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Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

REPORT OF THE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE COMMITTEE

Merger

MERGER OF DELGADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND
LOUISIANA COLLEGE – NEW ORLEANS

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
SEPTEMBER 12-16, 1999

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INTRODUCTION

A Substantive Change Committee of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools visited Delgado Community College located in New Orleans, Louisiana from September 12-16, 1999.

The Committee reviewed the merger of Delgado Community College and Louisiana Technical College – New Orleans. As directed by the Executive Director of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the committee also reviewed the substantive change in governance for Delgado Community College. A companion document reports on the substantive change related to governance.

The members of the visiting committee interviewed the administrative officers and representative faculty of Delgado Community College. In addition, they visited the facilities of the former Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans.

The merger of Delgado Community College and Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans was precipitated by legislative reviews of facility needs at Delgado Community College and the beginnings of educational reform for community and technical colleges. DCC had requested an additional \$17 million building for its City Park Campus. LTC-NO, located adjacent to the DCC City Park Campus, served approximately 320 students in a building which had been designed to serve more than 1,000 students. Further review of LTC-NO programs revealed significant overlap with DCC offerings. The conclusion of the legislative review was that both DCC building needs and program duplication could be alleviated by the merger.

The committee wishes to thank Dr. J. Terence Kelly, Chancellor of Delgado Community College, and his entire faculty and administration for the warm hospitality extended to each member of the visiting team. Throughout the visit, Drs. Raymond Garrity, Daryl Hippensteel, and Jeffery Smith and their respective staffs provided outstanding logistical and technical support. The arrangements were superb in every respect, greatly assisting the committee members in accomplishing their work.

SECTION I: PRINCIPLES AND PHILOSOPHY OF ACCREDITATION

In Summer 1997, a review by the Joint Education Committee of the Louisiana Legislature resulted in the merger of Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans (LTC-NO) and Delgado Community College. The legislative act that called for the merger was introduced into the legislative process in late May, was passed in late June, and became effective July 1, 1997. Neither institution anticipated the action.

Pursuant to the substantive change requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Chancellor of Delgado Community College submitted a prospectus for the merger to the Executive Director of the Commission on Colleges in September 1998. As stipulated in *Substantive Change Procedure E: The Consolidation or Merger of Institutions*, the prospectus described the institutional plans for ensuring continuing compliance with the *Criteria for Accreditation*.

On July 1, 1999, the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) was inaugurated and its lay board became the governing board for Delgado Community College, Nunez Community College, and Bossier Parish Community College, all COC-accredited institutions. In addition, forty-seven other institutions, mostly technical colleges, were placed under the authority of the LCTCS. This action, too, represented a substantive change for Delgado Community College.

In June 1999, the Executive Director authorized a single visiting committee to review both the "merger" substantive change and the "governance" substantive change. The "merger" review examined the impact of the merger of Delgado Community College

and Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans. The "governance" review examined the impact of the new governance system not only on Delgado Community College but also on Nunez Community College and Bossier Parish Community College. The findings of the former review are found in this report and the findings of the latter review are found in a companion report.

The substantive change document submitted by the Delgado Community College Chancellor, included the following elements:

- Rationale for change;
- Documentation of the legal authority for the change;
- Proposed timetable for implementation of the substantive change;
- Effects of the change on administrative organization/Board governance structure;
- Description of educational programs;
- Identification of resources required to support the change;
- Proposed processes for monitoring and evaluating the expected outcomes of the change and for using the results of evaluation to improve programs, services, and operations;
- How the non-accredited institution compiles with the *Criteria for Accreditation*.

In the opinion of the visiting committee, the merger of Louisiana Technical College - New Orleans with Delgado Community College has not affected the commitment of Delgado Community College to the *Criteria for Accreditation*, nor its compliance with the "Conditions of Eligibility" outlined in the *Criteria*.

SECTION II: INSTITUTIONAL PURPOSE

Upon review of the programs and services of Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans that were merged with those of Delgado Community College, the committee found that like activities were consolidated with like activities. All continue to support Delgado Community College 's statement of purpose, which is appropriate to collegiate education as well as to its own specified educational role. In addition, interviews with various campus personnel indicated that the official posture and practice remains consistent with the College 's statement of purpose. Consequently, the committee concluded that the merger of Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans with Delgado Community College has had no impact upon the College 's statement of purpose.

While not a part of the merger report, the committee wishes to point out that the recent change in governance for Delgado Community College may affect its purpose statement. These concerns are contained in the companion governance report.

SECTION III: INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Delgado Community College has a functioning planning and evaluation system, which uses the results of its evaluation process including the use of institutional research to improve its programs, services and operations. Although Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans did not have a systematic planning and evaluation system, interviews with personnel of the former institution indicate that their efforts and input have been incorporated into the on-going processes of the institutional effectiveness system adopted by Delgado Community College. For example, the Dean of Occupational Studies and former Director of Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans has experienced one cycle since the merger in 1997 of setting objectives, with the assistance of department heads, for the Division of Occupational Studies, and has been involved in the division's program evaluation process, aided by the use of statistics from the Institutional Research Office. In addition, interviews with select faculty indicated that they have been involved in providing input to determine objectives at the course and program level and in evaluating the progress of their students. Consequently, the committee found that Delgado Community College has a strong institutional effectiveness system, one that is able to integrate the efforts of those new to such a system. Further, the committee concluded that the merger of Delgado Community College and Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans did not affect the institutional effectiveness system established by Delgado Community College.

SECTION IV: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Delgado Community College is a two-year, comprehensive community college that offers the first two years of the bachelor ' s degree in arts and sciences areas, two-year associate degrees and certificates in occupational and technology program areas, developmental education, special training programs to meet the needs of business and industry, and continuing and community education courses. The committee found that DCC has sufficient student enrollment in the majority of its programs and has been able to obtain the necessary resources to support an effective educational program. The programs of the college appear to support the mission of the institution. The committee observed that the merger of DCC and LTC-NO has not been free from problems but significant results have occurred in the last two years and the future appears to be bright.

4.2.1 Undergraduate Admission

In order to accommodate students from Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans, a non-regionally accredited institution, Delgado Community College decided to award credit for prior "experiential" learning based on an evaluation of course work earned at LTC. The awarded credit was listed on a "crosswalk" of LTC and DCC courses and could be used on either DCC certificates or degrees. The *Criteria* permits such a process if the awarded credit represents collegiate coursework that insures equivalent learning taught by qualified faculty. The committee determined that courses listed on the "crosswalk" from

LTC-NO were taught by faculty who did not meet the minimum academic preparation qualifications necessary for associate degree credit. (Recommendation 1) *The committee recommends that the institution demonstrate that it transfers or accepts for credit toward its undergraduate degree only collegiate course work relevant to the degree, with a course content and level of instruction resulting in student competencies at least equivalent to those of students enrolled in the institution 's own undergraduate degree programs.*

4.8 Faculty

Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans had twenty-two full time faculty members at the time of the merger on July 1, 1997. As a requirement of the legislation that mandated the merger, these faculty members were assured of continuing employment at their pre-merger salary and benefits. Immediately following the merger, the credentials of these faculty members were reviewed, and nine were found by officials at DCC to comply with the *Criteria for Accreditation* of the Commission on Colleges. The remaining thirteen, all teaching in trade or technical areas, were advised of the need for additional documentation of experience or education. For those who needed further education, the College developed a professional development plan, including a timetable for completion of coursework. These employees were granted released time for the coursework and financial support to pay tuition and fees. At the time of the visiting committee 's review, seventeen faculty members remained employees of Delgado Community College.

4.8.1 Selection of Faculty

In the opinion of the visiting committee, the merger had no impact on the recruitment and hiring of faculty at Delgado Community College. Recently added faculty have been recruited and hired according to policies in effect at Delgado Community College before the merger.

4.8.2.1 Academic and Professional Preparation: Associate

Of the seventeen former Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans faculty members who remained at Delgado Community College at the time of the visiting committee review, only one has taught courses that according to the College catalog may transfer from DCC to four-year institutions. Official college records fail to document that the faculty member has earned either the master 's degree or eighteen graduate hours in the discipline. Documentation of prior experience and contributions did not justify this case as exceptional. (Recommendation 2) *The committee therefore recommends that the institution assure that all faculty teaching courses in professional, occupational and technical areas that are components of associate degree programs designed for college transfer have completed at least eighteen graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline and hold the master 's degree or hold the minimum of the master 's degree with a major in the teaching discipline.*

Several of the seventeen faculty members were teaching courses in professional,

occupational and technical areas that are components of associate degree programs not usually resulting in college transfer. Because official transcripts and documentation of work experience were not available for most of these individuals, the visiting committee was not able to establish that the College had met the criterion on preparation of such faculty. (Recommendation 3) *The committee therefore recommends that the College establish that all faculty teaching courses in professional, occupational and technical areas that are components of associate degree programs possess appropriate academic preparation or academic preparation coupled with work experience. Further,* (Recommendation 4) *the committee recommends that the institution demonstrate that it has fulfilled its responsibility to keep documentation of academic preparation on file for all faculty members.*

ACADEMIC AREA REPORTS

Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans Campus (LTC) had fourteen diploma programs, two associate degree programs which had been derived from diploma programs and a number of extension courses and special workforce training classes. Beginning on July 1, 1997, the administration and faculty of LTC and of Delgado Community College (DCC) met to develop plans for the merger of the curriculum, equipment and facilities of the instructional programs. Because nearly all of the LTC-NO programs had DCC counterparts, the visiting committee considered the merger process to be largely an "absorption" of the LTC programs by the existing DCC programs of instruction.

Thirteen former LTC programs were combined with existing DCC programs. The Accounting, Office Systems and Computer Systems programs were merged with similar programs in the Business Studies Division on the City Park Campus. Automotive; Air Conditioning/Refrigeration, Heating and Ventilation; Basic Electronics; Drafting; Food Services; Instrumentation; and Welding were integrated into similar programs in the new Division of Occupational Studies. The LTC Travel and Tourism program was absorbed by the DCC Hospitality program and it, along with the former LTC Child Development program, remains on a clock-hour basis.

The last of the fourteen programs, Practical Nursing, was approved as a credit certificate program by the Board of Regents and was relocated to DCC 's Charity School of Nursing campus.

SECTION V: EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

The Commission on Colleges *Criteria* requires that the educational programs at each institution be complemented by effective student development services and provide access to needed library and learning resources, by both the student body and the faculty. The visiting committee found that Delgado Community College had appropriate educational support services to properly support its mission as a comprehensive community college. The committee found that the recent merger between DCC and LTC-NO did not have a negative effect on the educational support services provided to students and to faculty. DCC plans to refurbish the old LTC building into a "one-stop" student services facility, which has the potential of enhancing these services.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES

6.1.1 Descriptive Titles and Terms:

The legislation that precipitated the merger mandated a change in the title of the organizational unit that administers vocational and technical education. It further stipulated that the then-Director of Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans would become the dean of the new unit. The new organizational unit was named the Division of Occupational Studies, and the former Director of LTC-NO remains the dean of the unit.

6.1.2 Governing Board

The merger mandated by the 1997 legislation did not have an impact on the governance of the institution. Later legislation, however, stipulated that Delgado Community College be governed by a new Board of Supervisors of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, of which Delgado would be a unit. The companion report developed by this visiting committee, which reviewed the substantive change on governance as well as the substantive change on merger, addresses issues of governance and policy development.

6.1.5 Administrative Organization

The College has published an organizational chart. In the opinion of the visiting committee, lines of communication and duties are clear.

6.3.6 Accounting, Reporting and Auditing

The accounting system used by Delgado Community College has not followed the principles for institutional accounting as they appear in *College and University Business Administration*. The committee reviewed the state audit report of Delgado Community College for FY 98. Past audits revealed a qualified opinion resulting from the College's not recording a liability for compensated absences as required by generally accepted accounting principles. (Recommendation 4) *The committee recommends that the institution adopt an accounting system that follows generally accepted accounting principles of institutional accounting as they appear in College and University Business Administration, published by the National Association of College and University Business Officers.*

6.4 Physical Resources

Delgado Community College consists of two campuses, the City Park Campus and the West Bank Campus. A learning center is also located at Slidell.

Physical assets total more than \$74.9 million, and are adequate to serve the needs of the College in relation to its stated purpose, its programs and activities.

As the result of the merger with Louisiana Technical College-New Orleans, Delgado Community College acquired a much needed 125,000 square foot facility and has in place a plan for the upkeep of its property which addresses health and safety issues, as well as routine, preventive and deferred maintenance of buildings, equipment and grounds.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION IV: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

4.2.1 Undergraduate Admission

(Recommendation 1) *The committee recommends that the institution demonstrate that it transfers or accepts for credit toward its undergraduate degrees only collegiate course work relevant to the degree, with a course content and level of instruction resulting in student competencies at least equivalent to those of students enrolled in the institution's own undergraduate degree programs.*

4.8.2.1 Faculty: Academic and Professional Preparation: Associate

(Recommendation 2) *The committee recommends that the institution assure that all faculty teaching courses in professional, occupational and technical areas that are components of associate degree programs designed for college transfer have completed at least eighteen graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline and hold the master 's degree or hold the minimum of the master 's degree with a major in the teaching discipline.*

(Recommendation 3) *The committee recommends that the College establish that all faculty teaching courses in professional, occupational and technical areas that are components of associate degree programs possess appropriate academic preparation or academic preparation coupled with work experience.*

4.8.2.1 Faculty: Academic and Professional Preparation: Associate (continued)

(Recommendation 4) *The committee recommends that the institution demonstrate that it has fulfilled its responsibility to keep documentation of academic preparation on file for all faculty members.*

SECTION VI: ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES

6.3.6 Accounting, Reporting and Auditing

(Recommendation 5) *The committee recommends that the institution adopt an accounting system that follows generally accepted accounting principles of institutional accounting as they appear in College and University Business Administration, published by the National Association of College and University Business Officers.*