

## **Follow-Up Report**

*Submitted to the Accrediting Commission  
For Community and Junior Colleges,  
Western Association of Schools & Colleges  
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***Solano Community College***

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## I. STATEMENT ON REPORT PREPARATION

Solano Community College submits this report in response to the requirement by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

On February 3, 2010 Solano Community College received notification that, after considering the College's April 2009 Follow-Up report and the Visiting Team's subsequent visit, ACCJC had acted to continue the College's Probation Status. As a result, Solano was required to submit this Follow-Up Report to address five of the six previous recommendations: Productive Dialogue, Institutional Planning, Institutional Effectiveness, Staffing and Organizational Stability, and Leadership. The Commission removed the recommendation regarding Fiscal Integrity and Stability; however, on March 4, 2010 Solano received a letter from Barbara Beno requesting an update on progress to resolve findings of Perry-Smith in its external audit dated June 30, 2009, specifically in three areas: (1) the "significant deficiency" in student financial aid, (2) "state compliance" with apportionment and student enrollment, and (3) the status of "significant deficiencies for internal controls." An addendum regarding these issues, prepared by the Interim Vice President of Business and Administrative Services, Interim Director of Fiscal Services, and Interim Dean of Enrollment Management and Student Outreach/Director of Financial Aide, follows this report.

Due to the successful production of the College's previous Follow-Up Report and college-wide participation in the inclusive process, the Accreditation Steering Committee, composed of the Academic Senate President, the Accreditation Liaison Officer, the Director of Research and Planning, the previous report-writer, and college administration agreed to follow the same process. Previously established Report Writing Groups were re-convened [0.01], and the wiki site, which had been reorganized for the upcoming Self-Study, was adjusted to include preparation for the current report [0.02]. Writing Groups then began gathering evidence, identifying actions and outcomes relevant to their assigned areas, and writing bulleted narrative to be shared with the college through the wiki. These initial stages continued throughout Summer 2010, and the report writer began working on a draft just before the beginning of the Fall 2010 semester. As the writer produced drafts of each recommendation response, they were posted to the wiki for review by individuals and constituency groups, and opportunities were provided for feedback. A rough draft of the report was sent to the Board of Trustees the week of September 6, 2010. A revised draft was posted on the wiki and delivered to the Board of Trustees, Shared Governance Council (SGC) and the Academic Senate (AS) on September 16, 2010 to be addressed as information items at their meetings the week of September 20, 2010. After further comment and revision, the finalized document was approved at a special joint session of the AS and SGC on September 29, 2010 and by the Board of Trustees on October 6, 2010.

This report and the corresponding evidence demonstrate that Solano Community College has met the requirements of the Commission's recommendations and sustained previous progress.

## II. RESPONSE TO TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

### **General Recommendation 1: Improving Institutional Dialogue**

**It is the responsibility of every constituent group at Solano College, including the Board of Trustees, to participate in productive dialogue, as defined by accreditation standards, that engages the entire college in identifying strengths and weaknesses of the college, and every constituent group must commit to action that improves educational quality and student learning. The college must proceed immediately to take this action and should not allow operational or collective bargaining issues to distract them from participating in planned opportunities for this dialogue, timely implementation of changes for improvement resulting from that dialogue, and assessment of the results of implemented changes. (Standards I.B.1, II, IV)**

As noted in the previous visiting team’s January 2010 report, Solano Community College “continues to improve and expand college-wide communication and dialogue.” Since that time, communication and dialogue has widened and increased. Led by Superintendent/President Laguerre, college constituents have addressed this area of Standards I.B.1, II, and IV by making activities and actions transparent through consistent dissemination of information and productive dialogue in an effort to enhance data driven decision making to improve student success.

### **College-Wide Collaboration and Participation**

Superintendent/President Laguerre continues to encourage open communication and dialogue by making himself widely available. For example, he regularly attends various division and other constituent meetings [R1 E1], and makes efforts to be as personally accessible as possible through events such as hosting dinners at his home that include faculty, staff, administrators, students, governing board members, elected officials, and community members [R1 E2]. In addition, S/P Laguerre regularly sends updates to the College and the Board of Trustees on his activities within the college and the community via his “S/P Directs” and “S/P Grams.” In these documents, S/P Laguerre outlines discussions and events throughout the college and community so that constituents are informed of events and invited to join ongoing conversations regarding decisions made by the college [R1 E3].

At another level, S/P Laguerre makes all of Solano’s processes as inclusive as possible. First, S/P Laguerre has expanded his Cabinet to include the Academic Senate President, the Student Body President, a Student Services Dean, and an Academic Affairs Dean in order to ensure that all constituents are involved in discussions and aware of outcomes. To further strengthen the participation of all college constituents and promote transparency, before administrative decisions are brought to the Board of Trustees, they are brought to groups such as Shared Governance Council (SGC) and Finance and Budget Planning Advisory Committee (FABPAC) for information and discussion. Other constituent groups are consulted as appropriate, and college-wide discussions are invited whenever possible. For example, S/P Laguerre has invited a wide range of dialogue to the hiring process through SGC discussions of new positions and revised senior administrator positions [R1 E4], as well as through forums with finalists at the Vice President and Dean levels [R1 E5], and he ensures transparency in these

areas through his communications to the college [R1 E6]. S/P Laguerre also holds frequent budget forums and offers updates in order to foster transparency, encourage dialogue and participation in the budget development and approval process [R1 E7], and will hold upcoming forums on numerous and open topics [R1 E8]. These opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to be involved in these processes foster a college-wide investment in Solano's leadership and a confidence that individual voices can be heard, which in turn sustains open dialogue and transparency and provides appropriate resources to facilitate continued student success.

There are, of course, instances in which the Superintendent/President and other administrators are empowered to make decisions prior to college-wide discussion in order to best serve organizational effectiveness and align resources to facilitate continued student success. For example, after following the shared governance process to hire new individuals, their skills are evaluated so that they may be utilized in the best interests of the college, and their responsibilities may be adjusted based on the best match between their skills and the institution's needs. These changes are discussed with various constituency groups on a case-by-case basis. Recently, for example, the Dean of Mathematics and Science took over the Sustainability Initiative because of her expertise in the area, necessitating discussions only with her and her supervisor. In addition, the responsibilities of the newly created position of Dean of Academic Success and Learning Resources changed from including the library as a direct report to including, among other things, responsibility for accreditation in order to make the most efficient use of the new hire's experience and expertise in the accreditation process. In this instance, the decision did not go through the shared governance or any other formalized planning process prior to taking effect due to the need to move the institution forward. However, discussions took place with librarians and other directly-affected faculty and staff after the decision had been made, which re-opened previous dialogue about hiring a library director and led to an agreement that this would be the best course of action for the long-term effectiveness of the library.

Finally, along with the opportunity to communicate directly via email, letter, or personal conversation, there is also a suggestion box in the hallway outside of the Superintendent/President's office to provide faculty, staff, and students a way to offer input anonymously.

Overall, S/P Laguerre's involvement throughout the College and his availability to and communication with its constituents fosters a truly positive environment that encourages and sustains open dialogue and communication.

### **Governing Board Dialogue**

Since the previous team's visit, Solano Community College's Board of Trustees has strengthened channels of communication among its members and between the Board and constituents of the College. First of all, the Board has changed the form and structure of its meetings, most notably adding Study Sessions to its schedule. The Board has held several of these sessions, allowing for in-depth presentations on important issues of the day and less formal, more engaging communication [R1 E9]. Not only have these events allowed the Board an opportunity to more fully understand issues of importance, but they have opened up trusting dialogue and communication while building personal

relationships. Of note as well are some of the Study Sessions in which the Board has invited faculty, staff and administrators to join them for dinner. These more informal sessions have allowed the Board to get to know constituent groups and vice versa, developing the Board's understanding of instruction, student services, and fiscal matters that inform their decisions to strengthen student success and academic achievement [R1 E10].

### **Online Communication and Dialogue**

In addition to these efforts, the College has increased and improved upon various online methods of communication. For example, the Solano Community College webpage has been going through a major upgrade/redesign in order to increase ease of use by all constituents and offer access to all college information. This work is led by the Dean of the Vacaville Center and the Director of Student Development as Co-Chairs of a Luminis Committee that includes faculty and staff in order to ensure that the process itself sustains college-wide dialogue [R1 E11a and 11b]. There has also been college-wide training in this new area of communication [R1 E12]. An important element of this webpage re-design is the use of MyGroups, an area where all constituents can access information and join discussions regarding activities of various college groups and programs [R1 E13]. MyGroups will be a college-wide resource to facilitate communications between college departments, as well as provide a virtual community to support students. College-wide use of MyGroups is relatively new, but expanding; for example, there is a Campus Police group used to communicate renewal of employee parking permits, saving interoffice mail labor and printing of new applications from graphics. There are also a number of other groups set up, such as those for Flexible Calendar In-Service (FlexCal), Helpdesk, Marketing, and the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), although these groups are relatively new and not yet in wide-spread use. The Academic Senate President Blog is another way that the college uses the internet to disseminate information [R1 E14]. Finally, one of the most successful uses of online communication is the continuing use of a wiki to maintain transparency and allow college-wide participation in the creation of this and other accreditation reports [R1 E15a and 15b]. At any time, anyone can access the wiki to read what is being done regarding accreditation, and anyone from the college community who has requested access can contribute comments and ideas, and/or upload evidence.

### **Student Success**

Perhaps more important than Solano Community College's strong lines of communication, is its serious collaborative dialogue regarding "student performance and success." For example, in the area of English as a Second Language, a team consisting of faculty, the Vallejo Center Dean, and S/P Laguerre took part in discussions with County Adult Ed Programs of possible collaboration between existing community programs and the College's credit offerings. The goal of this dialogue was to use the Centers to meet the needs of their unique populations [R1 E16]. An example of college-wide dialogue on student success is the bi-annual FlexCal activity involving outcomes assessment [R1 E17]. Every semester faculty members come together specifically to share assessment results and discuss ways to improve student achievement. These conversations lead to individual adjustments in teaching materials and/or techniques, and at a broader level lead to ideas for 3-year plan items and program reviews, and sometimes operational or strategic proposals for change at the department, division, or college-wide level [R1 E18].

### **Integrated Planning Process (IPP)**

As the previous visiting team commented, Solano Community College also remains committed to its “newly revived and developed planning processes,” which have increased productive dialogue across the college. Through Solano’s Integrated Planning Process (IPP), dialogue leads to connections between all areas of planning, implementation, and evaluation through 3-year plans (created through dialogue among faculty), operational proposals (created through dialogue among faculty and deans) and strategic proposals (created through dialogue among faculty, deans, and other administrators) that can move the college forward. These various plans and proposals then move on for dialogue in review groups, SGC, and FABPAC, which have directed and result-oriented dialogue focusing specifically on the connection between resources, planning, and student success. These groups then forward data-based recommendations to S/P Laguerre, who brings decisions before the Board of Trustees [R1 E19].

It has taken college-wide dialogue in order to make the IPP work. Deans and other college leaders have helped faculty see the connections between SLOs and the components of the IPP so that the intended dialogue and transparency of decision-making can be achieved [R1 E20]. In addition, the IPP is accessible through an interactive link on the Solano website that allows the process to be broken up into easily understandable sections for ease of use [R1 E21a and 21b]. Through these efforts, all college constituents are encouraged to use dialogue and data to drive decision making while producing and evaluating results. Further dialogue occurs as the Process Evaluation and Review Team (PERT) evaluates the effectiveness of the IPP itself, gathering and responding to feedback from review groups, faculty, staff, and administrators so that systems of planning and decision-making themselves can evolve and improve [R1 E22]. All in all, the dialogue elicited through the IPP serves to sustain and improve college initiatives while strengthening the institution’s planning effectiveness to further student achievement.

### **Mission and Strategic Goals and Objectives**

Another very successful use of productive dialogue can be seen in the work Solano has accomplished regarding its Strategic Plan, including the recent revision of its Mission, Vision, Values, Goals, and Objectives. The process of revision involved constituents and stakeholders from throughout the college and its community, ensuring that input regarding the college’s strengths and weaknesses was broad-based and transparent. The process began with a series of Strategic Plan Working Group forums, led by the Director of Research and Planning, the Academic Senate President, an Academic Senator, and a consultant. First, there were two days of internal discussions with students, staff, faculty, administration, and the Board of Trustees [R1 E23]. These forums were followed by a meeting with community stakeholders (including educational partners, government representatives, business-people, and non-profit group representatives), faculty, staff, students, and members of the Board of Trustees members [R1 E24]. Through these forums the college conducted highly focused discussions, completed a thorough SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, and produced a new Mission, Vision, Goals, and Objectives [R1 E25]. In the abstract, this dialogue and collaboration resulted in a focused view of the college’s direction and how constituents and stakeholders can work together along that path; concretely it has produced Solano’s new Strategic Plan [R1 E26].

## **College Climate**

The most recent visiting team commented that “old tensions and distractions related to leadership have subsided.” Evidence that this positive climate has been sustained can be found in several places. First, productive, efficient and effective negotiations on early retirement incentives for faculty, staff, and administrators led to the smooth approval and implementation of a timeline, allowing faculty to retire over the summer [R1 E27]. In addition, under the leadership of S/P Laguerre, the college community has embraced an environment in which all parties strive to resolve differences amicably. For example, Solano’s former Interim Human Resources (HR) Director, current HR Director and Faculty Association (SCFA) worked collegially to resolve all grievances without arbitration [confidential information available on request]. The Chair of the Grievance Committee worked well with the former Interim HR Director and meets weekly with the current HR Director to continue to solve disputes amicably [R1 E28]. Also of note is the significant reduction of legal fees resulting from this more harmonious relationship [R1 E29]. In addition, when Operating Engineers Local 39 (Local 39) expressed concerns about staffing at the Centers and shift differentials due to dynamic growth, these concerns were taken into consideration and easily resolved through meetings of the Superintendent/President, Interim HR Director, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the Center Deans, among others, resulting in additional staffing at the Centers using new Center Status money [R1 E30]. Finally, although Solano Community College has recently undergone an administrative reorganization [R1 E31] and is experiencing economic hardship along with other community colleges, ongoing consultations and negotiations between CSEA and the new HR Director have been productive. This is evident in the increased number of members participating in the accreditation process [R1 E32], the development of a new Student Services Generalist job description [R1 E33], and the adoption of the Winter Break calendar for the employees and District [R1 E34].

## **Conclusion**

The activities outlined here have all served to sustain a positive culture of participation and enhance collaboration, dialogue and transparency at Solano Community College. The college has demonstrated great progress since ACCJC’s original recommendation, and in fact has set up higher expectations in maintaining excellence in dialogue and communication. All constituents have come together in the common goal of mitigating the “deficiencies cited in the recommendation” and continue to meet the requirements of Standards IB1, II, and IV for the benefit of the college.



## **Recommendation 2: Improving Institutional Planning**

**In order to improve institutional planning, the College should clarify and simplify its terminology and processes used in planning so that the vocabulary is more easily understood and accepted institutionally, the planning processes are more integrated, and the plans actually get implemented. (I.A.4, I.B.3, ER 19)**

As noted by the previous visiting team, “the college has made significant progress in integrating institutional planning since the April 2009 report.” Since that visit, Solano Community College has continued to implement its Integrated Planning Process (IPP) and the ongoing cycle of evaluation, planning, budget, implementation, and evaluation as outlined in Standard I.B.3 and ER19. The College has sustained the ever-evolving nature of the process, continuously evaluating and revising it as necessary to ensure effectiveness in achieving the College’s Mission, Goals, and Objectives as outlined in Standard I.A.4.

### **Clarity and Understanding**

Solano Community College agreed with the previous Visiting Team’s observation that at the time it “must still achieve institution-wide understanding and acceptance of the various aspects of the planning process embodied in the IPP.” To this end, ongoing training has been a priority across the College. For example, emphasis has been put on the connections between areas of planning and evaluation such as SLOs, Program Review, Strategic Plan, etc. [R2 E1]. There has also been specific training at various meetings [R2 E2]. In addition, there is now an online site dedicated to the IPP, essentially a virtual version of the hardcopy document, which can be reached through a link on the Solano.edu website [R2 E3a and 3b]. This site divides all planning information into manageable segments so that users can click on the applicable area and find explanations, directions, forms, etc., making the process accessible and focused. Two instructional YouTube videos have been created [R2 E4]. Built into the IPP is the Process Evaluation and Review Team (PERT), whose role is to evaluate the effectiveness of the IPP, which of course involves how well it is understood by members of the College. To this end, in addition to the above, PERT has distributed a very simple explanation to communicate the essence of the IPP [R2 E4]. Finally, the PERT and Accreditation Self-Study teams are working with the Interim Director of Research and Planning to develop a faculty, staff, and administration survey assessing this understanding; this survey will be used in writing Solano’s Self-Study due August ’11 [R2 E6].

### **Implementation and Evaluation**

As suggested by the previous visiting team, Solano has sustained the “level of transparency and effectiveness sought by PERT, and along with it the full integration of planning with budget development,” including the incorporation of Program Review and Outcomes assessment. This full integration is clearly addressed in the IPP document [R2 E7], and can be seen in 3-Year Plans, Program Reviews, and Strategic and Operational Proposals [R2 E8]. Review Group notes and forms also demonstrate this integration [R2 E9]. Also, as the previous visiting team suggested, all administrators have been “instructed by the President to understand and implement the IPP as designed”. To achieve this integration, the administration has emphasized the use of the IPP by the entire college, as well as connections among all areas of planning and evaluation [R2 E10]. This has been re-enforced through

meetings of the Academic Affairs Leadership Team (AALT), Administrative Leadership Group (ALG), divisions, and other groups [R2 E11]. Any areas of planning that fall outside of the IPP, for example those decisions made by the Superintendent/President and other administrators regarding issues within their purview (those involving education code, policy, personnel, etc.), follow courses of information flow through Shared Governance Council (SGC) and the Finance and Budget Planning Advisory Committee (FABPAC) [R2 E12]. Finally, a tangential indicator of the effectiveness of Solano's IPP is that its mechanism has been adopted for internal deliberations by groups such as Basic Skills and Vocational and Technical Education (VTEA) [R2 E13].

The IPP implementation has gone very well and is evolving while successfully accomplishing its intended outcomes. Through the first cycle and a half of the IPP, part of which was completed while in development, the college continued the use of 3-year plans and program reviews, and produced nine strategic proposals for consideration by the appropriate review groups. Out of these cycles the college funded and implemented a proposal for the UMOJA program and a proposal for a Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) redesign [R2 E14; R2 E15]. In addition, through PERT, which established a formal membership and continued to meet regularly during Spring '10 [R2 E16], the IPP has built-in evaluation components [R2 E17]. Assessment of the IPP has taken place throughout the past year and a half as PERT discussed input from the field and made changes accordingly, and PERT's agenda continues to include evaluation and responsiveness [R2 E18]. Also during this time, review groups such as Enrollment Management have taken the process full circle by evaluating proposals that were previously approved and implemented [R2 E19]. As the college moves into the next cycle of planning, PERT will continue to evaluate and address what has occurred over the course of the year and a half of implementation, such as the need to broaden the scope, implement a clearer method of reporting out the status of individual proposals, establish a more effective method of encouraging additional proposals, and create wider awareness of deadlines [R2 E20]. PERT is currently brainstorming solutions to issues that have arisen, which it will then take to SGC for discussion and approval. Another goal of PERT is to write into the IPP processes by which "fast-track" or "off-line" planning can take place as needed while ensuring transparency and appropriate evaluation components. The Superintendent/President and other administrators must understandably make unforeseen decisions outside the scope of the IPP when needed, so PERT will describe these procedures in the IPP document to facilitate planning discussions and increase understanding. In addition, this Fall PERT will oversee the updating of all college-wide plans and the convening of proposal review groups.

Finally, while the previous Visiting Team expressed concern that "accomplishing an acceptable level of effectiveness any time soon may be inhibited by implementation of the proposed reorganization of senior management," the continuing evaluation of the IPP has been greatly enhanced by the addition of the Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Services. His new perspective has brought to light issues in need of attention, as well as possible solutions, that PERT has been too close to the process to see, some of which are mentioned above. In addition, he has ensured that he and other administrators understand the IPP and their role in its success [R2 E21]. One sure sign of the IPP's success is that in addition to the continued use of 3-year plans and Program Review, the Enrollment Management review group is currently considering seven proposals [R2 E22]. Finally, a team from Solano recently presented

its IPP, from creation to implementation, at the RP Group’s Strengthening Student Success Conference and was immediately asked to present at another conference in November because the IPP and its development are of great interest to other colleges struggling with their own planning processes. Overall, Solano’s process continues to function and evolve in a positive direction, and clear connections are being made among every level of planning and evaluation as the college works toward its newly revised Mission and achieving its newly redefined Strategic Goals and Objectives.

### **Strategic Goals and Objectives**

A very important element of Solano Community College’s current planning process has been the recent revision of its Strategic Plan, as discussed in Recommendation One [R2 E23]. To ensure connections to the IPP, PERT was the initial review group for this process, bringing in other constituents from the college and the community through working forums [R2 E24]. The various steps in the IPP now reflect these revised Goals and Objectives so that Solano’s planning is focused and integrated at all levels, and PERT has discussed this integration [R2 E25].

In addition, the newly revised Strategic Plan emphasizes the roles of data and assessment so that a comparison can be made between expected outcomes and actual results [R2 E26]. In this way, Solano is not only planning and implementing effectively, but “closing the loop” through cycles of evaluation.

### **Conclusion**

The previous visiting team expressed concern that the IPP needed clarification and simplification before it could be fully implemented. Solano Community College has sustained its planning process, expanding its use by content-specific areas such as Basic Skills and VTEA, and all strategic and operational proposals that require funding and/or general support follow the Integrated Planning Process. One of the IPP’s biggest strengths lies in the built-in review and revision through PERT oversight, ensuring that any needs for clarification, simplification, or revision are addressed as they arise. The PERT has addressed initial issues of clarity through training and simplified explanations, and the IPP will continue to evolve as it is used and evaluated for effectiveness, fulfilling this Recommendation and meeting Standards 1A4, 1B3, and ER19.

### **General Recommendation 3: Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

**In order to improve institutional effectiveness the College should establish and implement a clear, systematic, consistent, and ongoing method of measuring and evaluating its effectiveness in achieving stated strategic planning goals and student learning outcomes. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.6, I.B.7, ER 10, ER 19)**

The previous Visiting Team acknowledged that Solano Community College “has continued to make significant progress in generating and using data effectively and is well on the way to becoming a fully data-driven institution.” Since that visit, the College has met “Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement” in Program Review and Planning as defined by the ACCJC Rubric for Institutional Effectiveness.

#### **Integrated Planning Process**

Solano Community College continues to fully implement and refine its Integrated Planning Process (IPP) through Process Evaluation and Review Team (PERT) oversight [R3 E1] and training throughout the college [R3 E2]. By design, Solano’s IPP will continue to evolve as the college moves through the ongoing cycle of assessment, planning, and implementation. Currently, PERT is discussing possible refinements and activities that will strengthen the IPP process. For example, it was brought to PERT’s attention that perhaps some members of the college are not yet fully versed in the year-long IPP cycle of submission, review, report-out, implementation, and evaluation. PERT is therefore fulfilling its mission by considering how to clarify paths of tracking and follow-up. In addition, PERT will continue to clarify the IPP, direct members of the college to the website and training videos, and present regular training to all shared governance groups, division faculty and staff, leadership groups, and potential proposal writers [R3 E3]. In addition to PERT’s comprehensive “meta”-evaluation using data and input from constituent groups to improve Solano’s planning processes, the college continues to value quality improvement that leads to student success. Using assessment results, with SLOs and SAOs at the heart of our discussions, the college continues to use 3-year plans and program reviews to connect and inform what we do and how we do it.

As PERT chair, the new Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs immediately familiarized himself with the IPP during the summer of 2010 and is currently working with PERT to refine the IPP [R3 E4]. The college has learned quite a bit as it completed one and a half cycles of integrated and effective data-driven planning, and PERT continues to use what it has learned to assess and make changes accordingly as the college sustains its planning processes [R3 E5]. Evidence that the IPP is successful is that the college continues to produce 3-year plans, program reviews, and strategic proposals, with two being funded even with financial hardships [R3 E6] and at least seven strategic proposals currently under consideration [R3 E7]. In addition, to increase effectiveness, PERT reports are now a standing agenda item in SGC, with an emphasis on accountability [R3 E8].

#### **Data-Driven Decision-Making**

The previous visiting team made note that there were “some gaps . . . in data-driven decision making in certain units of the institution.” Solano Community College acknowledges that the best decisions are made when all facts are known and data are gathered as support; in this vein, Solano has continued to

make judicious use of its research office to gather data in decision-making. Solano's most recent report to ACCJC included a long list of data that continue to be available through BANNER, such as Grade Distribution, Workload, Enrollment Patterns, FTES, personnel data, etc. The college also considers a variety of outside sources to access data, such as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Association of California Community College Administrators (ACCCA), Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC), and studies issued by publications such as the Chronicle of Higher Education (Almanac). In addition, the College makes decisions based on regulations, requirements, Education Code and policies.

For example, from data such as fill rates; cancelations; past enrollment trends; student assessment results; and student success, retention and persistence rates, administrators make decisions to offer more classes, offer fewer classes or keep course offerings the same [R3 E9]. Student Services administrators also use SARS Track reports to make projections of when to offer appointments and workshops at all locations and to help determine scheduling of counselors. In addition, Admissions and Records (A&R) recently analyzed data to address the high number of Late Add Petitions, which led to an inefficient use of staffing resources, apportionment for students not actively enrolled at census, and a disservice to students. As a result of the analysis, Solano implemented a major campaign to dramatically reduce the number of Late Add Petitions by placing more emphasis on educating faculty, students and administrators of the need to abide by add/drop deadlines and repeatedly sending notifications to all via email, meetings, signage throughout college, faculty handbook and website [R3 E10]. In addition, from daily reporting of outstanding emails to the general A&R email box, A&R administrators determine how to staff and what to emphasize within the office on a daily basis in hopes that timely responses will encourage students to rely more on technology for correspondence. In addition, the IPP process requires data and analysis at all stages [R3 E11].

There are also many decisions made at wide-spread levels based on information, data or regulations. For instance, a lengthy process of data- and information-gathering went into the recently adopted retirement incentive. The college researched cost-benefit analyses regarding age, years of service, impact on services and instruction, etc. to share with the appropriate governance groups, such as SGC, FABPAC, Solano College Faculty Association (SCFA), California School Employees Association (CSEA) and Operating Engineers Local 39 (Local 39), and the public. Based on presentations by outside entities, the college set target numbers for each of its constituent groups in order to justify incentives. Timelines were set to ensure that target numbers were met in order to gain the maximum benefit for the district. Criteria were set on which the decision to offer or not offer the program was based. After careful analysis of the data and information gathered, the college made the decision to offer the incentives, ensuring a savings [R3 E12]. Another example of data-driven decision making is that to attract the best and most experienced individuals to the Finance and Administrative Services Office, the college considered the salary survey conducted by the Association of California Community College Administrators (ACCCA). Based on discussions of this survey, and a comparison of Solano's current salaries, the College determined the appropriate salary schedule to propose to the Board of Trustees [R3 E13].

In addition, Solano's recent growth has provided opportunities to make decisions, governed by Board Policy 4800, that enhance the administrative capacity of the organization while at the same time allowing faculty and staff to elevate their skills to be better utilized by the organization. Similarly, as the college hires individuals for new positions, their skills are evaluated to determine whether they may be redeployed based on institutional needs. These changes are discussed at various levels depending on the case and its impact. For example, the administration changed the responsibilities of the new position of Dean of Academic Success and Learning Resources based on the hired individual's experience. Because the change involved an adjustment in the lines of reporting for the library, after the change, S/P Laguerre discussed the issues with the librarians who agreed that the next best course of action for the long-term effectiveness of the library will be the hiring of a library director. Similarly, based on information regarding her expertise, the Dean of Mathematics and Science took over the Sustainability Initiative. These adjustments occur with due consideration to the data and information available.

Finally, Solano Community College continues to actively pursue data in order to strengthen the college and improve student success. For example, in order to improve the quality of services for students, the college has decided to have the Director of Research and Planning survey the student body to ascertain its satisfaction with the services offered at the college [R3 E14]. This survey is scheduled to take place during October 2010. Similarly, in order to improve the college's Integrated Planning Process, PERT and Accreditation Self-Study teams are working with the Interim Director of Research and Planning to develop a faculty, staff, and administration survey assessing their understanding of it, as well as assessing other areas of interest for the Self-Study [R3 E15]. In addition, data is used to make decisions in Basic Skills, VTEA, and Faculty Inquiry Groups (FIGs) [R3 E16]. Data is also gathered in order to evaluate Sabbatical Leaves [R3 E17].

### **Outcomes**

The previous visiting team acknowledged that Solano has made "progress on developing, implementing and assessing student learning outcomes." This progress continues, with focus on Program SLOs and Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) for the non-academic areas of the college. Currently, the College has GE and Institutional Outcomes, labeled Core Competencies [R3 E18]. Course SLOs have been written, coded to correspond to the Core Competencies, and are on an active cycle of assessment [R3 E19]. Most academic divisions and Student Services areas have completed Program Outcomes, and these are reflected in Program Reviews [R3 E20]. As the College transitions its curriculum to CurricuNet, SLOs are being attached to Course Outlines of Record, and Program SLOs will be coded there as well. Solano's Outcomes Assessment Coordinator (OAC) began the effort to address non-academic SAOs with an introductory presentation for Facilities staff in Spring 2010 and will continue working with them and other areas this semester to create Outcomes and Assessments [R3 E21]. Connections between Outcomes and Planning have also been emphasized to the Academic Leadership Group (ALG) and Academic Affairs Leadership Team (AALT) [R3 E22]. The college's bi-annual Flexible Calendar In-Service (FlexCal) activities continue to include a session in which SLO assessment results are discussed, which then leads directly into the creation of 3-year plans and annual or published program reviews, depending on the division's place in the cycle [R3 E23]. Faculty and staff participation in these activities

is evidence that the previous visiting team's observation is still accurate: the College has "accepted student learning outcomes and learning assessments as a long-term, substantive change in the culture of their institution, and have learned the benefits of this kind of self-examination." To further assess the institutionalization of the entire IPP, for Solano's Comprehensive Self-Study, due in August 2011, the College is in the process of creating a survey that will more specifically assess understanding of and commitment to Outcomes Assessment [R3 E24]. The College is well on its way to exceeding ACCJC's requirement to reach Proficiency on its Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness by 2012.

### **Strategic Planning Goals**

ACCJC's original recommendation called for "effectiveness in achieving stated strategic planning goals." As part of its planning process, Solano has just completed a thorough and participatory revision of its Strategic Goals and Objectives. As part of this comprehensive strategic planning process, constituents and stakeholders from throughout the college and its surrounding community gave input regarding Solano's strengths and weaknesses through a series of Strategic Plan Working Group forums, led by the Director of Research and Planning, the Academic Senate President, an Academic Senator, and a consultant [R3 E25]. Through these forums the college conducted an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) and obtained a focused view of Solano College's direction and determined how the college can best work with constituents and stakeholders. The process identified four Strategic Goals: Foster Excellence in Learning; Maximize Student Access & Success; Strengthen Community Connections; and Optimize Resources [R3 E26].

The College is committed to gathering data from the assessment of measurable outcomes in order to achieve its new Strategic Goals and Objectives. To this end, deans and directors assess their efforts at addressing the Strategic Goals and Objectives on a regular basis by developing, assessing, and documenting specific measures and targets for each of the 2006-10 Strategic Goals and Objectives]. Data for each of the four years were provided for most measures, which allowed for longitudinal assessment, and the outcomes of tasks that were completed to support the 2006-10 Strategic Goals and Objectives were recently documented [R3 E27]. College leaders and managers have worked with their departments to establish expected outcomes and a timeline for the current 2010-2013 Strategic Plan. At the end of each fiscal year they will report on the actual results achieved [R3 E28].

### **Program Review**

As mentioned briefly above, all Academic Divisions and Student Services Areas continue to produce 3-year plans [R3 E29], strategic and operational proposals [R3 E30], and annual or published program reviews [R3 E31]. These documents are completed based on data gathered in various reports, including SLO assessment [R3 E32]. To ensure sustained use of data, presentations have been made to both the Administrative Leadership Group (ALG) and the Academic Affairs Leadership Team (AALT) regarding processes and responsibilities [R3 E33]. The number and quality of Solano College program reviews demonstrate faculty and staff commitment to making data driven decisions, effectively assessing programs, contributing to institutional effectiveness, and seeking ways to improve student success and achievement.

**Conclusion**

Solano Community College is an institution that focuses on assessment, analysis, action, and re-assessment in planning and decision-making. At this time, the college has exceeded the expectations of this Recommendation by not only “establish[ing] and implement[ing] a clear, systematic, consistent, and ongoing method of measuring and evaluating its effectiveness in achieving stated strategic planning goals and student learning outcomes,” but sustaining and enhancing the processes by which the college plans and evaluates.



### **Recommendation 6: Staffing and Organizational Stability**

**The college should continue to focus on prior accreditation evaluation reports and implement the recommendations. Stability in personnel, particularly in leadership positions, fiscal services and human resources will help the college to meet the requirements of Standard III and assure institutional integrity. (III.A, III.D.1-3, ER 5)**

Solano Community College has made excellent progress in areas of staffing and organizational stability by increasing its administrative capacity and ensuring that the College employs qualified personnel and oversight of financial resources as outlined in Standards III.A and D and ER 5.

#### **Morale**

As acknowledged by the previous visiting team's report, Solano Community College's relatively new superintendent/president, Dr. Jowel Laguerre, "has engendered . . . good morale among the staff." S/P Laguerre has sustained this positive trend through his encouragement and practice of open and frequent dialogue in order to solicit input and ensure transparency. For example, he holds regular meetings with faculty, staff and student leadership, as well as with the presidents of the faculty and classified unions and the Academic Senate [R6 E1]. He also communicates regularly with the college via S/P Direct, an electronic newsletter, which includes college updates and activities as well as recognitions of staff, faculty, and student contributions [R6 E2]. S/P Laguerre also sends a regular S/P Gram to the Board of Trustees [R6 E3] and makes regular Flexible Calendar In-Service (FlexCal) presentations, updating the college on issues of importance as well as presenting awards and recognizing contributions [R6 E4]. In addition, S/P Laguerre encourages a close college community by promoting informal gatherings, such as faculty, administration, and staff dinners with the Board of Trustees [R6 E5] as well as dinner parties at his own home [R6 E6]. Finally, S/P Laguerre has made every effort to connect Solano Community College with its community at large through inclusive outreach activities, such as his participation in numerous service groups, public speaking engagements, and encouragement of community participation in college focus groups and the Strategic Planning Project [R6 E7]. He has also established strong ties to the community through meetings with local Chambers of Commerce (Fairfield, Vacaville, Suisun, Vallejo, Dixon, and Winters), local elected officials, and other community leaders [R6 E8]. These communications and activities encourage community constituent participation in college affairs and ensure that community members feel a part of the college community, creating a strong and stable partnership in a highly collaborative environment.

The ACCJC has also recognized that "the open communicative style of the new president has helped staff to feel empowered as partners in the decision-making processes of the college." Many of the items from above reflect the college's desire and capacity for empowerment. Additionally, open forums to meet and discuss the issues of the day have also been significant. For example, there have been forums and Board meetings at the Vacaville and Vallejo Centers, which has expanded the college community and ensured that all areas of the college service area and all faculty and staff are included in dialogue [R6 E9]. In order to facilitate access to candidates and allow for input from faculty and staff regarding hiring, there have also been second interview candidate forums [R6 E10], reorganization forums [R6 E11], and budget update forums [R6 E12]. In addition, internal Faculty Coordinator positions now follow

external hiring practices [R6 E13]. All non-confidential personnel matters are discussed with the corresponding unions and hiring decisions are shared with constituency group representatives. All of these efforts encourage input and promote awareness and mutual respect throughout the college community, engendering confidence in Solano's administration and processes and leading to a positive and collegial atmosphere that furthers institutional integrity.

### **Administrative Capacity and Stability**

The previous visiting team expressed concern regarding "the impact of the proposed administrative reorganization" and encouraged Solano to "keep stable administrative capacity as a goal for the reorganization." In order to successfully accomplish this goal and strengthen administrative capacity, the college has realigned reporting structures, duties, and areas of responsibility, in some instances creating new positions. The most notable change is that the college now has an Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs (EVPASA), replacing a Vice President of Academic Affairs and a Vice President of Student Services, who both had numerous, far-reaching responsibilities. The EVPASA position now has oversight of mid-level positions to whom primary responsibilities for curriculum, scheduling, student discipline, accreditation, enrollment management, and Academic Council have been appropriately delegated. The various responsibilities, although remaining under the direction of the EVPASA, are now the primary responsibilities of many distinct individuals [R6 E14]. The direct impacts of this reorganization has been to increase administrative stability, clarify administrative structure, create opportunities and improved capacity for immediate administrative professional development, and enhanced general administrative capacity by decentralizing responsibility and expertise among all administrators to further succession planning efforts and ensure stability in administrative personnel, particularly in Academic Affairs and Student Services leadership positions. In addition, many of the new administrative hires live in the College's service area. The college community is optimistic that this will lead to a stable administrative leadership group [R6 E15]. In sum the college's concerted efforts to stabilize its leadership will help the college to meet the requirements of Standard III and assure institutional integrity.

In relation to the previous visiting team's expressed concern over vacancies in administration, during the team's visit the college promptly hired a new Vice President of Business and Administrative Services and a Director of Fiscal Services. After a short time, appropriate due diligence, and recognition of the need for a new and more efficient college direction and considering the best interest of the college, the Board of Trustees accepted the timely resignation of the two administrators. The college's efficient decision making and resiliency allowed it to quickly identify highly specialized and skilled replacements. This prompt and decisive action allowed the college to evaluate its current status, plan for future permanent replacements, and set larger strategic goals [R6 E16]. During the tenure of these interim hires, the college effectively addressed budgetary concerns, generated the 2010-2011 budget, revamped the budget structure, appropriately designated expenditures to available resources, and provided accurate, transparent, and complete information to the college community. During this time, the college has also set appropriate budget targets resulting in a 7% reserve, which is 2% above policy requirement [R6 E17].

Additionally, Solano College's Board of Trustees recently extended Superintendent/President Laguerre's contract for two more years, ensuring the stability of leadership in the college [R6 E18]. Current college leaders have also been judicious in the employ and use of consultants to strengthen the capacity of the college's personnel. For example, under their leadership, SunGard Banner consultants have provided virtual support for key college classified staff, programmers and Banner technicians as well as training and troubleshooting [R6 E19].

### **Conclusion**

The reorganization and the resulting "new" eyes on Solano Community College's practices and procedures have led to the renovations and positive changes mentioned above. These changes have been transparent and will lead the college toward achieving its Mission.

### **General Recommendation 8: Leadership**

**In order for the Governing Board to focus on the institution’s major issues and questions of policy, the Board of Trustees is encouraged to delegate full responsibility and authority to the President to implement and administer Board policies and the operation of the college. The institutional leaders should likewise foster empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence through dialogue that builds trust and increases focus on student learning and assessment of learning outcomes, institutional effectiveness, and integrity. (Standards IV.A.1, IV.A.3, IV.B.1.j, IV.B.2a)**

As the most recent visiting team noted, Superintendent/President Laguerre has continued to “establish a productive and trusting relationship with the Board of Trustees.” The relationships that S/P Laguerre has fostered with the Board as a whole and with individual members have continued to evolve in a positive manner, allowing changes in Board activities that focus on institutional effectiveness and an overall positive environment at the college.

### **Collegiality**

Many activities have enhanced relationships within the Board of Trustees and between the Board and members of the college and community. For example, the trustees and the Superintendent/President hold monthly study sessions aimed at extensive and free-flowing conversations around issues of interest such as accreditation, budget, green technology, and Measure G. As a change from the structured environment of formal Board meetings, these sessions, which often include members of the community, faculty, and staff, foster open dialogue and a naturally evolving collegiality [R8 E1]. In this vein, the Superintendent/President also holds social and professional dinners at his home, through which he has fostered personal relationships in order to enhance collegiality in more professional settings [R8 E2]. Overall, S/P Laguerre has sustained his successful and productive interactions with the Board.

S/P Laguerre and Board members have also worked together for outreach by participating in different professional and community-based activities. For example, trustees have been invited to participate in discussions with local government leaders as they speak about developing partnerships with the college, and to participate in community events such as a visit to the state capitol for Advocate's Day and a visit with Senator Feinstein March 16, 2010 [R8 E3]. These activities have fostered positive relationships between the Board and the community at large and are encouraged by S/P Laguerre in his statement at the bottom of each “SP Gram” since 3-7-10: “If you want information about any of the activities and if you want to be involved, please let me know.”

Finally, Solano has experienced continued success with the Board of Trustees’ Code of Conduct, and at the June 22, 2010 Board of Trustees retreat the Board re-affirmed the code without changes [R8 E4]. Board minutes support the assertion that Board members have improved in their respectful treatment of those who present to the Board, and Board members are cordial amongst themselves in public sessions, even if there is a dissenting opinion. In open and closed sessions, the Board has been able to “agree to disagree” in a professional manner. This collegiality has led to subcommittee meetings that are positive and productive. For example, the Board participated in a Vallejo Expansion Sub-Committee

that toured a possible site for expansion of the Vallejo Center, eventually authorizing a bid on the property. The Auditor Selection Sub-Committee hired an auditor and continues to meet regularly to monitor progress, and an Accreditation Sub-Committee follows progress on the College's various accreditation reports and activities. Finally, a Policy Sub-Committee re-worked the Board's Policy 1000 series, and a Self-Evaluation Sub-Committee offers quarterly reports [R8 E5].

### **Delegation of Responsibilities**

The Board of Trustees has continued to demonstrate that its members are confident in S/P Laguerre's ability to manage the "daily operation" of the college, have "delegated management and operational responsibilities to the president," and "work well together." The most recent visiting team observed that micromanagement was still an issue on some level, so the Board has consulted specific Board Policies, such as 1020, 1070, 1071, and 1075 to address and alleviate this concern [R8 E6]. Furthermore, in cooperation with the Board, the Faculty Association President has expressed willingness to counsel faculty members if their interactions with the Board or individual Board members might potentially invite actions that could be construed as micromanagement [R8 E7]. As an example of reformed behavior, one of the Board members had previously been writing questions and comments on agenda items and requesting that these be shared with each Board member and responded to prior to Board meetings. As a solution, Dr. Laguerre established a finite timeline on questions, face to face communication, and agenda reviews, and Board members now see documents behind agenda items in a timely manner so they can do "due diligence" to budget items rather than making last-minute adjustments. At a Board retreat it was decided that Trustee Young will be point-person for budgetary concerns, which are addressed the Monday before the general assembly of the Board. Her concerns are then addressed and shared with the Board. Similarly, S/P Laguerre meets informally and reviews agendas with individual Board members or in small groups, allowing him policy-ensured control of the substance of Board agendas while being respectful of the Board's wishes and concerns. [R8 E8]

Furthermore, the Board has demonstrated faith and trust in the Superintendent/President by regularly supporting his actions. For example, the Board supported S/P Laguerre's administrative reorganization [R8 E9], as well as his proposals regarding Board meetings, such as agenda format, meeting times and locations, action/information items, and changes to the Board meeting structure [R8 E10]. The Board's trust in S/P Laguerre has also allowed him to successfully lead the college to Center status for Vallejo. Due to the strong relationship between S/P Laguerre and the Board, the recent resignation and replacement of the Vice President of Business and Administrative Services and the Director of Fiscal Services were recommended by the Superintendent/President and quickly approved by the board [R8 E11]. These actions, among others, demonstrate quick, smooth, non-confrontational decisions and, in contrast with past actions, trust rather than contentious dialogue.

### **Professional Development and Training**

To continue its positive growth, the Board has defined "ongoing training activities for new and incumbent trustees." First of all, the college has procured literature for Board members to learn more about effective trusteeship; the small library provides access to books and other materials as they become available [R8 E12]. The President of the Board has also attended workshops for Board chairs,

and other trustees have attended workshops and conferences aimed at trustee development [R8 E13]. Additionally, the Superintendent/President writes a weekly update to keep the trustees informed of developments at the college and its community [R8 E14]. These updates serve as an instrument for trustee development by keeping them informed of important issues and activities they might attend. The Board has also participated in retreats facilitated by ACCT consultant Dr. Pam Fischer, with topics including ACCJC updates, self-evaluation, re-affirmation of the Code of Conduct, and 2010-2011 Goals. At the most recent retreat, Dr. Fischer praised the Board for its progress [R8 E15].

In addition, the Board of Trustees has participated in Quarterly Self-Evaluations that have been compared to previous evaluations to analyze where improvement has been made or needs to be made. [R8 E16].

Finally, Special Trustee Tom Henry has been available to train new and incumbent trustees through ongoing communication with individual Board members and by attending Board meetings, Study Sessions, Retreats and other scheduled Board functions. To ensure the continuation of this training and to further the Board's commitment to addressing ACCJC's Standard IV, the Board extended its contract with Mr. Henry to June 2011. This action demonstrates the Board's commitment and willingness to work collaboratively with the State Chancellor's Office to focus on the institution's major issues relative to leadership and embrace the authority of the Superintendent/President in administering the day-to-day operation of the college.

### **Conclusion**

Special Trustee Henry has regular and ongoing communication with the Board President, attends regular and special Board meetings, Board Retreats and other pertinent Board functions. As such, the Special Trustee is in a unique position to assess how well the Board is adhering to Standard IV and specifically empowering the Superintendent/President to administer Board policy and run the day-to-day operations of the college. Mr. Henry has indicated that the June 22, 2010 Board Retreat, facilitated by ACCT's Dr. Pam Fischer, provided clear evidence that the Board is attentive and receptive to effective and efficient trusteeship. The Special Trustee also commented on the fact that the Board completed its self-evaluation, re-affirmed its Code of Conduct, and established its 2010-2011 Goals as further evidence of the Board's commitment and understanding of its role as policy developer and the Superintendent/President's role as chief operation officer. The Special Trustee has further stated that the recent behavior of the Board members relative to the discussion of the Superintendent/President's evaluation, contract extension and fiscal office reorganization demonstrates a mature Board with a solid understanding of its role and responsibilities. The Board discussions on these items were thorough, professional and within their role. At the September 15, 2010 Board meeting, Special Trustee Henry specifically discussed Recommendation 8, which addresses Standard IV. Mr. Henry congratulated the Board on their efforts to support the Superintendent/President in his day-to-day efforts to run the College. He commended them on their professional demeanor and stated that their use of data for decision making, evidenced by actions and discussions, has been remarkable. Mr. Henry also thanked the Board for their continued collegial efforts.

Solano Community College's Board of Trustees is effective and productive. Interactions within the Board, between Board members and the Superintendent/President, and between Board members and other constituents of the college demonstrate a Board that not only understands its adopted Code of Conduct, but adheres to its guiding tenets.

## ADDENDUM TO ADDRESS COMMISSION QUESTIONS ON 2009 AUDIT

The 2009 Solano Community College District Audit noted the below issues regarding Accreditation Standard II.D and IV, specifically “the ‘significant deficiency’ in student financial aid, ‘state compliance’ with apportionment and student enrollment, and the status of ‘significant deficiencies for internal controls’ cited in previous year’s [sic] reports.” While the official recommendation regarding finance was removed from sanction, a follow up letter from the Commission required the following update to show progress in addressing the June 30, 2009 Perry-Smith audit.

### 1. FEDERAL COMPLIANCE—STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

#### Condition

One student’s total financial awards exceeded her financial aid need. The excess was a result of the student receiving more Federal Work Study aid than she was granted. The District was required to pay back the excess amount of \$2,092 to the Student Financial Aid Program.

Another student received more Federal Work Study aid than she was granted. The excess in Federal Work Study aid did not result in total aid exceeding financial aid, but was not in compliance with the grant amount awarded. The District was required to pay back the excess of \$4,088 to the Federal Work Study Program.

#### **Excess of Need—Update**

Student X — The institution was not required to pay \$2,92 from the Federal Work Study account. This student had demonstrated the need for a computer, which falls under educational necessity (supplies). Therefore, her budget was increased by \$2000 to cover the need for the computer. The balance of \$92 falls under the \$300 tolerance level [AE 1]

Student Y — The institution was not required to pay \$4,088 from the Federal Work Study account. The student had sufficient need to cover the previous excess amount of \$4,088. Student work study earnings for the 2008-09 year were \$6,088, which has been entered and accounted for. The student still had a remaining need amount [AE 2].

#### Condition

The District did not perform a formal reconciliation between its financial aid data and the Common Origination Disbursement (COD) Report. Periodically the Financial Aid Analyst compared the COD report to the district’s financial aid data for reasonableness, but there was no evidence of the reconciliation or review. Additionally, per discussion with management, the



reconciliation between the District's financial general ledger and the COD system was not being performed and recently resulted in the district repayment of approximately \$149,000 to the Department of Education.

**Direct Loan Reconciliation—Update**

At the time of this citing, the FSA software was not installed to be able to perform the reconciliation of the Direct Loans. This work was completed in September 2009, and accounts are now fully reconciled [AE 3]. District staff has been very diligent with the reconciliation process and continues to work with the software to ensure that the work is completed in a timely manner.

District staff is confirming repayment or other resolution with the Department of Education.

Condition

The District's financial aid system did not trace applicants' criminal background. The Pell and Direct financial aid disqualify applicants if they are incarcerated in a Federal or State penal institution. Since the District did not track criminal background of students, the auditor could not determine if any applicants should be disqualified from Pell or Direct loan aid due to incarceration. The District was required to assess the student population for the 2008/09 fiscal year to determine the percentage of the student population that was incarcerated.

**Incarceration-Update**

Solano College accepts a student's written self-certification that he or she is no longer incarcerated. Unless the District has conflicting information, the student is eligible for Title IV aid. Solano College's Interim Dean of Enrollment Management/Director of Financial Aid verified that Solano was using the accepted and appropriate institutional protocol through direct communication with Department of Education (DOE) staff. The DOE response and excerpts from the Federal Financial Aid Regulations manual are attached [AE 4].

Please note that the DOE attempted to establish a prisoner match to determine whether a Title IV applicant is incarcerated, but encountered problems that made such a match impractical. The Department subsequently dropped those plans.

Condition

Students had the ability to continue enrollment even though student aid funds may have been owed back to the district. Students should not be able to continue enrollment without paying

the funds owed. The District must perform a 100% file review and calculation for all students who dropped or withdrew from the District during 08/09 to determine the amount of Title IV funds that must be returned to the government.

**Financial Aid Repayments--Update**

The issue with the Return to Title Four (R2T4) was resolved. The District completed all of the calculations for 2008-09 and reported them to the DOE. The R2T4 process has been automated through the Banner System for 2009 -2010 and students cannot enroll if funds are due for any reason. The R2T4 calculations are processed on a regular basis by the Financial Aid Systems Analyst. This issue has been fully addressed [AE 5].

## 2. STATE COMPLIANCE—GENERAL APPORTIONMENT AND STUDENT ENROLLMENT

### Condition

The Second Period Apportionment Report was prepared incorrectly. The District report of attendance was not consistent with the “Apportionment Summary CCFS 320: Summer 2008” report, which summarizes the attendance. The error resulted in an understatement of nonresident contact hours in Part IV and VI of the apportionment report. The fiscal impact is an understatement of 1.71 nonresident Full Time Equivalent Students (FTES).

Additionally, the District erroneously subtracted 25.49 FTES that had been borrowed from 2007/2008 Revised Annual Apportionment Report from Spring 2009 resident weekly contact hours. The 25.49 FTES was correctly subtracted from Summer 2008 resident daily contact hours on the Second Period Apportionment Report. This is an error because the 25.49 FTES was subtracted twice. The error resulted in an understatement of resident contact hours in Part II of the apportionment report. The fiscal impact is an understatement of 25.49 resident FTES.

#### **General Apportionment—Update**

The understatement of non-resident contact hours, for which the District does not receive apportionment, and the inadvertent subtraction of FTES were clerical errors made as a result of trying to complete the 320 at a time in which the College was producing the necessary Banner report audit tools at the same time as producing the report. These errors were corrected at the P3 filing [AE 6] The District 320 reports are now filed using Banner 7.6 which is the version that produces detail and summary California Apportionment reports. Current Banner reports are significantly improved, and the administrator in charge of completing this report has created a “check-off sheet” that is completed prior to reporting the actual 320 numbers. The report is verified by Admissions & Records staff members then reviewed for submission by the College executive leadership, which includes the Director of Fiscal Services, Director of Admissions & Records, Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and the Superintendent/President [AE 7].

### Condition

The District’s course tabulations for all courses did not include all required information for each course section in one document. The following items were not properly included: 1) Student Name 2) Student Identification code 3) Residency Category 4) Actual Student Hours of Attendance. There is no fiscal impact for this finding.

#### **Course Tabulations—Update**

The Director of Admissions and Records, in conjunction with the Information Technology (IT) department, has finalized the report requirements stated above. This new report, the SZR320S, includes all the information that had been missing as described in the audit finding [AE 8].

### Condition

The census date for the JOUR 60 class was 9/10/08, and for the BIO 99 class 9/12/08, both in week 4. These were 17 week courses, starting on 8/18/08, and as such the census should have been taken in week 3. There is no fiscal impact for this finding.

In addition, two students selected for drop testing were improperly counted for FTES. One student dropped the course on 1/26/2009, and the other student dropped the course on 1/29/2009. Both of these drop dates were before the census date of 2/9/2009 and therefore should have been recorded in Banner as drops, not withdrawals.

Finally, one student selected for drop testing was improperly counted for FTES. The student dropped the course on 3/22/2009, which was before the census date of 3/27/2009, and therefore should have been recorded as a drop in Banner, not a withdrawal. The fiscal impact for this finding is an overstatement of 0.67 FTES.

#### **Students Actively Enrolled and Drop Testing—Update**

These errors occurred as a result of an incorrect initial Banner set up routine. The Director of Admissions & Records, with the support of an expert Banner consultant, reviewed the set-ups and fixed the dates that had already been set. The corrections were identified and made in a timely manner so that the District was able to ensure the error was corrected on the Annual CCFS 320 enrollment report filed on July 15 [AE 8]. The proper steps are documented in the Director of Admissions & Records Term Set-Up file so that this mistake will not occur again. In addition, the administrator in charge of completing this report has created a “check-off sheet” (referred to above) that is completed prior to reporting the actual 320 numbers and verified by Admissions & Records staff members. The report is then reviewed for submission by the College executive leadership, including the Director of Fiscal Services, Director of Admissions & Records, Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and the Superintendent/President [AE 7]

### 3. SIGNIFICANT DEFICIENCIES – INTERNAL CONTROLS

#### Condition

The District did not have controls in place to ensure the proper preparation and review of bank reconciliations for the District bank accounts on a monthly basis in a timely manner. The District did not have appropriate communication or controls in place between the Bookstore and Fiscal Services and segregation of duties in place to reconcile the activity that is posted into the general ledger. The District did not have appropriate controls in place to ensure a review of documentation is indicated by a signature once the review is complete. As all reconciliations were completed prior to closing the District records, there had been no fiscal impact; however, the potential existed for an error to occur and remain undetected.

#### *Bank Reconciliations*

The District was unable to provide reconciliations for Cash in County Treasury or other operating accounts during the review of internal controls. Cash reconciliations were not completed in a timely manner. For example, the operating account for the Bookstore had not been reconciled since December 2008, and the operating accounts for the Associated Student Clubs and the Children's Center had not been reconciled since February 2009.

#### **Bank Reconciliations—Update**

Fiscal Services has developed a schedule to facilitate the completion of the bank reconciliations in a timely manner [AE 9]. The schedule requires the accounts to be balanced and signed off by the Director of Fiscal Services within 60 days of the close of each month's books. The County Treasury cash reconciliations are dependent on the timeliness of the County Office of Education reconciliations with the County Treasurer. These reports are usually received within 30 days of the end of the month. Once received, the staff has 30 days to complete the reconciliation to the County Office of Education records. Other accounts are dependent on the statements received from the bank; however, the District is working to get the files electronically. Although cash was being monitored for the Bookstore, the reconciliations were delayed in the 2008-09 fiscal year due to some conversion challenges, but they were completed subsequent to year's end.

For the first half of 2009-10, bank accounts were reconciled by staff and reviewed by the Interim Director of Fiscal Services, according to the new schedule. However, once the Director position was filled with a permanent replacement employee in January, and due to changes in job duties and extensive training required on the Banner finance system, bank reconciliations review ceased. When the permanent replacement employee resigned, the new Interim Director reinstated timely reconciliations, will continue to maintain timelines, and is prepared to have all reconciliations reviewed by the outside auditors during the their annual audit.

*Cash Receipts – Bookstore*

Segregation of duties for cash receipts at the Bookstore was inadequate. The head cashier created the cash count sheets and the Daily Sales Recap, and then input the total sales for the day into a spreadsheet. Fiscal Services used this information to post activity to the general ledger.

Cash at the Bookstore was not counted in dual custody, and cash deposits were not reviewed prior to being collected by Brinks. There was no indication of review by the Fiscal Services department of the Daily Sales Recap prior to the posting of journal entries.

**Cash Receipts—Bookstore—Update**

The closing supervisor now uses a cash-counting scale with a printer that prints out the counts by denomination, and also records the supervisor's system ID number and the register number. The closing cashier verifies the cash counts and signs the daily cash receipts log. The deposit slip is made by the Book Store clerk and placed in the Brinks bag for pick up. The amount is verified by Fiscal Services when the deposit is made by Brinks at the bank.

The attached documentation [AE 10] indicates the bookstore supervisor's system ID and register number, and the closing cashier's signature on the cash receipts log. Fiscal Services also initials the count sheet indicating agreement with the deposit in the general ledger.

*Cash Disbursements – Bookstore*

There was no indication of review for vendor payments related to bookstore transactions. The Vendor Payment Sheet used to indicate proper management authorization, support for receipt of goods, and review of the appropriateness of budget codes and mathematical accuracy was not being signed, and there was no formal indication of review of purchase orders for bookstore inventory, indicating approval prior to being submitted to the vendor to place an order.

**Cash Disbursements—Bookstore—Update**

A goldenrod Vendor Payment Sheet is produced for all Bookstore check runs [AE 11]. The Accounting Technician II in Fiscal Services signs the Vendor Payment Sheet, along with the Bookstore Manager, and either the Director of Fiscal Services or Accountant electronically authorizes the processing of the payments. Bookstore purchase orders are most often submitted electronically, frequently by the buyer. The Bookstore Manager initials the Vendor Payment Sheets and has access at any time to any or all purchase orders created online. Due to the immediate nature of certain book orders, the Bookstore Manager's approval is not always before the fact. The District will move to a process whereby the Bookstore Manager also initials approval of the purchase orders created, after the fact, on a sequential listing of purchase orders generated.

*Cash Receipts – Children's Center*

There was no indication of review of the Deposit Summary sheet and Deposit Receipt issued by the Fiscal Services Office to the Children's Center. Cash received at the Fiscal Services Office was not counted in dual custody.

**Cash Receipts—Children's Center—Update**

The Director and Assistant Director count the deposit together and record their initials and the date of the dual count on the deposit slip to verify the accuracy of the amount sent to Fiscal Services for deposit [AE 12].

<b>Index of Abbreviations and Acronyms</b>	
A&R	Admissions and Records
AALT	Academic Affairs Leadership Team
ACCCA	Association of Community Colleges Trustees
ACCJC	Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges
ALG	Administrative Leadership Group
ARCC	
ASSC	Associated Students of Solano College
Board	Board of Trustees
CSEA	California School Employee Association
FABPAC	Finance and Budget Planning Advisory Council
FlexCal	Flexible Calendar
HR	Human Resources
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
IT	Information Technology
R&P	Research and Planning
PERT	Process Evaluation and Review Team
SAOs	Service Area Outcomes
SCFA	Solano College Faculty Association
SGC	Shared Governance Council
SLOs	Student Learning Outcomes
S/P	Superintendent/President
TLC	Teaching and Learning Center
EVPASA	Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs
VPASLR	Vice President of Academic Success and Learning Resources
VTEA	Vocational and Technical Education Act
WASC	Western Association of Schools and Colleges



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0.02 *techlr.pbworks.com*

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