

Ad Hoc Peer-Evaluation Report

for the

Bachelor of Applied Science Degree in Operations Management

Clover Park Technical College
Lakewood, Washington

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A confidential report of findings prepared for the
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Ad Hoc Evaluator

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To answer federal and state projections for a strong regional need for managers and operations managers plus a gap between job openings and qualified individuals in the area, Clover Park Technical College (CPTC) went through the processes to develop a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Operations Management (BAS-OPM).

While the size of the gap has decreased somewhat since the degree was begun in 2014, the region still has a need for qualified operations managers in several fields. To keep the degree viable and growing, CPTC partnered with Bellingham Technical College (150 miles away) that has a similar degree and a comparable problem with a decreased gap between available jobs and qualified personnel. This partnership has allowed both degrees to continue, and the enrollment has increased for the current year.

The partnership/consortium structures the degree courses in a hybrid format that meets the needs of students with full-time work responsibilities. The format allows students who have a variety of undergraduate, two-year degrees to keep working while they take courses toward the bachelor degree. This structure is a win-win for the students and their employers. The evaluator found a remarkable commitment of both faculty and administrators to accommodate the working students' schedules and time commitments and to make the courses relevant to the students' diverse associate degrees.

The BAS-OPM Program Advisory Committee is actively involved with faculty and administrators to keep the curriculum relevant to industry needs. Students from a variety of two-year degree fields take what they have learned in BAS-OPM math, business communication, and operations management courses and use that knowledge in group and self-study situations to complete projects specific to their own areas of study.

The evaluator did question why a person with a juris doctor degree was hired to teach the general education business communication course. It was found that the majority of this person's experience is at the corporate level, but not in the field of law. He has worked in operations management and has extensive experience in written and oral communication.

Faculty members at CPTC are actively engaged with the students, even though it is a labor-intensive situation for them. Canvas is used for online discussions and other coursework, and the students are required to meet in person (or via Skype) at least three times a quarter (on Saturdays) for discussions, field trips, guest speakers, etc. All other involvement, communication, etc. is done online and through email. This requires a lot of commitment for faculty and students to make it work. Faculty work to help students understand general operations management principles, and then students apply them in various individual and group projects geared to their own particular industry.

Current and former students indicated that they can immediately apply the general principles they learn to their current employment, and their supervisors notice. Projects are tailored to real-life applications, often in their own work environment. Students expressed gratitude for the opportunity to increase their education without having to go out of the area or to a

university. It should be noted that two of the first cohort of students have been accepted at universities in MBA programs.

One vital element of the program is still in the planning stages: course and program assessment. This is just the third year of the program at CPTC and the first year of the partnership with Bellingham Technical College (BTC). While some course assessment has been done, there is not a formal plan or schedule of program or course assessment at either institution for the BAS-OPM degree. CPTC does have a map/cross walk of which courses teach each of the program outcomes.

CPTC, along with BTC—since both schools teach courses in the degree—needs to determine the measurement tool(s) for each program and course student learning outcome, set benchmarks, and create a schedule for the outcomes to be assessed. They then must analyze the data and determine what, if anything, needs improvement; determine a course of action; and then take action and report on those findings to complete the assessment loop.

The BAS-OPM baccalaureate program at Clover Park Technical College is effective and compliant with Commission standards. Although designed in a non-traditional manner, the degree appears to provide curriculum that is similar to peer institutions and provides appropriate rigor for a four-year degree programs.

The evaluator recommends that Clover Park Technical College receive baccalaureate status for the Bachelor of Applied Science in Operations Management degree.