



## **Green River's Instructional Plan 2005 Revision**

### Why an Instructional Plan

Although Green River Community College (GRCC), like other colleges, has always had an existing direction in instruction, until 2003, there had been no purposefully articulated strategic plan (defined to encompass student services). The Executive Vice President (EVP) determined that a formal instructional plan would demonstrate instruction's commitment to anticipating the needs of the community. The instructional plan is an evolving document that spells out our goals and what it will take to reach them. At the same time, this plan will guide the various college plans that now exist or are being developed (e.g., strategic plan, technology plan, campus master plan). This plan is a means of ensuring that instruction remains at the center of college planning and activity.

Every unit within instruction and student services has been involved in the ongoing process of developing this plan—all instructional divisions, IESL, academic support units, student services, Continuing Education, training enterprises. All faculty had input into this plan, which will be used as a means of determining our instructional future. In addition to the overall instructional plan, each unit has been encouraged to develop its own plan parallel to this one. In this way, specific goals of divisions and departments can be pursued even as the college pursues more global goals.

### Background on the Process

The division chairs and an expanded deans' group (including Continuing Education and training, Project TEACH, Learning Resources, Workforce Development) met on June 28, 2002 to launch the development of an instructional (and student services) plan. The group heard from Jan Yoshiwara, Director of Educational Services for the SBCTC, on statewide trends affecting higher education and about how peer colleges were responding to those trends.

In 2002, the key trends identified by Jan Yoshiwara were:

- The increasing importance of regionally growing industries (health care, engineering/computer science, and teacher preparation locally);

- . • The potential impact of K-12 education reform on our programs;
- . • The move to co-locate upper division courses on two-year campuses;
- . • Boeing's goal to offload employee training; and
- . • Continued growth in distance learning.

Based on these trends, the program innovations suggested by the group were:

- . • Tying our legal studies areas into Kent's Regional Justice Center;
- . • Work with Muckleshoot Tribal Council to establish course and program needs;
- . • Offering more ABE/ESL to local companies;
- . • Focusing on allied health programs;
- . • Working closer with local economic development agencies and industries;
- . • Capitalizing even further on Project TEACH initiatives;
- . • Better serving underprepared high school students;
- . • Partnerships with local business.

Early in fall quarter, after division chairs had a chance to share a summary of initial summer work with their faculty colleagues, the EVP drafted a document (October 1, 2002) explaining what the elements of an instructional plan would be, what role the faculty would play in creating such a plan, and how the plan would be used. To further assist divisions in discussing their approach to the college's instructional plan, the EVP presented eight questions (October 2, 2002) focusing on how divisions were meeting community needs, what they considered most important in student learning, what trends they saw in K-12 and four-year university education, what equipment and capital needs they had to make improvements, and what strengths they offered or could potentially offer. The EVP posed these specific questions to clarify elements of a plan that would address the trends presented by Jan Yoshiwara.

In answering those questions, it became clear that in some respects we were meeting the community's needs but in others we had significant room for improvement (see curricular innovations section). The group concluded that we knew what was most important in student learning (see philosophical priorities section), and we have some—but not enough—involvement in K-12 education reform and in upper division four-year institutional offerings. We could identify our capital and equipment needs (see those sections), and we were aware of our strengths and missing elements.

Each division submitted, in November 2002, a list of items from its own division's perspective. From those lists, the deans' group categorized responses into six areas:

- . • philosophical priorities;
- . • curriculum needs;
- . • equipment needs;
- . • capital needs;
- . • staffing needs; and
- . • current strengths/what's missing.

After checking these categorizations with divisions for accuracy, the deans' group combined like items and further categorized division submissions (December 2002) into four areas that seemed most appropriate (because they were immediate and could be implemented right away) for the first iteration of an instructional plan: urgent, campuswide, no cost, and short range needs/ideas, each of which included subcategories of curriculum, capital, equipment, and staffing. Additionally, the philosophical priorities list was carried forward intact. After again checking with divisions for accuracy, these lists were sent out in early January 2003 for all faculty to rank their top priorities within each section of the four areas and philosophical priorities. The results of those votes were sent to the divisions in late January, and a follow up list by ranking within each section was disseminated in February 2003.

At the same time, the EVP distributed a list of potential curricular innovations that had been brought to her attention in recent years and invited additional submissions to that list. She also asked for instructional plan priorities from the non-divisional units within instruction (Project TEACH, Workforce Development, Continuing Education and training). From all of these documents, which represent the breadth of faculty and administrators within instruction and student services, this first iteration of an instructional plan was drafted.

In February 2005, in preparation for updating the Instructional Plan, we again sought Jan Yoshiwara's expertise to identify statewide trends affecting higher education. Jan noted that the following trends are as germane in 2005 as they were in 2002:

- . • The increasing importance of regionally growing industries (health care, engineering/computer science, and teacher preparation locally);
- . • The potential impact of K-12 education reform on our programs;
- . • The move to co-locate upper division courses on two-year campuses;
- . • Continued growth in distance learning.

To her 2002 list, Jan added:

- . • Expanded partnerships with both high schools and 4-year universities;
- . • Pilot community and technical college baccalaureate degrees;
- . • The integration of basic skills, including blended instruction between basic skills and workforce education.

One important trend not noted but important for GRCC is a change in demographics. According to the 2000 Census, South King County has become one of the most racially diverse areas of the state. Kent's Hispanic population has increased 342% since 1990; and its African-American population has increased 400%. In addition, more than 63,000 people, speaking up to 70 different languages, reported English as their second language.  
Philosophical Priorities

Faculty believe strongly that an instructional plan must be based on the philosophical

priorities of the college. In past years, there has been some tension between “traditional courses” and “entrepreneurial programs” within instruction, with faculty believing that the former were eclipsed by the latter. Because the instructional plan includes both distinct and melded traditional/entrepreneurial programs, it calls for collaborative efforts between campus divisions and the units of Workforce Development and Continuing Education/training. Such collaboration should ease this tension over time.

Among the priorities most highly valued among faculty are the following:

- . • Instruction must be viewed as the primary function of the college.
- . • Students must be seen as learners first, rather than as customers or consumers, with a focus on students’ educational experience.
- . • An instructional model should support funding instruction so that needs are balanced across campus, rather than having divisions compete for funding.
- . • Students should gain sufficient fluency in English to succeed in college level classes.
- . • Students should successfully complete prerequisite classes in order to be prepared for a specific program.
- . • Student learning must include the ability to think logically, solve problems, gain skills for lifelong learning, and analyze real life data.
- . • Students should gain the skills of responsibility, teamwork, communication, critical thinking, self discipline, ethical standards, goal setting, and time management in order to succeed in future endeavors.

We base the remainder of this plan on these philosophical priorities. Our external community, including potential employers, shares the concern that students gain skills enabling them to continue learning throughout their careers and lives.

### Capital Priorities

In 2005, the division chairs, in consultation with their division members, prioritized capital projects into Major Capital Projects (Growth), Renovation, and Small Capital Projects. The list is as follows:

**Major Capital Projects:** The faculty propose and prioritize a new classroom and office building. There is an increasing need for a classroom and office building that can house general classrooms. A number of divisions are asked to launch additional sections and have no place to do so.

**Renovation:** Faculty prioritize the renovation of SMT to better serve the divisions that are housed there. The chairs also recognize and give secondary priority to student services, which needs to have an improved working environment. Many of the services they provide now are hampered by their location and lack of facilities.

**Small Capital Projects:** The faculty prioritize in the following order, from most needed to

needed: PE outdoor play fields and a Fine Arts Dance facility; dedicated space for the Writing Center; a new, better, and combined location for Journalism; a Tutoring/Help Center; a dedicated space for Faculty House; a Career Center.

Student Services' list, in order of priority, covers much of the same ground: LSC remodel/new building; general classroom space addition; trades complex; SMT remodel and move dean's office staff; Center for Excellence; athletic fields; radio/journalism space, Faculty/Staff lunchroom adjacent to cafeteria; Faculty House.

**As the division chairs noted under Major Capital Projects, an overwhelming priority for future capital projects is classroom space.** Despite efforts to modify our class schedule to include more afternoon and evening classes, and even with the addition of the Technology Center and the Science building, estimated to provide six additional classrooms and eight additional faculty offices, we continue to struggle with insufficient and inappropriate size or configuration of classrooms. Recent developments in learning theory and teaching methodology call for classrooms where students can work in teams, move around during class, and use a multiplicity of media. Many of our existing larger classrooms have tiered and fixed chairs, and inadequate space for learning communities/interdisciplinary courses. Lab requirements also limit the ability to assign many of our classrooms. As part of the vacated space committee effort, the room priority system was revised, but even updating this outdated system did not make up for the lack of flexible classroom space.

To provide additional classroom space, two replacement buildings have been included in our capital requests, HS/SS/BI (which due to state planning requirements may not add much additional space) and Trades. The high demand for programs such as automotive, auto body, welding, and carpentry call for an entire building dedicated to those equipment-intensive and specialized fields.

The establishment of the Kent Campus further enables instruction and student services to increase class offerings and better serve the Kent community, in much the same way the Enumclaw Campus has allowed us to better serve that local community. Phase I is complete and Phase II will be included in the 2007-2009 capital request. It has been possible in Phase 1 (22,000 square feet that includes 6 general purpose classrooms and 4 computer labs), and clearly necessary in Phase 2 (expansion of 40,000 additional square feet), for the college to design facilities for regular classes, especially those that don't require specialized equipment. The Kent facility will offer programs and courses culminating in direct transfer Associate of Science degrees in Engineering and Computer Science, pilot training, flight dispatch, and related aviation courses -- programs that all lead to high demand, high wage careers. A full slate of core academic transfer courses, along with teacher preparation courses, health science programs, ABE, GED, ESL, and High School Completion courses, and courses that complement the adjacent Regional Justice Center such as computer reporting technologies, will also be offered.

**Another major priority is space for instructional support services such as an**

**expanded assessment/testing center, an expanded writing center, additional tutoring/help centers, and an expanded career center.** Students lack privacy when trying to get help in mastering difficult subjects (i.e., additional tutoring centers); and more of our students need guidance in formulating a career plan in these difficult economic times (i.e., an expanded career center). In the professional/technical programs, it is important for enrolled students to have access to equipment between classes, for practice and study. Student collaboration areas located near the classrooms, with access to equipment and models, would provide such opportunity. Further, each new building should include spaces for group learning. Over the years we have cobbled together inadequate and often inappropriate space for some of these functions, but recent and projected continued enrollment growth have allowed demand to far exceed supply.

A Student Success Center (a Matching Project) was funded in the 2005-2007 capital request, which will include an expanded assessment/testing center, an intake center, and referral services. A Title III grant would address the programmatic aspects of these facilities, if we were to be awarded one in the next round. (There was no grant competition in 2004-2005.) Moving the testing center into the new Student Success Center will also allow the Writing Center to move into the larger space currently occupied by testing.

The PE building renovation was also funded in the 2005-2007 capital request. Although no new space will be added, the renovation will correct ADA and building code deficiencies, replace air-handling systems and modernize the facility.

**Further capital needs include additional dedicated classroom and storage space for specialty programs such as health and basic sciences.** Even with the addition of the planned Science building, there will be little room for program growth, if the entire ST complex and part of the OE building must be demolished.

**Additional priorities are both faculty office space and increased student and faculty/staff parking, as our enrollments continue to grow.** Because we will remain heavily dependent on part-time faculty in the foreseeable future, our lack of office space for them prohibits students from gaining access to many of their teachers. Coupled with demand for new services that fall within our mission—e.g., worker retraining, high school bridge programs, corporate skills training—office space sometimes has to cede to administrative uses. This further limits the available space even for full-time faculty offices or group meeting/conference room space.

Although there may be some additional offices in new buildings, we are adding faculty every year. These buildings are several years out, so whatever new offices there are may be taken by the time we actually occupy them.

Our shortage of parking further limits students' access to both faculty and administrative services. The Park and Shuttle at Pacific Raceway, 2.3 miles from campus, has eased, although not solved, our parking challenges. Shuttle vans make continuous trips Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m.

**Space for Faculty House is also a priority.** Faculty used to have the building now used by Human Resources but were moved out about 8 years ago. Currently, the faculty's standard room is the Glacier Room, but they are often relocated at the last minute to the other rooms or to another building. The faculty proposal is to have a mostly dedicated space that could be shared with another campus entity for off-hours use.

### Curricular Innovations

GRCC has some very strong programs, but there are a number of areas in which we could improve our responsiveness to community needs. Some of the campus-wide and program specific priorities that emerged from our process are noted below. Because many of these initiatives require intensive faculty development or staffing support, we are asking that instruction receive some of the additional tuition revenue we generate each year through significant enrollment as “innovation seed money” to pursue them.

**Diversity.** As the President's Commission on Diversity focuses on leading and implementing the Washington State Community and Technical College Framework for Diversity, instruction simultaneously has explored infusing multicultural elements into our courses. Several state universities now require or encourage students to earn credits in the area of American ethnic diversity. Research shows that students who learn about diversity, either in a required course(s) or throughout the curriculum, experience multicultural learning. Infusing elements of diversity into a range of courses can be extremely effective and can benefit the college by making us more competitive, but faculty need significant professional development to enable them to add such breadth to their existing courses. In 2004, general funds were used to create multi-cultural course modules. The Learning Outcomes Committee (LOC) plays a central role in discussing adding multiculturalism to our campus-wide learning outcomes list, and the IC's Instructional Diversity Committee (IDC) is proposing a multicultural certificate and additional multicultural courses. This curricular change will require faculty hiring and development changes.

Beginning in 2005, GRCC began offering a Gender Studies certificate. The program is a 20-credit interdisciplinary certificate and includes an introductory course in gender studies and 15 credits of additional courses whose primary focus is the study of gender. Content for additional courses may include, but is not limited to, issues of gender roles for men and women, social construction of gender and sex, and sexuality. Students completing the certificate program must pass courses from both humanities and social sciences.

**Learning communities.** Interdisciplinary education is extremely valuable for both students and faculty, in that they can explore the relationships among different fields, rather than focus solely on one subject in isolation. The Evergreen State College, nationally renowned for its educational success, bases its curriculum entirely on interdisciplinary coursework. Faculty need significant professional development to integrate other subjects into their classes, as well as to collaborate

with a colleague from a different field in teaching as a team. Because our courses have disparate class capacity limits (22 in composition, 37 in social science for example), it may be costly to offer some sections of learning communities. The benefits -- expanding students' thinking, dramatically increasing student retention, and revitalizing faculty teaching--are well worth our investment in finding a way to balance offering learning community courses with the need to serve as many students as possible, i.e., meeting FTE and student-faculty ratio targets. The IC has approved letting first-time learning community courses run with relatively low enrollment if deemed necessary by deans and division chairs.

**Prior learning assessment.** Many colleges in our state now offer students the opportunity to earn credit for prior educational and/or work experience through a thorough assessment of portfolios that document their experience in terms that translate to college degree or certificate credit. Such a model can be used for both domestic and international students. Instituting this program, known as Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), will require funding to train faculty in effective portfolio assessment techniques. After some delay, we have identified faculty who want to work on this project.

**Orientation to college and college skills improvement.** Students entering or wishing to enter the college have great need for skill enhancement in preparation for college level study. In particular, they need to transition from Basic Skills and IESL programs into professional/technical or transfer programs.

Several possibilities exist to better acclimate our students to the college experience. Modeled on the TRIO program's intensive support and advising services for first-generation or disadvantaged students, we have developed a Steps to Success program co-led by a faculty member and a student services member, and taught by regular faculty. The program enables students with poor preparation and study skills to gain confidence and persist. General funds and an outside grant supported our 2005-2006 pilot, but we need to expand and continue the Steps to Success program. Adoption of this model for multiple sections will require funding, possibly from Title III.

The Help Center engaged in the PA & I process during the 2004-2005 year and learned that the majority of the 40% of 700 respondents surveyed across campus who used the Help Center were very satisfied or satisfied with the services offered. Notable, however, among current non-users is that 28% of respondents said that they were not able to use tutoring services due to class or work conflicts and that 24% said they did not know the Help Center existed. Based on these results the Help Center staff will formulate an improvement plan.

The Writing Center also offers one-on-one consulting services for students at all stages of the writing process; and the Math Learning Center (MLC) offers tutoring assistance, math videos, computers, textbooks, and other learning resources to students free of charge.

**Online course development.** Distance learning courses, particularly those offered

online, are rapidly growing in popularity with students. Adapting a course to an online format is not just a matter of converting lecture notes to the screen; faculty need significant training and time to effectively engage students in this mode of course delivery. As we increase our services in Kent and to place-bound international students, online courses, both credit and non-credit, will play an ever-greater role in meeting student demand. Currently, faculty must develop or convert on-line courses with no compensation, despite the many hours of effort required for such conversion.

**Collaborative programs between ABE/ESL and Workforce.** Legislative and public focus has sharpened the need to retrain displaced industry workers and those who never successfully entered the workforce. Coupled with our region's growing immigrant population lacking English skills, there is unprecedented demand for partnerships between college units of basic skills (ABE/ESOL), Professional/Technical and Workforce Training. Lack of time for collaboration or funding for new offerings (e.g., health care skills and vocabulary, customer service and basic math) has greatly hampered our ability to serve these needs of the community.

An integrated class curriculum was written for a Business Ed/BASIC class in fall 2005. This effort taught the collaborators about the complexity of working across disciplines, meeting the requirements of two or more funding sources, coordinating development between full and part-time faculty, and initiating courses that are somewhat, but not exactly like, coordinated studies. Importantly, it was learned that the majority of TANF (Temporary Aid for Needy Families) students are ESOL rather than ABE. It was not possible to determine this prior to program implementation because of the stringent mandatory assessment requirements for basic skills students. Another fact learned was that DSHS case managers preferred short-term training for their clients and were unwilling to make references for long academic programs. The pilot will need to be revisited as it was designed for basic skills students. Also, modularization concerns will need to be addressed.

A third collaboration between ECE and ESOL is underway as part of the Center for Excellence for Careers in Education grant awarded in fall 2004 and funded again for 2004-2005. ECE and ESOL faculty have now taught the STARS (Washington State Training and Registry System) curriculum, a required set of skills for those who work in childcare, early education, and school-age care. The STARS ECE/ESOL program proved to be a very successful class retaining all seventeen students. ECE and ESOL are also piloting a combined ESOL and Child Development Associates (CDA) course series. This year-long certificate provides both assistance with English language and the curriculum required to take the CDA exam. The CDA certificate is a nationally recognized credential, follows students when they move, and allows entry into HeadStart positions. To address federal and state granting authority priorities an exempt position (Basic Skills Support Specialist) was created to assist in the development of these integrated programs.

**Additional options for high school students to earn college credit.** As statewide education reform begins to impact the K-12 system, schools are searching for alternatives for their students who complete the WASL test in the tenth grade. We are in the second

year of an early college institute program for the Enumclaw School District. It has been received well, and although the enrollment numbers have not held to the level that we would like, we continue to work that relationship. Strategies are being put in place to assist the high school in marketing the activity. We need to coordinate our high school Connections program. Some of our goals are to strengthen our relationship with the high schools, determine what is impacting the high schools and how GRCC might work in assisting them, and develop faculty-to-faculty interactions. This will be an on-going focus beginning in 2005-2006. Now that Auburn has a new high school near Green River's main campus, there is a natural partnership potential for our institutions. We need to work more closely with all our secondary partners to find new ways to collaborate on transfer and professional/technical programs, as well as on college transition skills.

Also, through Tech Prep, students have the opportunity to get a head start on their future and begin to prepare for a career while still in high school. Tech Prep consists of a coordinated, planned set of courses taken at the secondary and post secondary levels. Through articulation agreements, developed between high school teachers and community/technical college instructors, high school students can earn college credit if they earn a "B" (3.0) or better in select classes. Over 900 students are earning GRCC credit through this program.

**Expansion of Project TEACH and teacher preparation.** We have successfully broadened the scope of Project TEACH by sharing our model statewide with other community college and school districts, and we have embarked upon a focus in the humanities area to parallel our initial math and science emphasis. Central Washington University is already offering upper division education classes on our campus, so this project could lead to further increased presence of a four-year institution at the college. Given our state's need for more highly qualified teachers and its willingness to grant alternative teacher certification, Project TEACH will be key to attracting more individuals into teaching. In 2004, Green River was recognized as a Washington State Center of Excellence for Careers in Education. In addition, our Early Childhood Education program, which has become an integral part of the Center for Excellence, offers diverse courses to students interested in early childhood (birth to age 8) education.

**Boeing Alliance training.** Four years ago, Boeing made a strategic decision to offload most of its in-house training operation to a consortium of 17 of the state's I-5 corridor community colleges. Green River has delivered a few training programs for Boeing's South Puget Sound sites, through our Continuing Education program in Kent. The training is continuing but at a much slower pace than Boeing had originally thought. GRCC continues to provide space for NFPA training, but most of the larger programs like CATIA training have gone to Everett and Renton because of their proximity to the Boeing plants. The training dollars that GRCC receives through the Alliance are low and not expected to grow much in the near future.

**Health care programs.** Our state and region have identified the health care industry as most in need of more highly trained professionals. Despite the professional/technical and Workforce areas' best efforts to obtain state grant funding to launch new and

collaborative efforts, such funding is extremely limited and competitive. Each of our health care programs has ideas for innovative offerings—e.g., massage therapy, nursing assistant, home health care technician—but we need funding to design and implement them. Health care programs are among the most expensive to offer, given the need for state of the art equipment and accreditation requirements for low student-faculty ratios. Currently, we are exploring the feasibility of an LPN to RN program.

**Modularization of professional/technical curriculum for Worker Retraining students.** Because of state budget shortfalls, Legislative members are calling for shorter length education and training programs to serve displaced workers. Such restrictions call for redesigned professional/technical curricula that enable students to complete discrete curriculum modules within program areas that still give them employable skills despite their allowable time for education being shortened. Modularization of our IT program and changes in Manufacturing have been extremely successful, but making these changes to curriculum requires significant time and effort by qualified faculty. In addition, Continuing Education and the Business Education department are developing a number of short term credit non-credit retraining programs, adding to the college's mix of offerings for the changing workforce.

**Programs for students over age 50.** As our population ages and retirees search for meaningful activity, older adult education takes on new significance for our continuing education operation. Many baby boom generation members are highly educated and expect to remain productive well into their 70's and 80's. Continuing Education is expanding its self-support course offerings beyond personal interest topics in order to attract more enrollments by older members of the community. The Prime Time institute was launched in fall of 2005. The institute is a membership driven program for 55+ adult learners, dedicated to intellectual learning through non-credit courses, group discussions, and social activities. Classes have an academic focus, are six to ten hours in duration, and are taught by faculty and former faculty.

### Equipment Support

Individual instructional equipment and computer requests will continue to be handled through our annual process that brings division chairs and deans/EVP together to prioritize needs across all divisions. Our decisions are based on PA&I results that point to equipment deficiencies in those programs reviewed each year, as well as on year-end division reports that highlight unit strengths and weaknesses. Beyond our prioritization process, we have identified the following points as critical to our instructional plan:

- The college should establish a permanent equipment purchase and replacement budget for instruction. (Instruction's success in serving a significant increase in student numbers has resulted in a large increase in tuition revenue; this revenue would be a logical source of funding for such a budget.)
- Departments must take care of what they already have, by repairing and maintaining equipment, as well as preventing its theft.

Since the 2003 Instructional plan, we have implemented the following:

- . • The college has designated a source of funding to upgrade and replace computer labs and related technological equipment (e.g., classroom projection systems). After extensive work with student leaders, the Technology Fee was raised from \$2.00 per credit up to a maximum of \$20.00 to \$5.00 per credit up to a maximum of \$60.00 in spring 2004. For the first time since its inception in 1997, the Technology Fee Committee fielded technology proposals from across campus and funded an additional \$170,500 worth of one-time projects and increased its annual operating expenses to \$510,500.

### Staffing Needs

Although current economic conditions make the addition of staff unlikely in the near future, we have identified the following needs for the long term:

- . • Additional full-time faculty in high demand programs.
- . • More instructional technician staff for science and professional/technical laboratories.
- . • Further emphasis should be placed on student learning outcomes by incorporating this area into faculty hiring and tenure criteria.