

From the Editor

Our accreditation self study report is nearly complete, and it is time for the campus community to review what has been written. Beginning Monday, October 27th, you will be able to access the report from campus at www.pasadena.edu/selfstudydraft. Hard copies will also be available in department offices. Please take time to have a look at our self study report. Also, don't miss the accreditation Town Hall meetings slated for Monday, October 27th, 12-1 pm (CEC Multipurpose room); Tuesday, October 28th, 5-6 pm (C233); and Thursday, October 30th, 12-1 pm (R122). Highlights of the accreditation self study will be presented for discussion. Finally, our self study is the product of much hard work by many people. In this issue, a few of these participants provide their perspectives on the self study process.

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Perspectives from Self Study Participants

Carol Curtis, SLO Coordinator

My position as the SLO faculty coordinator has put me in the thick of the accreditation self study report. My initial task was to work with the writing groups for Standard IB and IIA. Later I had the responsibility of overseeing the level two writing groups who were responsible for merging the three parts of Standard II (A, B, & C) together. Sometimes this was frustrating as we collaboratively grappled with the questions put forth by the accrediting agency (ACCJC); however, overall it was a positive experience because I had an opportunity to work with some dedicated colleagues and to see the institution from a more global perspective.

There was a lot of work to do, and many people applied themselves to the task. I am most grateful to a handful of people who gave up countless hours to help me pull Standard IIA together. This group of women (Liz Wood, Dorothy Potter, Krista Goguen, Debbie Smith, and Janis Dwyer), with occasional visits from Dave Douglass, poured through the questions and worked with the submitted text to hash out responses to forward on to Lynn Wright. We laughed, ate a lot of chocolate and McDonald's apple pies, and stayed late many days. It is because of their cooperative effort that we were able to finish Standard IIA. In addition to getting to know my colleagues better, I also had a chance to see the college from a more holistic perspective. As we searched for evidence to support our claims, I learned about some great and innovative things that are happening in other places on campus. For example, our first-year experience program, .XL, is praised across the state; there are unique programs, like the Scholar's Program, that prepare highly-motivated students for transfer to the UCs; and there are 74 "computer labs" on campus, which includes classrooms, general computer labs open for student use, and learning support programs ranging from full services (resources, tutoring, instruction) to smaller course-specific lab opportunities. The experience of working on the self study has helped me to be more aware of who I am working with and what is happening across campus.

Accreditation Timeline

July 1—October 24	Self study report edited
October 13—October 23	Focus groups review report; copies distributed to Associated Students for review
October 27	Self study report available on the web and in department offices for college-wide review
October 27—October 31	Town Hall meetings scheduled for overview and discussion of self study
October 27—December 1	Shared governance groups review and sign-off on certification page
November 5	Board receives self study for informational purposes
November 17—December 5	Self study report submitted to college publications office for formatting
December 10	Board receives self study for action
January 8, 2009	Self study report mailed to ACCJC/ WASC
February 23 —March 6, 2009	Mock site visit (optional)
March 16—March 19, 2009	Site visit

Perspectives from Self Study Participants

Dr. Allen Dooley, Acting Dean, Enrollment Management

The accreditation process is always a major effort on the part of the college. I believe one of its best aspects is that to produce the accreditation self study, all elements of the college are brought into play. Students, faculty, staff, managers, members of the community, and our Board of Trustees are all brought into this dynamic and critical effort. It is very rewarding and inspiring to see so many from across the campus and the community pulling together to create this critical report.

One of the greatest challenges for PCC this go around was the substantial change in format for the accreditation self study itself. Although the new format calls for four standards instead of the former ten, within each of the new four standards were many subcategories, each of which had to be addressed. Also new this time around was the concept of “themes” that the self study has to include. Still, I think we will all be happy with the report once it is finished.

Maria M. Bustamante, Financial Aid Intake Specialist

I am a classified staff person, and I was a member of a Standard IIB writing team. I can honestly say that I was impressed by the amount of attention to detail Pasadena City College (PCC) gave to the accreditation process. My background before coming to PCC was with a private, for profit, higher education institution. In that environment accreditation was also important, but it was handled very differently. Most of the written information was provided by the department supervisors. All changes and revisions were only made by the CEO and his staff. Unlike that institution, PCC offered more input from the entire community of faculty, staff, students, and board members. This was a great experience in which I learned a great deal about the new accreditation standards that expanded the input from every area on campus. This is a tremendous project, and my kudos go out to all the members of the writing teams.

Anonymous, Accreditation 1st Timer

This has been my first experience with any kind of accreditation process. I’m a semi-newbie at PCC with a little over four years of service. The main reason I became involved with the Accreditation Steering Committee was because people kept telling me that this was the way to find out how PCC really functions. They were right. I have a much clearer picture about how our campus functions and the challenges faced by departments other than my own. At first I didn’t know how I was going to get through this process since I never experienced anything like this in the corporate world. I was lucky that there were some seasoned veterans on the committee who have been through this process before and were able to give me great guidance and support. In one aspect, it has been overwhelming the amount of information that has been collected. On the other hand, it is very exciting dissecting the college and getting to see how we really do function as an institution. On the Steering Committee I feel like I get an overview of the whole process.

The one thing I have gotten out of this whole process is the realization of how important accreditation really is. Keeping our accreditation status makes us much more attractive to prospective students. I think the importance goes a lot deeper. This process forces us to really evaluate ourselves as an educational entity. It gives the opportunity to employees from all levels and departments to get together for the same purpose: to evaluate who we are as a campus. It forces us to engage in difficult discussions and work toward solutions. It gives us the opportunity to see what we are doing right and to see what we need to improve. It forces us to plan for change and growth to better ourselves as a campus community. Now more than ever I see the college as this living, breathing thing. It’s not just bricks and mortar and policies and paper. It’s people. Being involved in this process has reaffirmed why I want to be part of this campus community. I guess this self study has been a self realization for me.