

Section I: Executive Summary

Joliet Junior College is a public two-year college located 30 miles southwest of Chicago. Established in 1901, JJC is the oldest continually operated community college in the United States. Approximately 13,000 credit students and 17,000 non-credit students attend one of Joliet Junior College's three campuses. The three campuses are strategically located within the district attracting both urban and rural residents. The college district straddles seven counties and encompasses a 1,142 square mile area.

The college offers pre-baccalaureate programs for students planning to transfer to a four-year university (61 AA and AS degree programs), occupational education (52 AAS degree programs and 82 certificate programs) leading directly to employment, adult education and literacy programs, workforce and workplace development services, and support services to help students succeed. The college is unequivocally committed to provide access to post-secondary education and occupational training to all residents to improve their quality of life as well as the quality of the community. Joliet Junior College maintains a quality faculty and higher than average instruction costs while controlling the costs of administration and retaining low tuition.

Despite the challenges faced during FY 2003 due to budget reduction the College has ventured forward into some new areas and continued its commitment to planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The college has been in the fortunate position of having Century Corporation construct a 300-bed residential facility adjacent to the main campus. This housing complex, although beset by early problems which affect many new initiatives, is an important addition to the affordable residential choices of JJC students. A housing task force made up of professionals from Century, JJC administration, the JJC Foundation, local business leaders, and the Joliet Police Department has crafted strategies to assist Century Corporation manage the facility into the coming year.

Following a year of data gathering and study, the college has instituted a new performance management system and salary structure for administrators and support staff. This system was perfected with the assistance of a management consulting firm and fits nicely into the college's move toward having functional employment units and staff develop annual goals. Personal and unit goal setting will help fine tune institutional goal setting and will be an important addition to planning and budgeting.

New curriculum has been developed in process technology, cosmetology, pharmacy technology, library technician, several health science certificates, and radiology technology to try to meet the needs of the local work force. These initiatives have come from the work the college has done with local advisory committees. The curriculum seems to be both proactive to perceived needs and reactive to business and industry demands. A strong relationship has been developed in District 525 between Joliet Junior College and the local business and industry partners.

Distance education initiatives have continued to grow in a planned response to stakeholder needs. Approximately 15 new credit courses are developed each year and

more effort recently has focused on non-credit activities. The college contracted with the BlackBoard company to expand its current Basic level of agreement and moved to the Enterprise level this summer (in time for fall). The resources expended here are heavy in the short term but allow the college to more fully develop its online presence. A new full-time Online Course Technician was also added to the staff.

Joliet Junior College lost two referenda attempts during the past year. The fall effort for a bond and tax referenda was defeated by a closer vote than the spring's tax question. Although these referenda failed they were opportunities for the college to finalize a master facility plan, focus on current deferred maintenance needs, and spend a great deal of time with local citizens sharing ideas and listening to their feedback. The college is growing faster than it ever has, but its physical facilities can barely sustain the current population. Challenging times lie ahead and planning and evaluation will be critical.