

Standard Three: Organization and Governance

The institution has a system of governance that facilitates the accomplishment of its mission and purposes and supports institutional effectiveness and integrity. Through its organizational design and governance structure, the institution creates and sustains an environment that encourages teaching, learning, service, scholarship, and where appropriate research and creative activity. It assures provision of support adequate for the appropriate functioning of each organizational component.

DESCRIPTION

System and Board of Trustees Administration

Washington County Community College (WCCC) is one of Maine's seven public community colleges with its campus located in Calais, Maine. It operates under the Maine Community College System (MCCS) governed by the MCCS Board of Trustees. Prior to 1985, Vocational-Technical Institutes were administered by the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education. In 1985, the Maine legislature approved L.D. 2174, An Act to Establish the Maine Vocational-Technical Institute System (MRSA, Chapter 431, Maine Vocational-Technical Institute System, enacted by Laws 1985, c.695, ssII, effective April 16, 1986). This act formally grouped the six institutions, once governed by the State Board of Education, into one organization under a central office structure governed by a board of trustees.

On June 22, 1989, the Maine legislature passed An Act to Enhance the Status of Vocational-Technical Education in Maine (MRSA, Chapter 443, ss2). This act changed the name of the Vocational-Technical Institute System to the Maine Technical College System with similar changes to the names of each institution within the system. It also provided the foundation for Maine Technical College System. The original responsibilities and mission remained the same. The original system consisted of the board of trustees, a system office and seven technical colleges.

On March 31, 2003, the Maine Legislature approved an act creating the Maine Community College System. This act changed the name of the Maine Technical College System to the Maine Community College System and completed the evolution of the Vocational Technical Institutes to their current status as

comprehensive community colleges. The governance system has remained essentially the same with the notable exception of the appointment of a chief academic officer at the system level to oversee and guide the continuing academic development of the colleges.

The Board of Trustees consists of 13 voting members, one ex-officio voting member and one exofficio non voting member. The members of the Board of Trustees and the Role and Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are provided at <http://www.mccs.me.edu/about/membership.html> and <http://intranet.mccs.me.edu/PoliciesandProcedures/Policy%20Docs/Section201p.doc> respectively. These seats include members from the fields of business, industry, labor, education, the general public, and one member from the student body of one of the community college campuses at the time of appointment.

Members of the Board are appointed by the governor, subject to review by the joint standing committee of the legislature having jurisdiction over education and to confirmation by the legislature. Board members serve four-year terms of office, with the exception of the student member who is appointed to a two-year term. The board is the legally constituted body responsible, through the exercise of the powers and performance of the duties set forth by the law, for the establishment, control, and administration of the statewide system of publicly supported community colleges. The board of trustees meets at least six times each year and at the call of the chair or at the request of a majority of the members. The functions, membership and organization of the board of trustees are delineated in the Maine Community College System Policy Section 201. The Maine Community College System Board of Trustees' powers and duties are described in Section 200 of the Maine Community College System Policy Manual. The Board is the policy-making authority of the system and has three standing committees; Executive Committee, Educational Policy Committee, Finance & Facilities Committee. All Maine Community College System policies must be approved by the board of trustees.

The Board appoints the president of the system. The system president implements the policies of the board, reports directly to the board through the board chairperson, and is responsible for the operation of the system. The president of the system meets regularly, typically monthly, with the Presidents Council, made up of all seven college presidents, to implement policies and goals. There are no other boards with vested authority for governing the institution. The

policies, including contracts negotiated with each bargaining unit, the Maine Community College System Strategic Plan as approved/adopted by the Maine Community College System board of trustees, and procedures approved/adopted by the President's Council and approved by the system president are distributed to each college. These documents clearly delineate the authority, responsibility and relationships among the governing board, the administration, staff and faculty.

Through the powers and duties delineated, the system president provides leadership in developing policies; sets goals and objectives with respect to operation of the colleges; appoints staff of the Maine Community College System office; selects and recommends presidential nominees to the board of trustees; selects and evaluates the system office staff and the presidents of the colleges; allocates special revenues; prepares budgets; maintains an accounting system and procedures which reflect and identify all appropriations, allocations, revenue and expenditures of each college and the system office.

The organizational design and governance structure are supported and strengthened by the vision, mission and guiding principles described in the Maine Community College System Strategic Plan. The plan serves as a guide for decision making and focuses the energies of the System on shared priorities. The plan directs the system in achieving its mission and establishes an environment that is conducive to effective collaborative, planning and evaluation. It defines the benchmarks by which overall system effectiveness and progress are measured. This Board assesses its effectiveness through a number of processes. First the organizational structure facilitates a review by the full Board of committee recommendations. This gives the opportunity for questions and clarifications by member colleagues. This structure includes the Executive Committee, the Finance and Facilities Committee, the Educational Policy Committee and a Strategic Planning Committee. The charge to each of these committees is at <http://intranet.mccs.me.edu/Accreditation/Files/BOT-Committees.pdf>.

Annually the Board holds a retreat to reflect on the past year and to look to the future. Included in this retreat is an “open forum” with the college presidents to discuss issues of concern and interest. Of significant interest at this meeting are the enrollment and financial goals for the year. In the years since becoming the Maine Community College System, the projected enrollment goals have been exceeded.

The financial interest includes how well the legislative appropriated budget allocation compares to the request for funding the MCCS and to the percentage increases for the University of Maine System and the various departments of State government. These interests also include the external annual financial audit results which include the composite system results and the results for each individual college. Historically, the MCCS Board of Trustees has established and periodically renewed a five year strategic plan. The July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2013 Strategic Plan and Planning Process are at <http://intranet.mccs.me.edu/BOT/StrategicPlan/StrategicPlan.htm> and provides a description of the process for its development. Progress is reported annually for each Goal, Objective and Measure identified under goal objectives in the plan. The colleges and System Office provide performance data on each measure in an annual plan report. This information is reviewed for the entire System by the Presidents and senior managers of the System. It is then reviewed with the Presidents by the Strategic Plan Committee of the Board. This Committee reviews the progress report and any recommendations by the presidents for modifications to the plan or other plan-related issues. The Committee may--and has--asked for additional information on the report and recommendations before it decides which recommendations it will carry forward to the full Board. The full Board reviews the entire progress report and discusses any recommendations made by the Committee. The plan is a document which benefits from modification so that it continues to reflect the changing experience and needs of the institution during the plan period. Any changes made to the plan, however, require a formal vote of the full Board.

An additional effectiveness measure is the Academic Review procedure, Policy Section 302 and the accompanying Procedure Section 304. Both of these are included may be accessed at <http://intranet.mccs.me.edu/> Typically, one of the program reviews completed each year by each college is selected by the Chair of the Educational Policy Committee and the Chief Academic Officer for presentation by appropriate college academic personnel to this committee when the Board meets on the respective college campus or during a special meeting if the Board is not meeting on that college campus for that year. The review report is forwarded in advance to the committee membership with the meeting agenda, and at the meeting, the committee members have an opportunity to clarify questions resulting from their preview of the report and to gain greater insight into the plans and challenges for the program of study. This review process provides committee members and college personnel with insight into the effectiveness of

the program of study. Each college is the major beneficiary of the program review process relative to the effectiveness of the programs of study on the college's academic inventory. As noted in Policy Section 302, all programs of study within a college are to be reviewed in five year cycles.

College Administration

The President is the Chief Executive Officer deriving power from the BOT. At the time of the last Self-Study President Dr. William H. Cassidy had just assumed his responsibilities a few months prior to the arrival of the visiting team. The President administers the College through three senior administration staff, two of which have direct responsibility for departments of the College: The senior staff includes Dean of Finance and Administration, Dean of Academic and Student Affairs, and Assistant to the President/Human Resources Coordinator. The departments under the direction of Dean of Finance and Administration are finance, facilities, information technology, snackbar, bookstore, and health and safety. Student and community affairs, enrollment management, academic support services, library services, academic affairs, and faculty are under the direction and responsibility of the Dean of Academic and Student Affairs, who is assisted by an Assistant Dean of Enrollment Management and an Assistant Dean of Student and Community Affairs. The Assistant to the President/Human Resources Coordinator oversees hiring, personnel and labor issues, coordinates College-wide projects and initiatives out of the President's Office, and plays a leadership role in College governance. The President has established a senior staff group for effective administration of the College. This administrative and advisory group also includes assistant dean level and department coordinator level administrators. The President's senior advisory group meets weekly. Meetings include updates, priority agenda items, planning sessions, and allows for the opportunity to have administrative decisions made. The President encourages the exchange of ideas. Tasks are assigned, including follow up.

In 2004 the President established the WCCC Community Council to provide a forum for college communication, policy review and development, updates and discussion of wide ranging topics and issues of import to the whole college community. Members of Community Council include representatives from faculty, staff, students, various departments and include representatives from the bargaining units on campus. Meetings occur monthly through the academic year and occasionally during the summer months. Meetings follow an agenda

developed by the President and Council and notes are distributed to the College community through email.

In addition to Community Council, there is a minimum of two College wide community meetings per semester for the entire community to attend. These meetings are an opportunity for the entire faculty and staff to engage in year beginning, year ending communications and announcements. At the conclusion of each academic semester the President leads with his senior management team a series of comprehensive college wide departmental meetings to evaluate the preceding semester/year and plan for the next. The meetings are an immediate opportunity to reflect on issues of concern and to engage discussions as to any new priorities emerging based on the concluded period.

The Dean of Academic and Student Affairs administers the departments of Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, Community Education and Industry Services, Academic Support Services and Library Services. The Dean meets with the assistant deans or directors individually and in subgroups weekly or bi-weekly. Meetings address goals, tasks, personnel, projects and planning. The Dean is directly responsible to the President for the academic program and provides academic leadership and ensures quality of the academic program in collaboration with faculty, department chairs, and the curriculum committee. Oversight of all academic programming - on and off campus, distance and e-learning, alternative programming and collaborative arrangements - are the direct responsibility of the Dean with select delegation to the Assistant Dean.

Faculty

Faculty have vital role in creating, developing, adapting, and modifying the College's programs and curriculum. Individual program faculty have direct responsibility for their programs and curriculum, and with the Academic Dean ensure quality, rigor and relevance. Faculty maintain a voting majority on the Curriculum Committee and only faculty may hold the position of chairperson. Three Department Chairs meet monthly with the Dean of Academic and Student Affairs. Meetings consist of discussions and planning for curriculum, course scheduling, enrollment, academic planning, budget planning, and academic assessment and evaluation. Faculty are also involved in enrollment management planning and activities. Faculty participate in specialized recruiting, and in on-campus enrollment management/retention activities such as New Student

Admittance Day, First Year Experience, and Early Registration/Advising. The College strives for faculty representation on all standing committees, ad hoc committees, and hiring committees.

Students

The students are represented by the Student Senate, whose membership is elected annually by the entire student body. Overseen by the Director of Student and Residential Life, the Student Senate's primary purpose is to represent the needs and best interests of students, and to encourage and provide for the participation of all students in considering the issues and policies that affect their rights and responsibilities.

Students participate in academic governance through participation in College's Community Council at monthly meetings, on the Disciplinary, Graduation, and Safety Committees, on select ad hoc committees, and through their Member of the Board of Trustees. The College President meets directly with the Student Senate twice per year in the fall and spring and on an as needed basis with the Student Senate President throughout the academic year.

APPRAISAL

System and Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees remains committed to the mission of the MCCS and Washington County Community College with their support of academic and technical education, and their belief in the accessibility of a community college education. The MCCS provides leadership for program initiatives such as Early College for ME and the Rural Initiative which both focus on providing greater accessibility for Maine citizens. WCCC has a part-time Early College Coordinator on campus and is delivering its Medical Assisting program to rural students in south western Washington County through a distance education model in collaboration with the University of Maine at Machias. The System forged a new partnership agreement with New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) to facilitate collaboration on programming, faculty development, student life, and resource sharing. WCCC has signed an articulation agreement with NBCC St. Andrews for WCCC's Culinary and Baking program and NBCC's Hospitality program. The Adventure Recreation programs at each institution are collaborating and sharing resources on expeditions and engaging in co-teaching

opportunities. Also WCCC signed an articulation agreement with Husson University which allows associate degree graduates in certain programs to advance to Husson and obtain an undergraduate degree with just two years of additional study.

The MCCC, over the past five years, has expanded its scholarship and financial program opportunities to students to further enhance student access into our College. In 2005 the MCCC and the University of Maine System sign an agreement for “Advantage U” which is a guaranteed admission agreement that allows MCCC students, upon completion of an associate degree in Liberal Studies, guaranteed admission to any University of Maine System institution. The Board of Trustees and MCCC provide strong examples of leadership for academic achievement.

College Administration

In the early spring of 2004 due to economic downturns in the State, the Maine Community College System and the College appropriation was reduced by the Governor and State Legislature. Additionally, this downturn and reduced appropriations would carry forward through the 2005 and 2006 fiscal/academic years. Beyond this, it was recognized by the System and the College’s administration that the infrastructure exceeded its ability to support itself while there were gaping holes within the College’s academic inventory. Furthermore, the College facilities, instructional equipment, instructional and administrative technology were in great need of improvement. The President and the administrative team with guidance from various individuals and departments within the College and at the Systems office commenced on making a number of significant financial and programmatic decisions yielding immediate curtailments in staffing and programming which would have near future pay off in bringing on new and more relevant programming while improving the Colleges infrastructure and placing it on sound financial footing. The College found it necessary to “right-size” itself while improving its educational mission and outcomes.

In 2005/2006 the College changed to a Department Chair model of academic leadership. After a long institutional history of a “Team Leader” model this was a challenging transition. Department Chairs now have a broader role in scheduling, curriculum, academic and college planning, adjunct faculty recruitment and evaluation, budget planning, and program assessment and evaluation. Prior to the 2007/2008 academic year the administration presented for approval to the

curriculum committee, changes to the curriculum committee bylaws that required a faculty member as chair of the committee and for the Academic Dean to become an equal voting member on the committee. Changes were approved by the committee and the President. The result of the Curriculum Committee changes is greater faculty leadership over the academic program.

Individual program faculty have maintained significant autonomy over their programs and curriculum, and they work in concert with Department Chairs and the Academic Dean. The College provides for multiple avenues of communication on decision making and College business. Formal meetings are conducted according to organizational structure and reporting, and additionally there are formal and informal information sharing meetings with varied purposes. The President's Office makes a significant effort to create ongoing and functional pathways of communication.

The College's committee structure consists of the following standing committees: Community Council, Labor – Management committees with the organized bargaining units within the College, Curriculum, Disciplinary, Graduation, Safety, Scholarship, Employee Recognition, Professional Development, Affirmative Action, Information Technology, Bookstore, and Library. Additionally the college will convene various ad-hoc groups as desired to address very specific issues such as a work group reviewing opportunities for energy and efficiencies across the College. Some committee activity can, at times, be uneven in participation and meeting frequency. A challenge WCCC faces as a small institution with increasing demands upon faculty and staff is the ability for the College to realistically address the wide range of College issues and business through the committee structure. WCCC's limited number of staff and faculty cause committee participation and meeting frequency to be minimized when considered along with other College duties and activities. These challenges prevent the College from implementing a fully voluntary committee participation model.

Faculty

Faculty are actively involved in standing and ad hoc committees, as well as various planning groups which arise during an academic year. The faculty assumes a strong responsibility for the curriculum through individual programs and the Curriculum Committee. In non-teaching areas such as recruitment, enrollment management and retention the faculty have increasingly participated in planning

and activities. While the faculty do have an active association to address collective bargaining contract issues, they do not have a formal campus body which addresses issues of import to faculty but outside contractual matters. Typically community college faculty have a deliberative body recognized as a faculty senate. Such a committee body may add to the existing committee participation challenges. Currently the department chairs have two to four meetings an academic year as an additional means for faculty to address academic and college business.

PROJECTIONS

1. Administration will continue to support inclusiveness for committee participation and explore ways to facilitate committee functioning given the limitations of personnel.
2. WCCC Community Council will ensure all committees in the WCCC governance have clearly defined and written bylaws, and that they maintain records of minutes with accessibility for the College community.
3. Create a more effective announcements and information component to the WCCC website.
4. Administration annually develop a master calendar for all governance related committee meetings and general governance meetings.