for exploration along with hybrid and online delivery to accommodate growth
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and take full advantage of existing space. Afternoon college or block scheduling for specific programs may also accommodate some growth. Night offerings are well attended, but many students are opting to take an online version if available.

The college uses its human resources effectively. It is frequently stated that the success of many organizations is dependent on its people. Otero’s culture has allowed it to manage to reward staff even in tough budget times with raises equal to or higher than other Colorado system colleges. Additional insurance benefits have been provided on a month by month basis to mitigate rising prices in all areas; this has been done on a flat scale to assist all employees regardless of office or years of service.

Otero has a suitable number of faculty but realizes that full-time faculty are responsible for many overload courses. It is the policy of the college to offer these to full-time folks first—a “working fringe benefit.” Administrators and staff on campus also fulfill many separate roles, and Otero has the leanest administrative structure in the Colorado state system. Simply, put, more people do more things. The benefit: people have a good understanding of many college areas of focus and are able to work together more quickly to pinpoint and resolve issues, to share new strategies. The downside: people have a lot on their plates and have multiple responsibilities, and cross training isn’t always as comprehensive as it might be. Otero is not bullet proof.

The organization intentionally develops its human resources to meet future changes. Many staff members are in different positions at the college than those for which they were originally hired. Bookkeepers become managers; faculty, directors, or human resources have become vice presidents; coaches become faculty; tutors become faculty or technical professionals. Custodians become supervisors and assistants become head coaches; part-timers become faculty or president. This metamorphosis does not happen for every individual. It is not automatic or an entitlement. This development of talent strengthens the college and supports its mission.

The college embraces the idea that individuals can and do grow in their experience and their abilities. Careful initial hiring and nurturing of staff lays the foundation for mentoring, a solid career, and movement within the college structure. Otero values ideas from good people regardless of where they are from, but the college is also unafraid to reward those who have made a commitment to the college and the area. Everybody pulls their weight at Otero. Many would say they have more “opportunities” than they can manage. Individual talents are viewable and can be integrated into existing
positions. It’s a good sign if people ask questions and the first thing they hear is not “No.” Usually, suggestions are met with an air of discovery and encouragement. Everybody is expected to do their job.

_Otero’s history of financial resource development and investment documents a forward-looking concern for ensuring educational quality (e.g., investments in faculty development, technology, learning support services, new or renovated facilities)._ One former president of the college, Dr. William McDivitt, exerted his influence on the college, the area, the state legislature, and thousands of students during his forty years as head of the college. He knew community businesses and individuals supported the college and was reluctant to ask them for additional financial support, respecting the fact that most people struggled enough simply making a living. Some corporate sponsors do support athletics, international activities, and a few other specific causes on campus, but, for the most part, OJC does not organize major contribution drives. The current foundation is a low-profile entity that assists the college in achieving mutually identified goals that benefit the school.

Professional development dollars are budgeted each year, and staff members are encouraged to take advantage of this support to attend meaningful training or conferences that will increase their ability or understanding of their subject or teaching techniques. Smart classrooms allow students and faculty to benefit from direct internet access, projectors for PowerPoint or other programs. All classrooms have this capability. A functional web platform enables students and faculty to connect in new ways both inside and outside the classroom.

Learning support services currently houses a coordinator and two full-time degreed tutors. New technologies include computerized math and reading materials and new computer stations. A full-time instructional technician is available for faculty training and support, and troubleshooting for faculty, administrative, and technical problems. Facilities for educational assistance are upgraded just as classrooms and labs. Grant dollars and dedicated general funds provide one of the best environments in Colorado.

Campus housing is at nearly maximum use level; however, there are currently only exploratory plans for housing expansion. This might show as securing additional housing on the south site or developing an adjacent neighborhood of multiple units specifically designed to house approximately twenty-four students who would be located on campus allowing students to access meal plans in the student center. Maintenance and renovation of housing facilities remain constants for the college. Housing is subject to
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considerable wear and tear that necessitates ongoing refurbishing. Maintenance records reflect excellent commitment to preventive maintenance of all campus buildings.

Need for housing also changes, and the college must remain responsive in order to more fully serve students. By way of illustration, one unit adjacent to the campus that had served multiple uses over the past few years was revitalized as recently as fall of the 2005-2006 school year to provide close-in housing for international students as well as OJC Law Enforcement Training Academy students.

In 1995 the east portion of the Student Center (director’s office, game room, and multipurpose room) was renovated to house a food court and eating area for dorm and campus students; seating capacity is 176. Food stations include special-of-the-day, pizza, grill, sub sandwiches, salad bar, and beverage and dessert areas. New chairs, carpet, tables, and booths were purchased. Reach-in warmers, freezers, coolers, pizza oven, grill, griddle, and stations completed the remodeling.

A permanent student game room was established by moving the Associated Student Government room and eliminating the listening lounge. The old snack bar was changed into a combination unit that houses the conference room and the Associated Student Government room. The auxiliary service office was moved to the east end of the bookstore.

In 2003 the banquet room was remodeled to make it more aesthetically pleasing. This was accomplished by eliminating brick walls and installing new carpet, new lighting, and a new sound system. New upholstered chairs and round tables were purchased to allow for a total seating capacity of 320. A new roof was installed, and new exterior doors with electronic locks also have been added. The remaining items in this building will be addressed in a comprehensive remodel during the summer of 2007. Architectural planning has been underway for bookstore expansion, additional student seating for main meals, and a refurbishing of the kitchen area and all major food preparations units.

Planning processes are flexible enough to respond to unanticipated needs for program reallocation, downsizing, or growth, and the organization has a history of achieving its planning goals. When all campus participants enter into budget discussions, they know they are responsible for accurately predicting costs for the coming year. Fixed costs come first, and then all other items are prioritized. Usually, the conservative culture monitors itself with realistic, unselfish requests. One-time “special project” dollars are used
CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

if funds are available. The college does set aside a contingency fund in excess of the state requirements. Otero Junior College can afford to respond to virtually any unanticipated needs because—in that sense—they have been anticipated.

Both the current president and the vice president for administrative services served on the statewide committee to help develop a viable funding formula. Their ideas reflect a fair disbursement for all colleges across the system and represented rural colleges well. The college has been able to hire new positions mid-year even during tight budget times if the investment was warranted. In the last twenty years, downsizing has usually been marked by a change of direction or reassessment more than a need to tighten a budget. Goals are reached.

Core Component—2c: Otero Junior College’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

The organization demonstrates that its evaluation processes provide evidence that its performance meets its stated expectations for institutional effectiveness. One example of helpful, meaningful feedback is the monthly budget reports for all major accounts. This report shows total dollars spent to date and also provides a percentage of total budget expended. In other words, if thirty percent of the school year has passed and eighty-four percent of the budget has been spent it might show early purchases in fall semester to cover the entire year for a program like cosmetology. On the other hand, it also tracks if a budget is over the thirty percent allotted that an account manager needs to limit spending or request additional assistance. When science labs are fifty-percent spent, more may be required for fully implementing a new microbiology course. This method provides a heads up for department chairs and college fiscal managers as well. These are sent to each of the three vice presidents who share responsibilities for all areas of the college.

The college maintains effective systems for collecting, analyzing, and using organizational information. Otero has fully utilized the Student Information Systems (SIS) software successfully for over twenty years. The college has also utilized a system developed Data Warehouse for tracking student information, program specific details, and all budget considerations. With a conversion to a new software system, the college is positioned to better connect with other community colleges in the state. Information will be uniform across the board as will most operating practices. A new Director for Research was appointed in November of 2006 to help coordinate efforts for each college and the Colorado Community College System office. Data
will be available and easier to track, allowing all internal entities to communicate more effectively and make the best possible decisions based on current relevant information.

The Colorado Community College System is implementing the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to centralize, standardize and integrate a system-wide information technology solution for our colleges. The primary objectives of this program are to:

- Provide an information system environment that enhances the collective operation of all academic, student and administrative units
- Redesign existing processes to leverage the improved capability and best practices and reduce redundant data entry and departmental shadow systems
- Significantly increase the flow of information and access to business operations across the community college system
- Enhance access to information to support decision-making
- Increase user autonomy through web-based self-service products

The Colorado Community College System with its thirteen colleges and affiliates has launched the Banner Program to create an environment in which all stakeholders have ready-access to the information required for day-to-day operations, reporting, and decision-making; one that enables the system to respond quickly to needs for change and adaptation. The following statement was taken from a system email issued by Nancy McCallin within six months of her assuming the CCCS presidency.

"I understand that during this process there have been many questions regarding how standardized we want to make the ERP system. This email should serve to clear up that question. In any process or system that is being put in place, I want to achieve the highest level of standardization, consistency among colleges, systemization, and centralization possible. If there is a choice in which policy to adopt or implement, please make the choice that yields the highest level of standardization or centralization possible. As you may be aware, House Bill 04-1086 requires us to put in place "...a centralized, standardized, integrated, system-wide information technology solution." The bill resulted after many months of task force meetings and is now state law. Therefore, this should clear up any ambiguity when deciding what type of a procedure or system to put in place. McCallin 4/2005"
In addition, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education manages higher education information for the state, and all SURDS and IPEDS data are pulled from information submitted by student services.

**The Student Unit Record Database Systems (SURDS):** provides information formerly used in QIS and tracks performance contract data that includes: Student Enrollment File, Undergraduate Applicant File, Degrees Granted, Teacher Education, Student Financial Aid.

**The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)** established as the core postsecondary education data collection program for NCES, is a system of surveys designed to collect data from all primary providers of postsecondary education. IPEDS is a single, comprehensive system designed to encompass all institutions and educational organizations whose primary purpose is to provide postsecondary education. The IPEDS system is built around a series of interrelated surveys to collect institution-level data in such areas as enrollments, program completions, faculty, staff, and finances.

**Appropriate data and feedback loops are available and used throughout the organization to support continuous improvement.** Accurate reporting and continuous monitoring of data is handled by key sub-units of the college. Information either filters through or emanates from the three vice presidents and the president. The college and its personnel certainly deal with situations when they arise quickly—usually effectively. Rather than focusing on problems and approaching each with a defensive damage control mentality, most people on campus deal with it and move on. Time and energy is spent better by focusing on what is right and working well and building upon that. This approach keeps the focus on celebrating what’s working and investigating how it can work better.

**Periodic reviews of academic and administrative sub-units contribute to improvement of the organization.** All sub-units receive ongoing reviews. The college sets clear, reachable goals and has met them in terms of enrollments, technology acquisition and utilization, system compliance and support, and securing provisions with regard to professional development for all staff. Students continue to seek out educational opportunities at Otero; they can and do state their thoughts on instruction and satisfaction with the college, whether or not they feel their needs have been met. Faculty, administrators, and staff members work to improve content and technique. One example is displayed in a newly adopted practice that affects the entire college:
Once a year, all web pages that currently reside in the ojc.edu domain will be reviewed for compliance in accordance with the policies and procedures set forth in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, §1194.22. These include graphics that include alternative text, multimedia presentations that include captioning, information conveyed solely with color will have a non-color text representation, be readable without the aid of a style sheet, have redundant links available for server-side image maps, identify row and column headers, associate headers with their data cells, provide frame navigation and facilitation, avoid designs that flicker with a frequency greater than 2Hz and lower than 55Hz, content displayed using a scripting language must have a screen reader alternative, all online forms must be accessible via assistive technology, and in the event the above standards cannot be met any other way a text-only page must be provided.

In order to accomplish these ends, each page of the ojc.edu website will be scanned using the web-based software provided by Watchfire WebXACT located at webxact.watchfire.com. All priority one and priority two errors discovered via this process will be corrected at the earliest opportunity. In the event that corrections have been made, yet WebXACT still reports an error, then efforts will be made to document the type of error and the steps taken to fix it. All pages and their error status will be kept in a report that will be made available to staff at any time.

Feedback that helps govern and direct critical elements occurs with this type overall activity that affects everyone and every operation on campus; other reviews might be small and localized enough that they simply require posting new hours for specific lab or instructional assistance.

*The organization provides adequate support for its evaluation and assessment processes.* Otero Junior College ensures that funds will be available for warranted activities. Staffing is provided to track student evaluations of the organization and evaluations of faculty and course instruction. Additional dollars are earmarked to support continuous improvement in delivering the best most effective learning experience possible. Changes are encouraged through frequent, regular conferencing and observations.

**Core Component—2d:** *All levels of planning align with Otero Junior College’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.*
Coordinated planning processes center on the mission documents that define vision, values, goals, and strategic priorities for the organization. The college, as a part of the community college system, has a college segment within the system strategic plan. This is developed in concert with the system office and reflects performance contracts with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. Colleges were required to submit Annual Academic Planning Reports to the State System office until fall of 2005 when performance contracts replaced this activity. Instructional planning consists of ongoing review and discussion with department chairs and appropriate college staff. Adjustments are made each semester in regards to staffing, program development, and facilities use. Major decisions are evident during spring semester when submission of budgets with rationale for fiscal support is accomplished.

Because the Academic Planning Report is no longer required or being utilized by the state system, monthly or bimonthly meetings (frequently more) of the President’s Administrative Council made up of the president and three vice presidents focuses on planning and growth. Monthly advisory council meetings focus on the same. Items like growing Online and Guided Studies hybrids come from these discussions. Selection of internet platforms such as Blackboard and WebCT took years of study. Equipping classrooms with Smart Stations and internet was a conscious choice and response to student expectations and the improvement of a professional learning environment.

Planning processes link with budgeting processes. Several key budget items are dictated out of necessity. Salaries, operation, and maintenance demand the lion’s share of available dollars, leaving little discretionary money to be invested wisely in all other remaining aspects of the college. This part of the budget reflects needs for the coming year on an account-by-account basis.

All accounts represented by one of three vice presidents or the president as primary reviewer/builders and advocate for equipment, supplies, services requiring any fiscal change.

Otero Junior College is proud of its reputation for being one of the cleanest and most attractive campuses in the Colorado community college system. Special attention is given to grounds maintenance and improvement with the knowledge that a pleasant working/learning environment yields positive results. A ten-year history of maintenance and beautification projects can be found at Project Description.

Although capital construction was halted in Colorado for a period of five years, with the recent passage of Referendum C there has been some
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movement on new building. Projects approved in Colorado’s emergency fiscal situation consisted primarily of health and safety projects for higher education. Physical upgrades on campus have been limited to projects that qualified for high priority maintenance like roofs, have been self-funded, or funded from alternative revenue streams. Otero is fortunate to have skilled and qualified physical plant staff to manage and produce projects that result in attractive learning environments. Many projects that have been completed reflect cost reductions of up to fifty percent because much of the design and construction was handled in-house.

Implementation of the organization’s planning is evident in its operations. Each individual on campus is responsible for relating significant issues to appropriate action centers. And “cooperating sub-units” is more accurate than “divisions.” People need to be supplied with what they need in order to do their jobs in the best way possible, the best they can. Otero follows planning that develops its human and program resources.

The well-being of any college is dependent upon its ability to carry on its primary business: education. In order to do business, a college must offer programs suitable to student needs and enroll a steady stream of students. Fall 2005-2006 enrollment at Otero Junior College was 1618 students. This represents the third largest total enrollment in the ten-year period since the last North Central evaluation. The highest enrollment occurred in the 2005 school year where total enrollment was shown as 1676. In general, there has been a consistent upward trend in enrollment with a single remarkable peak in 1998. This peak may be attributed to high enrollment by inmates in area prisons. After that time, state funding was cut for prison educational programs that were attached directly to community colleges. Currently,
there is renewed discussion around offering a limited scope of courses in prisons. Enrollment increases after 1998 reflect a rise in general population students who chose the community college system. The 1998 peak was essentially an anomaly in what was already a steady upward enrollment pattern for Otero Junior College. Specific yearly enrollment data may be seen below:

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<td>1995</td>
<td>1091</td>
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Otero has experienced an interesting trend reversal in full-time/part-time student ratios in the past ten years. In 1996, 62% of students enrolled in OJC courses were designated as full-time. In the current year, however, 52% of OJC students are part-time students. This change may be linked to an increase in online course offerings through the state community college system and the full-term and compressed guided study courses designed by OJC. Both course types provide increased convenience for educational access. A more detailed look at this trend is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>844</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>871</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Average age of students enrolled at Otero Junior College has changed over the past ten years. By a considerable amount, the largest enrollment group has consistently been students in the 18- to 20-year-old age group—what may be considered the normal matriculation group from secondary schools. On average, this group has consistently comprised slightly over 36% of enrolled students over the last ten years. The overall consistency in enrollment of the 18- to 20-year-old group is not carried over in the other age category groups, however. Enrollment in the 21-24 and over 45 age groups has risen slightly over time, but the 25-29, 30-34, and 35-44 age groups have experienced some minor declines. Perhaps the most remarkable change in enrollment is found in the increasing numbers of students under the age of eighteen. Enrollment of this group has nearly tripled—from 6.1% in 1996 to the current 16.1% in 2006. This age group now takes its place as the second largest group enrolled at OJC. A dramatic increase in the number of concurrent course offerings is largely responsible for this phenomenon. Eight school districts in the Otero Junior College service area participate in offering in-house concurrent courses to students.
Physical Plant activities are well planned and well documented; controlled maintenance is also tracked and forecast. Future plans are reflected in self-funding, general funding, and auxiliary funding dollars. Operational expenses show considerable dollars go to salaries, but additional tables show significant dollars have been invested in grounds and landscaping, building maintenance, building equipment and custodial supplies.

Careful attention is paid to evaluation of the physical condition of facilities on the Otero Junior College campus. Physical Plant work order history for the past ten years reflects a proactive maintenance effort. Also, the Physical Plant’s plan is to have the Forecasted Facilities Condition Index at the targeted 85% as seen on the next page:
Within the last couple of years, Otero Junior College has been able to reap considerable monetary savings as a result of the city of La Junta’s installation of a reverse osmosis water conditioning system. The cost of salt for use in campus-wide water softening systems has decreased markedly since only the boiler systems on campus now use salt. Water quality due to hardness is an ongoing issue in the Arkansas Valley, and at one point, the installation of a reverse osmosis system was considered for at least one area of the campus: the Student Center. The decision of the city of La Junta to move to a city-wide system was a blessing in disguise for Otero, and after some initial plumbing issues were resolved, savings in overall plumbing fixture and pipe replacement helps contribute to budgetary savings. Good water quality on campus may also contribute to increased use of campus facilities by outside groups.

**Long-range strategic planning processes allow for reprioritization of goals when necessary because of changing environments.** Degree and certificate demand and completion rates do drive course offerings, hiring, and facility usage. Otero’s ten-year program enrollment history may be further reviewed at [10 Year Enrollment History by Program](#). The junior college’s ability to respond quickly is one of its most valuable assets. Several outside
organizations have been impressed that when they sit down at a table to get information it is there. They have remarked that it is encouraging when someone representing the college has the authority to enter into a contract very quickly and move the process ahead. This has been true of business representatives and those partners from other institutions of higher education.

On several occasions, the college has been able to make changes to appropriately accommodate requests and, in many cases, offer solutions to outside or affiliated groups that benefited them without establishing a further relationship with the school. One business seeking to relocate in southern Colorado was unaware that Workforce Centers provided screening for potential employees. This saved the company time and money at their home office located away from the college service area. In another case, utilization of two-way video was critical to another college in its ability to resolve alternative delivery issues for baccalaureate programs.

Concurrent courses were initiated utilizing local teachers at host high schools. Additionally, students from participating districts as well as school districts that do not have participating concurrent teachers come directly to the OJC campus to access courses through PSEO. This influx of students under the age of eighteen into traditional college classrooms has created both opportunities and challenges for the college. Increased student numbers bring welcome FTE, but there also exist challenges of discipline and demands of courses that create obstacles for younger students who find they must compete with the more seasoned traditional and non-traditional student populations. It is clear, however, that a need is being filled, and it is expected that concurrent course offerings will not only continue but may actually increase.

While many college campuses struggle with the issue of parking, Otero Junior College has addressed the issue of parking access with fervor over the last ten years. Available parking has gone from 489 spaces in the 1996–1997 to a present parking capacity of 620 spaces. This represents one parking space for approximately every 2.5 students currently enrolled at OJC. Careful attention has been paid to make sure that accessible parking spaces for students with disabilities are present throughout the campus. Lot locations ensure that no one need walk much more than a block to access any part of campus. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of parking on the OJC campus is the fact that it is free and unassigned—for both students and staff.

Planning documents give evidence of the college’s awareness of the relationships among educational quality, student learning, and the diverse,
**CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE**

**complex, global, and technological world in which the organization and its students exist.** College officials, staff members, and faculty understand the interdependence of each of these components to create, deliver, and sustain relevant experiences that empower all those participating to learn necessary content and skills in order to compete comfortably in a changing professional climate.

Male/female enrollment statistics have been tracked at Otero over the last ten years with consistently more female students enrolled than male. Female enrollment averages range from 53% to 62% and male enrollment averages from 37% to 46%. There appear to be no marked spikes in data over the ten-year period.

Comparative ethnicity follows generally predictable patterns in light of the ethnic makeup of the geographic area in which the college exists. Statistics show that the largest ethnic population has consistently been white (non-Hispanic) at 60%-65% with a current 64.5% representation. The second most prominent group is Hispanic, which has ranged from 28% to 33%. Currently, the Hispanic student population rests at 30.5%. The third most prominent group is comprised of Black (non-Hispanic) students. This group has fluctuated little—from 3.5% in 1996 to 1.7% in 2001 and 2004. Currently this group makes up 2.2% of the total OJC student population. The remaining 2.8% of OJC student enrollees fall into the categories of Asian/Pacific Islander, Indian/Alaskan, or non-specified (.5%). These final categories have been consistent in percentage throughout the ten-year period.

**Planning processes involve internal constituents and, where appropriate, external constituents.** Program decision making is accomplished in more than one way. Any individual from on or off campus can suggest investigation into appropriate programming needs. Usually, individuals within an individual department are responsible for reviewing, expanding, replacing, developing new programs. This occurs most often in the Career and Technical fields. Instructional Services is also charged with exploring new programs and operates in a supervisory/consultative capacity. Environmental scanning includes examining the Department of Labor and Employment’s Labor Market Information for emerging jobs and demand. Some new programs are suggested by the community and developed with sensitivity to serving local industries and agencies. Otero has contributed with its Adams State partnership to a number of home-grown teachers for surrounding school districts. In some cases, such as nursing, select community college board members have pressed for producing more nurses. Using the same example, legislators have done the same. This resulted in Otero increasing nursing students from 36 in a traditional semester to over 60 by utilizing a NEW (Night, Evening & Weekend) method of delivery.
CHAPTER FOUR
CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

INTRODUCTION

Otero Junior College provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness. Learning outcomes are clearly stated in each course and for every career and technical program. Otero values and supports effective teaching with emphases in the areas of professional development, improved pedagogies and innovative practices, and the application of appropriate technologies. Special attention is given to creating effective learning environments that support students inside and outside the classroom. Students always come first when making decisions that affect them in terms of cost and quality. Advising, registration, billing, tutorial and financial support, and a variety of activities are all designed with the student in mind, the student coming first.

OJC provides the necessary curricula for Associate of Arts degree (AA), Associate of Science degree (AS), Associate of General Studies degree (AGS), Associate Degree Nursing (ADN), Associate of Applied Science (AAS) and Career and Technical Certificates. The AA and AS degrees are programs designed for students intending to transfer to a four-year institution. The AGS degree is a rigorous 60 credit hour program but a blend of academic and career coursework (in the past, students have successfully transferred to four-institutions having completed the AGS). The AAS and ADN are degree programs principally career or vocational studies; however, both have required general education courses.

Criterion Three: The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission. OJC is committed to addressing needs of students and faculty in order to deliver high quality environments and experiences to accomplish its mission of learning.

Core Component—3a: Otero Junior College’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.
Otero clearly differentiates its learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate programs by identifying the expected learning outcomes for each. Students successfully completing either a prescribed Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree program at Otero Junior College will be able to transfer to a Colorado four-year college or university as a junior. The college maintains transfer agreements with Colorado colleges and universities to facilitate the transferability of its academic programs. According to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, students completing sixty hours of acceptable college work at any junior or community college will qualify for guaranteed transfer to most Colorado public four-year institutions and should be able to graduate most programs with only an additional sixty hours.

Within its course offerings, OJC has defined specific programs for those AA/AS students who elect to declare a major prior to transfer to a four-year institution. The academic transfer curricula is comprised of the following instructional disciplines: Anthropology, Art, Astronomy, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Economics, Education, English, Foreign Language, Geography, Geology, History, Humanities, Literature, Mathematics, Music, Philosophy, Physics, Political Science, Psychology, Science, Sociology, Spanish, Speech, and Theatre. These disciplines are combined in a variety of ways to create the following transfer emphasis for OJC students: Behavioral Science, Business Administration, Chemistry, Education, English or Literature, Health Science, History, Liberal Arts, Mathematics, Political Science, Psychology, Theatrical Arts/Drama, and a variety of Pre-Professional Fields (e.g., Pre-Engineering, Pre-Law, Pre-Medicine, Pre-Veterinary Medicine, etc.).

These instructional disciplines also comprise the general education course work for both the Associate of General Studies and the Associate of Applied Science degree programs. Students completing course work towards an Associate of Applied Science or an Associate of General Studies most frequently move directly into careers requiring those special talents and skill sets. OJC has specific programs for the AAS students. These programs include Administrative Assistant with Information Processing and Medical Options, Business Management with Microcomputer and Small Business Options, Early Childhood Education, and Associate Degree Nursing. Otero’s nationally accredited nursing program leading to an Associate Degree in Nursing provides well qualified nurses for immediate employment.

A good blend of Career and Technical certificates prepares students with training to equip them in today’s competitive marketplace. Regionally developed programs also receive state approval based on a review of need for programs, job markets, and institutional ability to support. Course work aligns with state curricula and all appropriate external agencies.
CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

The Registration/Data Sheet was redesigned to reflect the courses by Career and Tech Education, Remedial, State Guaranteed General Education Transfer, or General Elective. This change was implemented to assure students had a clear understanding of what they were taking in relationship to their educational plan.

Assessment of student learning provides evidence at multiple levels: courses, programs, and institutional. All faculty measure student comprehension at the course level through various testing mechanisms, projects, writing, performance, and class assignments. Many utilize ongoing interactive student participation to gauge the level of understanding and adjust particular learning experiences for the groups and individuals. Student ratings reflect degrees of satisfaction with course and instructor on a semester-by-semester basis. Each course is developed and adheres to common course requirements of the state system.

Learning outcomes are specified clearly in all Career and Technical Education programs. State approval and approval for certifying agencies requires programs to comply with specified learning outcomes and, in many cases, total practical hours in areas like early childhood, nursing, massage therapy, cosmetology, or law enforcement training. Skill sets are monitored by experts and validated.

Both CTE and academic programs assess student learning. Departments develop instruments to determine proper placement and consistent measurement. For instance, the math and science department has implemented a diagnostic test to better place students pursuing courses in Anatomy and Physiology. This assessment should prepare students to be more successful in the required courses and also help with retention in health related programs. A preparatory BIO 090 has also been developed. The Arts department is undergoing an examination of its rubric for assessing student proficiencies in composition. Course and program assessments lead to institutional success on the part of the college and on the part of the student.

Assessment of student learning includes multiple direct and indirect measures of student learning. Students are given the opportunity to display their mastery of content in relevant course activities. Students demonstrate their understanding of basic concepts by presenting oral reports based upon recognized content and carefully managed performance criteria. They complete clinical activities under the close supervision of faculty who note areas of mastery and areas for improvement. Students have the opportunity to present homework to make sure they are on the right track, group discussions to clarify points, in class teacher-led reviews, papers to

All CTE programs follow staff approved assessment plans

Otero Junior College 2007 Self-Study
summarize and respond or evaluate and apply. A combination of quizzes and exams that are designed for students to demonstrate their understanding of topics and their interrelatedness are available throughout a semester. Class interactions and viable working groups provide insight and can prove to be good measures of student understanding.

**Results obtained through assessment of student learning are available to appropriate constituencies, including students themselves.** It is crucial to students’ acquisition of knowledge that they are advised into courses that are appropriate given their individual backgrounds and knowledge. OJC administers a basic skills assessment exam covering English, reading, and math to new students; OJC currently uses the Accuplacer test and prior to that the Compass test. These data are used by counselors/advisors during pre-registration meetings to assist the students with their course selections.

Students who demonstrate deficiencies are advised into the appropriate remedial course(s). By Colorado statute, House Bill 1464, beginning Fall 2001 all first-time students who declared a degree or certificate program were required to take the Basic Skills Assessment Test; students who perform poorly on the Accuplacer exam are required by Colorado statute to receive appropriate remediation before they may begin the core curricula defined by the degree program. This may take the form of individual remediation, course placement, or retaking the placement exam. And any remediation is to be completed prior to students completing their first thirty hours.

Most faculty members work closely with other department members and department chairs to communicate effective practices. Both celebrations and challenges are shared with instructional services and student services personnel in order to best advise students. Using the results of an assessment instrument to re-teach or solidify learning can be a powerful tool. Conclusions regarding changes in curriculum or assessment or staffing can make differences in future classes

**Otero Junior College integrates into its processes for assessment of student learning and uses the data reported for purposes of external accountability (e.g., graduation rates, passage rates on licensing exams; placement rates; transfer rate).** The Colorado Commission Higher Education (CCHE) and the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) both require the tracking of several key indicators of success graduation rates and passage rates on external licensing exams. The CCHE did track transfer rates and transfer student success until the late nineties. CCHE assumed responsibility for surveying Colorado employers.
CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

In 2004 the CCCS developed qualitative and quantitative measures for replacing the Quality Indicator System (QIS) that had been in place. These measures would replace the QIS measures then in use, and could be tailored more specifically to address key aspects of the community college role and mission. What standards and/or peer institutions would be appropriate? What other approaches should be used (e.g. historical performance at each college)? All benchmarks to be used were to have been "measurable" in a way that could be easily handled, provide substantive information on community college performance, and be useful on a long-term (multi-year) basis. Once all system college responses were received, they were summarized, compiled, and submitted to CCHE.

Students know what to expect on testing from outside agencies. Their preparation is geared toward specific content and test taking strategies. They know how well former students have performed on state boards and P.O.S.T. examinations. They have compared their rates of passage with others from different colleges.

The organization’s assessment of student learning extends to all educational offerings, including credit and non-credit certificate programs. Student learning outcomes are tracked from placement to completion in all areas. Career and Technical Education programs and courses spell out competencies and applications. While Otero offers limited non-credit courses, it does not offer non-credit certificate programs. Current continuing education courses are comprised primarily of dance courses for children and young adults. Other courses of a customized training nature do administer course, and instructor ratings to verify if courses met expectations; frequently, these courses require tailored rating sheets due to the specific type of training provided.

Faculty are involved in defining the expected student learning outcomes and creating strategies to determine whether those outcomes are achieved. Faculty essentially own course curriculum. The Colorado Community College System (CCCS) Common Core, is monitored by the State Faculty Curriculum Committee who serves in an advisory role to a statewide group of academic vice presidents. Outcomes for each class have been identified along with course descriptions, and topical outlines. Any changes to those courses already approved must follow specified procedures for review.

On campus, faculty adhere to prescribed instructional parameters and continually work to discover best methods of improving student success, understanding, retention, and critical application of learning.
Otero Junior College administration and faculty members have been instrumental in the development, maintenance, and improvements in the Colorado Common CORE for twenty years. Further, they have provided leadership and expertise in reducing the total number of courses from over fourteen thousand to just over four thousand since 2003. Education professionals on campus have represented the community college system to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) in the Guaranteed Transfer initiative. Faculty members have served as reviewers for community college core courses recommended to Guaranteed Transfer (gt) for CCHE.

All gtPathways courses are required to maintain certain similarities, guaranteeing rigor and uniformity. The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has identified as of November 30, 2005, the following components for inclusion in Guaranteed Transfer courses. Competencies involve critical thinking, mathematics, reading, technology, and written education. Five elements are integrated into identified courses and have been approved by the CCHE through a process involving discipline faculty from four and two year colleges from throughout the state each year. For the purposes of qualifying a state-guaranteed general education course that requires this competency, the institution must demonstrate that the course substantively addresses most, not necessarily all, of the stated criteria. Thirteen Colorado system colleges were required to submit separate syllabi for review. All approved community college courses went through this review.

For the most part, courses are congruent with a system “catalog” that includes all objectives, competencies, and topic outlines with these two major curricular warehouses. Eighty percent curricular alignment still allows flexibility and room for enhancements. Course work can go further than basic descriptions.

**Faculty and administrators routinely review the effectiveness of college programs to assess student learning.** Faculty utilize written assignments, departmental rubrics, sample student essays, presentations, peer grading, one minute papers, and note taking skills. Faculty do complete rubric modifications based on student performance and exact degrees of measurement. Test item analysis occurs frequently and results in re-teaching and creation of better measures. Faculty might regularly assess how often test questions are changed, how many students regularly fail certain types of questions, and how rubric-criteria might be better aligned with a classroom texts and other relevant learning materials and methods.
CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Core Component—3b: Otero Junior College values and supports effective teaching.

The College’s excellent transfer record should be rightfully credited to the high quality of its instructional staff. The appropriate educational background, teaching experience, ultimate concern with course transfer, desire to excel at teaching, a supportive instructional administration, and a strong interest in students all make an unbeatable and highly reputable combination for the institution’s two transfer degree programs. Otero makes every effort to assure that its part-time academic instructors are as well qualified as its full-time faculty. Excellent teaching techniques and dealing well with people pair with academic credentials and career and technical certifications.

Qualified faculty determine curricular content and strategies for instruction. Faculty display appropriate credentials and experience. The goal is to hire the best people possible to engage students. Deep knowledge of subject matter and effective teaching are chief components. While the state system maintains a “catalog” of courses, faculty ultimately own those, and, obviously, flexibility in many areas allows individuals to meet core requirements while at the same time delivering meaningful examples and supplemental material. Faculty members also meet annually with counterparts across the state and also four year colleges to discuss necessary changes. State Guaranteed Transfer courses are initiated through a nomination process where courses are introduced and approved or rejected; a committee of two and four year faculty represent the State.

Career and Technical Education programs in Colorado require faculty to be vocationally credentialed. This process is overseen by Department Chairs, Instructional Services, and the CTE unit at the system office. An initial three year provisional period may occur, and then credentials are renewed every five years. Most training is currently run through Colorado State University, but new credentialing procedures are being developed starting in the fall of 2006. Some specific areas are relying on other groups to provide equivalent credentials. For example, recent changes have enabled state and nationally certified EMS instructors to utilize alternative, equivalent credentialing standards. Credentials are kept on file in the Human Resource Office for full-time faculty and in Instructional Services Office for part-time.

Specific CTE programs also benefit from external certifications that include automotive, law enforcement, nursing, cosmetology, Microsoft applications, Cisco training, and others. Because individual faculty do continue to be learners themselves, fundamental changes do appear in courses and programs.

Common Course Numbering: http://www.cccs.edu/cccns/Home.html
Guarantee Transfer: http://www.state.co.us/cche/gened/gtpathways/index.pdf
Vocational Credentialing http://www.coloradocredentialing.org/
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based on warranted arguments. Syllabi in CTE and academic courses are reviewed each semester by faculty members themselves and approved by Department Chairs.

State and national accreditations for CTE programs include several areas: Nursing—State Board of Nursing for State Licensure Examination and National League of Nursing; Law Enforcement—Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training Certification; Early Childhood Education—Colorado State Human Services; Emergency Medical Services—National Registry; Cosmetology—State Board of Barber and Cosmetology; Auto Technology for ASE certification in the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation, Inc.; Real Estate—Colorado Division of Real Estate; and Computer Systems Technologies—Microsoft Certified Professional Exams.

Curricular changes represent proven methods and content selection as well as emerging supplemental and enhancement materials. Applicable educational materials from publishers in the form of web cartridges or suggested practices are reviewed and integrated to provide meaningful experiences. Courses continue to be added or evolved to address the changing demands from the world of work. State-wide standard with guarantee transfer for approved academic program of 80% of more. Common course numbering assists with transferability of course work.

The organization supports professional development designed to facilitate teaching suited to varied learning environments. The college has a professional development committee that represents needs of administrative and classified staff as well as faculty. This group monitors and plans for special or ongoing programming. Numerous professional opportunities include but are not limited to professional association memberships, one-day workshops, several day conferences either in- or out- of-state, computer training, courses on campus, on-line classes, Summer Academy, program specific in-services, state 2 to 2 Conference and 2 to 4 Conference, Faculty Retreat, and the new Lecture Series implemented in the fall of 2005.

The Summer Academy, while designed primarily for K-12 personnel, offers attractive and useful learning experiences for college personnel too. Faculty members are also provided two courses a year at no cost under current state policy. Faculty members have also instituted a lecture series, providing a forum for their ideas. Guests are also scheduled on relevant and timely topics. An annual faculty retreat held in early May brings faculty together to share year-end reviews and engage specific issue for the coming year. The recent Title V grant with Adams State College (ASC) also allows five OJC faculty and staff to participate in a summer institute based on ASC’s Center...
for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). This five year program provides intensive training on diversity issues and focuses on improved pedagogical style and innovations.

Internationalizing the campus means more than increasing the number of students from foreign countries. Activities like hosting the Geophysics Global Conference enable faculty and staff to interact with scientists and professionals from around the world in content specific situations. Fulbright scholars and other visitors provide a window to the world. Mentoring nursing educators from Slovakia and Kyrgyzstan helps them but also enables Otero faculty opportunities to question and confirm educational and professional practices.

As “institutional members,” staff members receive information on opportunities available through The League for Innovation and have attended the innovations and information conferences, leadership diversity training in association with Kellogg, the executive leadership conference, and AAHE assessment conferences. Grant related activities also invite staff to participate in numerous settings. As a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), Otero more than meets the twenty-five percent population requirement. USDA grants and Title V grants have enabled project managers, grant administrators, and personnel directly connected to these grants opportunities to interact locally and nationally.

Faculty and staff have participated in state system leadership development seminars. These year-long activities identify a small cohort group from the thirteen system colleges and convene them several times during the year to discuss issues and learn from experts in many educational arenas. The Academic Management Institute allowed selected women faculty to spend time throughout the year working closely with high profile university presidents and business leaders. Issue-specific conferences are also attended that deal with enrollment management, retention, Banner software implementation, marketing, and system-driven initiatives.

Everyone should be aware that professional development funds do exist and the proper procedures to access those dollars. Committee members are elected and usually serve a three year term. Professional development at OJC has been impacted by a downturn of the state’s economy. Some restrictions on out-of-state travel may have limited the college some, but priorities have been set and needs have been met. There are usually dollars that go unspent in this particular budget. Staff members have been encouraged to seek out all feasible, meaningful opportunities. They have
been assured that warranted claims can provide additional dollars when designated for causes that improve learning at Otero Junior College.

**Otero evaluates teaching and recognizes effective teaching.** Faculty is evaluated by the Otero Junior College Evaluation of Faculty Job Performance in compliance with State Board Policy BP 3-31. The evaluation process is for fall and spring semester only. The summer semester may provide selected spot evaluations for full-time faculty serving in summer adjunct status.

In accordance with BP 3-31 and SP 3-31, the four principal factors in the evaluation process are weighted as follows: teaching effectiveness 65%, service to the college 20%, professional development 10%, and service to the community 5%. Compliance with State Board and System policies is a requirement of all State employees; noncompliance will be an overall negative factor in a faculty member’s evaluation. Outcome of the Faculty Evaluation Process will result in a performance rating of: Outstanding, Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, and Fails to Meet Expectations.

Faculty evaluations provide learning opportunities for individuals and the college. The focus in these assessments is always upon growth and improvement. Department Chairs, Vice President of Instruction, Associate Vice President for Instruction, or, in some cases, a peer may conduct observations and evaluations. Annual evaluations and planning for the following term are due May 31. All evaluations are confidential. Evaluation processes are addressed in the Faculty Handbook.

In addition to these areas, faculty are being assessed on that year’s goals and are also developing Individual Performance Objectives (IPOs) for the upcoming year. These are negotiated with department chairs and are reinforced during the year, aiming at a year-end review.

Student ratings are administered in classes, and data is aggregated in instructional services. Results are provided to faculty after courses are over and grades are turned in. Classroom evaluations are done each semester by students and on file in Instructional Services office. Evaluations for guided study are completed on-line. Agri-Business evaluations are mailed directly to the home of the student. Hard copies of the actual evaluation are kept one year, and the summary with comments is kept in permanent file.

The Colorado state system requires each campus to identify a Faculty of the Year. This person is selected by faculty. A separate subcommittee of Faculty Affairs handles this honor. Numerous faculty have been recognized...
CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

in Who’s Who with appropriate press releases being shared with the community at large. Classified personnel also receive similar status on the state level, being selected by their peers and being recognized at a state meeting specifically designed to honor their achievements.

The organization provides services to support improved pedagogies. A number of opportunities exist for students to determine their personal learning styles. These are administered in the Educational Assistance Center and in individual classrooms. The library orders specific materials for instructors to support learning. This includes an array of online teaching resources. Classroom and course materials can be held on reserve.

Since 1997 a mentoring program has been available for new faculty. New faculty are provided mentors for assistance in navigating the college and community. The department chair also serves in this capacity to reinforce a positive transition, taking the lead with others offering support as needed. Each new member receives several resources including the text on Teaching Tips by McKeachie and Svinicki that deals with “strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers.” Faculty have had in-services from excellent presenters like Sharon Bowman and have been provided her texts: How to Give It So They Get It, Presenting with Pizzaz, Shake Rattle and Roll, and Preventing Death by Lecture.

Faculty and instructional staff are provided a bi-monthly publication entitled The Professor in the Classroom. This has received positive feedback and will continue as a requested support piece. They also have access to the expanded website of The MASTER Teacher. OJC’s website also supports a Faculty Exchange page http://www.ojc.edu/FacultyExchange.aspx for sharing best practices, informative materials, and links to resources like MERLOT and specific university sites.

Faculty regularly receive tips on teaching through hardcopy and email to support improved pedagogies. They deliver PowerPoint assisted lectures and rely on internet advantages. All lecture classrooms are equipped with internet and smart classroom technologies that include projectors, computers, and video components. Students are encouraged and, in some cases, required to utilize these as well.

All staff members are able to get specific training in the Computer Center technology training room or receive one-on-one training in their own office on their own computer. Otero’s instructional technician is vital to the goal of providing a smooth integration of teaching and technology. Computer center personnel are committed to a student first philosophy.
Otero’s Education Assistance Center provides support services that include tutoring, open labs, study groups, learning style inventories, study techniques, stress management, and a variety of customized workshops. English, math, and reading remedial sections integrate fully with routine EAC operations. Some sections are arranged to provide individual support to identified students who require extra care.

All faculty are equipped to utilize the appropriate web learning platform. With the system transition to state wide usage of the WebCT Vista 4 product, faculty members are making a quick transition from their use of Blackboard. Training results in competence in handling the new look and functionality, but emphasis is also placed on proper applications, teaching strategies, and building successful learning communities. Beginning 2006 school year, faculty members who complete this specified training are “certified.”

All clinical/lab components for nursing, early childhood, cosmetology, law academy, computer system technology, emergency medical services, massage therapy, science, and art include qualified instructors who follow the most recent recommendations on effective learning.

*The college demonstrates openness to innovative practices that enhance learning.* Technology certainly has the potential to enhance innovative teaching and learning. Otero provides students with access to numerous computer applications that include packages like Adobe Photoshop, After Effects, Flash, and 3-D Studio Max for use in graphic design. Digital art can challenge students in design and animation. PC tablets have been introduced to allow greater freedom of movement in classes, providing more easily seen projections than chalk or dry erase markers can accomplish.

The Educational Assistance Center works with faculty and students utilizing handheld pens that can copy materials and then download directly into computers for easy manipulation of research. This technology is also helpful for students who require assistance with note taking skills. The Center also can assist the auditory learner with this technology as material can be inputted into the computer and utilizing Dragon Naturally Speaking software can read the materials to the student.

The learning platform WebCT Vista 4 comes with E-Pack from the publisher with interactive activities for students. Many of the instructors are using these resources to reinforce the materials covered in class. Innovations are also evident in the use of case studies in business classes. Similar innovative methods that enhance learning are investigated and implemented.
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Learning strategies are also emerging in science classes that ask for evaluation of material and application in a case study situation; this goes beyond simply gathering data and performing well on traditional exams. Some instructors have initiated this structure and plan to expand its use in the future.

It would be counterproductive to discourage discovery of better learning practices. Faculty members are encouraged to try new methods and new courses. They are encouraged to stretch a bit, knowing any element of risk is understood and thereby reduced or eliminated.

_The organization supports faculty in keeping abreast of the research on teaching and learning, and of technological advances that can positively affect student learning and the delivery of instruction._ As mentioned above, faculty members are hired based on their knowledge of new technologies and trained for specific learning related tasks. New faculty have possessed transferable technical competencies and been able to translate that into practical applications for students. Theatre productions that utilize a wide array of multimedia enhance the student experience. A staged radio production for live and the recorded performances requires reliance on new skills and an assurance that support is present.

Continued personal and professional development is supplemented with Summer Academy, the state 2 to 2 and 2 to 4 conferences. Faculty have attended and presented at the new system sponsored assessment conference. The Colorado Composition Conference for Community Colleges provides opportunity for instructors to review new rubrics, portfolio projects, computers in composition, preventing plagiarism through technology, and other topics.

Immediate feedback for students is an effective technique to encourage learning. Most instructors are able to accept questions from students in class due to small numbers. The additional web supplement to classes is becoming more the norm. Students can leave questions for an instructor or other class members on a discussion board. Grades are immediately available after a test is taken, automatically posted to the course website. Test item analysis also provides instructors with viewable goals for focused re-teaching.

Improved “anatomically correct patients” can provide clinical simulations that students might not otherwise encounter. These health-related technologies may serve to reduce costs, but, more importantly, they can better prepare future nurses and emergency medical technicians.
Whether in chemistry or physics or microbiology, new laboratory space provides a significant, safe advantage for teachers and students. New equipment assures students they are working in an environment that will position them for studying at the next level. Science students may also take advantage of field trips to other sites to fill in any gaps. Simulations here are also helpful.

Automotive professional development has been a combination of new technologies but blended with teaching strategies and sensitivities. Electrical components on automobiles change so quickly, instructors must constantly adjust. Computer diagnostics and electrical systems will continue to be an item of focus.

Faculty members actively participate in professional organizations relevant to the disciplines they teach. CTE faculty are appropriately licensed in their specific area and frequently maintain memberships in state and national organizations such as Association for Career and Technical Education, Colorado Association for Career and Technical Administrator, Colorado Association for Career and Technical Education, Mountain-Plains Business Educators Association, National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Farm Ranch Business Management Educators Association and American Nurses Association.


Core Component—3c: Otero Junior College creates effective learning environments.

Assessment results inform improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, instructional resources, and student services. Classroom assessments do improve classroom curriculum and pedagogy. Assessments provide information for appropriate changes in student services areas. Year to year success rates on course placement and student satisfaction surveys provide information to direct suitable adjustments.

Besides the typical assessments of quizzes, assignments, homework and exams, each department has favorite assessment tools. The Arts Department utilizes “one-minute papers”, group discussions, peer grading, and rubrics. Math and Science Department faculty members use pre-exam worksheets,
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Combinations of academic and career and technical skills are assessed for the Business Technology, Nursing and Service Occupation Departments. These are governed primarily by state approved career and technical education programs that specify outcomes and external certifications that mark a clear target for students and faculty. In each of these cases, students need to perform the required competencies and log necessary hours to qualify for advancement. Strict assessments are in place and include writing, testing, practical demonstrations, and projects. Competency based competitions also serve to assess understanding of materials and learning applications.

Many of the CTE programs review the student evaluations of the courses through post graduation surveys (VE-135 follow up) and certification pass rates. These data are reviewed and used in a number of decisions that continuously improve the curriculum and program outcomes. Examples: Student course evaluations are considered when faculty write their Individual Performance Objectives for the following year’s self-evaluation criteria, a nationally normed test is given at the end of the program to identify areas of weakness for the students preparation for the licensing exam and to identify weak areas in the curriculum (if more then 50% of the students miss a question the curriculum is reviewed for content in that area). The nursing faculty meets weekly to monitor academic program issues and meets for one or two weeks each summer to review total program curriculum to update and revise as the data indicates need.

Evidence suggests that technology used in the classroom actually affects student learning. Faculty report that students appear to be more engaged in classroom activities and have commented that they appreciate films, PowerPoint presentations, projection of diagrams, use of CD’s provided by publishers, Internet sites, dry lab programs, lab experiments, graphing calculators, math software, and Blackboard. Students often print the PowerPoint lecture and bring it to the class lecture; this facilitates note taking and better listening.

The sentiment of the faculty can be summed up by this individual’s comments, “I never teach a class the same way twice. I’m always looking for new ways to teach, for the sake of my students and myself.” Faculty is open to innovation and responsive to student assessment in improving their classes.

The organization provides an environment that supports all learners and respects the diversity they bring. Otero has been aggressive with its focus on
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attracting graduating seniors from its service area high schools. The college has also kept a strong focus on recruiting in state students for athletics and specific programs because state funding streams follow Colorado students. Non-traditional students receive assistance in gaining access and achieving success. Colleges were given the option in 2006 of reducing out of state tuition in order to better attract new students. This was timely for the college because it also allowed OJC to focus on integrating a larger population of international students. The college environment supports all diverse learners and diverse learners help create a better environment.

The college provides an environment that supports all learners and respects the diversity they bring. A variety of course formats are provided—lecture, PC, guided study, internet, laboratories, day and evening classes. Many are web enabled. Most of the classrooms are equipped with smart stations that enable the use of videos, DVD’s, PowerPoint presentations, and internet access. There are remedial classes as well as advanced classes. Accommodations are made for students with physical disabilities, those requiring additional preparation, and those with learning disabilities can make use of tutoring, individualized test-taking, specialized software and even one-to-one sessions with faculty.

Many of the faculty have identified their own preferred learning style and are encouraged to broaden their teaching techniques to include methods that include all styles of learning. An effort has been made to eliminate gender biased language from course objectives, textbooks and daily vocabulary.

The college provides basic and developmental courses to more fully accommodate the recruitment of international students. Textbook content reflects issues of diversity; textbook online-tutorials supplement individual skill-needs; all faculty responded that they make conscious efforts to meet the wide range of student’s needs.

This response does not identify the diverse needs of students in terms of learning disabilities, gender, age, ethnic, and cultural differences. There is no mention, specifically, of how diversity issues are dealt with in the classroom, but faculty are aware that they can treat these issues in terms of assignments, variation in types of tests, lecture delivery for students with special needs. As the college continues to deal with these issues, it can also benefit from assessing needs from both faculty and student perspectives.

The organization’s commitments are shaped by its mission; periodic environmental scanning to understand the changing needs of its constituencies and their communities; attention to the diversity of the
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constituencies it serves; and viable outreach programs. Needs are present and being met in areas like services for the disabled, upgrading of classroom technology, upgrading of classroom furniture and lighting to accommodate present students comfortably. Class offerings convenient for students create course options including weekends, evenings, online, and guided studies. Partnerships with other colleges afford a diverse student group more opportunities while remaining in the area.

Programs have been initiated to meet the needs of specific cohort groups. These include prison GED, Bueno HEP (GED), Part-Time Nursing Program, Summer Teacher Academy, Community Education Classes, Kids College, Para-Educator Program, and Customized Training.

The Library incorporates methods to accommodate student diversity to provide or address learning. Professional library staff takes into consideration the diverse students utilizing the Library’s resources whether that is by physically coming in, calling, emailing or logging into our website. To better assist students who prefer digital or electronic access, there is remote database access to over 10,000 serials, journals, newspapers, theses and monographs, online access to over 2,600 full-text books, quick-links to Instructor Reserves, access to remote patron accounts, a Virtual Reference Desk for online research, a Library calendar to upcoming events, and the website has been redesigned to be more user-friendly and attractive.

A broad range of programs, activities, and class-environments appear to aid students. Minority retention and graduation rates have always been representative of the population enrolled. Students who have been identified as economically or educationally disadvantaged or otherwise challenged often require educational assistance. Most faculty and staff believe the college enables students to succeed by employing timely and appropriate intervention strategies. Students who are identified as learners who will benefit from tutoring are advised and enrolled in a variety of activities. These may include remedial courses or other customized remediation. Students are monitored; successful course work and completion of individually designed programs provide evidence that students who engage in these programs are more likely to succeed when progressing to the next level.

**Advising systems focus on student learning, including the mastery of skills required for academic success.** Mastery of skills for placement purposes is evidenced through student assessment scores like the ACT/SAT and Accuplacer. One-on-one personal advising is designed to enable the student to succeed and follow a “correct” academic or vocational path. The goal is to maintain contact throughout the school year and from year to year. Advising
goes beyond simply scheduling. Student Services monitoring course offerings and future teaching challenges through graduation rates, remedial course offerings, next level success rates, and transfer information.

The majority of math department members do not use a pretest in class, although results of students’ math placement tests are available to advisors when placing students in math classes. Two faculty, both math teachers, regularly use a diagnostic exam at the beginning of the semester to review students’ skills. Seven department members do not use an initial diagnostic per course. One of the seven members interviews students about math/science backgrounds and academic plans. Many of the science classes have no disciplinary prerequisites. Students may never have taken a class in that discipline before, so pretests may not be particularly helpful or appropriate.

Math-science faculty generally find their students properly advised to enter their courses, with the exception of Anatomy and Physiology. A new BIO 090 prep course has been developed for implementation in spring 2007. This arrangement is designed to assist students in entering biology more prepared without having to add an additional semester to the nursing prerequisites.

Required testing for college level placement is done for all new full-time students. Placements in English and college level math have proven more than satisfactory as assessment plan data verifies. Some interest has been shown surrounding the use of student portfolios to document student competencies in a mobile, current format. The majority of faculty members use some diagnostic testing per discipline. While there is no departmental English diagnostic exam, most instructors utilize early writings to further screen and advise students regarding course placement and appropriate strategies to succeed. Other methods might include a hand-written, two and one-half page response to a pre-chosen topic or the first-essay paper assigned in class.

The nursing program uses the college’s pre-requisite protocols to advise students prior to admission to and throughout the program. When a pre-requisite is completed with a grade of C or higher it is assumed that they have completed the required skills of that course. While in the program specific critical nursing skills are tested in the nursing arts lab before students are allowed to practice those skills in the clinical setting. Also students are referred for tutoring with the student support center upon their request or when failing grades indicate a need, students who demonstrate poor skills while in the clinical setting are referred back to the lab coordinator for practice and re-testing for specific demonstrated problems. This lab referral
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Policy has been in place for several years but it is only this year that a designated lab coordinator has been available consistently to work with these students.

Student development programs support learning throughout the student’s experience regardless of the location of the student. Many students seek out assistance themselves even prior to the start of classes. Faculty refer students to the center when course level assessments indicate a student will benefit from additional academic help and educational encouragement. Assistance takes on many forms depending on the needs of the individual student. A combination of word of mouth, self-advising, teacher referral, and the systematically initiated Early Alert twice a semester all serve to identify potential issues and seek to help mitigate circumstances as early as possible. Attendance, participation, poor testing, study skills, instructor counseling, and tutoring are all suggested interventions. Many times students are able to take advantage of the drop/add deadlines to adjust schedules to better fit their needs and skill levels.

Faculty are aware of services available to them and to students and use referrals in addition to the early alert. Close communications with the Coordinator of the EAC and specific disciplines is vital. Faculty members and tutors need to work closely together to provide a consistent set of expectations to students. Return rates have occasionally run at one hundred percent for the Early Alert.

Even when referred, students do not always make use of the Educational Assistance Center. One instructor urged faculty to give students signed Educational Assistance Center referral forms and direct them to that office. Follow up with students could be more than verbal. Many instructors do check on attendance and progress of their students in the EAC environment while others typically do not. Answers on a faculty survey regarding referrals ranged from not at all to 2-3 times per week. Other answers: every 1-2 weeks, 3 times, 4 times, 5 times, “very often” and just through the Early Alert reports. There is a wide range of follow-up with EAC by faculty. There is not a standard procedure or expectation of follow-up among the faculty. Neither is there any direct reporting back to faculty from EAC staff on student attendance or progress.

Library staff plays a role in furthering skill development among students. They assume the role of leader and guide in offering assistance both with physical media (computers, websites, videos, catalog, finding resources) as well as assisting students to “think around” or discover a topic. Staff members possess a wide breadth of knowledge pertaining to the skills and

Students have assistance available and are encouraged to access all areas.
requirements asked of students. Library staff provides limited one-on-one tutoring for students new to computers, answers and assists with simple format questions, tutors and guides access questions and offers options to broaden horizons. When appropriate, staff offers insight into new technology and trends to enhance user learning. Referrals are also made to other departments or persons for assistance.

The library offers many services to students who may not be in our area or who are unable to visit the library during business hours. Available services include: online, full-text resources, interlibrary loan, courier service and agreements with other Colorado libraries for reciprocal use, Colorado Library Card participant (allows OJC students to physically use other participating libraries at no charge), e-mailing of files, mounting files on the server, shipping via USPS, allowing third-party pickup/delivery, virtual reference via website, emailing staff, phone assistance and library website patron account access.

The college employs, when appropriate, new technologies that enhance effective learning environments for students. Adequate training and support is offered to the faculty for use of Blackboard’s WebCT and other programs, software, and technology for instructional use. Students and faculty utilize digital texts when appropriate to effect and/or enhance an effective learning environment. Current technology can support student portfolio assessments. Current technology systems are used effectively and often. Many courses utilizing web platforms provide immediate feedback for students on their performance. More and more faculty members are using a web platform (Blackboard) for more than just two or three reasons like Gradebook, Discussion Board, or Posted Lecture Notes.

All improvements do not necessarily come from technology. Some of the department members believe the learning environment at the college is ideal because of small class sizes, individual attention given students by faculty, and the availability of free tutoring for students having difficulty in a class. The library should remain flexible in its attempts to meet student needs regarding hours and services. The quality of teaching can be better maintained when instructors have time to prepare thoroughly; overloads can be monitored appropriately. There is nothing magic about well planned professional development workshops and applications for learning.

Some faculty with large classes in large rooms suggested smaller numbers and a smaller room. Students need to realize that success requires out-of-class time and effort. Expectations held by some students seemed to support the idea that class attendance alone should be sufficient for success. A pre-test,
prerequisites, and co-requisites for anatomy and physiology were suggested. A math teacher suggested separate beginning algebra classes for those who have never had algebra. Other faculty agreed that classes grouped by ability and background would be ideal. As funding allows and departmentally prioritized, science laboratories have been updated. Additional classrooms and an astronomy observatory have been suggested.

Students ask that lecture notes be posted electronically. Students regularly access grades on-line. Students have asked for help in using PowerPoint and Microsoft Publisher. There may be continual need for faculty to schedule class tech-time to show students how to use various technologies. Most of the nursing courses have integrated the use of internet searches, PowerPoint presentations by students, course information availability on the internet etc. to enhance access for the student and to familiarize the student to accessing quality information in the web. Most nursing faculty use PowerPoint as an organizational tool for class presentations. Course information is supplemented with several Computer Aided Instructional CD’s or DVD’s with a specific focus on clinical situations that are not readily available in the rural areas. Faculty feel this makes a significant difference to students.

OJC’s nursing lab uses simulated patient situations with several skills practice manikins and some electronic simulation. An effort to establish a high tech patient simulation lab to be shared with other nursing school in Southeastern Colorado is underway. This will provide opportunities for realistically simulated clinical experiences in high risk situations that are safe for both the patient and the student.

_The organization’s systems of quality assurance include regular review of whether its educational strategies, activities, processes, and technologies enhance student learning._ Weekly meetings with the president’s executive council review current issues and integrate ongoing planning measures to provide responsive actions and careful guidance. At the departmental level, evaluation of instruction is continually occurring with supervisor, self, and student evaluations being run annually. Interventions are put into place as soon as issues are identified. Constant mentoring is provided by chairs and peers. Instructional services oversee instructional technologies along with computer center staff to optimize learning opportunities.

**Core Component—3d:** Otero Junior College’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

_The college ensures access to the resources (e.g., research laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites) necessary to support_
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learning and teaching. The library, academic labs, occupational performance space, and off campus clinical areas provide students in all programs necessary facilities and equipment to adequately prepare for succeeding in course work and future education and employment possibilities.

Key learning resources support student learning and effective teaching at Otero Junior College. These include Wheeler Library, the Educational Assistance Center, several computer labs, science labs, nursing labs, Microcomputer/Cisco lab, mediated math lab, reading lab, auto shop, cosmetology salon, law academy facilities, art classroom, theatre areas, early childhood classrooms, massage lab, and clinicals, Student Services testing center, career counseling center. Special equipment, instructional classroom technologies, alternative delivery systems, supplemental programs like Academic Systems/Plato software for math, Reading Plus software, Adobe software, Blackboard and WebCT delivery platforms are available. SIS and Banner operating systems support student success in terms of courses and financial aid and overall campus operations.

The Library has established the following: group computer areas and single computer stations, large and smaller group study areas, individual/private study areas, quiet areas and spaces where conversations are common, both enclosed spaces and open, window-oriented spaces, formal table and chair settings, less formal couch/chair seating, and informal beanbag seating. The Library attempts to provide a myriad of study and gathering spaces appealing to each preference as well as flexible enough to withstand the day’s changes. This resource space has been seeing more and more use over the past six years as it continues to identify and meet student needs.

Educational Assistance Center staff provides multiple student support services. This center assists faculty and administrative staff as well in retention and success strategies for enhancing learning. Services include: individual or small group tutoring by professional or peer tutors for most subjects; Learning Styles Inventory for student/faculty use; English/Writing lab; Reading lab for basic reading skills uses the software program Reading Plus; Math assistance is offered; alternative testing is provided for students who may have special needs; and accommodations for students with disabilities.

Study tables are provided for individuals and groups in open labs. Three private cubicles allow enable student to access computers for individual sessions. Sixteen stations are available in an open lab setting. Small meeting rooms are also utilized for specific group or individual needs. Three full-time
staff members provide access and opportunity during the day and select evening hours. Part-time tutors schedule sessions, and support is free to all currently enrolled students.

Two primary twenty-six station computer labs located in McBride Hall Rooms 122 and 125 serve instructional and technical support functions on campus. These are updated every two to three years, guaranteeing fresh, powerful computers to handle all applications. Classrooms are equipped with Smartboards as well for effective instruction. Local area network responsibility rests with a manager who interacts with faculty and instructional administration to assure office and classroom compatibility. These are attractive learning environments with comfortable furniture and suitable room. These labs are available for student use during non-classroom time and hours are posted.

Campus computers are “trickled down” regularly to ensure the newest technology is available in all areas where students have computer access. Classrooms receive the newest machines to guarantee frontline performance. Additional discipline-specific labs are supported in science labs located in Wheeler Hall Rooms 122 and 124. A separate nursing lab is located in Life Science 119. A hospital set-up for hands on training and a small computer lab with three computers is located off the lab for student use. Cisco and Microcomputer specialist students have access to a special lab in Humanities Center 112 and a wiring lab in adjacent room 114.

Beginning the fall semester of 2002, Academic System Math a web-based math program began that allowed students access on campus or from home. This stand alone mediated learning lab in McBride 117 supports developmental as well as transfer level math courses—Pre-Algebra, Introductory Algebra, Survey of Algebra, and College Algebra. The lab is equipped with ten computers in a U-shaped setting that allows students to learn at their own rate and provides flexible instruction time. Students listen and read about math concepts, work on problems, and take tests to show their progression in understanding the levels of math. PC-based math software is the backbone of the program and students license the product as part of a textbook purchase. One full-time math faculty is present for direct instruction and additional one-on-one support. Academic Systems, recently acquired by Plato, regularly updates the software so that the program is kept current and any flaws can be fixed.

Auto Technology located in McDivitt Hall provides a six station computer-assisted classroom and a separate hands-on mechanics garage area for students to use during their training. Vehicles are provided by students, Otero
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Junior college staff, community members, and private donations from business. Equipment includes: Floor jack, balancer, transmission jack high pressure washer, oscilloscope, and alignment machine.

Cosmetology lab is located in McDivitt Hall with a separate, dedicated classroom facility. This area is a full beauty salon for students to learn techniques and practice. Customers come to the salon for services provided by the students. Clientele are community members, students, and Otero Junior College employees. There are two computers for student use in the salon. There is also a computer at the front desk to track customer appointments and services. Separate training stations for hair, nails, esthetician, microderm, and pedicures are available.

The Law Enforcement Academy utilizes a dedicated classroom and an adjacent room for program support. Skills courses are arranged at alternate sites in conjunction with the city of La Junta. Suitable surroundings for future law enforcement officers include space for physical training in arrest control; this is located in the same building as the Colorado State Patrol offices. Skills training for driving and firearms are held at the industrial park site. A firearms training simulator is used for training college students and is also available for area officers. Housing is also provided for those students from outside the area. One director handles much of the instruction, but experts in specific areas make this academy customized to deliver the best practical information available. PowerPoint presentations, internet resources, and practical simulation are used extensively.

The Art Room located in Wheeler Hall 116 provides easels, a storage room and adjacent instructor office. This room is dedicated to courses in drawing, painting, and design. Students work on easels instead of tables. The room is now open, providing flexible work space and a more functional environment.

The Ed Stafford Theatre is located in the Humanities Center. Theatre students have access to a new Century Strand computerized lighting board, improved sound equipment, and a stage that is receiving continued attention in regard to needs of campus and other performers. Additional lighting instruments are ordered regularly. Costumes and props have been organized and stored. Dressing rooms have been reordered to provide useable space. Backstage construction areas are being organized and restored and brought up to theatrical standards. This includes re-establishing an inventory of platforms and flats, tools and equipment, and proper storage facilities. This sets the stage for training future theatre students in proper behind the scenes etiquette.
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Early Childhood Education is located at Columbian school and shares space with Head Start, Otero’s Child Development Services. Along with two faculty offices and storage space, students have a fully equipped dedicated classroom. Students also practice their skills at a variety of facilities to meet their lab training hour requirements. These include childcare centers and preschools throughout the area. Massage Therapy also located at Columbian has a classroom with an adjacent lab. The lab is set with six massage tables and twelve massage chairs to practice the various techniques.

The Testing Center located in McBride Hall is supervised by Student Services. Students are required to take the Accuplacer, the Colorado community college placement exams, if they have not taken the ACT test. English, reading, and math scores are the most critical for proper advising. A new science test pretest is being implemented for Spring 2007. The center has also administered Work Keys, and operated as Pearson Vue testing center. Testing for Cisco and Microsoft certifications have also been administered through the center. This center along with being used for placement and professional testing is also used for proctoring tests for teachers and helping to coordinate testing for online instruction.

Developmental courses are delivered through both traditional and hybrid formats that include PC-based, internet, and face-to-face instruction, blending strategies that provide flexible alternatives and proven program support. Beginning in fall 2001, Academic Systems Math software was implemented with one transfer level course, College Algebra. In Spring 2005, Reading Plus software was added to the College Preparatory Reading class. Reading faculty and Educational Assistance Center staff have trained on the software.

A web based learning platform software, Blackboard Learning Systems, was introduced in Fall 2001. A committee comprised of faculty, instructional and student services staff met to provide transitional planning for implementation. Blackboard training was provided by a professional trainer from Blackboard for all faculty with on-call Blackboard assistance available. In 2006, the state system decided to implement a standard to all web based course offered at the community colleges. To be in compliance with this new policy OJC is making the transition to WebCT Vista 4 by spring semester of 2007.

Otero Junior College evaluates the use of its learning resources to enhance student learning and effective teaching. The library assures that information, resources, and teaching opportunities are effective and enhance student learning. The library staff never stops evaluating the effectiveness of its resources. Professional library staff members monitor database usage, circulation statistics, interlibrary loan requests and website hits to determine
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current needs and trends. New educational programs provide opportunity to review current applicable holdings and needed acquisitions.

The campus boasts a high ratio of computer work stations to student population. Smart Station technology is present in nearly every classroom. Classrooms are technology-oriented with emphasis on multimedia approaches. The college ran for a period of time on the Arkansas Valley Network and experienced solid performance, but many daily operations are now dependent on system network and the accompanying speed. While some ISP still utilizes the AVNA network, sometimes system connections are slow. This may be affected by heavy system video use. Faster connections mean higher, happier participation and better learning.

The organization regularly assesses the effectiveness of its learning resources to support learning and teaching. The Education Assistance Center at the end of each semester evaluates the success of students receiving tutoring noting the percentage who completed the course with a C or better. Gains made from the time they started to where they ended are also examined. The individual needs of the student drive EAC and strategies are determined according to those needs. Learning style inventories are used to help develop success strategies. Session on time management, study skills, note taking, test taking and stress management are available to students.

Reviews for library staff and instructional support staff occur in ongoing fashion with formal evaluations done annually. An inventory of items in specific subject areas are evaluated by historical value, currency, degree of specificity, use and applicability and either updated or discarded as needed. Frequent visits with instructors provide opportunity to tailor library materials to assignments as well as highlight various library collections pertinent to the courses. As new programs are added to the curriculum, staff research suggested resources from publishers, peruse notable library catalogues from other colleges and universities, and monitor publisher publications for possible acquisitions. All media types are considered: print, digital, electronic, audio, video, software.

When addressing effectiveness, the college looks at four areas: effective staffing, faculty participation, administrative flexibility, and curriculum development. In effective staffing, favorable ratios of students to staff, ongoing staff training, and staff versatility and community involvement are considered. For faculty participation, faculty members are given academic freedom, encouraged to develop programs of study, and expand syllabus offerings, and use field resources and community projects. In administrative flexibility, administration is responsive to faculty needs, and an open
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exchange exists between administrative and teaching personnel. Effectiveness and development of curriculum is assessed through Individual Performance Objectives, personal goals for the year, and faculty working on improving courses.

Otero supports students, staff, and faculty in using technology effectively. At the beginning of each semester, students are sent a letter explaining the log in process, their ID and PIN number, and the campus policies for using technology. All computers have the following: Windows XP, Microsoft Office Professional 2003 Suites, Internet connections, and course specific software such as Microsoft Virtual PC, Secretarial Program (Keyboarding) and Adobe Acrobat. Program specific software such as Maple, Nursing Simulation, QuickBooks, Perceptions, Reading Plus, Dreamweaver MX 2004, Cosmetology Discovery Pro, and PhotoShop are loaded on designated computers.

There is an orientation for students enrolled in Guided Study courses where the syllabus, class expectations, and meeting times are discussed. They are shown how to log in, how the class works, where to find materials, and how to troubleshoot. Students are also given an email address and phone number for technical support.

Instructional classrooms are equipped with Smart Station—PC computer, DVD/VCR, document camera, portable laptop hook-up, and full projection capability. Smart Boards (Interactive White Boards) are utilized in the three computers labs and two larger classrooms. The Instructional Technician and Computer Center staff provide faculty and staff with individual or group training in using technology (equipment or software). Additional training on the Student Information Systems is provided by Student Services.

OJC has engaged an ambitious agenda for instructor education and encouraged instructors to actively pursue improvement in classroom presentations. Otero needs to continue financial support for training and upgrades in the area of technology. Multimedia may be underutilized by some instructors. When appropriate, instructors should meet the challenge to integrate multimedia with lecture formats. Professional development should continue to focus on strategies for combining technology with effective pedagogy. Technology is always a support strategy to good, solid teaching. Technology like faculty reporting of census dates and directly reporting grades into the Banner system are also ways to improve efficiency and service.
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The college provides effective staffing and support for its learning resources. With the assistance of dollars from several grants, OJC has been able to provide training and support for faculty in the area of online and web supplemented learning. Full media capabilities are available in classrooms with an effort to make sure the newest technology is on the frontline.

Office hours of campus faculty/instructors are posted on office doors. Each syllabus usually gives office hours for students’ information. Faculty web pages now display current schedules. Part-time instructors use the course syllabus to provide student’s with for contact information.

Math Lab, Computer Labs, Science Labs, Microcomputer/CISCO Lab, Theatre and Arts Room have hours posted on entry doors and faculty also notify students of available lab time. Most are available for student use when classes are not scheduled. The specific career and tech facilities such as the Auto Shop, Cosmetology, Law Academy, Nursing Lab, and Massage Lab are also available. Often students are practicing their new skills after classes.

The library’s hours are posted on the entrances as well as the outside doors of the building. The website also has information available on it. Mini sessions for library research are offered throughout the semester. Instructors may schedule a tour of the library and resources with the librarian.

The Educational Assistance Center is open from 7:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. on Thursday and 4:00 p.m. on Friday. Besides the three full time staff, there is a part-time person available. This center provides open computer lab, study areas, and tutoring. Faculty can also refer students who need extra assistance.

Student Services are opened daily from 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 5:00 p.m. on Friday. Services include general college information, financial aid, counseling and advising, placement assessment, and student records. Testing stops an hour prior to the close of the day.

Book Store is opened Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with extended hours at the beginning of the semester to accommodate students. Staff is available to assist students in obtaining correct textbooks, supplies and other items.

The organization’s systems and structures enable partnerships and innovations that enhance student learning and strengthen teaching effectiveness. The college benefits from its many partnerships to enhance the opportunities for students.
CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

The Early Childhood Education students practice their labs and student teaching with kids from infant and toddlers to pre-school and after school at Head Start and large and small childcare centers. Law Academy demonstrates cooperative ventures with local law enforcement agencies and Colorado State Patrol to encourage community service, responsiveness and additional training. The nursing department has lab and clinical sites at a variety of healthcare facilities not only in the valley but also in the metro areas. EMT classes are usually hosted in the emergency facilities of the community being trained (i.e. Las Animas Ambulance Barn or Ordway Fire Station). Strategic partnerships with Cisco and other technology providers offer specialized technical training.

The Community Lecture Series offers perspectives on academic work to the community. The Introduction to Hydrology class was an outcome from one of the lectures. The interest expressed by area farmers and businesses warranted an evening section being offered. This program also worked closely with the CSU extension in the valley. Otero Players provide theatrical experiences for students and the community.

Strategic partnerships continue to provide local workforce with training and education. The OJC faculty and staff reach the community on diverse levels of interest. There is a continued need to focus OJC resources on future concerns of the Arkansas Valley, developing more opportunities for dialogue with community leaders and organizations about concerns for future growth.

**Budgeting priorities reflect that improvement in teaching and learning is a core value of the organization.** Every spring as the college’s budget is development, each department is asked to identify and submit needs for the coming year. Then they present these requests to the administration and priorities are determined. The Perkins and the general fund budgets are
CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

developed at the same time, allowing for the best use of available funds from all federal, state, and grants sources.

Instructional Services has ambitiously focused on orientation. Outreach effectively presents diversity of resources and educational depth of faculty members. Faculty members have a positive image regarding effectiveness of teaching and learning being communicated through clear goals for each academic program. Working to provide even more transparency about how budgeting priorities are set will gain additional support and help clarify for decision makers the setting of long-term priorities. Involving faculty and staff in setting departmental priorities is essential as would be linking professional development to institutional goals.

The college has focused on updating the science laboratories with technology by design and the availability of funding. Much of the equipment is expensive, and as more money becomes available, the science labs could continue the improvement that has been experienced in recent years.

Otero Junior College doers believe in and support the idea that student learning and growth is the reason for being a viable force for sixty-five years. Budgeting priorities do reflect the idea that improvement in teaching and learning is a core value of the organization.
CHAPTER FIVE
CRITERION FOUR: ASSESSMENT DISCOVERIES AND RESPONSES

INTRODUCTION

The college promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission. Otero commits financial and personnel resources to ensure there are both freedom of inquiry and finances for quality professional experiences. With a solid general education component being one of the primary purposes of the college, it provides the foundation for a commitment to inquiry, practice, creativity, and social responsibility—all of which are linked to successfully engaging a global, diverse, technological society.

Otero Junior College promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission. Otero Junior College values and promotes a continuing appreciation for learning. All staff are encouraged to pursue all meaningful opportunities to improve their abilities and share experiences and practices with other professionals on campus as well as with students.

Core Component—4a: Otero Junior College demonstrates through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff that it values a life of learning.

The organization’s planning and pattern of financial allocation demonstrate that it values and promotes a life of learning for its students, faculty, and staff. The Professional Development Committee consists of representatives from administrators, faculty, and staff. Committee reviews applications and approves funding. Staff is asked to submit proposals during the budget process to assist in budget planning. The general fund budget is currently $10,000 to be used by all three categories of employment. Sabbatical leave is in board policy but currently suspended due to budget constraints.

In addition, professional development is a priority in the Perkins plan. Annual at least another $10,000 is line itemed by program area to specifically target
an area. For example three nursing faculty attended a conference, *All About Student Success*, and came back to implement changes to the student nurse orientation, curriculum revision, and new presentation methods.

**The board has approved and disseminated statements supporting freedom of inquiry for the organization’s students, faculty, and staff, and honors those statements in its practices.** Board specific language dealing with academic freedom and intellectual inquiry can be found at the SBCCOES website under BP3-20, Due Process for Faculty Academic Freedom is defined as: The absence of constraint or coercion of choosing what one will teach (within the constraints of official course descriptions and official course syllabi), investigate, study or present in all fields of learning.

The college sees itself as a place to explore new material and offering an environment that is open to different ways of thinking. Staff members and students do have the ability to voice concerns and expect to be taken seriously.

**The college supports professional development opportunities and makes them available to all of its administrators, faculty, and staff.** The Otero Junior College Professional Development Committee operates according to its own mission statement: Provide programs and services which facilitate professional growth. Integrate staff development activities with the goals of the institution by creating an environment which supports professional growth and fosters the success of the institution and its diverse student body.

Goals for the group include promoting currency in content and instructional techniques. The group promotes interest in diversity of students and staff, revitalizing professionals. Representatives from all campus constituencies make decisions directing development. This group has a budget that can be used for warranted requests and for creating opportunities based on defined needs.

All administrators, faculty and staff have professional development funds available to them either through the professional development budget, limited departmental funds, and Perkins federal funding. Staff utilizes a standardized request form and the committee is responsible for approving requests. In addition, Perkins funds target many CTE program specific areas like nursing or cosmetology and must adhere to state requirements for meeting sub-indicator issues like recruiting students for nontraditional careers and making certain faculty are equipped to enhance those opportunities.
CRITERION FOUR: ASSESSMENT DISCOVERIES AND RESPONSES

Professional development makes available opportunities for student learning centered activities that will enhance instruction and provide quality educational programs and services that prepare persons for decisive and responsible roles in society. At one point the taskforce charge and parameters included the following: recommend, coordinate, and facilitate appropriate professional development processes and practices to increase institutional and individual effectiveness. Help identity and advance clear communications and learning-centered opportunities.

All staff and students should be aware of these institutional beliefs and priorities. By knowing each, they can shape behaviors. Strong, thorough orientation and refresher information is always helpful so people remain aware and informed. Awareness campaigns may pay dividends.

Otero publicly acknowledges the achievements of students and faculty in acquiring, discovering, and applying knowledge. Public acknowledgement is given through area newspapers, radio, campus newsletters, award ceremonies, and special events. Academic honors are published regularly, recognizing both full-time and part-time student accomplishments. Academic success is key to successful athletic programs and recognition follows.

Press releases are issued for significant achievements of all employees. Faculty members of the year serve as Faculty Marshalls at graduation. Their syllabi are used as models for the current Faculty Handbook. An event such a completion of a new degree, addition to the family, wedding, or birthdays are often celebrated on campus.

The faculty and students, in keeping with the organization’s mission, produce scholarship and create knowledge through basic and applied research. Some research and writing are accomplished on campus, but the primary focus of Otero Junior College is on teaching. Science faculty members have worked in conjunction with Colorado State University professors on water projects. Some work has been done on textbooks and lab manuals. Research and writing in the area of geophysics has been published. Presentations have been made by faculty members in psychology and English. Several faculty members are working toward advanced degrees.

The organization and its units use scholarship and research to stimulate organizational and educational improvements. Information gained from participation in meetings and conferences is integrated into appropriate campus practices. Statewide groups offer opportunities to interact with professionals in the areas of governance and content specific matters. State
CRITERION FOUR: ASSESSMENT DISCOVERIES AND RESPONSES

faculty advisory council, state faculty core curriculum committee, educational services, state business officers, state assessment conference, composition conference, and technology seminars all provide feedback and usable information.

Core Component—4b: Otero Junior College demonstrates that the acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

The college integrates general education into all of its undergraduate degree programs through curricular and experiential offerings intentionally created to develop the attitudes and skills requisite for a life of learning in a diverse society. Students attending OJC belong to two broad categories, traditional and non-traditional which is typical for most community colleges. Within these categories there are four distinct student types. First, students are seeking an associate degree with the intention of transferring to a four-year institution. Second, students are seeking a career and technical certificate and/or licensure. Third, students are seeking an associate’s degree as an end of their higher learning. Fourth, students are seeking a bachelor degree through a partnership with Adams State College’s (REAP) with degrees in Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies with licensure in K-6, Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (Liberal Arts), and Bachelor of Arts in Sociology.

The college must provide educational offerings satisfying the needs of these diverse student groups. Furthermore, OJC must remain cognizant of expanding educational needs of the communities in its service to demonstrate that its educational offerings are integral to its overall educational plan as is stated in its Mission and Purpose Statements.

The organization regularly reviews the relationship between its mission and values and the effectiveness of its general education. The college works with the state system; the CCCS works with CCHE in regard to determining graduation requirements for all degrees based on an effective general education. Required credits earned in arts and humanities, social sciences, communications, math and science are clearly determined for those seeking a transfer degree. Specific courses within several areas are also selected to provide a comprehensive experience. For example, requirements specify requiring courses from two separate disciplines or, in another, including one history to earn the degree. Mission and value statements clearly reflect this approach to learning. These documents are available to all students and staff.
CRITERION FOUR: ASSESSMENT DISCOVERIES AND RESPONSES

in the form of the college catalog. Unique features of each statement are readily and regularly supported.

As a part of the evidence on how OJC faculty members perceive their role in fulfilling the Purpose Statements, one committee devised a short questionnaire. Twenty-eight faculty members responded. The responses from strongly agree and agree somewhat comprise 96.3%, which indicates that the majority of instructors adopt some teaching methods to accommodate learning styles. The overall conclusion of the survey is that the majority of faculty believe their role as an instructor is consistent with the institution’s Mission Statement. The majority of faculty believe they promote intellectual inquiry.

Otero Junior College demonstrates the linkages between curricular and co-curricular activities that support inquiry, practice, creativity, and social responsibility. One program that focuses on inquiry, practice and social responsibility is the International and Intercultural Activities office and its primary student organization: International Relations Organization. The International Relations Program facilitates international students and American students who have studied abroad by establishing relationships with community agencies, making presentations to classes, and connecting students. Experiential learning enables students to grow in awareness of international issues and enables them to develop leadership skills which address these issues. Through the International Studies Program, Otero Junior College has been hosting students from countries in Eurasia who have been chosen to study in the United States as part of the Eurasian Undergraduate (UGRAD) program. The program is sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the United States Department of State and administered by IREX (the International Research and Exchange Board).

The purpose of the program is to enrich the educational experience of young people who show the promise of contributing to the betterment of their own country and to increase mutual understanding between Eurasia and the United States. The UGRAD program is valuable for fostering democratic principles and helping to develop free enterprise in newly organized countries. To help facilitate the program’s philosophy, students concentrate on a specific area of study while in the United States. They will also do an internship to understand the functions of American business and government.

Club Caliente also promotes creativity, practice, and social responsibility for student, staff and community members by offering a wide array of academically-oriented activities events and programs with the explicit
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intention of encouraging Spanish language usage and awareness of Latino American and Spanish culture and history within the college and community. Activities include Día de los Muertos, the celebration of El Grito, and collaborating with the International Relations Organization to co-sponsors World Food Day.

Students, faculty, staff and the community can contribute original art, poetry and prose to the Chinook, a publication of writing and art. This publication is edited by a student. Otero Players is for students and community members with a desire to participate in stage productions. Participants gain experience in performance and aspects of technical production. Students can also practice their creativity by displaying their skills in the Student Art Show.

Learning outcomes demonstrate that graduates have achieved breadth of knowledge and skills and the capacity to exercise intellectual inquiry. Graduate student surveys suggest students feel they have received an excellent education and were treated fairly. Evidence suggests they have been well prepared to be successful at further education or employment in their chosen areas. Information from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and several specific four year universities have stated that transfer students perform as well or better than students that began at a four year institutions in Colorado. The Provost at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs made this comment during visits in 2005 and again in 2006. The president of Colorado State University in Fort Collins made a similar statement in 2005. Adams State College informed Otero that students completing its Bachelors programs in Elementary Education and Business outperform their native students.

For the last 10 years OJC students have completed a student graduate survey relating to their learning experiences. The survey is a five-level heuristic survey designed to determine students’ perceptions of how well OJC meets their needs. Citation of averages item by item is really strong evidence supporting the college’s addressing items in “4b.”

The opinion of the OJC faculty is that they promote intellectual inquiry, add to the prescription of their courses in terms of breadth of knowledge, and that they provide a healthy learning atmosphere. According to the faculty survey on intellectual inquiry, 88.8% of faculty believe their courses are designed to challenge students to think beyond the envelope of the course lectures and textbook(s). When faculty was asked if their courses sufficiently develop a curiosity in the subject that promotes students to continue to learn about the subject past the completion of the course, 96.3% of faculty believe their
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courses did instill continued interest in the topics with 55.6% significantly agreeing.

The breadth of knowledge also pertains to the range and diversity of all institutional offerings. OJC offers a variety of competency-based and/or skills-based curricula that provide students opportunities in obtaining certificate or licensure or both for a selected occupations or careers. The career and technical programs address the mission of OJC in providing valuable trained professionals to the communities of its service region. These programs attend to the awareness, flexibility and responsiveness to student and community needs. Many have been developed in direct response to requests from the community.

Learning outcomes demonstrate effective preparation for continued learning. The college utilizes a longitudinal study that focuses on assessment and appropriate placement in College Algebra (MAT 121) and Composition (ENG 121) as well as tracking prescribed remediation and subsequent success in these core sequences. Otero proceeds with offering companion courses and programs that expand upon these two academic building blocks. Essentially, these are viewed as predictors of success in all related areas.

Career and Technical Education outcomes are enumerated in each separately approved program plan. These are developed locally by faculty and department chairs along with instructional services administrators; they are developed in concert with specially formed advisory committees with individuals from outside the college who represent industry specific standards and current hiring requirements. The state system also utilizes five program managers to assist in the development of programs and who advise on appropriate components for inclusion.

In addition, the state requires a VE-135 follow up each year that is a report demonstrating the number of completers in each career and technical program. This report also tracks students who are continuing their education, working, working in an area in which they were trained, and the salary they currently earn. Perkins legislation encourages high tech, high wage, high demand programs. These have always been considerations in locally delivered programs, bearing in mind the unique natures of businesses and employment opportunities in the region.

Core Component—4c: Otero Junior College assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.
CRITERION FOUR: ASSESSMENT DISCOVERIES AND RESPONSES

Regular academic program reviews include attention to currency and relevance of courses and programs. Initial student assessment is handled at the intake level through a college placement test. Otero and the Colorado Community College System currently use the Accuplacer for advising students in English, mathematics, and reading. Mandatory cutoff scores are set by the system, requiring a certain score or course to be completed before enrollment in college level English or math. Although reading is also a critical component, these levels are managed by the individual college for proper placement.

With the advent of statewide curriculum development, approval, and review, Otero’s Curriculum and Instruction Committee has operated in more streamlined, responsive format. Department Chairs work closely with Instructional Services administrators to identify courses and suggest course changes for the consideration of statewide discipline groups.

Communications with Student Services personnel are ongoing based on new offerings and specific requirements surrounding advising sensitivities. An example would be the newly established BIO 090 Basic Biology preparatory course for BIO 201 Anatomy and Physiology a new requirement for students wishing to apply for the nursing or massage program. Responsibilities include making additions, deletions, and modifications to curriculum; making policy recommendations for the revision of catalog; and monitoring the quality and coordination of instruction. Academic standards are also monitored for compliance with CCHE and CCCS policies regarding evaluation, grading, and graduation requirements.

Career and Technical Education courses are approved and reviewed regularly for relevancy. A variety of individual assessments are used on the course level. Student comments are referenced by chairs, and faculty are able to make appropriate adjustments on well identified instructor and course issues. Most issues dealing with curriculum have been designated as department specific issues and the Curriculum and Instruction Committee has delegated those types of decisions to each department and Instructional Services unless there is significant cross over requiring further coordination.

In keeping with its mission, learning goals and outcomes include skills and professional competence essential to a diverse workforce. Curriculum development and improvement is an ongoing function. Faculty, chairs, technicians, and administrators all reviewed courses each semester in order to improve content and delivery to enhance learning. State processes also dictate many of the course requirements. Statewide discipline committees
can re-examine courses at any time. Changes can be forwarded to faculty and educational services for review on a monthly basis.

Career and Technical Education advisory committees review curriculum developed by faculty and geared to supplying all necessary features identified with the state’s commonly numbered courses integrated from the state office when programs were originally approved. Knowledge, understanding, and application are all measured as students move through programs and matriculate. Information from Department Chairs, Instructional Services, the CCNS Website, and CCCOES “A Guide to the Operation of CTE Advisory Committees” shows the organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

**Learning outcomes document that graduates have gained the skills and knowledge they need to function in diverse local, national, and global societies.** Graduate student surveys attest to the fact that students feel they leave Otero well prepared. They received solid information, had excellent educational support, and had their educational goals met. Students were “satisfied” in academic area with regard to organizing, thinking, writing, problem-solving and speaking effectively. They were “satisfied” in the areas of sciences, mathematics, social sciences, humanities and ethics. There is also an informal “where are they now” initiative in place to locate and identify graduates or people who have attended or worked at the college.

External certifications in the areas of early childhood education, cosmetology, nursing, automotive, law academy, and massage rely on solid preparation and, in many cases, verified hours in specific activities. Five designated state system program managers work with colleges, departments, and instructors to align necessary competencies and experiences to industry standards. Over ninety percent of CTE graduates are enrolled in additional education or have found work.

**Curricular evaluation involves alumni, employers, and other external constituents who understand the relationships among the course of study, the currency of the curriculum, and the utility of the knowledge and skills gained.** OJC has participated fully and implemented the state wide common course numbering project. Colorado has developed a statewide guaranteed transfer program and transfer policy. Colorado public institutions of higher education have more than 500 lower-division general education courses in 20 subject areas approved for guaranteed transfer. Courses are approved at least twice per academic and calendar year and apply the next semester immediately following their approval. These courses will automatically

CTE Advisory Committee:  
http://www.cccs.edu/Docs/CTE/AdvisoryCommitteeGuide_10-03.pdf 

A Brief History of the Common Course Numbering Project
CRITERION FOUR: ASSESSMENT DISCOVERIES AND RESPONSES

Transfer and continue to count toward completion of general education core or graduation requirements for any liberal arts or science associate or bachelor’s degree program.

Additional legislation also impacted the process. Legislation in two areas impacted the work being done to commonly describe the community college curriculum. The first was the Basic Skills Legislation that dictated assessment and remediation before students could enter college-transfer courses in Mathematics and English. The second was the King Bill, also known as the Students Bill of Rights. This piece of legislation required the development of a common core of General Education that would be transferable among all of Colorado Higher Education. This set of courses was fully implemented Fall of 2003. As a result of the latter legislation, the original Transfer Core Agreement grandfathered in until the end of the Spring Semester, 2003. Students completing an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree are guaranteed 60 credit hours of an A.A. or A.S. degree will transfer to a four-year school, once students are accepted for admission.

Changing leadership for the project presented some challenges, along with the implementation of the Basic Skills legislation, requiring that some guidelines be revamped. While work with academic courses progressed at a fairly steady pace, work among career and technical courses was delayed somewhat. Some of the CTE faculty groups were not convened until quite late in the process. Project continuation after the bulk of the development, review, and approval of the curriculum was completed relying on a faculty task force to work with vice presidents of instruction to develop guidelines for submitting new courses to the database. This process is now in place. Availability of a more “user friendly” database and website has been developed so that the information on courses available in the system is accessible to students, parents, and faculty throughout Colorado (and beyond).

Two members of the faculty represent OJC at the state level on the State Faculty Curriculum Committee. One representative is an academic instructor and the other is a career and technical education instructor. The purpose of this committee deals with courses from the community colleges in Colorado and also those proposed for GE-25 status, works on the common course numbering system for the community colleges in Colorado—each of these involve recommendations for the Educational Services group, plans the annual 2 to 2 year conference for community colleges in Colorado, and other duties as assigned.

CCHE: http://www.state.co.us/cche/academic/transfer/index.html.
CRITERION FOUR: ASSESSMENT DISCOVERIES AND RESPONSES

The Career and Technical Education Programs are required by law to each have an advisory committee. The primary purpose of the committee is to assist educators in establishing, operating, and evaluating programs which serve the needs of students, business, and industry, and to provide expertise pertaining to technological change. These committees provide an opportunity for discussion among people in education, business and industry and focus on how to improve CTE and make the most of the community resources that are available. Members provide expertise to the program by reviewing curriculum, facilities, budget, student competencies, and student placement in related occupations. Members of the CTE committee are representatives of business and industry people who are active and represent diversity in gender and ethnicity.

_The organization supports creation and use of scholarship by students in keeping with its mission._ Students utilize educational knowledge and experience in areas outside the classroom. Students have presented programs on political forums that targeted key ballot issues and other nationally relevant topics. PTK members have worked to enhance understanding of key themes for the year. Math students have competed at a number of levels. Students are selected for academic accomplishments in various fields including athletics or other agency specific designations.

Students in the career and technical programs have occasions to practice their skills in a multiple of settings. The nursing, cosmetology, and massage students have lab and clinical opportunity. The auto tech students have projects in the shop. The law academy students practice everything from arrest control to driving to firearms. The early childhood students’ lab experiences include infant and toddlers, childcare, pre-school, and before and after school in a variety of settings.

_Faculty expects students to master the knowledge and skills necessary for independent learning in programs of applied practice._ Introduction of material, then reinforcement and mastery of the same material is critical to achieving competencies necessary for professionals to practice what they’ve been trained for. This is true in both academic course work and CTE course work. High standards in nursing that stress the importance of mathematical dosage calculations attempt to guarantee better trained nurses. Competence and compassion create a competitive package. Professional ethics also are critical to a professional’s understanding of clients. The focus is to create independent, confident completers.

_The organization provides curricular and co-curricular opportunities that promote social responsibility._ Student organizations align with appropriate
department and program goals. Clubs complement courses with field trips and focused activities that enable students to learn in a different way and to contribute in a number of ways. Student fund drives, community assistance efforts, volunteering at local businesses, and community organizations all provide opportunities for students to connect to information, to other people, and even more closely to themselves.

The student body is represented by an Associated Student Government (ASG), presided over by the study body president. The Associated Student Government considers and makes recommendations regarding student affairs and the disbursement of student activity fees. ASG is responsible for working with the Director of the Student Center and/or those responsible for the supervision of activities in coordinating and promoting student activities. ASG promotes activities for the entire student body attending OJC. These leadership opportunities promote responsibility.

Within each organization or club at OJC there are opportunities to reach out and be involved in some way in the lives of others. These are Phi Theta Kappa, Non-Traditional Student Organization, International Relations Organization, Club Caliente, Otero Players, Student Nurses’ Association, Chess Club, Campus Crusade for Christ, Club Cosmetology, Ecology Club, Alpine Club, Wunsch Hall, Science Club, and Math Club, Science, Club, Club Caliente, Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science. Other organizations are started every year as interest develops. Students work through the Associated Student Government and sponsors of existing organizations and clubs to organize and develop new organizations.

Student athletes learn self discipline, work ethic, responsibility, and team building. The philosophy at OJC is for them to be students first then athletes. Each team has study tables, and coaches regularly track their athletes’ progress in the classroom. Sportsmanship is emphasized.

Core Component—4d: Otero Junior College provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

The organization’s academic and student support programs contribute to the development of student skills and attitudes fundamental to responsible use of knowledge. Geared for successful completion of all relevant goals, college offices and personnel place a premium on supporting students. Faculty professional development is ongoing. Provision of all technologies and appropriate training and support are understood investments in their
professional ability to deliver optimum service to students as knowledgeable skilled partners in the learning process.

Learning responsibilities are shared by students and teachers, and administrators as they team to provide quality experiences in the classroom and out. An attractive, safe environment complements well designed and delivered instruction. Classroom and campus management also place a high priority on hard work and honest effort. Students are accountable for their active participation in the learning process.

The organization follows explicit policies and procedures to ensure ethical conduct in its research and instructional activities. OJC provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and practice conducted by its faculty and students. All research projects conducted by college faculty, staff and students go through an approval process involving the researcher’s Department Chair, Office of Instructional Services and the Office of the President. Currently no faculty members are conducting research with human subjects. As policy within the college, an institutional review board is convened when a research proposal involves human subjects. This rare research proposal is then reviewed to ensure that all research involving the use of human subjects comply with federal regulations. Students who are conducting research are under the same review requirements as faculty and staff.

Otero Junior College is committed to a high standard of academic integrity among its faculty and students. Faculty and students should maintain a spirit of honesty and honor in all academic endeavors. To reinforce this, college policy encourages that the academic code of integrity developed by faculty be included on each class syllabus. Observations below are included on most faculty syllabi. “As a general rule, using the ideas, words, and work of another (others) and passing them off as your own violates this code. Other specific examples include, but are not limited to:”

1. Copying homework of another student.
2. Failure to cite sources used in writing assignments.
3. Bringing facts or any aid not allowed by the instructor to an exam situation for the purpose of copying or referencing them on the exam.
4. Bringing pre-written essays into an exam situation.
5. Copying another student's work on an exam.
6. Making up sources and information for inclusion in a research paper.
7. Using research papers found online.
8. Giving or receiving information on any assignment or exam where working with others is not allowed by the instructor.
9. Obtaining a copy of an exam, by whatever means, before it is administered.
10. Copying from published material as it is written, copying most of the text and changing a few words here and there, or restructuring sentences of the text.
11. Claiming an idea is your own when it is not.
12. Having someone else take an exam for you or complete an assignment for you.

In addition to statements within courses concerning plagiarism, the notion of academic integrity is disseminated to students through various learning support programs in the Educational Support Center. The library is also a key resource for providing information to students. Strategies to reduce misconduct include library sponsored instruction that helps students understand plagiarism so that they are more likely to avoid it. To support faculty, strategies to reduce cheating are included in the Instructor and Faculty handbook.

The organization encourages curricular and co-curricular activities that relate responsible use of knowledge to practicing social responsibility. As part of its focus on social responsibility mission Phi Theta Kappa, an international honor society has been promoting student learning through community service. Phi Theta Kappa members sponsor fundraising events through Race for the Cure and have sponsored two fundraising events for the Tsunami victims and Hurricane Katrina victims. In conjunction with the Student Nurse’s Association, they have sponsored a smoking cessation campaign.
Several examples of how other organizations practice social responsibility are: Student Nurses’ Association’s blood drive, Club Cosmetology’s “Cuts for Cans” and “Locks for Love,” and Ecology Club’s recycle and raptor projects. Non-Traditional Student Organization, Campus Crusade for Christ and PTK supports Operation Christmas Child.

The organization creates, disseminates, and enforces clear policies on practices involving intellectual property rights. Otero Junior College faculty, administrative, staff, and student personnel are regularly involved in scholarly activities that include teaching, research, and other creative activities. Policies on intellectual property rights are disseminated through the office of Instructional Services. This policy is intended to support faculty, staff, and students in identifying, protecting, and administering intellectual property matters; defining the rights and responsibilities of all involved; and establishing support offices to provide the required assistance. Pursuant to college and state policy, and without an express agreement specifying otherwise, any work (whether a technical work or a creative work) prepared by college personnel within the scope of their employment is work for hire owned by the university. An individual wishing to maintain ownership will need to receive prior approval from the College President in the form of a written agreement, signed by the President.

Several faculty members have written and published articles, stories, plays, essays, lab manuals, and formal scientific papers. Several science faculty have worked in conjunction with area universities on specific related projects like water. Faculty have presented at regional, state, national and international conferences. Several faculty members are working toward advanced degrees.

Some staff may not read all college provided materials like catalogs and handbooks or state system procedural manuals; some claim they have never seen these items. This does not mean they have not been supporting the basic concepts. An awareness campaign may pay dividends. This dissemination and display of mission and values through campus ecology could be handled through internal, on-campus marketing, website, mailings, and banners. This activity might provide understanding and motivation while confirming existing practices or pointing toward employing new ones, keeping college priorities in view, in line. These general statements can align efforts and expectations, help make sure current goals are accurate, and the college is meeting needs.
Chapter Six

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Otero Junior College 2007 Self-Study
CHAPTER SIX
CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

Otero Junior College maintains strong positive relationships with its constituencies and serves them well. An ongoing dialogue benefits all groups in collaborative, innovative partnerships that value intelligent investments of restricted resources. The college demonstrates its capacity to engage people in its communities. It is seen as an integral part of regional economic, educational, and cultural well being. A basic tenet of the college is that it should always operate as a good neighbor. Sometimes leading; sometimes following; at all times, responding and supporting.

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value. This criterion committee asked a very good, simple question. “Who are our constituencies?”

Otero Junior College serves a special group of people with common aims and views. This group has been defined as residents of a three county area, but hundreds of other Colorado citizens and people from out of state and other nations also benefit from the college offerings. With an eye toward internationalization, Otero’s definition and reality of “constituencies” continues to expand. Usually, the support from all members of this expanded group is readily available to ensure the success of both the student and the college in their shared goals.

Local area school districts enroll students through dual credit in host high school settings. They send students to attend on campus classes through Colorado’s Post Secondary Options Act (PSEO) and Fast Track programs. Students can earn credits, certificates and, indeed, degrees while still in high school. Districts also benefit from outreach activities designed with the younger student in mind. Kid’s College has offered numerous opportunities for school age children. Various school programs are held on campus every year, including musical performances, science fair and athletic camps.

Teachers within these districts benefit from professional recertification through the Colorado Department of Education for completing courses that are specifically designed by the college and districts in a cooperative Summer Academy format. Competitive rates and district subsidies enable teachers to remain in the Arkansas Valley.
Formerly known as the Rural Education Access Program (REAP), this teacher education opportunity provides a baccalaureate experience on the OJC campus through a unique arrangement with Adams State College to deliver classes locally that lead to a degree in Elementary Education. In addition, other bachelor degrees have been added in with degrees in Business Administration, Interdisciplinary Studies (Liberal Arts), and Sociology. Master programs are also available in Counseling and Education. Other alliances with agencies and institutions prove Otero to be a solid player on the lookout for value added advantages for its constituencies.

New and emerging constituencies are also becoming familiar more quickly. With the newly created SCORE Center located on campus, relationships are already paying dividends. College personnel are becoming more involved with attracting new business and investigating relationships with other communities outside the service area to pool resources in the areas of eco-tourism, biotechnology, alternative energy in the forms of wind power and ethanol, and retirement community planning.

**Core Component—5a:** Otero Junior College learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

*The organization’s commitments are shaped by its mission and its capacity to support those commitments.* It invites, energizes, involves, and responds. The college has partnered with four year schools to import courses in order for students to complete degrees at home. This is one form of accommodation that goes beyond the scope of college’s authority but is still evident in its mission.

Otero has made provisions to serve disabled students in the form of providing a campus easy to access physically. Appropriate instructional technologies are also implemented to accommodate students with specific learning challenges in the Educational Assistance Center. The college website is keenly aware of electronic challenges, and every effort is made to mitigate learning barriers within that venue.

Classroom technologies are modern and utilized by staff and students. Room arrangements to fit Otero students and enhance their learning are reviewed constantly. Comfort contributes to a student’s ability to concentrate. Furniture, seating, lighting all contribute. In addition to providing the always-to-be-celebrated traditional bricks and mortar, has been the inclusion of appropriate “clicks and borders.” Online access to entire courses or robust supplemental materials is a reality at Otero Junior College. Course cartridges provided by textbook suppliers and other online enhancements continue to populate the learning environment on and off campus.

Geographical and financial access
CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

Affording college can present barriers to students. One way in which the college manages to increase its capacity in funding education is to invest intelligently to handle as many needs as possible with finite resources. OJC operates an extensive financial aid program for students who find it impossible or difficult to enter or remain in college without some type of financial assistance. Types of financial aid fall in four categories: Scholarships, Grants, Loans, and Employment Opportunities. Scholarships include Colorado Scholarship Program, Governor’s Opportunity Scholarship, and Private Donor Scholarships. Grants include Federal Pell Grants, Colorado Student Grants, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants, and State Student Incentive Grants. Loans are Federal Stafford Student Loans (Subsidized and Unsubsidized) and Federal PLUS Loans (parents). Employment Opportunities are the College Work-study Programs. Job listings are posted in the Student Services Center with daily updates from the Colorado Workforce Center.

Marketing encompasses several unique components. It is the anticipation, management and satisfaction of demand. Otero’s “tangible products” include education and service, providing quality opportunities. Success is measured by enrollment dollars properly applied to activities that promote learning and students reaching their goals. Ninety seven percent of students who graduate from OJC are employed upon graduation or transfer to colleges and universities to further their education. Public relations help promote intangible goals like integrity that provide a foundation to deliver on promises with competence and expertise.

The organization practices periodic environmental scanning to understand the changing needs of its constituencies and their communities. The Otero Junior College Advisory Council meetings occur at specific site throughout the three-county region. Residents in Las Animas, Rocky Ford and Crowley County have attended a college council meeting in their own city. This traveling council meeting allows people to meet up close and personal, putting names with faces and recognizing the geographical area and geopolitical areas served by the college. The council has representation from each county as well.

Concurrent credit administrators, CAVOC Perkins grant coordinators, and Student Services advisors and recruiters make numerous trips to area high schools. These connections prove to be invaluable in bringing back necessary information to better serve students and communities. The president serves on multiple area boards and is committed to traveling to the people.
Businesses represented on Career and Technical Education Advisory Committees provide know-how but also deliver requests for services. Frequently, conversations are in person and closer than a phone call away.

Continuous scanning can outperform periodic scanning. Some of the observations over the years have been:

- Enrollment in area school districts began to drop in the late 70s’ and early 1980s. As a result, enrollment at OJC dropped. Down to 500 requiring reducing staff.
- Athletics were reinstituted, starting with men’s basketball, later adding baseball, volleyball, softball, and golf.
- Looked at technical skills programs, the perceived and actual demand.
- Started with nursing, added computer technologies, and business.
- New programs established based on expected demand: Law Academy, Cisco, Computer Systems Technologies, Cosmetology, Massage Therapy, and Auto Tech.
- New partnerships established that included Adams State College, CSU-Pueblo, CSU-Fort Collins, UCCS, Mid-American Christian University, Franklin University, and others.

The organization demonstrates attention to the diversity of the constituencies it serves. Although Otero Junior College continues to provide a solid junior college transfer program, it delivers opportunities to students that allow them to enter the workforce earlier. With the average student age dropping slightly, it may signal more recent graduates have made a conscious choice to enter post secondary education at Otero. Costs and quality have been cited as reasons for this change.

The college assumed a larger role in the delivery of GED services to people in the area. Upon the reduction of funding for the University of Colorado Bueno HEP (GED) Program, OJC hired one of the incumbent instructors who continues on Otero’s payroll. This action was followed by close communications with Student Services personnel who integrates counseling and advising into their routine, engaging students and clarifying next steps to college. Assistance has enabled significantly more students to identify college as a realistic choice.

Otero stepped up to answer one of the state’s challenges: increasing the number of qualified nurses. With assistance from some grant dollars, OJC implemented a part-time nursing program running evenings and weekends. This was designed to allow potential nurses who needed to remain currently employed to move ahead at a convenient time. Many students commuted over two hundred miles round trip to attend classes in this unique program.
CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

Depending on the state’s ability to reimburse for inmate education, the college can access dollars and provide meaningful educational opportunities. Once inmates stopped receiving PELL dollars, the college was unable to provide programs. Colorado Youthful Offenders Programs have surfaced in a number of vicinities. This program that identified first-time offenders under the age of twenty-three who maintained good behavior and were within nine months of parole could qualify for state tuition dollars. Barriers included a cumbersome Department of Corrections screening and mandatory training that discouraged faculty, and in some, cases, delayed the courses to the point of cancellation. Otero has reviewed the monetary advantage and also its responsibility to meet the educational need for inmates. In many cases, state dollars are already spoken for and dedicated to high school equivalencies or vocational education.

Three key components govern Otero Junior College’s success. First, stimulating demand is effected through recruiting, public relations, and advertising. Second, regulating demand has basically been facilitated through offering three fairly traditional semesters; most emphasis areas within associate degree programs can commence at any semester without having to delay for a fall start. Special calendar accommodations can be made for programs like part-time nursing, cosmetology, or law academy that may be better served by implementing customized attendance periods in order to achieve maximum results. Third, facilitating demand through a variety of methods can help ensure access, delivery, and completion. Determining the educational focus with a limited number of career and technical education programs and solid transfer degrees allow the college to assess needs and move appropriately to address those. Facilitating demand through day, evening and weekend classes as well as short and compressed courses, internet courses, and other independent study options are additional methods to serve students.

Courses have been offered beginning at 7:40 in the morning; others have been offered over lunch hour, frequently on a two-day basis to maximize facility usage and provide instruction at convenient times for students. Most classes are held in the morning with few afternoon classes. Some discussion has occurred regarding no noon classes so students can participate in college organizations, but capacity and sensitivities to time have proven to be an overriding factor at this point.

*The organization’s outreach programs respond to identified community needs, and in responding to external constituencies, the organization is well-served by programs such as continuing education, outreach, customized training, and extension services.* Otero has responded to needs manifested in the Department of Social Services and responded with an
Essential Skills in the Workplace program for TANF recipients that was geared to providing usable, employable training skills and personal coaching. Now with the new TANF regulations being implemented, the college is once again developing strategies with the three county departments to assure compliance in the area of postsecondary activities.

Community Networking is a group of agencies that meets bi-monthly through the school year to address education and training issues. Began as an advisory committee for a single parent/displaced homemaker program, the group has determined the need to meet existed beyond the longevity of that specific program. This group is comprised of people from the three county departments of Human Services, the workforce center, BOCES transition coordinator, division of vocational rehabilitation, Workforce Investment Act vendor, GED, resource and community centers, and the college.

For a number of years the college initiated many customized training ventures. Lately the demand has been small and intermittent. Many companies are too small and too specialized to warrant producing meaningful training. Customized training struggled with achieving critical mass for delivery to single or even aggregate groupings based on an identified common theme. Any specific requests for training currently are referred to departments for appropriate accommodations. Feedback from employers generally centered on needing solid, honest, motivated employees. In most cases, employers could provide their own training. This was true with welders as well as telephone operators.

Some provisional programs have been delivered and moved from non-credit service programs into credit generating certificate programs. Two of these still operate: Real Estate and Emergency Medical Services.

Housed on campus, the OJC Dance Program is dedicated to the principle that those who have the desire to dance should have the opportunity to do so. Movement education in the central focus for the youngest dancers; however, older students may choose from the more traditional disciplines of ballet, tap, modern, and jazz. The program also offers specialized movement classes.

Child Development Services (CDS) has been a sponsored agency of Otero Junior College since 1974. It is the mission to provide high quality, comprehensive early childhood education programs for children from birth through 6 years old; to provide parent education programs that strengthen family, develop basic literacy, encourage job training and personal development; and to develop community partnerships and coordination of community based services. CDS administers three federally funded early childhood programs-Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, and Early
Head Start. These programs help low-income children, their families, and communities overcome the effects of poverty and help prepare children to start school. In addition, CDS administers the Colorado Preschool Program for East Otero School District. CDS provides service to over 900 children annually throughout a nine county area in southern Colorado.

Beyond the concept of satisfied customers, success is measured by educated, responsible, independent citizens. Returning students and increased enrollment are excellent indicators of this satisfaction. Goals are: 1) Making sure OJC provides the educational services it promises in all recruiting and advertising. This includes quality instruction and assistance from faculty and staff to help students reach their goals. 2) Making sure students are prepared for higher level classes or the workforce when they complete their education here. 3) Making sure courses meet all the requirements for transfer to other colleges or universities in Colorado. For some colleges, this is not a given. OJC has been able to accomplish this due to a diligent effort by the faculty and administration to establish transfer agreements with four year colleges and universities in the state. 4) Making sure the environment is safe, positive, and stimulating. Students can be encouraged to take part in campus activities and clubs, experiencing the full benefit of the college experience.

Core Component—5b: Otero Junior College has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

The organization’s structures and processes enable effective connections with its communities. Otero Junior College is a strong campus. This is true of its facilities, its people, and its financial resources. Its main street location fits mission as campus chimes ring in the hour and half hour as well as providing suitable music that reminds everyone where to come and invites them to campus. Personal connections and word of mouth remain currency of the day.

Otero’s presence pervades the community. Newspaper articles run almost daily; a separate OJC page appears weekly. In addition, radio coverage is ongoing; a weekly program is devoted to college matters. Some material targets continuous marketing and, frequently, college spokespersons share education related details with the public or highlight upcoming events. College personnel are present and participating in a number of civic organizations.

College recruiters maintain constant relations with all of Otero Junior College’s service area high schools. A strong priority for years has been to serve the high schools in a consistent and earnest manner. The college for the past five years has seen approximately 50-55% of the service area seniors
attend Otero Junior College right out of high school. Much of the college’s success with this population has been measured through visitations and conversations with high school counselors and administration. The high school personnel and OJC staff have worked together to build and maintain positive relations. Throughout the year, the college hosts area counselors on campus to update them on changing academic policies and to receive feedback on how to better serve their schools and students.

The recruiters will make eight to ten visits to each high school it serves and contact instructors, counselors, and administrators. They also assist the high schools with valuable four year college/university contacts. Over the years, Otero has developed positive relationships with four year transfer advisors and have been able to assist high school personnel in transitioning their seniors to other institutions. This is one service the college is proud to provide, even if the student is not looking at attending Otero Junior College. The goal of these visits is to not only enhance and build upon the already positive relationship the college has with the schools, but to visit in a group/individual setting with potential college bound students.

Each spring, Otero Junior College hosts a Career Day for high school students. The students have an opportunity to attend four workshops they have selected to learn from professionals about the career. Each year approximately 350 attend from 12 schools. In the fall the college has Senior Visitation Day which allows the seniors to learn about the programs the college offers, visit with instructors, tour campus, and eat at the Food Court. Otero also offers an “Open House” venue designed to attract the non-traditional population to the campus. This event occurs during the late summer months.

The staff actively recruits from the GED program. OJC is host to not only the Bueno HEP GED program but also serves as a regional testing site. This service is also provided at remote, geographically accessible sites to encourage the largest number possible to continue their education. Recruiting efforts include contact with Social Services, Probation, alternative programs, and other entities throughout the valley. Testing is done weekly.
Otero Junior College also attends Counselor Workshops throughout the fall semester and this allows the OJC staff to visit with numerous high school counselors throughout the state and talk about what the college has to offer. The college is an active member with the Colorado College Day/Night program. This program allows the OJC staff to visit with many high school students at their high schools.

Student athletes provide young energies to assist Early Settler Day participants with setup and take down annually in one of the area’s largest community events. Faculty, staff and students participate in the Arkansas Valley Parade. College students are frequently called upon to lend a hand in these types of projects. Many on campus projects involve individual students or volunteering student groups to lend the man and woman power necessary to successfully host an event.

Likewise, community members support athletic and cultural events on campus through their attendance and donations. Relationships exist with city and county agencies that benefit both. Shared facilities usage comes in the form of athletic fields with city, college, and school districts. Law Enforcement Academy equipment and facilities are utilized by local law enforcement agencies; they, in turn, offer driving courses and firing ranges, knowing theirs is an investment in potential police, sheriffs, security, or corrections officers.

Otero’s library works in conjunction with area libraries to maximize holding availability. Designed primarily to serve OJC students, the library does provide services to community patrons. Inter-library loan functions assist users when accessing necessary documents. Several internet options are also available. An in-house computer lab allows and encourages research and writing from within the library complex. Limited assistance is also provided for students with writing questions.

Conferences, corporate training, meetings, convention accommodations, banquets, weddings, La Junta Wake Up Breakfast and a variety of community organizations all find a home in the Student Center. The Food Court feeds students, staff, and guests and operates a moderate degree of catering as well. The college bookstore is located in the center to support student learning and contribute to a college atmosphere. Along with textbooks and supplies, the bookstore features clothing and items with the college logo. Hours are adjusted for high traffic periods. Book buy-backs are also coordinated through the center. The center supports a student game room available on a first-come, first-served basis.
CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

Rural Philanthropy Days began in the early 90’s as a way to bring Front Range foundations and government agencies to rural Colorado to open dialogue, provide networking opportunities, and create relationships with non-profit organizations. To accomplish this goal, Colorado has been divided into eight rural regions with each region hosting a Rural Philanthropy Days event every four years. Under the direction of the Colorado Resource Center, two Rural Philanthropy Days events are held in Colorado each year. Southeast Colorado also hosted the regional event in 2002 and again in 2006.

While in Southeastern Colorado, grantors have had the opportunity to meet with non-profit groups and community leaders where they will learn first hand what the issues and needs of the areas are. The capstone of the three-day conference has been a session of Round Table discussions held at Otero Junior College where grantors and representatives from non-profit organizations have the opportunity to discuss specific funding needs and then exchange information about applying for grants and other funds.

Non-profit organizations in the counties of Crowley, Otero, Huerfano, Las Animas, Bent, Prowers, Kiowa, and Baca were strongly encouraged to attend in order to request a share of the $272 million granted by philanthropic organizations in 2005. Only $1.9 million (.7 percent of total funds) came to Southeast Colorado.

The concept of bringing young people to our campus has been in place for many years. The idea of a Kids College has taken different forms; age appropriate experiences of a “higher thinking skills” nature have been the norm. The Kids College schedule is printed and distributed to area schools. Adventure skills and other unique offerings pepper the brochure. Classes such as Clay at the Kiva, Dino Digs, and Canoe School note both the diverse nature and general appeal of the project. Registration takes place in the Instructional Services office. Public suggestions of modification and new inclusions are noted. Its design and cost were evaluated during the summer of 2006. It is expected that a new energy will guide this redesigned effort during the summer of 2007. Much of our Kids College content and structure will change and will reappear with expanded participation opportunities for the area youth.

One of the areas’s featured attractions and one of the state’s prize possessions is the Koshare Kiva Indian Museum. The Kiva brings both community folks and sightseers on to campus, while preserving a rich heritage and history. Several entities share the facility. The Boy Scouts calls the Kiva home. The art and museum collection belongs to a separate foundation, and the college owns the building itself. At one time in the college’s history, the Kiva served
as theatre, dance area, physical education, meeting space, and other special functions.

The organization’s co-curricular activities engage students, staff, administrators, and faculty with external communities. Community involvement and community service are keys to Otero’s message. A wide range of formal and informal opportunities engage people both on and off campus throughout the year. Activities that embrace the community come in as many shapes and sizes as they people they serve. Otero coordinates with school districts, recreation leagues, arts organizations, service clubs, performing and visual arts centers, non-profit agencies, local and regional governments, and businesses.

For a small campus, there are a variety of clubs offered to students. Some clubs may lie dormant and then experience a resurgence in energy. Many extra-curricular activities are offered and available for all students at OJC. The activities are described during new student orientations as well as continued advertising by the activity sponsors throughout the year, through radio, the campus paper, and posted flyers. Campus resources for educating students outside the classroom offer students numerous possibilities. Student organizations include a wide variety experiences—Associated Student Government, International Relations Organization, Wunsch Hall Club, Otero Players, Student Nurses’ Association, Non-Traditional Student Organization, Phi Theta Kappa, Campus Crusade for Christ, Ecology Club, Alpine Club, Chess Club, Math Club, Club Caliente, and other organizations are started each year as interest develops. With a large population of students from Mongolia in the fall of 2006, a Blue Mongolian Club has been introduced.

Arts oriented students may participate in the annual school art show. Fine arts and studio arts are presented in drawing, painting, and design, electronic art, graphic, design, and emerging art opportunities are also available. Chinook is published annually and includes stories, essays, poetry, and artwork from students, faculty, staff and the community.

Students and community members with a desire to participate in choir have the opportunity to join the OJC College and Community Choir. Members are exposed to various types of musical literature and gain experience through community and campus concerts. This group blends talents of both traditional and non-traditional college students. It performs multiple concerts to large audiences and also performs in a variety of settings that showcase the college. The choir adds a unique touch to commencement exercises.
CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

Students and community members with a desire to participate in stage productions have the opportunity to join the Otero Players. All participants gain experience in performance and aspects of technical production. Emphasis is placed on presenting a varied program of drama, music, and dance to the campus and community. Otero serves as a cultural center for the Arkansas Valley. This group also works closely with outside groups who perform in the theatre. Students participate in the Rocky Mountain Theatre Association. This organization provides support, training, recognition, and scholarship possibilities for students in a five state region that includes Utah, Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho. Otero Players is a group that has historically been run as a more autonomous organization, preferring to make production decisions more independently. Recent discussion may allow new faculty, staff, and students to reconsider this arrangement.

For over fifty years, the Otero Arts Festival draws junior high and high school students to the campus every spring. The Arts Festival showcases creative writing, sculptures, pottery, paintings, drawings, and other works of art and crafts submitted by students from throughout southeast Colorado. Students are judged and recognized in accordance to category and grade level. Creative writing categories that include essay, short story, and poetry provide students with the opportunity to have work recognized by ribbon and possible scholarship. Over the past several years, the writing and art contests have drawn over 2,000 entries per year. The entries are showcased in the McDivitt Center gymnasium and open for public viewing throughout the festival.

International and intercultural activities have become firmly ensconced on the OJC campus. Deliberate efforts have been made to internationalize the campus by recruiting and attracting more international students. Efforts have been made to increase sensitivity and awareness in regard to the diverse heritage of our own community. OJC acts as a catalyst to bring our learning community into a relationship with a global community. Music, art, variety shows, special performers, group presentations, and popular performances have been designed as fundraisers for scholarships and for promoting such activities.

Foreign exchange students from area high schools are invited to campus to visit classes and participate as guests, hosts, or entertainers at the International Foods Night. Sodexho food service caters the event at no charge, providing international cuisine for about 300 students and another 300 community members.

Outreach programs enable school children to enjoy a wide variety of educational programs and entertainment. Creative writers in residence,
puppet theatre, international musicians, youth choirs and symphonies tour southern Colorado, bringing a message of unique opportunity and choices beyond what is normally found in their own neighborhoods. This experience has enriched students and widened the scope of their understanding.

Otero’s Faculty Lecture Series began in the fall of 2005 and has become an instant success. Faculty members offer free lectures on topics that they are studying or are interested in. The purpose of the lectures is to showcase faculty and their knowledge to campus, community and beyond. The series also functions as a forum for current issues. Lectures have been attended by faculty, administration, students and community members.

The college has directing the Arkansas Valley Regional Science Fair since 1995 with assistance from a number of faculty and staff members. The science fair district was Otero and Bent Counties; in 2001, the region was expanded to include Las Animas and Huerfano counties. Affiliated with the Colorado Science and Engineering Fair (CSEF), the fair is for students K through 12. There are about 120 projects each year. In 2001 the Science Fair has been affiliated with the International Science and Engineering Fair, an international competition for grades 6 through 12. The best of the student’s projects may advance to compete at the state, national, and international levels. One measure of the success is the increase in the numbers of projects advancing to CSEF.

Otero Junior College hosts the Girls in the Middle Conference each year, which encourages middle school girls to continue studying math, science, and technology once they enter high school. Begun in 1998, the Conference has 200 middle school girls attend from over 20 different southeastern Colorado schools. During this one day conference, girls attend workshops taught by professional women in careers that require math, science and technology education. In accordance to its purpose, these 6th, 7th and 8th grade girls leave the conference with a multitude of information on professional careers and hopefully a renewed interest in math, science and technology.

Each year, Otero hosts the district qualifying competition for Future Business Leaders of America. College business faculty and staff assist area FBLA sponsors in running the competition. Thirty to forty business people come to campus and serve as judges. Students compete in various events in business, technologies, public speaking, interview skills, parliamentary procedures, and more. Approximately five hundred students from 18 schools in southeastern Colorado attend this event. Additionally, two or three advisors from each school come to campus. This is a service to the region and also serves to acquaint educators and student with the campus.
Otero Junior College Athletics hosts successful Team Camps for all athletic programs including both men’s and women’s basketball programs and volleyball, which bring in over eighty area teams each summer. Individual camps are well attended by all area youth. In the past years, softball, baseball, basketball, and volleyball all have put on highly successful individual camps that allow area youth to learn from the college coaches and current and former student athletes.

The organization’s educational programs connect students with external communities. The college measures success of Career and Technical Education programs through the statewide vocational educational follow up (VE-135); this is completed by all vocational programs. After a student graduates from OJC in a vocational program, the VE 135 Follow Up process documents if a student is employed, attending further education, did receive appropriate training that helped secure employment, if they are seeking employment, or if they are currently working in the same field. The last question asked on this form is if they were satisfied with the skills they learned in programs at Otero. Well over ninety percent approve of their experience.

CTE Advisory committees meet to provide needed guidance on specific curricula and program enhancements. In addition, the college locates workshops or guest speakers in areas that are suggested. For example, guest speakers have presented to the students as well as the community on Ethics in the Workforce, Customer Service, and Job Interview Techniques. In addition, OJC presented one day community workshops on computer software programs.

Early Childhood Education operated a lab school on campus until 2003. Students also utilized lab sites at various locations in the area. The Otero Junior College ECE Program helped establish many local childcare facilities and a large center, First Impressions, at the La Junta Industrial Park. Associated costs of operating a child care center on campus required the college to consider alternatives. Otero Junior College, the East Otero School District, and Head Start agreed to share a recently vacated elementary building. These separate entities partnered to provide before and after school care, wrap around care for Head Start students, and facilities and staff for the Colorado Preschool Project.

Certified nursing assistant courses are held for high school students and current and potential workers in the allied health care industry. Clinical sites are arranged and contracts written with medical facilities to complete all necessary studies. The Student Nurses Association of Otero Junior College under the direction of faculty members has been actively involved in
CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

community efforts for a number of years with fall and spring blood drives. This group assists with local hospital health fairs. Students also support monthly birthday celebrations at Arkansas Valley Community Center which services mentally challenged adults.

The organization’s resources--physical, financial, and human--support effective programs of engagement and service. Otero Junior College partners with the City of La Junta and the La Junta Public Schools, in maintaining softball and baseball fields. Each entity benefits from the shared resources. Colorado High School Activity Association sponsored District volleyball and basketball tournaments enable communities from the southeastern plains to utilize facilities and become familiar with the college. An annual Holiday Shootout is held in conjunction with the East Otero School District and the La Junta Chamber of Commerce.

Otero’s Director of Auxiliary Services books events in the Student Center, and the Humanities Center Facilities Coordinator handles events there. The college is able to provide facility usage in a number of arenas. For example, when a local livestock company had difficulties with its ability to broadcast a national auction, they came to the college and were provided a room, high speed internet access, video capability, and coffee. These types of events can be planned or spontaneously hosted with facilities and personnel who are happy to and capable of assisting. Student Center Banquet Room and facilities are used by community, local businesses and organizations. OJC’s Ed Stafford Theatre is utilized by local school districts, community organizations, and conferencing groups.

Otero’s campus and structures promise attractive settings for educational, cultural, and community opportunities. The college has the money to invest in physical plant, projects, and people. People who work at the college choose to serve others. They are capable, hospitable, and competent. Definitely not overstaffed, the college takes advantage of knowledgeable people who are responsible for a multitude of areas.

Planning processes project ongoing engagement and service. Weekly executive council meetings will continue to function as a continuous clearinghouse of ideas and concerns. Otero will continue to reach out to fully integrate itself with the communities it serves. Capital improvement projects and controlled maintenance are professionally monitored. Program development will remain active when sufficient information warrants closures or creations. Courses that fit college mission will continue to be adopted, if currently in the system catalog, or developed if new and unique to the campus. People work to ensure learning comes first.
**CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE**

**Core Component—5c:** Otero Junior College demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

For the most part, it is the college or university, not the Commission that determines its constituencies. Although the college service area consists of Bent, Otero and Crowley counties, Otero Junior College considers anyone who can benefit from its services to be a constituent member in good and deserving status. While the primary mission is to address the higher education needs of the larger community, companion pieces often make sense to include.

Collaborative ventures exist with other higher learning organizations and education sectors (e.g., K–12 partnerships, articulation arrangements, 2+2 programs). Concurrent credit courses provide high school students the opportunity to earn college credit while remaining in their own schools. Students are required to submit the admissions forms for college as well as the concurrent credit forms with signatures from parent, student, and school administrator. Classes are taught by high school teachers; students may earn both high school and college credit, concurrently. The teachers who wish to participate in the Concurrent Credit Program must meet the same academic criteria required of any adjunct instructor employed by Otero Junior College. All credentials and transcripts are on file with Instructional Services. The syllabi must meet the stipulated in the Colorado Community College Core agreement and be approved by the appropriate Department Chair or Associate Dean for Instruction. Upon successful completion of concurrent credit classes, Otero Junior College will transcript those college credits. Students may use those credits toward higher education or certificate programs.

Otero participates in Colorado’s Escrow credit program that allows secondary students in approved courses the right to count those experiences toward completion of certain requirements for completion of nearly identical college programs. OJC has worked with high schools in the areas of Teacher Cadet, certified nursing assistant, Cisco, business technology, and early childhood education.

Since 1998, Otero Junior College has hosted the Summer Academy for teachers. Throughout the month of June, teachers have the opportunity to attend workshops that pertain to educators. Educators who attend receive OJC credits that count towards teacher re-licensure. The Summer Academy is sponsored in partnership with Otero Junior College, the Santa Fe Trail BOCES, eight area school districts, the C2D3 Colorado Consortium, and the Regional Professional Development Council. Recertification courses are designed around perceived needs in the districts and to accommodate
CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

Congruent initiatives throughout the state including everything from Six Trait Writing to Managing CSAP Classrooms. Opportunities for teachers’ aids and students pursuing an education degree have also been included.

Otero Junior College has served the population well by transitioning students on to the four year degree programs offered through Adams State College. Students have completed OJC coursework and have then embarked on their final two years of study with Adams State College right here on the OJC campus. The Student Services office has served as a liaison for the student and the two colleges, working closely with an Adams State coordinator also housed on campus. Otero Junior College has also facilitated of programs offered through Mid American Christian University for students wishing to major in behavioral science and ethics, management and ethics, criminal justice management and ethics, management information systems and ethics. Again, students can remain in La Junta and earn a four year degree utilizing a two-way video network delivered through MACU in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

A specific articulation between OJC and Colorado State University in Fort Collins exists for students interested in majoring in dietetics or soil and crop science. Similar situations exist with Colorado Christian University for students wishing to major in early childhood development.

Otero has partnered with Ameri Corp to provide internships for students who performed as classroom reading aides in elementary schools in the area. The Talent Search Program was housed on the OJC campus but has been sponsored in this area by Trinidad State Junior College until fall 2006. This program identified and assisted individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education. The program provided academic, career, and financial counseling to its participants and encouraged them to graduate from high school and continue on to the postsecondary school of their choice.

*The organization’s transfer policies and practices create an environment supportive of the mobility of learners.* All system community and junior colleges have one hundred percent lateral transfer in the common degree areas. With the implementation of Banner software, a great deal of standardization occurred between 2004 and 2006. Similar policies have been agreed upon to address student needs as a state system and prevent any internal barriers for student transfer.

Key amongst transfer specific agreements is the Colorado Commission on Higher Educations 60 + 60 initiative that guarantees students who meet specific requirements are automatically accepted at Colorado four year institutions and should be able to complete most programs with a total of 120

CCHE Initiative: [http://www.state.co.us/cche/academic/teached/agreements/articulation.html](http://www.state.co.us/cche/academic/teached/agreements/articulation.html)
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hours. In addition, CCHE lists the following four agreements between Colorado Public Community/Junior Colleges and Four-Year Institutions in the areas of business, engineering, elementary teacher education, and early childhood education.

Many of the policies are viewable on the CCCS website. These originated in the Educational Services Council which is a statewide group of Instructional and Student Services Vice Presidents. Items include those listed below.

**AA/AS Degree Designations**

- Academic Renewal
- Audits
- Calculation of GPA
- Colorado Community College System (CCCS) College Transfer Guide
- Common Grading Symbols - Inventory
- “D” Grades (Transfer and Applicability to Program Requirements)
- Directory Information
- Graduation Honors
- Late Registration & Overrides
- Maximum Student Load per Term
- Repeated Courses
- Residency
- S/U Grading
- Student Load by Term
- Term Academic Honors
- Tuition Determination

The Student Service Center is committed to helping pave the way for students who wish to transfer to four year schools. Assisting students to develop an individualized transfer program, select transfer courses, obtain applications for admission to Colorado colleges and universities, and obtain information on transfer scholarships.

Community leaders testify to the usefulness of the organization's programs of engagement. Advisory council members represent community members from the three separate counties. This group consists of business leaders and professionals in the service area. They have been/are bankers and company presidents, former educators, farmers, nurses, publishers, mayors, postal workers, and homemakers; all experts in their vocation.

The college works closely with county commissioners and city officials. Businesses and other agencies support college efforts. Colorado First dollars are distributed through the college. This relationship partners new businesses

Ed Services Policies: http://www.cccs.edu/ESC/Procedures.html
CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

in the area, attracts new businesses from outside, and trains incumbent workers. This program has assisted in economic development. Otero is seen as an attractive feature in the community when discussions are held and decisions made that result in new jobs, new business.

City mayors and managers view the college as a definite asset to the region. State senators and representatives have supported programs and enabled the college to make significant improvements in its physical plant. Because the college has an extremely high penetration rate in the communities it serves, most people have a direct personal contact with the school. Education in the forms of academic transfer and workforce training are vital to the continued health of the area.

OJC’s programs of engagement give evidence of building effective bridges among diverse communities. Otero Junior College maintains an enrollment rate for the region’s Hispanic community representative of the general population. Its graduation rate is consistently the highest in the state of Colorado for this particular group. Recent attention to continued service is evident in the hiring of a minority recruiter and advisor whose goal it is to keep this long established trend a reality.

Otero welcomes students who are enrolling straight out of high school. OJC enrolls many home schooled individuals. It encourages those who have been away from education for years and are now re-entering. A campus non-traditional student organization, NTSO, serves to assist many of these people with an orientation to managing college and supporting them through a critical transition.

Otero pioneered an Essential Skills in the Workplace program in conjunction with social service groups in three counties to deliver computer skills, personal management skills, basic math, English, reading, business practices, and internships that supported a healthy work ethic. Once firmly grounded, agencies chose to continue programs.

The staff in the Educational Assistance Center also provides free services and accommodations to students with documented disabilities. These might include tutoring, note takers, readers/scribes for tests, extra time for testing, physical accommodations, and adaptive technologies.

Otero participates in partnerships focused on shared educational, economic, and social goals. Otero Junior College is an active partner in an on-going economic development effort with a variety of local, regional, and state partners. The OJC SCORE Center is an on campus location which houses economic development specialists, grant writers, the Small Business
CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

Development Center, and the Small Business Management program. This unique effort is the epitome of the before mentioned title. Four-year college affiliates contribute to the number of quality opportunities available to people in the region.

The organization’s partnerships and contractual arrangements uphold the organization’s integrity. The Vice President for Administrative Services oversees all college contracts. These are routinely reviewed with Colorado Community College System (CCCS) legal counsel and usually finalized by the college president. Contracts are regularly reviewed and re-issued if everything is properly in place. The college controller and college human resources director offer suitable analysis as well in appropriate circumstances.

Core Component—5d: Internal and external constituencies value the services Otero Junior College provides.

Many of the key elements highlighted below have been touched upon in earlier sections of this chapter.

The organization’s evaluation of services involves the constituencies served. Authentic discussions gained from various constituent groups include student ratings of faculty and general satisfaction with the college. Faculty members are evaluated through a method prescribed by the state system office and the state board. Administrative, Instructional, and Student Services operations are reflected in annual personnel evaluations that take into account activities, goal attainment, and basic job performance. The college is responsive to community needs.

Service programs and student, faculty, and staff volunteer activities are well-received by the communities served. In responding to external constituencies, the organization is well-served by programs such as continuing education, outreach, customized training, and extension services. Continuing education at Otero has been an on-again, off-again arrangement. Not surprisingly, many courses are individual specific, based on interest, time, and expertise. Mild demand surfaces; arrangements are made; classes or programs are implemented; recreational and leisure activities run their course; attendance drops; options are eliminated. Some, like OJC Dance, experience an unusual longevity and continue to be viable, community supported activities.

The Otero Junior College Community Outreach Committee is comprised of faculty members who facilitate community projects for the faculty throughout the Arkansas Valley. Presently OJC faculty has three ongoing community
projects: adopt-a-highway along Hwy 50 west of La Junta, volunteering once a month selling tickets and concessions at the Grand Theater in Rocky Ford (a civic/non-profit organization) and participating in singing once a month at the Evergreen Gardens Retirement Center. Each of the projects reinforces Otero Junior College’s commitment to service in the Arkansas Valley. This committee also serves other functions on an as needed basis. Frequently, faculty and staff assist with school related projects like spelling bees, geography bees, or Knowledge Bowl competitions.

The organization’s economic and workforce development activities are sought after and valued by civic and business leaders. Business and industry has been served through educational training, sometimes specifically designed for a niche market. Although requests are infrequent due to much in-house training, the college has been responsive in areas like computer software applications, computer networking, basic office management skills, and more general areas like sexual harassment.

The health industry relies on trained nurses completing college programs. La Junta’s Arkansas Valley Regional Medical Center along with several smaller hospitals and nursing homes in the valley enable students to have quality clinical experiences while, at the same time, doing their best to attract and retain qualified nurses. Southeastern Colorado benefits from an EMT program that has provided additional critical capacity in a rural setting. Likewise, the students from the early childhood program are hired by the Child Development Services or the larger local child care centers. Many of the directors and staff of those facilities are OJC graduates.

With the development of the SCORE Center, a re-energized effort has been executed to meet the needs of economic development, business, housing, and non-profit organizations in the region. Regional economic development is a focus.

External constituents participate in the organization’s activities and co-curricular programs open to the public. Student athletes represent one major group on campus that produces a large number of out-of-region students. Approximately two hundred students participate in sports in some way. Otero Junior College offers interscholastic competition in men’s and women’s basketball, baseball, softball, men’s and women’s golf, and volleyball.

Academics and sportmanship is stressed first; winning is welcome when it follows hard work. In the past five years, OJC has honored 21 student-athletes as NJCAA Distinguished Academic All-Americans, an honor that requires a 3.80 – 4.00 cumulative GPA. In addition, 31 students received the...
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NJCAA Academic All-American award, requiring a 3.60 – 3.80 cumulative GPA. Numerous student athletes have move on to four year universities to continue their academic and athletic careers.

Athletic teams have participated in community service events including serving as hosts for TRY Carnival, chair pickup, and assist in the bed-race for “Early Settlers Day. Athletic teams have done other community service events including serving as team leaders for the Girls in the Middle Conference and “adopt a class” for the year.

The college has corporate sponsorship with local businesses for the athletic programs. These businesses are recognized with billboards in the gymnasium and their names in the media guide. Currently, there are 59 Arkansas Valley businesses who are corporate sponsors. OJC developed an on campus fitness center with some of the money, and equipment was donated. The goal of the athletic programs is to continually try to do more for the community, do the best possible in scholastic opportunities, and compete at the highest level.

Guests from the area, across the state, and even internationally attend the International Food Night, plays, concerts, Community Choir performances, Summer Academy, non-traditional training, regional workshops, or the Alternative Energy Symposium.

The organization’s facilities are available to and used by the community. Because the Otero Junior College campus has operated as an educational and cultural hub in the valley for the past sixty-five years, people from the area assume it is open for business and open for use. The current president served almost twenty years in the state legislature and in the governor’s cabinet. He, along with most citizens in the area, views the college as public property and, as such, subject to be best and fullest utilization possible. Beyond that, this philosophy is borne as much out of the desire to help everyone possible as it is out of any legalistic “contract.”

It is not unusual to see a community concert, school music program, honor band or choir, the FBLA or FFA district conference, community meeting, or numerous other events on the campus weekly calendar.

The organization provides programs to meet the continuing education needs of licensed professionals in its community. Mentioned earlier in this chapter were extensive opportunities for educators, nurses, and local businesses. The college also assists with training for railroaders, utility workers, power supply companies, regional library organizations, water conservancy districts, local BOCES, and others who find the college a suitable provider.
Otero Junior College Child Development Services at Head Start operates a Music and Movement Outreach Program for the Arkansas Valley communities. It is designed to teach kinesthetic learning and movement learning strategies to approximately 450 preschool and Head Start children in the La Junta, Rocky Ford, Manzanola, Olney Springs, Las Animas, and Lamar CDS centers. It conducts teacher-training workshops for preschool and elementary teachers, childcare providers, and others who work with young children. It organizes child-parent activities for Parent Night, end-of-school-day or other special parent/children events. The program also provides summer teacher training seminars for Migrant/Head Start teachers in Alamosa, Boone, and Manzanola summer migrant programs. It sponsors enrichment opportunities for children through OJC Dance Program presentations, celebration of National Dance Week, and special activities for Week of the Young Child. Finally, it ensures support services for La Junta Primary teachers in teaching kinesthetic strategies.

As with any request made to any group or individual on campus, requests for education and training of any type are received and reviewed. Not every response is a positive one resulting in programs at every level. Some requests lie outside the prerogative of the college like providing a law degree or certifying someone to run a piece of heavy equipment. Others are simply not a good fit or do not offer as many advantages as disadvantages.

Otero Junior College does not attempt to be anything other than what it is, a comprehensive junior college with solid transfer status and credible career and technical education programs. As an institution, it is committed to providing quality, community, and opportunity.
Chapter Seven

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Otero Junior College 2007 Self-Study
CHAPTER SEVEN
ASSESSMENT DISCOVERIES AND RESPONSES

Otero Junior College achieves its five purpose statements. Through proper student placement and appropriate remediation, students are provided a solid start; most do earn degrees. Students in Career and Technical Education programs acquire necessary knowledge, skills, and experience. Through the use of Student Evaluation of Instruction, students, faculty, and administration are involved in a continuous semester-by-semester exercise to identify and address warranted changes. Surveys from currently enrolled students and graduate surveys provide insight on many aspects of the college that include and go beyond instruction. The approved longitudinal study on success in initial courses offers a compass of sorts to monitor and direct behaviors. Some data previously required by the state system offices has been eliminated.

College Level Placement

Otero Junior College has an “open-door” admissions policy. However, since it is the college’s intent to help each student succeed, an entering student placement test is administered to new students. The Colorado state system adopted ACCUPLACER as the universal college placement instrument. The results of this diagnostic are used to place students in the most appropriate courses (English and Mathematics, in particular) or to encourage those who are in need of further academic preparation to engage appropriate remedial/developmental courses prior to attempting college-level course work.

Assessment of Student Academic Achievement

The NCA approved assessment plan for the OJC campus was submitted June 30, 1999. During the 1998-99 academic year, the OJC Curriculum and Instruction Committee had determined that a longitudinal study on student performance in all English and Mathematics courses was warranted. This summative method was designed to provide specific information on the curricular interconnectedness of sequential courses in each of these two major disciplines. In addition, the committee membership expressly stated that English and Mathematics were the two major “building block” disciplines for all programs (academic transfer and occupational) offered by the college. Tracking student performance in each of these two fields will document the connect or disconnect of the sequential courses as well as the ability or
inability of such courses to prepare students for the ever-increasing, more complex competencies of the higher level courses (e.g., ENG 090 – ENG 121). It was the current hypothesis that students who perform at the “C” or higher grade level in the lower, prerequisite course would perform similarly in the next higher level sequence course.

Otero Junior College
BASIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT CUT-SCORE MATRIX
Effective Spring 2004

**READING, ENGLISH & MATHEMATICS COURSES**

### READING COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCUPLACER</th>
<th>REQUIRED COURSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 79</td>
<td>REA 090 College Preparatory Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 -120</td>
<td>No Basic Skills Placement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACT Reading score of 17 or SAT Verbal score of 430 or higher, student is eligible for college level Reading and is not required to take a remedial Reading course.

### ENGLISH COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCUPLACER</th>
<th>REQUIRED COURSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 49</td>
<td>ENG 060 Writing Fundamentals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 94</td>
<td>ENG 090 Basic Composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95 - 120</td>
<td>ENG 121 English Composition I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACT English score of 18 or SAT Verbal score of 440 or higher, student is eligible to take ENG 121 (English Composition I)

### MATH COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCUPLACER</th>
<th>REQUIRED COURSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 120 (AR) or 0-44 (EA)</td>
<td>MAT 060 Pre Algebra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 60 (EA)</td>
<td>MAT 090 Introductory Algebra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 - 84 (EA)</td>
<td>MAT 106 Survey of Algebra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 - 120 (EA)</td>
<td>MAT 121 College Algebra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63 - 102 (CLM)</td>
<td>MAT 122 College Trigonometry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103 - 120 (CLM)</td>
<td>MAT 201 Calculus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACT Math score of 19 or SAT Math score of 460 or higher, student is eligible to take MAT 121 (College Algebra)
ASSESSMENT DISCOVERIES AND RESPONSES

The past combination of college placement exams (COMPASS & ACCUPLACER) appears to have been fairly effective in “predicting success.” Results of this longitudinal study on students enrolling in remedial courses show varying degrees of success. The study of MAT 090 and subsequent success in the MAT 121 (College Algebra) college level course mirror results from the English study overall. The combination of those enrolled in remedial courses first and those placed directly into MAT 121 showed a success rate (grade of “C” or above) of 81.4%. Again, those who required remediation first performed on a par with those beginning in the college level course.

Of the students who were initially placed in ENG 121 or who took the recommended remedial course and then enrolled in the college level course, 78.2% received grades of “C” or above. Students who required the two course series performed as well after remediation as those entering at the outset.

The past combination of college placement exams (COMPASS & ACCUPLACER) does not appear to be aligned for ENG 121 and “predicted success” as strongly as that shown in mathematics. English represented the second “building block” for academic success. Results of the longitudinal study on students enrolling in these remedial courses also show varying degrees of success. The study of ENG 090 and subsequent success in the ENG 121 (English Composition I) college level course records the success of students who have been “placed” directly into the college level course based upon their placement scores.

Numbers of students enrolling in ENG 121 have not witnessed any growth, and, if anything, have seen a mild drop over the ten year period. The college has developed and expanded many certificate programs that have not required English composition for completion. Approximately 85% percent of students test into the normal college level course with 15% taking the developmental route.

Numbers of students enrolling in MAT 121 have grown, and success rates for both those students initially placed and those with appropriate remediation have shown methods to be efficacious. Common course numbering encouraged more students to select MAT 121. Mandated remediation may also have had an effect on numbers and success rates. More students were advised into college algebra rather than statistics because of its more universal transferability. New instructors and new techniques may also have had a positive effect on these results. OJC instituted mediated learning labs and Academic Systems software to assist math students on a more individual
ASSESSMENT DISCOVERIES AND RESPONSES

basis. Some students have opted to satisfy math credits with the recently adopted MAT 155/156 Integrated Math series for teacher education.

Of those who are placed in the college level course initially, approximately 78% percent have been successful in the course with a grade of an A, B, or C. After having completed appropriate developmental work, that group has averaged just under seventy-eight percent. So, the two groups perform in a very similar fashion. To help prepare students better, the college has recently introduced traditional sections for reading instruction rather than individual instruction based on schedule. OJC has also implemented a Reading Plus software program to assist students. As the college opens its arms wider to embrace more students, it also accepts the role of addressing the needs of students who are less prepared to attend college.

Data did demonstrate the percentage of students receiving grades of “C” or higher in MAT 121 has increased over the past three years while the percentage of successful grades of “C” or higher dropped somewhat in the ENG 121 course.

Program Level Measurement

The College utilizes a measurement method at the program level, i.e., the Colorado Community College System Survey of Currently Enrolled Students. This instrument asks currently enrolled students for their impressions on Student Evaluation of Two-Year College Instruction, Student Satisfaction of Growth Resulting from their Two-Year College Education, and Student Evaluation of Two-Year College Services.

Program Currently Enrolled Student Survey

This instrument is completed by approximately 200 students each spring semester. The resulting information is used to address the overall quality of educational programming and services provided by the institution. Even though the information is not program specific, it is still a viable source for obtaining information on how the currently enrolled students view the college. Student ratings are also completed for individual courses and instructors each semester utilizing the Student Evaluation of Instruction.

The tables identify survey results captured since 1997 on fifty-two universal items built into the Currently Enrolled Student Survey. Stratified information presents results in six separate tables, followed by a brief analysis. These
data reflect a compilation from a random sample of responses. Table I addresses the perspectives of this group of students on Quality of Educational Services.

Table I
RESULTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENT SURVEY OF
Quality of Educational Services
SCALE: 1=Excellent, 2=Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Criterion</th>
<th>Composite Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional program is meeting your educational goals</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors’ knowledge of subject matter</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of courses is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of library &amp; learning resources is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of library/resources is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of tutorial assistance is meeting your needs</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of tutorial assistance is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of educational development courses is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of development courses is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of basic skills program is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of basic skills program is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student ratings suggest they feel teachers know their subject and that the quality of basic skills programs and library and learning services is strong. Tutorial assistance might be improved. Starting in 2003, the Educational Assistance Center employed two full-time tutors. One possessed a bachelors degree in business, the other a masters in math. Additional tutors are identified and hired on a part-time basis to fulfill the needs of students. Also, a retired faculty member from the Arts Department has volunteered time several days a week on a regular basis over the past two years in the areas of
English composition, theatre, and other courses in the humanities. Table II details student opinions on Instructional Programs Improving Abilities.

### Table II

**RESULTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENT SURVEY OF Quality of Instructional Program**

SCALE: 1=Excellent, 2=Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Criterion</th>
<th>Composite Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organize ideas</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think critically</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve problems</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write clearly</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak clearly</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with others</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use microcomputers</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students ranked their ability to write clearly and use microcomputers most strongly. All eight items were mid-range compared to the overall fifty-two item survey. These ranked closer to good than excellent.
Table III rates Student Services Components.

Table III
RESULTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENT SURVEY OF Quality of Student Services
SCALE: 1=Excellent, 2=Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Criterion</th>
<th>Composite Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ease of admissions process</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation program for new students</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid services</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran’s services</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student activities/organizations</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged/Handicapped services</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookstore services</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food services</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students identified ease of admissions as a strength. Veteran’s services and bookstore were rated fairly high. Student ratings suggest continued work in the areas of more student activities, housing, and food services.
Table IV comments on Advising Services.

Table IV
RESULTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENT SURVEY OF Quality of Advising Services
SCALE: 1=Excellent, 2=Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Criterion</th>
<th>Composite Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisor assistance when registering for courses</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of registration process</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance from an advisor for career planning</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance from an advisor if changing majors</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance in getting a job after graduation</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned to an advisor within major department</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed of program progress at least once a year</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided a term-by-term schedule for graduating efficiently</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use advising available on-line (computer) and/or by phone</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access employment opportunity information available on your instructional program</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advisor assistance and ease of registration received high ranks and good marks. Students did report career planning and employment opportunities needed work. They also identified advising on-line as being good but a feature that could be improved. Otero has held out for face-to-face contact during the registration process; it’s remarkable the college received even a “fair” in this area. New Banner software became available and put into use fall of 2006. This will enable students to have exceptional access to all their student records. Web platforms have also enable students to track grades and progress throughout the term electronically.
Table V measures Technology Services.

Table V
RESULTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENT SURVEY OF
Quality of Technology Services
SCALE: 1=Excellent, 2=Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Criterion</th>
<th>Composite Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer classes are offered in sufficient number</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of computer classes is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability of institutional technologies are meeting your needs (open computer labs, internet, e-mail, &amp; electronic library systems)</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of courses available through technology are meeting your needs (internet courses, guided study course &amp; telecourses)</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of such courses are meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses which utilize new educational technologies enhance ability to learn (microcomputer projection equipment, large screen television systems)</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses which utilize technology are more effective than traditional courses in helping you to learn</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Otero has long been known for its computer instruction and its commitment to providing the latest technology for students, instructors, and all campus personnel. Students have been aware of this and gave the college a favorable review on availability of technologies and the quality of courses that meet their needs. Students rated courses which utilize technology as good but did not distinguish these as being any more effective than traditional courses. Technologies over the past ten years have ranged from utilizing specific software, to PowerPoint, to projectors and smart stations, Smart Boards and internet/web instructional configurations.
**ASSESSMENT DISCOVERIES AND RESPONSES**

Table VI rates Areas of Administrative Services.

### Table VI
RESULTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENT SURVEY OF
Quality of Administrative Services
SCALE: 1=Excellent, 2=Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Criterion</th>
<th>Composite Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The overall quality of classrooms &amp; laboratories (temperature, lighting, seating, cleanliness, equipment)</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The overall appearance &amp; cleanliness of the campus</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequacy &amp; convenience of campus parking</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicapped access to campus buildings &amp; classrooms</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus security services (police, safety, or emergency assistance)</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashier services (financial &amp; loan disbursement, tuition payments, student fees)</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payroll services (bi-weekly work study &amp; hourly paycheck processing)</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel services (work study &amp; hourly employment verifications)</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students rated overall cleanliness and attractiveness of the campus high; they approved of access issues and reacted positively regarding quality of classrooms and laboratories. Parking ranked lower but many changes will undoubtedly cause score to rise. Security items may receive higher scores in the future as well. Considerable effort and expense has been placed in new secure doors that are of a higher quality material and also track access. Campus crime statistics remain at low levels from year to year. New billing procedures may provide more information and comfort for students. New Banner software will allow students (and parents) the ability to access their accounts that contain key personal information.
Graduate Student Survey

This instrument is completed by approximately 200 students each spring semester. The resulting information is used to address the overall quality of educational programming and services provided by the institution. Even though the information is not program specific, it is still a viable source for obtaining information on how recent graduates view the college.

The tables identify survey results captured since 1997 on fifty-two universal items built into the Graduate Student Survey. Stratified information presents results in six separate tables, followed by a brief analysis. This data reflects a compilation from a random sample of responses. Table I addresses the perspectives of this group of graduates on Quality of Educational Services.

Table I
RESULTS GRADUATE STUDENT SURVEY OF Quality of Administrative Services
SCALE: 1=Excellent, 2=Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Criterion</th>
<th>Composite Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional program is meeting your educational goals</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors’ knowledge of subject matter</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of courses is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of library &amp; learning resources is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of library/resources is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of tutorial assistance is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of tutorial assistance is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of educational development courses is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of development courses is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of basic skills program is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of basic skills program is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students rated instructor’s knowledge of subject matter high just as currently enrolled students did and with a similar rating closer to excellent than good. There was some consistency with a good ranking on the schedule of courses meeting needs. Graduates ranked instructional programs second as meeting their needs with a 1.50 excellent to good rating but showed less favor with a lowered rank and rating for the library. Graduate ratings show a 1.66 compared to the 1.79 awarded this block of questions by currently enrolled students.

Table II details student opinions on Instructional Program Quality.

Table II
RESULTS GRADUATE STUDENT SURVEY OF Quality of Instructional Program SCALE: 1=Excellent, 2=Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Criterion</th>
<th>Composite Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organize ideas</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think critically</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve problems</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write clearly</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak clearly</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with others</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use microcomputers</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduates ranked their ability to think critically similarly amongst the other items but with a 1.76 compared to the enrolled student rating of 1.90. They achieve a degree of consistency ranking their ability to write clearly as number one based upon composite averages and respective ratings of 1.57 and 1.77. Speaking clearly also surfaced as an area where students felt comfortable with their instruction. Graduates rated this entire category a 1.71 compared to the currently enrolled rating of 1.81. A more positive set of perceptions.
ASSESSMENT DISCOVERIES AND RESPONSES

Table III rates Student Services Components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Criterion</th>
<th>Composite Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ease of admissions process</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation program for new students</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid services</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran’s services</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student activities/organizations</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged/Handicapped services</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookstore services</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food services</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seven of the nine Student Services items received graduate ratings of 1.58 or below—excellent to good. Overall the graduate mean for the nine items on the composite average showed a 0.41 stronger approval rating than that given by currently enrolled students who provided a good rating at 1.95. Both housing and food services approval ratings improved by over 0.50 when comparing graduates to those students currently enrolled. Although “ease of admissions” dropped from first to fifth in its rank, its composite average resulted in a better rating. Student activities remained among the lowest ranked and rated items on both. Graduate composite average ratings on this bank of questions resulted in a strong score of 1.54; enrolled students registered a total of 1.94.
Table IV comments on Advising Services.

Table IV
RESULTS GRADUATE STUDENT SURVEY OF Quality of Advising Services
SCALE: 1=Excellent, 2=Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Criterion</th>
<th>Composite Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisor assistance when registering for courses</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of registration process</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance from an advisor for career planning</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance from an advisor if changing majors</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance in getting a job after graduation</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned to an advisor within major department</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed of program progress at least once a year</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided a term-by-term schedule for graduating efficiently</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use advising available on-line (computer) and/or by phone</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access employment opportunity information available on your instructional program</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ease of registration ranked consistently high on both surveys. For graduates, ease of registration and assistance from advisors when changing majors received ratings of 1.38 and 1.39, indicating high quality services. Interestingly, a 1.45 excellent rating for advising availability on-line or by phone was significantly stronger than the 2.88 mark delivered by currently enrolled students. Assistance for career planning, being assigned to an advisor by major, being informed of progress, term by term schedule, and access to employment opportunities ranked lower among other items in this group. Composite averages for graduates ran at 1.65, ahead of the 2.03 average for enrolled students.
Table V measures Technology Services.

Table V
RESULTS GRADUATE STUDENT SURVEY OF
Quality of Technology Services
SCALE: 1=Excellent, 2=Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Criterion</th>
<th>Composite Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer classes are offered in sufficient number</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of computer classes is meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability of institutional technologies are meeting your needs (open computer labs, internet, e-mail, &amp; electronic library systems)</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of courses available through technology are meeting your needs (internet courses, guided study course &amp; telecourses)</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of such courses are meeting your needs</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses which utilize new educational technologies enhance ability to learn (microcomputer projection equipment, large screen television systems)</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses which utilize technology are more effective than traditional courses in helping you to learn</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ratings show courses utilizing new technologies enhanced learning and were offered in sufficient numbers and at convenient times. Quality technology services received excellent marks (1.52) from the group of graduate students.
Table VI rates Areas of Administrative Services.

Table VI
RESULTS GRADUATE STUDENT SURVEY OF
Quality of Administrative Services
SCALE: 1=Excellent, 2=Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Criterion</th>
<th>Composite Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The overall quality of classrooms &amp; laboratories (temperature, lighting, seating, cleanliness, equipment)</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The overall appearance &amp; cleanliness of the campus</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequacy &amp; convenience of campus parking</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicapped access to campus buildings &amp; classrooms</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus security services (police, safety, or emergency assistance)</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashier services (financial &amp; loan disbursement, tuition payments, student fees)</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payroll services (bi-weekly work study &amp; hourly paycheck processing)</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel services (work study &amp; hourly employment verifications)</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Payroll and personnel services ratings improve considerably based on graduate ratings. The campus is viewed as clean and providing handicapped access to all areas just as seen through the eyes of enrolled students. Administrative services received the best overall rating at 1.49 from graduates; this was higher by a 0.43 rating.
Table VII captures Graduates’ Overall Perceptions.

Table VII
RESULTS GRADUATE STUDENT SURVEY OF
OVERALL EXPERIENCE
SCALE: 1=Excellent, 2=Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Criterion</th>
<th>Composite Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How would you rate your Otero Junior College experience as preparation for continuing your education</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fifty-two aggregated questions provided a rating of 1.73 spread across the six areas measured. This score of 1.40 on a single item question indicates a higher overall positive satisfaction with the college based on graduates’ perceptions. Although by itself, the 1.40 offers little specific information, and if 1.00 represents a perfect score, OJC is at least “in the hunt.”

Comparison of Currently Enrolled to Graduate Student Surveys

Although ranks on specific items did vary, scores were generally higher on graduate surveys than on those gathered from currently enrolled students. This might have several plausible explanations. Students have something else to which they can compare their experience. They no longer live and eat on campus or realize they had it pretty good.

Of the items that did register some alignment by rank, instructor’s knowledge of subject matter was consistently high and received similar composite averages. The schedule of courses and quality of basic skills programs are two items that also remained relatively high and fairly consistent. Students from both groups report that they feel they can write clearly as demonstrated by a shared number one ranking on both surveys and scores of 1.73 and 1.57 respectively. Students had exact matches regarding rank with veteran’s services rated high and food services ranked near the bottom—even though food services were rated low rank wise, graduates gave it a higher score by 0.41 and a respectable “Good to Excellent” rating.

Currently enrolled students and graduates rated ease of registration high and assistance from advisors. Items like accessing employment opportunities and being informed of student progress once a year received lower scores. The number of courses available through technology ranked fairly high, but student ratings show an acceptable but slightly lower satisfaction with the
schedule of courses or their meeting needs any more completely than traditional courses. Students feel positive about the overall appearance of the campus, most noting excellent access to buildings and classrooms. As might be expected, activities regarding tuition, fees, and loans drew student measured student attention.

**Student Success: Retention and Graduation**

Otero is one of sixteen community colleges in Colorado. It customarily ranks highest in both retention of students and percentage of students who graduate. Occasionally, it has ranked second to one other relatively small rural college in the state. It also maintains top marks in the system for retention and graduation of minority students.

Otero Junior College attempts to monitor significant variables and provide appropriate intervention strategies and improvements to benefit students in a positive learning environment. It has sufficient resources to invest in ways that make a difference. Its people take their jobs seriously and establish a framework for student success.

In order to assure the transferability of Otero’s A.A. and A.S. degree programs, the Office of Advising, Guidance, and Recruitment works with their counterparts at Colorado four-year colleges and universities in the identification of transfer curriculum guides. If students attending OJC know the college or university to which they will ultimately transfer as well as their program major, students are advised to follow the prescribed curriculum for that major for that institution. The long-range result of these transfer articulation agreements is the acceptance of all appropriate credits by college or university.

The Colorado community college core curriculum agreements have been in place since 1986 with all Colorado four-year colleges and universities. Their governing boards recognized these courses as the bases for the majority of lower-division, undergraduate, academic, general education programs throughout the state. By successfully completing the core curriculum and one of the two transfer degrees, the student would not be required to engage in any additional general education freshman or sophomore level courses at the colleges or universities upon transfer, and would, therefore, attain academic classification as a junior in good standing at the college or university. This has been confirmed again in Colorado’s recently adopted 60 + 60 transfer agreement.

Otero has ranked consistently at the top of Colorado Community College in retention and graduation.
Otero Junior College has always focused on the importance of students completing the entire degree program. The majority of colleges and universities in the state are far more receptive to transferring the entire degree rather than courses or just the 33 or 34 semester credit hours of the core curriculum. This degree completion orientation is so pronounced at OJC that the College annually achieves one of the highest degree completion rates among the sixteen community/junior colleges in the state of Colorado.

Otero Junior College is very proud of its ability to prepare career and technical education students for all necessary skill sets. OJC is proud of its transfer record and works very hard to assure students a high quality program and one which will provide them with a sound educational foundation which is necessary to earn a baccalaureate degree.
Chapter Eight

Summary and Recommendations

Otero Junior College 2007 Self-Study
CHAPTER EIGHT
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This short chapter will provide a summary of self-study activities, observations, and evaluations. It incorporates data and deliberations. The purpose will be to demonstrate campus connections to deliver improved learning opportunities. Otero Junior College functions efficiently and effectively through an understanding that everyone fulfills various roles. Everyone has the right and responsibility to work together, complementing each other while making and suggesting improvements.

All members of the campus community were assigned to a specific criterion team. Faculty members served as chairs of each criterion while the vice president for instruction was the self-study coordinator and lead writer. SharePoint was utilized as a central resource and communication center along with multiple live meetings and countless emails and phone conversations.

All constituencies were invited and encouraged to review materials and share observations. The self-study does contain many clear examples of evidence that demonstrate the college is upholding its mission. The college has been active and innovative. Many senior faculty and administrators have departed from the college since 1996. The college has welcomed new people and maintained a rich heritage and tradition of solid academic transfer and quality career and technical education programs.

Otero has benefited from having five separate and distinct presidents over the past fourteen years. One served the college for over forty years and handed that over to a former vice-president who had been with the college almost thirty years. A new president arrived after the last NCA visit in 1996 and stayed three years to be followed by an interim for almost two years. The current president who has been with the college for six years is an alumnus of Otero, a former state senator, and member of the governor’s cabinet.

The Colorado Community College System operated with a stable board and administration for many years prior to 1996. Since that time, the board has initiated many initiatives under the supervision of four separate CEOs and in answer to ever increasing demands from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. A governance study for all higher education found Colorado had more boards than appeared necessary, but it concluded systems were functioning fairly well. A governor’s taskforce was convened to study efficiencies in the community college system with some of the recommendations being selected and reframed to provide some direction for a
new system administration. Otero was enjoined by the system to provide expertise and resources to a sister community college in the region: a pilot for regional governance and potential resource sharing and cost savings.

The Taxpayers’ Bill of Rights (TABOR) eventually distressed state budgets and crippled higher education’s ability to operate as usual, let alone advance in a growth mode. Many around the state looked at ways to remedy the situation. The College Opportunity Fund (COF) was instituted as a short-term method of providing relief to higher education by not counting it as revenue. Students signed over state stipend dollars to colleges rather than having state reimbursements go directly to the schools. This was done to promote awareness of state dollars going to education, grow enrollments, and achieve some revenue relief.

More new programs have been implemented over the last ten years than over any similar time period prior. CCHE and system accountability measures also asked colleges to close any programs that did not warrant continuance. Grant dollars are a more prevalent part of the college’s financial landscape and have also contributed to growth in general education, special activities, and new programs. Otero continues to define goals, manage dollars, and work hard.

Otero is known for its quality education, its community of supportive learners, and the opportunity for all involved to benefit from the energies and expertise displayed every day. Technology threads itself through cashiering and bookstore practices, procurement cards, and improved accounting measures. Instruction integrates the top web platform and training to deliver in a modern competitive yet highly personal educational marketplace. Classroom teaching with technology combines savvy teachers with strong, stable, seductive innovations that benefit students.

Otero Junior College has invited and encouraged not enjoined self-study participants. Learning more about how all areas interface and impact each other has been helpful. OJC plans on continuing a healthy balance of stable change. Based upon its commitment to learning and its successful service to students, the college requests continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission.