Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
of

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

Galloway, NJ 08205

By

An Evaluation Team representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution's self-study report
and a visit to the campus on March 25-28, 2012

The members of the team:

Dr. Nancy Kleniewski, President, SUNY Oneonta, 108 Ravine Parkway, Oneonta, NY 13820

Mrs. Joyce K. Becker, Esq., Dean of Graduate & Professional Studies, Stevenson University, 100 Campus Circle Drive, Owings Mills, MD 21117

Dr. Aminta Hawkins Breaux, Vice President of Student Affairs, Millersville University of PA, PO Box 1002, South Georgia St., Millersville, PA 17751

Dr. Sandra Pryor Clarkson, Professor of Mathematics and Statistics, Hunter College of CUNY, 695 Park Ave., New York, NY 10065

Dr. Hardy M. Cook, Professor Emeritus of English and Modern Languages, Bowie State University, 7505 Citadel Dr., College Park, MD 20740

Dr. James H. Haynes, Director of Title III Programs, Morgan State University, 3239 Powhattan Ave., Baltimore, MD 21216

Dr. Rosalyn A. Lindner, Associate Vice President for Curriculum and Assessment, SUNY College at Buffalo, 1300 Elmwood Ave., GC 519, Buffalo, NY 14222

Mr. Pedro I. Martinez, Finance Director, University of Puerto Rico-Ponce, PO Box 7186, Ponce, PR 00732

Working with the team:

Ms. Iris Duffield, Administrative Analyst, Academic Affairs, New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, PO Box 542, 20 West State St., Trenton, NJ 08625

AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

President/CEO:
Dr. Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr. President

Chief Academic Officer:
Dr. Harvey Kesselman, Provost and Executive Vice President

Chair of the Board of Trustees:
Mr. Stanley Ellis, Chair
Vice President and Director of Strategy
Burlington County Times
4284 Route 130N
Willingboro NJ 08046-2080

Team Report for Comprehensive Visit

The Richard Stockton of New Jersey
101 Vera King Farris Drive
Galloway, NJ 08205-9441
609-652-1776

I. Context and Nature of the visit

Chief Executive Officer:	Dr. Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr., President
Enrollment:	7062 Undergraduate; 817 Graduate
Control:	Public
Affiliation:	State
Carnegie Classification:	Master's - Medium Programs
Degrees Offered:	Bachelor's, Postbaccalaureate Certificate, Master's, Post Master's Certificate, Doctor of Physical Therapy
Distance Education	No
Additional Location	Carnegie Library Center, Atlantic City, NJ

Self-Study Process and Report

The President appointed a planning committee to facilitate nominations to the Steering Committee and to recommend a format for the self-study. The Steering Committee chose to write a comprehensive self-study with standards from *Characteristics of Excellence* grouped into seven chapters, as follow:

Chapter One: 1, 4 & 6	Mission and Goals; Leadership and Governance; Integrity
Chapter Two: 2, 3 & 5	Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal; Institutional Resources; Administration
Chapter Three: 8 & 9	Student Admissions and Retention; Student Support Services
Chapter Four: 10	Faculty
Chapter Five: 11, 12 & 13	Educational Offerings; General Education; Related Educational Activities
Chapter Six: 14	Assessment of Student Learning
Chapter Seven: 7	Institutional Assessment

Participation was widespread among faculty, staff, students, alumni, and Trustees. Some 28 individuals participated on the Steering Committee and some 110 individuals worked on teams that wrote the various chapters of the self-study. Several faculty and staff members attended Middle States workshops for professional development, and the college held workshops on strategic planning, preparation for reaccreditation, and the assessment of student learning.

II. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation

The institution has affirmed that it continues to be in compliance with MSCHE requirements of affiliation and federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including those

requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 such as those on distance learning and transfer of credit. A certificate of compliance is attached to this report.

III. Compliance with Federal Requirements

The Official Cohort Default Rates for Schools, delivered to both domestic and foreign schools on September 12, 2011 by the Department of Education, shows that the official default cohort rate for Stockton College in FY 2009 is 3.7%. Schools that have an FY 2009 official cohort default rate that is less than 5.0% are eligible to make single and non-delayed disbursements on loans used for attendance in a study abroad program as defined in Section 428G(e) of the Higher Education Act. The default cohort rate for the college is within federal limits.

The institution has a transfer credit procedure that provides guidelines and procedures related to the award of Stockton credit for past education and learning experiences. This policy is available online to students and to the public. The procedure for Transfer of Credit is available at http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/policypro/content/docs/2032_062310.pdf. Furthermore, its definition of credit hour conforms closely to the nationally accepted definition.

IV. Evaluation Overview

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey is a vibrant and innovative institution with a focus on supporting student learning and success. Its mission strongly emphasizes teaching, and the team observed a uniformly high level of commitment to students on the part of the faculty, administration, and staff. During the 40 years since its founding, the institution has continually refined its practices while remaining true to its original mission of interdisciplinary work. Planning occurs at all levels and is broadly shared. The mission and goals are closely tied to resource allocation, making possible ongoing improvements in the performance of the overall institution and of the component units. The Faculty Senate as a governance body includes students on many of its committees to give them a voice in decision-making.

The College is in sound financial circumstances, characterized by strong assets and a series of unqualified financial statements. In the past three years the college has doubled its endowment and increased federal, state, and local grant funding by 70%. Resource allocation decisions have directed increased support to instructional programs and student services. Facilities are in very good condition and have been expanded to meet the needs of a growing student body. Recent construction and acquisitions of the Campus Center, the Carnegie Library Center, the Parkway Building, and the new science center provide much-needed space for academic programs and administrative and student services while respecting the surrounding protected natural reserves. The Seaview Resort is a particularly notable acquisition, both for its intrinsic value and for its integration with the Hospitality program.

The close collaboration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs is to be commended for the many initiatives that advance the development and learning of students. The EOF program could be a model for all students, with a record of superior student retention and academic success. The CARE program is also outstanding in providing intervention and monitoring for at-risk students. The college is to be commended for the numerous opportunities that it affords to its students to engage in high-impact learning environments including service-learning, community service, and small learning communities.

Stockton College has attracted a highly qualified, committed faculty who express strong commitment to teaching and precepting as well as increasing their productivity in research, publications, and creative activity. The institution has increased the number of tenure-track faculty and has reduced the student-faculty ratio in recent years, although several programs still depend heavily on part-time faculty. Students overwhelmingly expressed their appreciation for the dedication of the faculty and staff to their personal and academic growth and success.

The institution is to be commended for the excellent programming in place for freshmen students, including the First-Year Experience/Freshmen Seminar Courses, the Stockton Orientation and Adventure Retreat (SOAR), the basic skills program, and the recently improved first-year studies program to be implemented over the next two years. The college considers itself to be transfer-friendly, and all evidence supports that perception. Also commendable is the unique interdisciplinary approach to general education which is spread throughout a student's entire academic program.

The college has a strong culture of assessment both in academic areas and throughout the institution. Institutional assessment is aided by benchmarking against national standards and is routinely used in planning. Student learning outcomes assessment is faculty-driven and is exemplary in a number of programs.

Suggestions for Improvement

In the area of planning, the team suggests that the institution work further to close the perceived gap between top-down and bottom-up planning and continue to strive for thorough communication, consultation, and collaboration. In addition, there are a great many plans, goals, and objectives that might benefit from streamlining and integration.

As the institution grows, it will be critical to ensure that the strategic enrollment plan is fully integrated by aligning it with human resources, the budgeting process, and the campus master plan. Enrollment plans should also be communicated to faculty whose enrollments and personnel needs are impacted by enrollment changes. In addition, retention should be regularly analyzed and taken into consideration in overall enrollment planning.

While decentralized curricular planning is a tradition of Richard Stockton College, as the institution grows it may want to review its process for curriculum development to determine if wider faculty oversight should be adopted.

While the administration has devoted significant resources to assessment of student learning outcomes and institutional assessment, the team suggests that these efforts could be made more effective with full-time professional support for assessment. We would suggest public sharing of learning outcomes for prospective and current students, for example, in the *Bulletin* and on department websites. We look for continued integration of institutional outcomes, programmatic outcomes and course level learning outcomes.

In conclusion, our team was greatly impressed by the overall direction of the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey and by its students, faculty, staff, and administration. The College's brief history is already rich with accomplishments and it appears to have a very bright future. In the words etched outside of the Campus Center, it truly provides "an environment for excellence."

Chapter One

Standard 1: Mission and Goals
Standard 4: Leadership and Governance
Standard 6: Integrity

The institution meets these standards.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Characteristics of Excellence contains the expectation that institutions possess clearly defined missions and goals that focus on student learning and institutional improvement. In its self-study document, Stockton College has clearly outlined the institutional mission, one developed over thirty years ago. The mission focuses on the importance placed on teaching, research and community service, with primary emphasis placed on the teaching mission, especially the interdisciplinary approach to the development of the curriculum.

The College is also commended for its mission of research and promoting this aspect of college life among its faculty. Faculty members have opportunities to explore within their chosen fields of study and expand that knowledge to the local, state, national, and international communities. The community service function is also an important part of the Stockton College mission. The college encourages involvement by its students, faculty, and administrators in issues pertaining to the surrounding community.

The institutional goals are outlined in the Stockton 2020 Strategic Plan. These goals are grouped in themes of Learning, Engagement, Global Perspectives, and Sustainability. It is indicated that the goals formed the basis of objectives developed by the different departments within the college. It is understood that the departments are required to relate their objectives to one or more of the institutional goal(s). The college connects its goals and objectives to institutional resource allocation. The connection of the two helps promote an atmosphere of collaboration, cooperation, and sustainability.

Stockton College has a leadership system consisting of a Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, students, and staff. These entities are inextricably connected in the overall operation of the institution. The Board of Trustees provide general oversight and policy direction, while the administration of the institution provides the overall implementation of policy and in many cases recommends policy directives to the Board of Trustees. The By-Laws of the Board were reviewed as revised on May 4, 2011. Faculty, staff, and students participate in the leadership of the college through membership on various boards and committees.

The fact that institution encourages and practices strategies that promote participation among and between the various constituent groups indicates the degree to which groups are involved in the overall governance system. The college Trustees and administrators have made a concerted effort to ensure that governance is across the campus and among the different constituents. The administration is commended for having a Faculty Senate and a Student Senate to address the needs and concerns of their respective constituent groups.

The newly established Faculty Senate, formerly the Faculty Assembly, is commended for including students on some of its standing committees and having them understand and participate in the overall governance process.

Stockton's environment is transparent and open. Overall, the leadership of the institution is extremely inclusive. The college is to be commended for the extent to which a wide variety of constituents participate in decision-making. Likewise, the governance process is inclusive and shared by constituents, the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, students, staff, and in some instances, the outside community.

Suggestions:

The Mission of The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey was first developed in 1982 and later expanded to include the graduate education component in 1996. We suggest that the institution would benefit from a review of its mission, perhaps every 10 years, more clearly to address the changing society in which we live and educate. Furthermore, it may prove more effective if the missions of undergraduate and graduate education were combined rather than having graduate education appear to be an appendage to the overall purpose of the institution.

Recommendations:
None

Requirements:
None

Chapter Two

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal
Standard 3: Institutional Resources
Standard 5: Administration

The institution meets these standards.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Stockton College has established clear policies and procedures, setting the tone for continuous planning processes, incorporating annual institutional plans, and linking the mission, vision and budget with its planning process. One of the key planning instruments is the Stockton 2020 Strategic Plan, which will guide the college for the next several years.

Stockton 2020 was prepared based on a comprehensive Balanced Scorecard ® approach to strategic planning and management and is based on four strategic themes: Learning, Engagement, Global Perspective, and Sustainability. These four strategic themes are framed into four perspectives (Students, Faculty and Stakeholders; Internal Processes; Employee Readiness and Resource Stewardship) within which there are twenty-six objectives clearly defined in the strategic plan. Faculty and staff have expressed that they also set their own goals in the Annual Program Reviews, work towards these goals to meet the themes in Stockton 2020 and eventually assess the targeted goals. The overall process is driven by the vision for 2020: "The Richard

Stockton College: an environmentally-responsible learning community of engaged citizens embracing a global perspective."

Stockton 2020 employs a set of measures to track progress towards attaining strategic objectives and basic themes and to assess the effectiveness of the planning process. The Steering Committee has also appointed Initiatives Teams to encourage individuals, units and cross-divisional teams to propose initiatives that yield strategic results. Stockton 2020 planning produces data which are reported and maintained online, accessible to unit managers. The overall annual institutional data are reported to the Board of Trustees, the president and the cabinet, which have the primary responsibility of the decision-making process. Other parties also monitor this information to see that the college uses assessment results in closing the loop and in re-setting each planning cycle.

Annual Program Reviews offer units of the college the opportunity to advance goals for the current year and request budget allocations based on previous assessment results, which are reviewed and approved at the next higher level. Each unit prepares its Annual Program Review establishing new goals based on the result of assessment for the previous year. According to their respective program reviews, every unit level assesses its goals in order to collect data and analyze results. The institution also implemented a Technology Plan, a set of measures that has strengthened the use of technology, providing better use of technological infrastructure to students, faculty and staff.

Stockton College implemented a Master Plan for its campus in 2010. The plan will guide the future capital projects at the institution and is being aligned with other planning activities. In order to meet both existing and projected enrollments, the master plan calls for new construction of student housing. The existing buildings and grounds appear to be in excellent condition, and the institution is looking forward to completing construction of a unified science center. The recently completed Campus Center added an attractive "front door" to the campus and provided much-needed space for student services and activities.

Even going through a relatively unstable economy, Stockton College has been able to strengthen its financial position by adding important capital assets. An example of this is the purchase of the nearby Seaview Resort and conference center, which not only accommodated enrollment growth and added an income stream but also strengthened the Hospitality program and provided additional student housing. The college supports academic and outreach programs at the Carnegie Library Center in Atlantic City, providing a strong presence in this community.

The institution has implemented a continuous budgeting allocation process driven by the planning process. Data from 2009 demonstrates that 34% of Stockton's operational expenses were destined to cover expenses in the instructional category. In 2011, an increase of a 3% of operational budget has been reallocated to instruction, thus representing more than $5 million more in funds directly supporting the mission of the institution. Student services also has benefited from budget reallocation, as 2011 financial data reveals an increase of more than $1 million in this category, compared to data from 2009.

The institution seems to be in a strong and healthy financial position; however, the institution has notably increased its long-term debts. The debt-to-equity ratio is 1.78%, according to audited

data from the financial statements, dated June 30, 2011. Such a ratio probably evidences that the institution has been aggressive in financing its capital projects with debts. Even though the institution has no plans to incur any additional debt, the institution might look closely and continually monitor this ratio in order to maintain a solid capital structure.

The institution has been under the leadership of Dr. Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr., since 2003, when he became the college's fourth president. He has significantly contributed to the advancement of Stockton, not only with his knowledge, but also with his expertise and length of experience in higher education. Under his administration and leadership, the College has taken a new direction in fulfilling its goals and has engaged even more in community activities. Both the Board of Trustees and the president participated in a 360 degree evaluation by 45 individuals representing key constituencies of the College. This action evidences that there is assessment conducted on the effectiveness of administrative structures at the college.

The institution has a well-balanced composition among its academic and administrative leaders. They possess the appropriate degrees and training necessary to carry out their responsibilities and functions and are aware of their respective roles. It is noteworthy that there is a collegial environment among the president, provost, deans, associate deans and administrative leaders. In a formal meeting the deans noted that significant improvements have been made and that they appreciate the leadership provided by the top-level management of the institution. Other members of the staff have expressed how positively Stockton has been impacted by the vision of its president and decisions he has taken.

Significant Accomplishments

The college has moved forward in an exemplary way by planning to increase capacity to accommodate enrollment growth. Proof of this is the acquisition of the nearby Seaview Resort and the negotiation to restore an historic building so that it may be used as an education center. At the same time, these decisions will develop additional revenue streams.

An independent CPA firm has issued an unqualified opinion for The Richard Stockton College's Financial Statements over the past three years, thus assuring the fine work, transparency, and due diligence with which the college has dealt with its finances.

In the past three years, Stockton College has doubled its endowed funding; in the current academic year, new assets have been added to the Stockton Foundation. These additions are the result of an increased focus on fundraising by the president. The college should also be commended for obtaining increased resources from external funding from grants and contracts. As evidenced in the self-study, the institution has been able to increase by 70% its federal, state and local grants and contracts.

Suggestions

The institution might want to adopt a conservative approach and take careful decisions in the light of its substantial long-term debt, waning state appropriations, and increased reliance on tuition revenue.

We suggest that the college consider incorporating pro-forma budgets for the next three years in its Financial Plan. These would demonstrate the institutional ability to produce a balance budget contemplating enrollment tuition projections, grants and contracts approved and other revenues, versus operational expenses, such as compensation planning, interest on capital assets related debt, etc., among other assumptions.

Recommendation to be Reported in the PRR

There is a great deal of planning at the institution; there is some perception, however, that there may be too many goals to work with and a lack of alignment between "top-down" and "bottom – up" plans. In addition, the Stockton 2020 Strategic Plan's *themes* do not necessarily substitute for clearly articulated *goals* that could be accomplished through the stated *objectives* and be assessed by *data.* The institution should strive to integrate the various plans (e.g., enrollment, academic, financial, facilities) and clearly articulate overarching institutional goals in the Strategic Plan. (Standards 2 and 8; see Chapter 3.)

Requirements
None

Chapter Three

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention
Standard 9: Student Support Services

The institution meets these standards.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

The admissions policies support and reflect the mission of the institution. The admissions policies as well as communications strategies consistently promote a quality student experience provided by the college, the promise of which is supported by institutional assessment. The college conveys that *it is a public college that feels more like a private institution*. Examples include the faculty-student ratio which now stands at 17.5:1, and the high proportion of courses taught by full-time tenure track professors.

The criteria for admissions for undergraduate and graduate students are clearly described and made available via the college website; and information on the cost of education, academic majors, and financial support including scholarship information is readily available. All new students entering the college are given flash drives with financial aid information, as well as the course catalog; transfer students are provided easy access to information via the college website admissions page.

Upon review of the current state of enrollment it is evident that the college has not yet fully developed an integrated approach to enrollment management, but is striving to develop a Strategic Enrollment Plan. Past growth has resulted in stresses brought about by space

limitations, program limitations, and insufficient supports for students. Students report concerns for growing the enrollment at a rapid pace if the physical structures, i.e. housing, do not offer the accommodations as expected in promotional materials. We anticipate that the Strategic Enrollment Plan currently under development will assist in moving toward a fully integrated planning process.

Special groups including transfers entering Stockton as first-time first-year residential students benefit from a comprehensive orientation program and a clearly defined path to help with acclimation to the campus. The college is now striving to offer comparable programming for transfer and commuter students. Students who transfer report a need for an improved and expedited transfer credit process. This concern may be exacerbated by late acceptances.

The college's one-stop shopping model is apparent as visitors step into the new Campus Center with numerous welcoming spaces, support services, and venues to aid students throughout their time at the college. The policies available in the *Student Handbook* and the *Bulletin* clearly address adherence to state, federal, and accrediting requirements and regulations including the policy on the release of student records and the Clery Act, among other policies.

The college has been successful in its recruitment and retention of students, with an 83.8% first to second year retention rate for all first-year students. Six-year graduation rates also indicate a marked improvement in retention for Latino/Hispanic students—55.6% for the 2002 cohort, and 60% in the 2004 cohort; and for African American students—49% for the 2002 cohort, and 52.2% for the 2004 cohort.

The Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) program offers the opportunity for disadvantaged and low- income students to achieve the institutional learning outcomes through enhanced academic and social support services. As a result of the intentional efforts to recruit and retain this population the college has consistently seen a much higher first to second-year retention rate for EOF students than for the overall population as was evidenced in the 2009 cohort that included a 92.1% EOF retention rate compared to the overall student population rate of 87.4%; and while the six-year graduation rate for EOF has been consistently lower than the general student population, the gap is closing. The 2005 EOF cohort had a 61.2% six-year graduation rate while the general population was 65.5%.

There is a concerted and coordinated effort to retain undergraduate and graduate students at the college; and evidence indicates that the programs and interventions have been successful. Among the numerous efforts are strategies that bring together Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to track and intervene with high-risk students. With increased capacity for housing, a greater number of students can access support services such as tutoring in the residence halls.

There are appropriate strategies to identify students who may be under-prepared, and the college offers resources to enhance their opportunities for success. The Basic Studies (BASK) program is a systematic and proactive strategy to aid students who are identified through testing. The piloting of *Accuplacer* demonstrates a commitment of the institution to engage in continuous quality improvement, as it is being explored as a means to enhance placement testing.

Student concerns are handled by a number of areas at the college including the office of Affirmative Action and Ethical Standards, the Information desk at the Campus Center, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Office of the President, the Dean of Students, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, and the Dean of Graduate and Continuing Studies. Concern for the safety and welfare of the students is evident in the established Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) at Stockton which brings together mental health professionals with the faculty and staff to provide early intervention strategies. The BIT program also assists in identifying at-risk students and pairing those students with mentors as part of the CARE program.

In keeping with the philosophy that co-curricular activities complement the academic curriculum, the Division of Student Affairs supports the growth of student leaders who are involved with over 110 recognized student organizations. Student Affairs has also been an integral part of the Essential Learning Outcomes process that is currently underway at the college. Stockton affords numerous opportunities for students to engage on the campus, in the community, and during fieldwork experiences. The experiential component of the academic program is well-designed, supported and an integral part of the academic program.

Significant Accomplishments

The concerted effort toward assessment including the multitude of meaningful assessment initiatives across the college including those in the academic support and co-curricular areas is to be commended, along with the efforts at the college to ensure continuous improvement. One example is the continuous improvement efforts in the Housing department as indicated by their use of the Educational Benchmarking Inventory instrument.

The college is to be commended for the numerous opportunities that it affords to its students to engage in high-impact learning environments including service-learning, community service, and small learning communities.

The close collaboration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs is to be commended for the many initiatives that advance the development and learning of students including advising for at-risk students, living/learning communities, the Stockton Orientation Adventure Retreat (SOAR) program, tutoring in residence halls, and the Coordinated Actions to Retain and Educate (CARE) team that identifies students needing supplemental instruction or support services.

Suggestions

The college conducted a Cultural Audit that yielded suggestions for improvement of areas that have the potential to impact retention including compositional diversity, psychological climate, behavioral climate, and organizational structure. We suggest that the recommendations be included as part of ongoing retention initiatives.

Recommendation to be Included in the PRR

As the Stockton 2020 visioning process develops, it will be critical to ensure that the Strategic Enrollment Plan is fully integrated with other institutional plans to address long-term strategic

goals. The Strategic Enrollment Plan should be aligned with institutional resources including the human resources, the budgeting process, and the master plan. Enrollment plans should also be communicated to faculty whose enrollments and personnel needs are impacted by enrollment changes. In addition, retention should be regularly analyzed and taken into consideration in overall enrollment planning. (Standards 2 and 8; see Chapter 2.)

Requirements

None

Chapter Four

Standard Ten: Faculty

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Faculty at the Richard Stockton College clearly bear the "primary responsibility for promoting, facilitating, assuring, and evaluating student learning" as required by *Characteristics of Excellence.* The college's faculty members are unquestionably well-prepared and qualified to fulfill those roles: of the 282 full-time faculty in the fall of 2011, 94% hold doctorates or the highest degrees in their fields, 72% are tenured, 24% are in tenure-track positions, and 23% hold the rank of full professor. The college's 70% of courses taught by full-time faculty was the highest average of all the New Jersey State colleges and universities in fall 2011. However, some programs rely heavily on adjuncts; in some cases, the part-time faculty are practitioners but in others they are writing faculty. The institution should be commended for lowering its faculty to student ratio from approximately 21:1 in fall 2001 to 17.5:1 in fall 2011.

The college has reached gender balance among faculty but should be encouraged to continue its recruitment of minority faculty. Policies are in place regarding non-discriminatory practices and in 2009 the administration engaged Bryant Associates Consulting LLC to conduct a cultural audit of the environment of diversity and inclusion. The recommendations of Bryant Associates underline the need for the college to "Make diversity and inclusion mission critical."

Founded in the late 1960s, Richard Stockton College employed a decentralized curriculum review procedure to encourage the quick implementation of innovative and experimental approaches and ideas. Initially, faculty members had complete control over what they taught in the General Studies curriculum, approximately one third of their teaching workload. Currently, the college strives toward developing an innovative and creative curriculum, while endeavoring to balance autonomy with curricular integrity through programmatic oversight. The faculty members are proud that they still do not have a centralized curriculum committee. Since the Faculty Senate structure is a new one, the effectiveness of its role in the educational curricula remains to be seen. Nevertheless, the recent implementation of a Faculty Senate to replace the

Faculty Assembly that previously represented faculty interests should result in a more manageable mechanism for faculty oversight of academic curricula and programs.

The college should be commended for recognizing the need for a comprehensive review of policies and procedures for the evaluation of faculty teaching and for faculty reappointment, tenure, and promotion resulting in the 2007 introduction of a new *Faculty Evaluation Policy*. There seems to be agreement that the Individual Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) tool that is used to evaluate teaching is preferable to the previous instrument. Since the use of the IDEA method for teaching evaluation is a matter negotiated between the College and the faculty union and is scheduled to sunset after 2012, a Faculty Senate committee was tasked with studying the teacher evaluation process.

The institution should be commended for increasing the overall amount of Research and Development funding in 2011 and for increasing the number of semester sabbaticals awarded in 2010. However, the absence of a contract and changes in past practices by which stipulations of the past contract were in effect until the new contract is negotiated have resulted in the canceling of sabbaticals that had been approved. Although this decision was not under the institution's control, it has a negative impact on faculty productivity and might jeopardize retention and recruitment of junior faculty members.

The faculty should also be commended for its scholarly output. In 2009-2010, the faculty as a group had 31 books published, 203 other published works, 73 performances and exhibitions, 368 presentations, 96 board representations, 155 awards and grants; in 2010-2011, the faculty had 40 books published, 139 other published works, 100 performances and exhibitions, 404 presentations, 66 board representations, 184 awards and grants.

Faculty members appear satisfied with the Grants Office and with the Institute for Faculty Development. However, the late 2010 *Middle States Grants Survey Results* reveals some faculty dissatisfaction: whereas 70% of the responding faculty felt intellectually stimulated, only 28% agreed or strongly agreed that they were "able to maintain a satisfactory balance of teaching, service, and research/creative endeavors." Nevertheless, 67% agreed or strongly agreed that their research/creative endeavors were "valued by the Administration" and 66% agreed or strongly agreed that their research/creative endeavors were "valued by other faculty members."

In the area of professional development, program coordinators and graduate program directors often have responsibilities similar to those of department chairs at other institution; however, these coordinators and directors do not receive training or development that would assist them in carrying forth their responsibilities. The Middle States Team believes that the entire institution would benefit from coordinators and directors receiving such training.

One of the four original pillars of the "Stockton Idea" is "Preceptorial Advising Program." Advising at Stockton College is considered "a form of teaching" and "a contractual obligation of all full-time faculty." From its founding the institution recognized the importance of advising to students' success at college. During the past five years, the Online Degree Evaluation System—the Curriculum, Advising, and Program Planning (CAPP) Audit System—has been an integral element in the precepting process. The college should be commended for adding CAPP to the

other tools that faculty and students have for tracking students' progress toward graduation. An issue regarding preceptorial advising is that faculty members in popular programs or programs that rely heavily on adjunct faculty often must serve larger numbers of students than can be handled in a timely and equitable fashion.

The college should be commended for adding program specific details about what constitutes excellent teaching, scholarship, and service. Also commendable is the establishing of individual faculty plans for meeting college, school, and program standards for tenure and promotion and periodic reviews of those plans. A faculty survey reveals that 69% of those responding agreed or strongly agreed that the College standards for reappointment, tenure, and promotion were clear.

Richard Stockton College appears to engage part-time and adjunct faculty in "selective and intentional ways." The hiring, orienting, overseeing, and evaluating of part-time and adjunct faculty appear to be exemplary.

Significant Accomplishments

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey has a vibrant, well-qualified, and committed faculty; a faculty willing to trust each other's integrity in working for the good of the students and the College. The implementation of the Curriculum, Advising, and Program Planning (CAPP) Audit System should greatly assist faculty in the task of Preceptorial Advising with the recognition that some students may use it in place of individual consultation. The Middle States Team found many ways to commend this hard working faculty and its leadership. One example of many is that the faculty has an exemplarily record of scholarship and creative activities.

Suggestions

Program coordinators and graduate program directors often have responsibilities similar to those of department chairs at other institutions; however, these coordinators and directors do not receive training or development that would assist them in carrying forth their responsibilities. The entire institution could benefit from coordinators and directors receiving such training, perhaps during a coordinators' retreat.

Recommendations
None

Requirements
None

Chapter Five

Standard 11: Educational Offerings
Standard 12: General Education
Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

The institution meets these standards.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Educational offerings are aligned with the institution's interdisciplinary approach for education as set forth in its mission statement. Both the general education curriculum and the curricula in the majors support this interdisciplinary approach. A wide array of undergraduate and graduate degree programs, minors, and certificates is offered by the eight schools that foster student learning and promote synthesis of learning. The assessment cycle includes annual program reports and five-year self-studies. Most syllabi include student learning outcomes. The graduate curricula provide for the development of research and independent thinking. Faculty teaching in the graduate programs have credentials appropriate to the graduate academic disciplines.

The institution has in place a process for developing and approving new degrees. However, faculty have the ability to develop individual courses within the general education or degree programs with only program approval – no institutional approval is necessary. While this allows faculty great freedom to develop curriculum within either the general education curriculum or within the majors, there is no overarching oversight to ensure that student learning outcomes are consistent and that there is no duplication of courses or content. The institution is encouraged to review its process for curriculum development with this observation in mind.

The library staff, faculty, and administrators collaborate in fostering information literacy as is evidenced by the fact that information literacy skills are an important part of the Common Elements of Freshmen Seminars. Faculty often bring students to the Library for information literacy instruction. Computer literacy skills are covered throughout the curriculum. Every course has an optional supplemental Blackboard site and many faculty are using Blackboard as an instructional supplement. Many faculty require completion of assignments using various software products.

All students must complete a general education program where the skills and abilities are applied in the major or concentration. General education is completed through the General Studies courses which are interdisciplinary and not confined to a particular major. The General Studies courses provide breadth while the major provide depth. The General Studies objectives are divided into three categories: Primary Goals; General Competencies; General Content Experiences. These goals are also addressed in the majors.

Students fulfill the general education requirements by completing a required number of credits and required distribution of courses in General Studies. These courses are divided into five categories, namely General Arts and Humanities, General Interdisciplinary Skills and Topics, General Integration and Synthesis, General Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and General Social and Behavioral Sciences. In addition, students must complete a required number of At-Some-Distance courses, which are defined as a category only after a student chooses a major. These courses provide a breadth of study in areas that are unrelated to the major program. Students must also complete one course in each of four subscripts areas, namely Arts, Historical Consciousness, Values/Ethics, and International Multicultural. Finally, students must complete three quantitative reasoning designated courses, as well as four writing across the curriculum.

The status of a student (freshman or transfer) and the degree program (BS or BA) determine the manner in which the general education requirements are fulfilled.

The First-Year Experience/Freshmen Seminar Courses are an integral part of the general education requirement. A theme for the first year experience is selected each year. The Freshmen Seminar is a major component of the first-year experience. The Freshmen Seminar courses are reviewed annually to ensure inclusion of Common Elements (reading, information literacy, writing and oral presentation). Curricular and co-curricular thematic programs are sponsored during the year. In addition, a wide variety of student support services and programming supplements the first-year experience. A new first-year studies program (FRST) has been recently approved and will be implemented over the next two years to bring together the various pieces of the freshman experience and engage freshman students in the second semester.

The institution accepts a large number of transfer students, approximately 1,200 in the fall and 400 in the spring. This represents approximately 60% of the incoming students per year. Stockton has policies and procedures in place regarding transfer credit. Stockton is known as one of the most transfer friendly institutions in New Jersey. Transfer Seminar courses are offered to meet the needs of transfer student. Transfer students are often advised of services offered through the Academic Tutoring Center and of other campus resources in these seminars. However, these seminars are not as extensive as the Freshmen Seminar courses and are not a requirement. The institution may wish to consider whether the transfer seminar should be required or whether some other type of program should be in place for transfer students.

The institution has a long history of serving underprepared students and has a well-developed basic studies program (BASK) for meeting the needs of these students. Students are identified by incoming test scores. Developmental instruction is provided to freshmen students with weaknesses in writing, critical reading, and mathematics. The Academic Tutoring Center supports the BASK program. The data show that freshmen graduation rates for students taking BASK courses are comparable to those of students who test out of BASK courses.

The institution serves students at the Carnegie Library Center, the Parkway Building, and at various other instructional sites. The Master of Social Work Program and the Master of Arts in Education, Special Education Program are offered exclusively at the Carnegie Library Center. In addition, some undergraduate and graduate courses in other majors, including Business, Criminal Justice, Instructional Technology, Health Services and Hospitality Management, are offered at this location. The institution engages in regular assessment of its students and offerings at this additional location.

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey Southern Regional Institute and Educational Technology Training Center is housed in the Parkway Building located close to the main campus. The Center provides professional development programming to K-12 teachers. Credit-bearing classes in Education, Speech Pathology and Audiology, and Communication Disorders are offered in the late afternoon and in the evening.

The institution offers a limited number of certificate programs, the largest being the post-baccalaureate program in teacher certification. The institution offers a significant number of non-

credit offerings through its Division of Continuing Studies, including programming in health sciences and human services, corporate, and community education. Continuing Studies is an approved provider of continuing professional education for social work, marriage and family therapy, licensed professional counseling, occupational therapy, speech/language/hearing, addictions, CPA and public health. Becoming an approved provider ensures national standards for excellence have been met or surpassed. These certificate and non-credit offerings are consistent with the institutional mission.

The institution offers courses in an online format and in a hybrid format. In addition, the institution has offered telecourses, which are in the processed of being phased out. Programs in nursing (RN to BSN and Graduate Nursing), as well as an executive-style hybrid Substance Awareness Coordinator certificate, are offered in a hybrid format with less than 50% online instruction. Fully online courses are offered in the fall and spring semesters and in the summer sessions, with the greatest growth in the summer sessions. In 2007, a Task Force on Distributed Education developed a vision for distance education, which included a commitment to student engagement, recommended best practices to develop and implement distance courses, and developed guidelines to assist and support faculty, programs and the college in the development and implementation of distance courses. The vision includes a comprehensive plan for institutional commitment, curriculum and instruction, constructing courses, delivering courses, faculty support, student support, evaluation and assessment. The elements of the vision have been embraced in the offering of distance education courses.

In 2006, the institution received approval from Middle States and the State of New Jersey to award a Doctor of Professional Practice degree in Physical Therapy. The DPT program was launched as a 104 credit full-time three-year cohort program for students with a bachelor's degree who wish to become licensed physical therapists. In 2007, a post-professional DPT program for licensed physical therapists was launched. This program is a 21-credit part-time fully online program. This program is marketed to a different constituency. The courses offered in this program to licensed physical therapists are different from the program offered to the students who wish to become licensed. This institution viewed the DPT program and the post-professional DPT program as a single degree program. When looking at the program from this perspective, the institution determined that since less than 50% of the coursework was offered online a substantive change request was not necessary.

Middle States has on file correspondence dating back to 2009 from the institution regarding this program. At that time, programs that had face-to-face orientations and final exams/presentations were considered hybrid, not totally online. Since that time, the definition has changed to include the phrase "predominant form of instruction" with the result that many programs once considered to be hybrid are now classified as online. In light of the fact that the post-professional DPT program can be completed fully online except for a required face-to-face orientation, the institution will need to submit a substantive change proposal to Middle States. The administration has been advised of this and has indicated to the team that it will submit the substantive change request.

Significant Accomplishments

The institution is to be commended for the excellent programming in place for freshmen students, including the First-Year Experience/Freshmen Seminar Courses, the Stockton Orientation and Adventure Retreat (SOAR) the BASK program, and the recently improved first-year studies program (FRST) to be implemented over the next two years.

The institution is to be commended for its unique interdisciplinary approach to general education which is spread throughout a student's entire academic program.

Suggestions

The institution is encouraged to review its process for curriculum development to determine if some form of overarching oversight should be adopted.

The institution may wish to consider whether the transfer seminar should be required or whether some other type of program should be in place for transfer students.

Recommendations to be Reported in the PRR

The institution is urged to file a substantive change request with Middle States for its transitional Doctor of Physical Therapy degree program. [Note: Since this report was originally drafted, the team chair was notified that the substantive change request was completed and filed with the Commission.]

Requirements

None

Chapter Six

Standard 14: Student Learning Outcomes

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Richard Stockton College employs a number of methods to assess student learning outcomes.

On the institutional level, Essential Learning Outcomes are being identified for key areas by ten faculty groups. Assessment is discussed in every meeting and there appears to be widespread buy-in. The faculty have adopted 13 school-wide competencies for the General Education requirement and all General Education curricula are designed to meet aspects of those competencies. The Collegiate Learning Assessment is the primary means of assessing this curriculum. The results from this standardized assessment have been used to alter the curriculum; several courses have been developed that integrate CLA type exercises into the content. This

comprehensive evidence-based assessment of Student Learning has been done in the five General Education areas, and results have led to changes in course offerings.

Assessment measures, other than the CLA, include the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) and the Individual Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) student ratings. Results are discussed, published and considered in design and implementation of new courses, access to funds for effective teaching and assessment-related workshops, and alterations of current student policies and practices.

At the program level, all program coordinators and directors submit annual assessment reports and planning documents, in consultation with their assessment coordinators. Approved common templates are used for all assessment and annual reports. Standard data are provided by Institutional Research giving pertinent statistics for the program, including course enrollment, instructor demographics, number of majors, etc. Program reviews are conducted in five-year cycles and include assessment. Deans discuss submitted assessment reports with program faculty and school-wide groups. Reports are archived and distributed college-wide. Resources are provided by the Provost based on data.

Organized assessment is evident in many programs; however, there is little consistency in the quality of program assessment. Where there are some excellent reports of assessment efforts, there are also reports of unsustained efforts. Much assessment is still in the planning stages or incomplete. We anticipate that assessment will continually improve; certainly the program coordinators recognize its importance. However, coordinators serve usually for two years only and are often not in the position to follow through with assessment initiatives.

Institutional support for assessment of student learning outcomes is abundant. The Institute for Faculty Development assists with assessment advice at the request of faculty members. The newsletter *Evidence*, in existence since 2003, gives faculty the opportunity to share assessment efforts across the college. Additional support includes sending faculty to assessment conferences, hiring outside evaluators, and purchasing assessment instruments.

Clearly, the growing culture here is one of assessment. Where there may be some programs that could use additional help translating the data they collected into useful information, most programs have made real headway in using assessment results to inform their decision-making.

Significant Accomplishments:

The use of standardized, approved templates for assessment and annual reports is commendable. The data provided to each program, and to the ultimate decision-makers, is standard, fixed, and useful. Decisions made about resources can be accomplished in an informed manner.

Actively involved in assessment since 2003, the college publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Evidence*, highlighting outstanding work in assessment. This is one example of a growing culture of assessment among the faculty.

Suggestions:

There should be more public sharing of learning outcomes reflecting an integration of institution, program and course level outcomes in a course catalog or on program websites.

Some programs need help using assessment results to inform their decision-making. Also, much assessment is at the course level only; overall program goals should be assessed. Targeted faculty development might address both issues.

The institution would benefit greatly from a dedicated assessment professional who would work well with the Institute for Faculty Development to promote and support assessment at all levels.

Recommendations
None

Requirements
None

Chapter Seven

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents and interviews with faculty, staff, students and administrators the team believe that Stockton College has a documented, organized and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve the total range of programs and services.

The Stockton 2020 Strategic Plan has its foundation in the mission of the college. Clearly articulated institutional, unit and program-level goals encompass all programs, services and initiatives and are appropriately integrated with one another. Stockton 2020 has been instrumental in aligning goals for all levels and a Balanced Scorecard approach is being used to assess progress in meeting these goals. The college has instituted processes to review existing structures, annual budgets and assessment annually as a means to evaluate overall institutional effectiveness. While this process is still being refined and shared, it is substantially underway and many examples have been offered to indicate progress. Combining planning and institutional research has proven an effective means for advancing institutional assessment. Assessment of goals in the previous plan was conducted in 2008 to inform the current strategic plan.

Data are collected in all of the units and at the college level, analyzed annually through a program review process, and shared with the appropriate constituents. Templates have been developed to enhance and systematize this process, making decisions at all levels data-driven. The use of national measures such as: learning outcomes - CLA and NSSE; teaching - IDEA; service - Carnegie Classification; leadership - Association of Governing Boards; student affairs - EBI; continuing education - JER Online; study abroad - ACE internationalization project--all provide excellent opportunities to benchmark progress against external standards.

Individuals from all units of the college offered numerous examples of the gathering and use of multiple measures of effectiveness. For example, student affairs units cited an early warning

tracking system used to contact and refer students at risk to appropriate support services. The college evidently uses data to make positive changes for continuous improvement. We found evidence of support and collaboration between faculty and administration in assessing student learning and responding to results; clear, realistic guidelines and timetables; appropriate investment of institutional resources; and periodic evaluation of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the institution's assessment process.

The team found evidence that assessment results are shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and used in institutional planning, resource allocation and renewal (see Standard 2) to improve and gain efficiencies in programs services and processes, including activities specific to the institution's mission (e.g. service, outreach, research). Furthermore, we found that written institutional (strategic) plan(s) reflect(s) consideration of assessment results and that assessment results are widely shared on campus and discussed with appropriate constituents.

Significant Accomplishments

Our analysis of the institutional culture for assessing effectiveness found campus-wide support and recognition for assessment; professional development opportunities and resources; analysis of results of surveys of students and other relevant groups; and the use of evidence to review and improve programs and services.

Planning is aligned with goals at all levels from courses through units/departments through the institution. The strategic plan is continually being assessed and updated.

Suggestions

We would suggest public sharing of learning outcomes for prospective and current students, for example, in the college *Bulletin* and on departmental websites. Integration of institutional outcomes, programmatic outcomes and course level learning outcomes should be pursued.

The institution might consider hiring a full time person responsible for institutional assessment. Currently one person in academic affairs receives release time to support assessment activities but the need is clearly greater.

Recommendations
None

Requirements
None

CHE MSA **Middle States Commission on Higher Education**
3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680
Phone: 267-284-5000 Fax: 215-662-5501 www.msche.org

Certification Statement: Compliance with MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and Federal Title IV Requirements *(Effective October 1, 2009)*

An institution seeking **initial accreditation** or **reaffirmation of accreditation** must affirm by completing this certification statement that it meets or continues to meet established MSCHE requirements of affiliation and federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including relevant requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 such as those on distance education and transfer of credit.

The signed statement must be attached to the executive summary of the institution's self-study report.

If it is not possible to certify compliance with all such requirements, the institution must attach specific details in a separate memorandum.

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
(Name of Institution)

is seeking *(Check one)*: ___ Initial Accreditation ✓ Reaffirmation of Accreditation

The undersigned hereby certify that the institution meets all established requirements of affiliation of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including relevant requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 such as those on distance education and transfer of credit, and that it has complied with the MSCHE policy, "Related Entities."

___ Exceptions are noted in the attached memorandum *(Check if applicable)*

(Chief Executive Officer) (Date) 12-7-2011

(Chair, Board of Trustees or Directors) (Date) 12-7-2011