

ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT

**Solano Community College
4000 Suisun Valley Road
Fairfield, CA 94534**

A confidential report prepared for
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited
Solano Community College
On October 24 – 27, 2011

Mr. Jerry Patton and Ms. Kathryn G. Lehner
Co-Chairs

VISITING TEAM ROSTER

Solano Community College

October 24 – 27, 2011

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President
College of the Desert

Ms. Kathryn G. Lehner (Co-Chair)
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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

INSTITUTION: Solano Community College
DATES OF VISIT: October 24-27, 2011
TEAM CO-CHAIRS: Mr. Jerry Patton and Ms. Kathryn G. Lehner

An eleven-member accreditation team visited Solano Community College from October 24 through October 27, 2011, for the purpose of evaluating how well the institution is achieving its stated purposes, analyzing how well the college is meeting the Accrediting Commission Standards, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the status of the college.

In preparation for the visit, the team members attended an all-day training session on September 6, 2011, conducted by the ACCJC and studied Commission materials prepared for visiting teams. Team members read carefully the College's self-study report, including the recommendations from the 2005 accreditation visiting team, and assessed the evidence provided by the College.

Prior to the visit team members completed written evaluations of the self-study report and began identifying areas for further investigation. On the day before the formal beginning of the visit, the team members spent the afternoon discussing their views of the written materials provided by the College, reviewing evidence provided by the College and other materials submitted to the Commission since its last comprehensive visit.

During the visit, the team met with over 150 faculty, staff, administrators, members of the Board of Trustees, and students. Additionally, various team members met with 17 committee and groups represented by a broad spectrum of the College community constituents. The team co-chair met with members of the Board of Trustees, the president of the college and various administrators. In addition, team members visited the Vallejo Center, Nut Tree Airport and the Vacaville Center. The team also attended three open meetings to allow for comment from any member of the campus or local community.

The team felt that the self-study report was well organized and the format was easy to follow. College staff members were very accommodating to team members and available for interviews and follow-up conversations. The College was well prepared and ready for the team's visit.

Summary

The visiting team observed a college that has a dedicated cadre of faculty, staff and students who believe strongly in their mission and in the value of student learning. Those beliefs were evident to the team as they observed the daily operations of the College and listened to the comments and discussions with employees and students.

The team noted the following commendations:

1. The team commends Solano College for its heroic efforts to meet accreditation recommendations during a time of significant institutional challenges. The entire college community has responded to the ACCJC recommendations with exemplary professionalism, rolling up their sleeves and working together to strengthen the institution and its commitment to student success.
2. The team commends the faculty and staff for maintaining a caring and nurturing educational culture focused on student learning and success even in the face of organizational turbulence and fiscal crisis.
3. The Board of Trustees is to be commended for its commitment to student success and by taking significant strides in understanding, accepting and demonstrating its role in governance and supporting the Superintendent/President along with the entire college community and each other.
4. The President is to be commended for the vision and energy he has brought to Solano College and for creating a sense of community on-campus and in the greater community.
5. The team commends the new administrative team for working to create an institutional climate of optimism, transparency, collaboration, and focus on student learning and students.
6. The team commends the Ethnic Diversity Coalition for its stamina and caring in promoting awareness of, and addressing the needs of, the College's diverse student population.

After carefully reading the self-study, examining evidence, interviewing college personnel and students, and discussing the findings in light of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges 2002 Standards, the team offers the following recommendations to Solano Community College. The recommendations are based on specific standards cited in parentheses following each component of the recommendation.

Recommendation #1

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College modify its mission statement to identify its intended student population and its commitment to achieving student learning. The College should consistently use the same mission statement in all documents and publications. Additionally, the mission statement should be used by the college as a primary force in decisions made by the College. (Standards I.A.1-4, IV.B.1.b)

Recommendation #2

As noted in recommendations 1, 2 and 3 of the 2005 Accreditation Evaluation Report, and in order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College build upon its progress in developing an integrated planning process in order to ensure that:

- processes are documented and consistently implemented for all college planning.

- the various college plans are clearly linked to each other and the interrelationship between the plans is clearly articulated.
- program reviews are regularly assessed for quality and incorporated into resource allocation processes.
- all major resource allocation is clearly linked to college planning, including hiring, enrollment management, and bond projects.
- integration of planning and resource allocation occurs in a timely manner.
- planning processes are widely understood and followed by the entire campus community.
- planning processes are ongoing and systematic and continue to be regularly reviewed and revised as necessary.
- there is broad participation and meaningful engagement from all members of the College community in the planning processes.

All planning processes should be clearly linked to fulfillment of the College mission and strategic goals to support continuous improvement of student learning and student success. (Standards I.B.1-7, II.A.2.e-f, II.B.3.a, II.B.4, III.A.6, III.B.2, III.C.2, III.D.1.a-d, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.B.2.b)

Recommendation #3

As noted in recommendation 4 of the 2005 Accreditation Evaluation Report, in order to meet the standards and achieve proficiency in achieving student learning outcomes by fall 2012, the team recommends that the College:

- accelerate its schedule for the completion and assessment of effective and measurable student learning outcomes (SLOs) for courses, instructional programs, and the institution; and that the development and assessment be faculty driven.
- accelerate the development and assessment of effective and measurable SLOs or service area outcomes (SAOs) for student services and all other operational services.
- provide SLO/SAO training for all instructional, student services, and all other staff.

(Standards I.B.3, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.g, II.B.4, II.C.2, ER 10)

Recommendation #4

In order to meet the standards and to ensure institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that resources and support for institutional research be made available to provide necessary and timely data and information for program review, evaluation of institutional effectiveness, documentation of assessment results, and tracking of planning processes. The results of these efforts should be used to demonstrate that the institution regularly uses data in all integrated planning processes and has developed a culture of evidence in all decision making. (Standards I.B, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.3, IV.B.2.b)

Recommendation #5

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College expand its data collection, analysis and planning related to meeting the needs and fostering the success of an increasingly diverse student population. Student and staff equity and diversity plans should be fully integrated with the College's planning processes and should include strategies geared toward

attracting a diverse pool of qualified applicants able to contribute to the success of the College's student population. (Standards II.A.1.a, II.A.2.d, II.B.3.d, III.A.4.a-c)

Recommendation #6

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College develop mechanisms and learning support systems to ensure that students enrolled in distance education courses are achieving stated learning outcomes at a level comparable with students enrolled in onsite programs and courses. (Standard II.A.1.b-c)

Recommendation #7

In order to meet the standards and increase institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the College develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures that incorporate effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes into the evaluation process of faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving student learning outcomes. (Standards II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, III.A.1.c)

Recommendation #8

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College develop a plan to provide equitable access to appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students who are taking classes at the Vacaville and Vallejo Centers and online. Increased funding and staffing for the libraries at the two centers should be a priority. This plan should also include a regular evaluation of the services. (Standards II.B.3.a, II.C.1)

Recommendation #9

In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the College develop a clear, written code of ethics for all its personnel. (Standard III.A.1.d)

ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT FOR SOLANO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Introduction

Established in 1945 as Vallejo Junior College, part of the Vallejo Unified School District, Solano Community College (SCC) became an independent community college district in 1965. The 192-acre central campus, located just off Interstate 80 in Fairfield, CA, opened in 1971 with 5,000 students. The SCC District currently includes Vacaville, Vallejo, and Travis Air Force Base Centers and enrolls approximately 12,000 students from the communities of Benicia, Dixon, Fairfield, Suisun, Vacaville, Winters, and Vallejo. As of a 2010 population estimate, this service area consists of approximately 376,000 residents. The District provides educational and training opportunities in four broad mission areas: Academic/Transfer, Career Technical Education/Vocational, Developmental/Basic Skills, and Continuing Education.

In addition to the approximately 2600 course sections offered each semester, 88 degrees, 42 certificates of achievement, and 28 job direct certificates (per the 2010-2011 catalog), SCC also offers Vistas, a community education and lifelong learning program; the Solano College Small Business Development Center, which offers training, business advice, and mentoring to assist small business owners and managers start, buy, assess, manage, improve, expand, grow or sell their companies; and Contract Education, in which the College partners with local businesses, industries, and agencies to develop solutions for workforce or workplace needs. In addition, in 2009 Solano Community College was awarded a grant by the California Clean Energy Workforce Training Program (CEWTP) of the Employment Development Department of the State of California to establish Green Building and Clean Energy Pre-Apprenticeship programs. SCC's program is targeted to providing veterans and unemployed persons in Solano County an opportunity to begin training for a career in the Clean Building and Clean Energy fields.

SCC has recently undergone extensive expansion and renovation due to the passing of a \$124 million bond measure (Measure G). On SCC's Fairfield campus, a new two-story Student Services building was constructed to consolidate services into a central entry plaza and "one-stop" location for services such as Admissions and Records; Counseling; the Tutoring Center; Veterans' Affairs; Financial Aid; Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS); Disability Services Program (DSP); the Assessment Center; the Career/Job Placement Center; the Transfer Center; Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement (MESA) and offices for Umoja, CalWORKs, and the Office of the Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. This building has improved student access to services and also provides additional classroom space. Measure G has also allowed for extensive facility renovations, including the implementation of smart classrooms across campus, a new faculty office building, a new adaptive physical education (PE) building, and a faculty/staff lounge. Additional Measure G activities include sports complex construction, utility infrastructure repair, ADA compliance, exterior lighting and building security, and scheduled maintenance repairs, as well as the building of centers in Vacaville and Vallejo.

Vacaville Center

In June 2010 a new Vacaville Center opened across the street from the original Center, which was established in October 1996. This new Center, located on a 60-acre site, features a 40,000 square foot, two-story, state-of-the art facility which houses 14 classrooms with a 700 student capacity, science and computer laboratories, a 60-seat lecture hall, math and reading/writing laboratories, faculty offices, and a multi-purpose room for theatre arts and physical education. This Center offers an array of academic and career technical education courses, averaging 80 sections each semester. (These numbers do not include enrollment or offerings at Travis AFB and Nut Tree Airport, whose numbers are captured under the Vacaville Center for reporting purposes only.) In July 2010, the former Vacaville Center Director position was upgraded to a Center Dean (educational administrator) position in order to effectively address the anticipated growth in size, complexity, and ongoing challenges at the Center. With this change, the Center's chief administrative officer is able to manage both the operations and personnel. The enhanced administrative and academic role of the Vacaville Center Dean includes the supervision of two academic programs: Aeronautics and Fire Technology. The Aeronautics Program provides training in basic maintenance techniques and specialized requirements for airframe and power plant work. Upon completion of required courses, students are eligible to take the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) exams for airframe or power plant licenses. The Aeronautics program is housed at the Nut Tree County Airport, located a few miles from the Center. The Fire Technology program, which is one of the College's top ten majors, provides the skills, knowledge, and training needed to be a firefighter. The Center hosted its first Fire Academy graduation in December 2010.

During the 2010-11 academic year, the Vacaville Center enrolled 644 Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES), averaging 1,642 students per semester (excluding summer 2010). There was a 33% increase in the Fall 2010 FTES and a 23% increase in Fall 2010 headcount for the Center over the prior fall semester. In order to serve these increasing numbers of students, the new Center has acquired increased service hours and additional staffing, including an administrative assistant to the dean, increased custodial and grounds keeping staffing, a part-time Community Services Officer, increased counseling services, library services, and a part-time Science Lab Technician. In addition, the former 1.4 FTE Extended Campus Assistant positions were reclassified as Student Services Generalists to reflect the growing student support needs at the Center. The Student Services Generalists perform a variety of support duties and provide current and potential students with registration, financial aid, outreach, assessment, and career services at the Center.

Vallejo Center

SCC opened a new Vallejo campus in September 2007, replacing and adding to classes that had formerly been held at Vallejo's JFK Library since 1984. The campus, now with Center status, is located on a 10-acre site, is a multi-story facility that includes classrooms, a lecture hall, a computer laboratory, bookstore distribution space, youth theatre rehearsal space, art exhibit areas and outdoor spaces for study and relaxation. Through its Needs Study, the Vallejo Center was recognized as an official campus by the State of California, enabling the Center to receive an

ongoing apportionment of \$1,100,000, which is being used to employ additional personnel, including a Learning Lab Technician for special needs students. Through marketing efforts and curriculum offerings, the Center has grown to serve more than 2,800 students, including a significant percentage of Hispanic, African American, and Asian students and all age groups from K-12 to senior citizens. Through collaboration with local principals, the Center is placing courses at local high school sites to help students initiate their college careers and prepare them for college success. The Center has more than 100 faculty and staff and generates over 1,300 FTES and approximately \$7,000,000 per year in revenue.

At the Vallejo Center, students can take two years of general education for transfer to a CSU or UC, and there are a number of job direct and other certificates available. The Center offers approximately 150 courses per term, with certificates and degrees in Business, Accounting, Office Technology, Criminal Justice, Human Services, Early Childhood Education, Art, Pre-Nursing, and a program for Registered Nursing. It provides a number of basic skills English and math courses to prepare the sizable percentage of underprepared students for college-level course work and provides Contract Education to the community in areas such as Green Technology and Computer Technology. In September 2007 the Vallejo Center established a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Sonoma State University to offer a BA degree for local residents interested in such careers as Education, Human Services, Criminal Justice, and Law. The Vallejo Center was given the 2010 Business of the Year award by the Vallejo Chamber of Commerce, and it received recognition from the California Postsecondary Education Commission, which positions the Center for state funding for the Phase II facility it is now planning. The Vallejo Center Expansion Advisory Committees are designing a new \$15-20 million Center for Higher Education, which will house Bachelor of Arts programs from Sonoma State University and the California Maritime Academy. Plans are also underway with local officials to establish a location in Benicia, and discussions are taking place to establish an institution in downtown Vallejo that will accommodate a Middle College, Solano Community College, and the California Maritime Academy.

Evaluation of Institutional Responses to Previous Recommendations

The comprehensive evaluation visit to Solano Community College in 2005 resulted in eight (8) recommendations. There have been a number of follow-up reports since the initial visit that revisited a number of these recommendations, and in some instances revised the original recommendations.

The first follow-up report and site visit was in response to the March 2007 Progress Report. This visit resulted in restatement of eight 2005 recommendations and a recommendation to focus on recommendations 6, 7, and 8 for the next progress report. These three recommendations focused on Staffing and Organization Stability, Fiscal Integrity and Stability, and Institutional Leadership including the operations of the Board of Trustees.

The second follow-up report and site visit, in response to the October 2007 Progress report, resulted in the College being placed on Warning and requested to prepare a Special Report (focusing on Recommendations 2, 6, 7, and 8), in addition to another Progress Report by October 2008.

The third follow-up report and site visit, in response to the October 2008 Progress Report, resulted in the College being placed on Show Cause and requested to prepare a Show Cause Report by April 1, 2009.

The April 1, 2009 Show Cause Report resulted in the College being taken off Show Cause and placed on Probation and requested to prepare a Follow-up Report by October 15, 2009. The October 2009 Follow-up Report resulted in the college continuing on Probation and requested to prepare a Follow-up Report by October 15, 2010.

The October 2011 visiting team has reviewed these same recommendations and concludes as follows:

Previous Recommendation #1

The College should broaden the self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional effectiveness among and between faculty, staff and administrators within and across different divisions of the College as well as between the Board and President and vice presidents in order to increase college unity and teamwork (I.B.1, II, IV).

Revised Previous Recommendation #1

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 the 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. (I.B.1, II, IV)

The College has substantially responded to this recommendation by opening up dialog through their committee structure and the Integrated Planning Process. Linkages between planning, outcomes, assessment and budgeting are still weak. The governing board has strengthened relationships and trust among themselves and have increased collaboration with the President and among College constituents. The President has successfully led the college in collegial dialog on improving student success and institutional effectiveness. He conducts frequent forums, attends and convenes meetings of employee and student groups, and communicates regularly through reports and blogs. The College has partially met Previous Recommendation 1.

Previous Recommendation #2

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. (A.4, I.B.3, ER19)

The College has successfully developed an Integrated Planning Process (IPP). The process includes a well-defined and on-going cycle of evaluation, planning, budgeting, implementation and re-evaluation. An oversight committee provides a built-in review and evaluation of the process and cycle to ensure that the College understands the institutional planning process and that appropriate revisions are implemented to improve the process or remove weaknesses in the process. However, the program review component of this process requires oversight and improvement. The relationship between the various college plans is not always clear. Further, the process currently drives only a small fraction of college planning resource allocation. The College has partially met Previous Recommendation #2.

Previous Recommendation #3

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, ER10, ER19)

The College has a well-defined strategic planning process that emphasizes a consistent process to measure, assess and evaluate the effectiveness in achieving strategic goals and student learning outcomes. The Integrated Planning Process (IPP) utilizes the Process Evaluation and Review Team to assess the function and success of the IPP. However, this process currently drives only a small fraction of college planning and resource allocation. The college has recently hired a full-time Director of Research and Planning and has also implemented the Banner Information System allowing for access to data and reports to promote a data-driven decision making process. The College has partially met Previous Recommendation #3.

Previous Recommendation #4

The College must develop institutional procedures for the identification of student learning outcomes at the course, program, degree, and institutional level. It must also develop a timeline for the accomplishment of this process and expand this process to include assessment measures for each level, analysis of these assessment processes and results, and documentation of how results of the assessments are used to improve student learning. In addition, the College must involve all faculty, including those in Student Services and Library Resources, in the dialogue about process and results. (II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.h, II.A.1.i, II.A.6.a, II.B.4, ER 16)

The college has implemented a process of student learning outcomes assessment that includes course, program, service area and institutional support outcomes. Course learning outcomes are assessed on a regular basis, along with some student-area outcomes. While some mapping between course, program, and core competency outcomes has occurred, the College is not actively assessing program learning outcomes and Core Competencies. There is little systematic documentation that assessments are used to improve student learning, which may provide a challenge in meeting the ACCJC 2012 deadline. The College has partially met Previous Recommendation #4.

Previous Recommendation #5

In order to have Library holdings and services sufficient in scope and currency to support its curriculum, and be able to extend its services to the off-campus centers in Vallejo and Vacaville, the College will have to address the Library's funding level and , at a minimum, be responsive to the recommendation of October 1993 and 1999 accreditation teams. (II.C.1)

There has been an overall increase in permanent annual funding of yearly library acquisitions in spite of state apportionment funding reductions in recent years; however, with the state's fiscal crisis over the last couple of years, the overall budget decreases for the Library has totaled \$31,085. Also due to fiscal constraints, the Library is currently short five full-time library positions. The library services at the Fairfield, Vacaville and Vallejo campuses are augmented by adjunct librarians. The support services in Circulation and Technical Services have been assigned to Circulation staff and student workers. Though the College has made some forward advances in this area, work remains in order to ensure that library services continue to be sufficient in scope and currency to support curriculum at all campuses and centers. The College has partially met Previous Recommendation #5.

Previous Recommendation #6

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 requirement of Standard III and assure institutional integrity. (III.A, III.D.1, III.D.2, III.D.3)

The previously high amount of turnover in staffing and leadership created instability in the College operations. Under the leadership of the new President, the College has filled several positions, reorganized Academic Affairs and Student Services, and is recruiting for six management positions. Three new management positions have been created and four dean positions have been eliminated as a result of reorganization and consolidation of duties. The reorganization has increased the efficiency of leadership in Academic Affairs while at the same time addressing the state's budget cuts to the College. The reorganization along with filling of the Vice President of Finance and Administration has provided stability within the leadership ranks, particularly in the area of finance and human resources. The College has met Previous Recommendation #6.

Previous Recommendation #7

The College should develop a detailed plan with a timeline and fixed responsibility to address the long-term financial obligations including debt retirement, capital lease options, and establishment of a reserve for retiree benefits. Financial obligations associated with negotiated settlement should be evaluated and managed to determine long-range impact on institutional financial stability. (III.D.1, III.D.2, III.D.3, ER 17)

Revised Previous Recommendation #7

The College must take immediate and necessary action to address its inability to timely and accurately generate financial and apportionment reports. In order to assure the institutions future fiscal stability, the College should immediately develop a detailed plan with a timeline and fixed responsibility to address the establishment of a reserve for retiree benefits. The College must take immediate responsibility for planning all long-term financial obligations including financial obligations associated with negotiated collective bargaining settlements which should be evaluated and managed to determine long-range impact on institutional financial stability. (III.D.1, III.D.2, III.D.3, ER 17)

The College has implemented the Banner Information System and is using the product to produce timely and accurate financial reports. The college has hired a new Vice President of Finance and Administration and a new Director of Fiscal Services that are competent. The College has established a trust for other post-employment benefits (OPEB) and is making annual contributions to the trust to service this liability. The College ended the fiscal year 2010-11 with a reserve in excess of 11%. The College is planning to spend down excess reserves in fiscal year 2011-12 but will remain above the 5% minimum reserve. The College has planned for long-term financial obligations in the current fiscal year budget. The College has met Previous Recommendation #7.

Previous Recommendation #8

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. (IV.A.1, IV.A.3, IV.B.1.j, IV.B.2.a)

The Superintendent/President has created trust and a strong working relationship with the Board of Trustees. The Board has understood the urgency of developing trust and a collegial relationship with the Superintendent/President. The Board supports the Superintendent/President and has delegated responsibility and authority to him. The college has met Previous Recommendation #8.

Evaluation of 2009 Recommendations Regarding Eligibility Requirements

The 2011 Self-study did not comment separately on the Eligibility Requirement concerns noted in 2009. The College relied on the conclusions of the follow-up visiting teams to establish compliance with the Eligibility Requirements. The 2011 visiting team has commented on the continuing compliance of the College with Eligibility Requirements within its report.

Eligibility Requirement #3 - Governing Board

The visiting team confirms that Solano Community College is governed by a publicly elected seven member independent policy-making Board of Trustees that is given the responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the College by college policy. However, the Board disagrees on how the mission of the College is being carried out and is divided on most major issues brought to it. The Board's dysfunctions are contributing to the dramatic fiscal and administrative instability of the College. The College does not comply with this eligibility requirement.

The 2011 Self-study did not address this Eligibility Requirement (ER). However, the College responded in writing to the Eligibility Requirement and a reference to the ER in Previous Recommendation #8 addresses this issue. After several training sessions by outside consultants as well as the guidance provided by the Special Trustee, the Board of Trustees now functions in a collegial manner and operates with one voice. The Trustees continue to participate in professional development programs and performs quarterly self-evaluations that strengthen their resolve to evolve into a highly functioning Board. The team concludes the College now complies with this Eligibility Requirement.

Eligibility Requirement #4 - Chief Operating Officer

The visiting team confirms that Solano Community College's Superintendent/President is appointed by and reports to the Board of Trustees. There is currently an acting Superintendent/President. However, there have been three different Superintendent/Presidents in the past three years. A search is being conducted which is scheduled to conclude in the summer of 2009 when a new permanent Superintendent/President is to be hired. The current Superintendent/President has served one month in that position and has been a vice-president at the college for about one year. The previous Superintendent/President was first acting, then hired after the presidential search failed and then retired in October. He served less than two years. While the College technically complies with this Eligibility Requirement, the extraordinary turnover in the last three years has contributed to the instability of the college.

The 2011 Self-study did not address this Eligibility Requirement. However, the College responded in writing to the Eligibility Requirement and a reference to the ER in Previous Recommendation #6 addresses this issue. The College has had a permanent Superintendent/President since May 2009 and his contract was recently renewed through 2013. The team concludes the College now complies with this Eligibility Requirement.

Eligibility Requirement #5 - Administrative Capacity

The visiting team found that Solano Community College has an administrative staff that is inappropriate in number. This is due to high turnover in executive level administrators and the use of other administrators to “fill-in” and be used for “interim” and “acting” positions. In some cases the “acting” and “interim” assignments are given to individuals who have little preparation and have little experience at that level or even at their regular position. The College does not fully comply with this Eligibility Requirement.

The 2011 Self-study did not address this Eligibility Requirement. However, the College responded in writing to the Eligibility Requirement and a reference to the ER in Previous Recommendation #6 addresses this issue. The College president is building a solid team of administrators and is resolving these deficiencies. The College has undergone several reorganizations and successful permanent hires that provide the College with continuity and stability. There are three key administrative positions that still have an interim in place, the Director of Human Resources, the Dean of Human Performance and Development, and the Dean of Liberal Arts. All three positions are filled with qualified administrators and the College is advertising for permanent replacements. The team concludes the College now complies with this Eligibility Requirement.

Eligibility Requirement #10 - Student Learning Achievement

Eligibility Requirement 10 is partially met; the team did not find published program outcomes for each program or regular, system assessment for all programs. However, there is a plan to make program review inclusive of all programs and systematic. Although the College does not currently have program outcomes in such programs as Nursing, there has been a commitment by institutional leaders to pilot the Bakersfield Student Learning Outcomes model in two programs (one academic transfer and one vocational) and the Self-study assures that “learning objectives have always been a part of the College’s course approval process.”

The College continues to implement, and refine as necessary, its Integrated Planning Process (IPP) with oversight by the Process Evaluation and Review Team. The IPP assures the use of outcomes assessment, dialogue, planning, strategic and operational proposals, and program review in all instructional and non-instructional areas of the College to connect planning, assessment, outcomes and institutional improvement. Because the team was unable to locate published program outcomes for all programs, the team concludes that the College partially complies with this Eligibility Requirement.

Eligibility Requirement #17 - Financial Resources

The team has serious concerns regarding the College’s ability to generate meaningful and accurate fiscal and apportionment reports for both internal decision-making purposes as well as annual reports to external agencies including a required financial report from last year. As of the team visit on November 2, the College had not adopted an annual budget for fiscal year 2008-2009. It was reported to the team that the report submitted to the State

Chancellor's Office the last week in October differed from the report approved by the Board on October 15. To strain matters more, the College implemented a new software system that is to be used for annual budgeting without running a back-up system. The College currently does not utilize a position control system to account for and budget for existing and new positions. Failure to utilize such a system has resulted in miscalculation of salaries and benefits and significantly increases the chances of under budgeting salary and benefit expenses. The College does not fully comply with this eligibility requirement.

The 2011 Self-study did not address this Eligibility Requirement. However, the College responded in writing to the Eligibility Requirement and a reference to the ER in Previous Recommendation #7 addresses this issue. The College has joined the Community College League of California's (CCLC's) Retiree Health Benefits Joint Powers Authority (JPA) and has set up an irrevocable trust and is funding the trust annually at the actuarial rate. The most recent external audit indicates the financial statements fairly represent the fiscal status in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. In addition, the Banner enterprise resource software is fully functional providing accurate access to financial data. The team concludes the College now complies with this Eligibility Requirement.

Eligibility Requirement #18 - Financial Accountability

The visiting team confirmed that Solano Community College annually undergoes and makes available an external financial audit by a certified public accountant. The audit is conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. However, the College continues to receive audit findings published in their annual financial statements concerning weaknesses in internal controls over the safeguarding of assets, in particular cash. In the College's 2006 and 2007 audit reports, the external auditors cited findings indicating that the College was not reviewing, in a timely manner, bank reconciliations for many of its bank accounts. The 2007 audit report cites the College for failing to address the concerns in the 2006 report. The College has a recent history of being in arrears in providing statements with approved financial aid checks. Financial records have not been transparent to College budget managers nor to the public. The College does not fully comply with this requirement.

The 2011 Self-study did not address this Eligibility Requirement. However, the College responded in writing to the Eligibility Requirement and a reference to the ER in Previous Recommendation #7 addresses this issue. The College has addressed the ER with permanent staffing of a Director of Business Services and a Vice President of Finance and Administration. The most recent audit indicates the College no longer receives citations on bank reconciliations or arrearages of statements of approved financial aid checks. The team concludes the College now complies with this Eligibility Requirement.

Eligibility Requirement #19 - Institutional Planning and Evaluation

The visiting team confirmed that Solano Community College has established components of an institutional planning and evaluation process for the development of the College but has not fully implemented a process for the assessment of student learning outcomes to

measure student achievement of educational goals. The College has begun a process that integrates planning and resources allocation but it is not fully implemented. The Commission’s requirement that an institution have in place data-based institutional planning, that it implements its plans and improve institutional quality, is not yet met. The College does not fully comply with this requirement.

The 2011 Self-study did not address this Eligibility Requirement. However, the College responded in writing to the Eligibility Requirement and a reference to the ER in Previous Recommendations #2 and #3 addresses this issue. The College has successfully integrated its strategic institutional planning process, Integrated Planning Process (IPP), throughout all departments of both academic and non-academic areas. The process is an ongoing cycle of evaluation, planning, budgeting, implementation and re-evaluation. A built-in review and evaluation is achieved by the Process Evaluation and Review Team. The team concludes the College now complies with this Eligibility Requirement.

Eligibility Requirement #21 - Relations with the Accreditation Commission

The team did note that there were inconsistencies within the report document, such as changing meeting minutes to include a distribution of a report which was not developed until a later date. Also the “Special Report” was excerpted verbatim from the Mid-term Report and did not add additional information on the Commission requirement to fully address Recommendations 2, 6, 7, and 8 by October 2008, as requested in the Commission meeting of January 2008. The extensive documentation, some of which was irrelevant to the Recommendations addressed, was sent to the team at a very late date and some team members had only five days to read and evaluate the extensive amount of material received from the College.

The 2011 Self-study did not address this Eligibility Requirement. However, the College responded in writing to the Eligibility Requirement addressing this issue. The current self-study was sent to the ACCJC and site visiting team in ample time for adequate review and study. However, many of the documents that were referenced in the Self-Study did not have active links making the items inaccessible to the Team. Once these issues were brought to the attention of the College, they were responsive and resolved the issues. However, in some cases, this left a very brief window of time for the Team members to review the evidence before arriving at the College for the Site visit. Once these “technical difficulties” were resolved, the Self-Study, as well as the supplemental documentation, later submitted by the College, had no significant inconsistencies and the information was timely and relevant. The team concludes the College now complies with this Eligibility Requirement.

Solano Community College Compliance with Eligibility Requirements

1. Authority

The visiting team confirmed that Solano Community College is authorized and operates under the California Constitution, the California Education Code and the California Title 5 Regulations. The College is authorized as an institution of higher education and to offer undergraduate degrees. Solano Community College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

2. Mission

The visiting team confirmed that Solano Community College has a clearly defined mission statement that was revised in 2009 and was adopted by the Governing Board in 2010. The visiting team confirmed that the mission statement defines institutional commitment to achieving student learning. The mission statement is included in the 2010-2011 catalog and is prominent on the College's website. The statement is appropriate to a higher education institution and to the College's constituencies.

3. Governing Board

The visiting team confirmed that the College has a functioning, independent policy-making Governing Board of seven elected members and one student member that exercises responsibility for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the College and for ensuring that the mission is being carried out. The Board is cognizant of its constituent and public interest in board activities and decisions. Board members adhere to a conflict of interest policy that assures that those interests are disclosed.

4. Chief Executive Officer

The visiting team confirmed that Solano Community College has a chief executive officer appointed by the Governing Board, whose full-time responsibility is to the institution, and possesses the requisite authority to administer board policies.

5. Administrative Capacity

The visiting team confirmed that the College has sufficient staff, with appropriate preparation and experience, to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose.

6. Operational Status

The visiting team confirmed that the College is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs.

7. Degrees

According to admissions information, a majority of students enter Solano Community College with the intent of completing a degree, certificate or preparing to transfer to a baccalaureate institution. The visiting team confirmed that a substantial portion of the institution's educational offerings are programs that lead to degrees, and a significant proportion of its students are enrolled in them.

8. Educational Programs

The visiting team confirmed that institution's principal degree programs are congruent with its mission, are based on recognized higher education fields of study, are of sufficient content and length, and culminate in identified student outcomes.

9. Academic Credit

The visiting team confirmed that Solano Community College awards academic credits based on generally accepted practices in degree-granting institutions of higher education, and provides appropriate information about the awarding of academic credit in its publications.

10. Student Learning and Achievement

The visiting team confirms Solano Community College defines and publishes for most of its programs the program's expected student learning and achievement outcomes. Course outlines and syllabi contain student learning and achievement outcomes. Because not all programs have completed and published their student learning and achievement outcomes, the team concludes that SCC partially meets this eligibility requirement. See Recommendation #3.

11. General Education

The visiting team confirms that Solano Community College defines and incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry with levels of quality and rigor appropriate to higher education. The general education component has comprehensive learning outcomes for the students who complete it.

12. Academic Freedom

The team confirms that the College's faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the

academic/educational community in general. The College maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and independence exist and thrive.

13. Faculty

The visiting team confirms that Solano Community College employs a core of full-time qualified faculty with full-time responsibility to the institution and sufficient in size and experience to support all of the College's educational programs. Faculty responsibilities include development and review of curriculum as well as assessment of learning.

14. Student Services

The team reviewed the student services provided and determined the College provides for all of its students appropriate student services that support student learning and development within the context of its mission.

15. Admissions

The visiting team confirms the College has adopted and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs.

16. Information and Learning Resources

The visiting team confirms Solano Community College provides specific long-term access to sufficient information and learning resources and services to support its mission and instructional programs.

17. Financial Resources

The visiting team confirms that Solano Community College documents a funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development adequate to support student learning programs and services, to improve institutional effectiveness, and to assure financial stability.

18. Financial Accountability

The visiting team examined the external financial audits for the last five years and reviewed the College's financial and accounting records. The team also verified the audits were conducted under generally accepted auditing procedures for public colleges and universities as prescribed by system, state and federal regulation.

19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation

The team confirmed the College provides evidence of planning for improvement of institutional structures and processes, student achievement of educational goals, and student learning. The College assesses progress toward achieving its stated goals and makes

decisions regarding improvement through an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation.

20. Public Information

The team confirmed that the College publishes in its catalog, class schedule, and other publications information concerning the College's purposes and objectives, admission requirements and procedures, rules and regulations affecting students, degrees offered, degree requirements, financial aid, fees and all other requisite information. Information on course and program student learning outcomes is published in the current catalog.

21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission

The team confirmed that the institution provides assurance that it adheres to the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards and policies of the Commission, describes itself in identical terms to all its accrediting agencies, communicates any changes in its accredited status, and discloses information required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.

STANDARD I

Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

I.A. Mission

General Observations

In general, Standard I.A. is clearly written and complete. However, the mission statement discussed in the self-study is inconsistent with the mission statement written in published documents including posters around campus.

The mission statement, “Solano Community College prepares a diverse student population to participate successfully in today’s local and global communities,” as discussed in the self-study appears to be abbreviated. Although, the mission is not found on the College’s website, it is included in the college catalog, the class schedule, and posters that are found in most conference rooms and other public locations around campus. The mission statement included in the posters and in publications includes an additional statement describing how the mission will be accomplished.

The College has made significant improvements in establishing an integrated planning process; however, the College has not fully implemented, integrated or completed an entire cycle to include all plans.

Findings and Evidence

The College has established some course and program student learning outcomes (SLOs). The College states that all courses and most programs have established SLOs. Some course outlines include SLOs and program SLOs are listed in the program review documents. (Standard I.A.1)

The College revised its mission, vision, and core values in 2009. These were found around the campus in conference rooms, in offices and published in various documents. The self-study version is limited to one sentence, while the printed version includes a second sentence followed by a seven bullet list. When asked about the difference, the team learned that in the college/community vision meetings held in 2009, various constituencies felt that the mission needed to align with the mission of the state community college system, therefore the additional portion was also adopted. (Standard I.A.2-3)

The College strives to meet community needs in its educational programs and services at the main campus and the centers. The College has a number of community based groups that meet with local constituencies to dialog about local needs. The College has a defined strategic planning process, the Integrated Planning Process (IPP), that is used to develop College-wide three-year plans from which strategic/operational proposals and implementation plans are derived. The College has defined the process well and although some progress has been made

towards its implementation, full implementation of the process has not yet been achieved. (Standard I.A.4)

The process references the College's strategic goals. The IPP requires that proposals and requests be linked to these goals. The College views the mission, vision, values and goals as a comprehensive package. They flow logically from the mission and comply with the standard. (Standards I.A.1, I.A.4)

Conclusions

The College partially meets Standard I.A.1. The team learned that not all courses have SLOs listed due to a technical problem in the CurricuNet implementation. Other than the verbal assertion that all courses had developed SLOs, the team was unable to confirm this fact. The program SLOs are included in each program's program review document, and those programs that have developed their SLOs have included those in the college catalog. However, because not all programs have undergone the review process since inclusion of the program SLOs were required, the team was unable to confirm the existence of all program SLOs. The college will need to engage in due diligence in this area to achieve proficiency by fall 2012.

The College meets Standards I.A.2. and I.A.3.

The College partially meets Standard I.A.4. The team confirms that the mission is driven by a commitment to serve the community, and while the administration asserts that the mission drives planning, the mission statement is neither printed nor is referenced in the planning process. The team found that although the mission statement is not found in any of the written processes or procedures for the IPP or other processes, the processes do link to the strategic goals that are derived from the mission.

While the College's planning and decision making appear to be driven by the mission statement, the statement itself is not consistently written or effectively communicated. It is not a part of any of the processes, and there appears to be two versions of the statement - an abbreviated version discussed in the self-study, and an expanded one that is posted throughout the campus and published in various documents.

Recommendation #1

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College modify its mission statement to identify its intended student population and its commitment to achieving student learning. The College should consistently use the same mission statement in all documents and publications. Additionally, the mission statement should be used by the college as a primary force in decisions made by the College. (Standards I.A.1-4, IV.B.1.b)

I.B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations

The College has made substantial progress in defining and documenting its Integrated Planning Process (IPP) in response to prior accreditation recommendations. This process is intended to link student learning outcomes, program review and college planning to resource allocation. The process is carefully considered and well-designed. However, there are still significant gaps. Linkages between the various plans on campus are not always clear; in particular, program review is not clearly linked to most aspects of budgeting. Most of the College's significant resource allocation decisions do not follow the IPP, particularly in full-time hiring and enrollment management.

Findings and Evidence

Since the last full accreditation visit in 2005, the College has invested significant efforts in developing and refining its Integrated Planning Process (IPP). This process resulted from substantial institutional dialog and is documented in a very thorough planning manual that is regularly revised (most recently in October 2011). The manual is accompanied by a series of carefully thought out forms for each stage in the planning process. A particularly valuable component of the IPP is the Program Evaluation and Review Team (PERT), charged with ongoing evaluation of the process. (Standards I.B.1, I.B.3, I.B.6, I.B.7)

The IPP includes a clearly delineated process for evaluating and funding operational and strategic proposals from members of the campus community. A particularly commendable aspect of this process is the use of tracking forms to provide feedback both forward to later levels in the process and backward to the original proposer. The college has now been through several iterations of this process, gaining substantial experience and refining the process as a result. (Standards I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7)

Some on campus argue that the proposal process is too time-consuming, particularly in years when there is little money to fund proposals. The inclusion of \$100,000 specifically earmarked for strategic proposals in this year's budget may increase confidence in the process. There have also been some preliminary discussions in PERT about creating a "fast track" process for proposals requiring a shorter response time. (Standards I.B.3, I.B.5)

The IPP planning manual states that the IPP is "an integrated, reiterative approach to program review, planning and budget development that revolves around a systematic and ongoing process of review and evaluation." This would seem to imply that the IPP includes all major planning and resource allocation at the college. However, the team found that at this point, the primary link between the IPP and resource allocation is in the evaluation and funding of operational and strategic planning proposals, which represent a very small fraction of the college's overall resource allocation. Many aspects of resource allocation, including the hiring of full-time faculty and classified staff, follow processes outside the IPP that are generally not clearly documented or explicitly linked to program review. Similarly, it is not clear that program review plays a formal role in enrollment management decisions. (Standards I.B.6, I.B.7)

Although the College has a program review process in place, the team found that the quality of the actual reviews is highly variable. Stated outcomes for many of the College's programs are actually program goals or objectives, not student learning outcomes. There is currently no formal process for assessing the quality of program reviews, although PERT has discussed whether it might take on that role or recommend the establishment of a Program Review Committee. As discussed above, the team could not find evidence that program reviews are consistently used in planning and resource allocation outside of the operational and strategic proposal process. (Standards I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4)

Interviews with campus constituents indicate that there is still ongoing discussion and differences of opinion regarding the interrelationships and linkages between various aspects of the plan, such as the relationship and relative priorities of the educational master plan and the College's strategic plan. There has also been discussion of the relationship between program review and the three-year plans, with some preliminary discussion of better aligning or perhaps unifying these plans. (Standards I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.6)

In fall 2010, PERT proposed expanding its membership to include faculty representation from each of the seven divisions. However, PERT minutes for 2010-11 indicate that many of these slots are vacant and that there are frequently only four to seven committee members in regular attendance. The committee has indicated that it will be conducting outreach to faculty for greater participation. The College should encourage these efforts to widen participation in PERT in order to assure a broad campus dialog on planning and evaluation. (Standards I.B.4, I.B.6, I.B.7)

Although employee surveys generally substantiate a high level of awareness of the IPP across the campus, there seems to be a perception among some college faculty and staff that planning and budgeting are not clearly linked, or that established processes are not always followed. In the employee survey, less than half of those surveyed agreed that "the College budget reflects SCC's goals and priorities." The mean response to this question was significantly lower than responses to any other question on planning. This may simply be an expression of unhappiness with the College's current budget situation, but it also reinforces the impression that the IPP is not widely seen as the fundamental driver of resource allocation on campus. (Standards I.B.2, I.B.4)

Conclusions

It seems clear that the college has taken the recommendations of the 2005 team seriously. Substantial effort has gone into the creation of an integrated planning process, and there is evidence of a frank, ongoing dialog about the effectiveness of that process. Awareness of the process is relatively high across the campus.

However, implementation of the planning process is far from complete. Program review is inconsistent and is not well positioned to ensure that student learning outcomes are at the core of college planning and resource allocation. The current Integrated Planning Process informs only a small fraction of campus resource allocation.

The Institutional Planning Process developed by the College provides an excellent foundation on which to build, but the College should expand and refine the process so that it encompasses all major planning and resource allocation decisions.

The College partially meets Standard I.B.

Recommendation #2

As noted in recommendations 1, 2 and 3 of the 2005 Accreditation Evaluation Report, and in order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College build upon its progress in developing an integrated planning process in order to ensure that:

- processes are documented and consistently implemented for all college planning.
- the various college plans are clearly linked to each other and the interrelationship between the plans is clearly articulated.
- program reviews are regularly assessed for quality and incorporated into resource allocation processes.
- all major resource allocation is clearly linked to college planning, including hiring, enrollment management, and bond projects.
- integration of planning and resource allocation occurs in a timely manner.
- planning processes are widely understood and followed by the entire campus community.
- planning processes are ongoing and systematic and continue to be regularly reviewed and revised as necessary.
- there is broad participation and meaningful engagement from all members of the College community in the planning processes.

All planning processes should be clearly linked to fulfillment of the College mission and strategic goals to support continuous improvement of student learning and student success. (Standards I.B.1-7, II.A.2.e-f, II.B.3.a, II.B.4, III.A.6, III.B.2, III.C.2, III.D.1.a-d, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.B.2.b)

Recommendation #3

As noted in recommendation 4 of the 2005 Accreditation Evaluation Report, in order to meet the standards and achieve proficiency in achieving student learning outcomes by fall 2012, the team recommends that the College:

- accelerate its schedule for the completion and assessment of effective and measurable student learning outcomes (SLOs) for courses, instructional programs, and the institution; and that the development and assessment be faculty driven.
- accelerate the development and assessment of effective and measurable SLOs or service area outcomes (SAOs) for student services and all other operational services.
- provide SLO/SAO training for all instructional, student services, and all other staff.

(Standards I.B.3, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.g, II.B.4, II.C.2, ER 10)

Recommendation #4

In order to meet the standards and to ensure institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that resources and support for institutional research be made available to provide necessary and timely data and information for program review, evaluation of institutional effectiveness,

documentation of assessment results, and tracking of planning processes. The results of these efforts should be used to demonstrate that the institution regularly uses data in all integrated planning processes and has developed a culture of evidence in all decision making. (Standards I.B, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.3, IV.B.2.b)

STANDARD II

Student Learning Programs and Services

II.A Instructional Programs

General Observations

According to the self-study, Solano Community College (SCC) offered approximately 2,645 course sections in 2011-12, leading to 88 degrees, 42 certificates, and 28 “job direct” certificates. In addition to the main campus in Fairfield, the district provides educational opportunities at their Vacaville Center, the Vallejo Center, and at Travis AFB, in addition to 381 online offerings in 2011-12. In 2010, there were 11,836 students enrolled at one or more of the College’s locations; there were 9,222 duplicated enrollments at Fairfield; 2,857 enrollments at Vallejo; 2,661 enrollments in distance education; and 1,669 enrollments at Vacaville. Over the past few years the largest percent growth has occurred at Vallejo (50%) and at Vacaville (34%). Distance education (DE) has also grown in recent years (13%). This expansion of DE is described by the Academic Senate Distance Education Committee as “spontaneous growth.” As a result, faculty are engaging in an evaluation of distance education program success. At the same time, they admit that they have not received reliable data on the progress of DE students, which is not effectively disaggregated from institution-wide data on student success and retention.

The College is in the process of revising the Educational Master Plan, which is anticipated to help define and guide the College mission. SCC ensures that courses and programs are consistent with the mission in a number of ways, including a formal curriculum review process. The self-study provides background regarding the development of course, program, and institutional outcomes (Core Competencies). The institution began with development of course outcomes, which are now linked to program outcomes. The self-study also indicates that service and program outcomes are linked to Core Competencies. Evaluation of materials and conversation with faculty indicate that while there is a structure in place to assess course outcomes, there is little or no linkage to course and institutional outcomes (Core Competencies). There is no evidence of a sustained discussion of general education philosophy, criteria and outcomes.

The institution gathers data through environmental scans, internal assessment of student learning, through dialogue with four-year institutions and high schools, with evaluation of community needs, and analysis of labor market data in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. A theme throughout Standard II is the increasing role DE plays at the college in meeting student needs. There is dialogue around the question of which courses should be offered in this modality. The standard provides evidence that there is broad scale input from advisory groups for CTE programs and a strong college presence in the community. The College is clearly engaged in the assessment of SLOs, yet there is little evidence that there are documented improvements either informally or through the revised IPP. The team’s examination of selected DE courses raised concerns about the level of “regular effective contact” among the faculty and students. Over reliance on prepackaged commercial materials, especially PowerPoint presentations, may lead to attenuated opportunities for students to develop their critical thinking skills and other institutional core competencies. Some online syllabi exhibited confusion between course objectives and SLOs.

The self-study suffers from lack of clarity and logical flow from evaluation to planning agendas. One could conclude from the evaluation that a planning agenda is warranted, yet this is often not the case. In some instances the planning agendas seem to vaguely relate to a statement in the description or are not to be found at all when turning to the end of the self-study. Quite often the planning agendas are not deliberate enough to demonstrate that much thought went into their relevance, e.g., “The College will consider the following catalogue issues....” The relationship between description and evaluation is also blurred, making it difficult for the reader to draw a conclusion; furthermore, conclusions are also made with regard to meeting the standard when evidence is weak and/or sparse at best.

Findings and Evidence

Across the College, faculty engage in dialogue about the educational needs of students. The Educational Master Plan (including the environmental scan) is intended to provide direction to the institution in order to address the needs of the community and to provide education that reflects the needs based on local demographic trends. Feedback during interviews indicates that there has been little involvement of faculty and staff in preparation of the Master Plan, which may cause challenges with regard to implementation. There are numerous examples of how the College has engaged in analysis of how to meet the varied educational needs of its students. Faculty inquiry groups in the English department are one example presented to demonstrate how data are used to make curriculum changes. Efforts are underway to identify strategies to accelerate students through developmental math and English faster. The institution is also active in the community and engaged in dialogue with four-year institutions in order to facilitate successful transfer. (Standards II.A.1.a)

Historically the College has had adequate access to institutional data, yet the implementation of Banner has caused considerable challenges with regard to access and integrity of data to measure student progress in recent years. As the College has expanded its technological capabilities and offerings in distance education, attendant dialogue followed regarding the relationship between delivery systems, modes of instruction and the curriculum. The Humanities Division recently adopted DE guidelines based on best practices, but as yet, there appears to be no institutional consensus about the long-term strategic direction of DE other than the position that SLOs are the same for each course regardless of modality. The self-study reports, along with corroborated evidence, that “DE information is not specifically disaggregated on a regular basis,” suggesting that the College may not be in compliance with the ACCJC Guidelines on Distance Education and Correspondence Education. Although the self-study reports that administrative evaluation of faculty ensures that appropriate delivery modes are used, evidence indicates that the evaluation processes fell behind over time; thus the College would be well served to maintain the scheduled faculty evaluation process if the intention is to ensure appropriate delivery systems and consistent student outcomes across the curriculum. (Standards II.A.1.b, II.A.2.d)

The self-study provides an overview of the initial training and work to develop course and program outcomes. Interviews and other evidence indicate that there was a concerted effort to initiate the dialogue about assessment of student learning outcomes. During the development of course and program outcomes, the Academic Senate adopted Cabrillo College’s Core

Competencies. FLEX activities continue to provide training opportunities in the area of assessment. The College uses its portal to document and share assessment resources, though the extent of use appears limited. Assessment data and results are part of departmental dialogue, but there is no mechanism in place to centralize assessment results. There is evidence of using course assessment results, but little evidence about how assessment results lead to improvements in curriculum and pedagogy. At this point, there is sparse evidence of assessment of program learning outcomes, Core Competencies, or general education. (Standards II.A.1.c, II.A.2.f)

The self-study demonstrates that there is a coherent and honored curriculum and approval process led by faculty and educational administrators to develop new courses and programs across the curriculum. This is the strong suit of an exceptionally process oriented Academic Senate. Faculty inquiry groups (FIGs) in some disciplines indicate that the college and faculty are taking the student learning dialogue seriously. These efforts should be expanded. (Standard II.A.2)

The College maintains an effective faculty-led curriculum review on a five-year cycle. There is evidence that the College relies on advisory committees for labor market signals, curriculum design, and validation of student learning. There is evidence based on discussions with the career and technical faculty and the dean as well as the Academic Senate that full-time faculty engage in dialogue on assessing and improving student learning. It was difficult to find evidence of the role of adjunct faculty in assessment dialogs and curriculum review. These faculty members who teach approximately half of the Solano college classes must be engaged as well. (Standard II.A.2.b)

The self-study and team investigations demonstrate that the Solano College faculty care about students and student learning. Meetings with administrators and classified staff confirmed to the team that the institution is student-focused. Extensive innovations across the curriculum indicate the existence of a learner and learning-centered ethic among some faculty. However, for an institution that is putatively outcomes-based, there is a paucity of data on results. There also needs to be a concerted institutional effort to address declining transfer outcomes for some historically underrepresented groups of students. (Standard II.A.2.c-d)

The self-study and team investigation confirmed that Solano College is adept at creating complex institutional processes supported by elegant forms. The Integrated Planning Process (IPP) appears to be a systematic and intentional process on paper. The various elements of the process—outcomes assessment, program review, three-year plans, proposals, review, budget allocation, and process evaluation (PERT) form the basis for a growing continuous quality improvement movement at the college. However, there is little evidence that the Educational Master Plan (EMP) has been reviewed or updated since 2007. The college research website mentions a “working group” to evaluate and update the plan, but there is little evidence of progress on the review. An integrated, “recursive planning process” should make provision for revisiting the master plan on an annual basis or at least as part of the three-year planning cycle expected of the departments. (Standard II.A.2.e-f)

The self-study states that the students are “are expected to have achieved stated outcomes” in pursuit of degrees and certificates. There is an assertion that the institutional core competencies are systematically evaluated across the curriculum as are the skills, competencies, and habits of

mind for major and certificate courses. The narrative provides little evidence of how this is accomplished other than students completing the requisite number of units with the minimum grade average. Grades without coherent rubrics across course sections keyed to clearly identified skills and competencies are not adequate assessments of student learning outcomes. (Standard II.A.2.g-i)

The self-study and sifting of available evidence do not demonstrate that the College possesses a “carefully considered philosophy” of general education. A review of the 2005 Academic Senate minutes indicate that a general education sub-committee of the Curriculum Committee deliberated for only two weeks before the academic units agreed over the objections of some student services personnel to terminate the general education discussion. The College cannot defend the assertion of a rigorous meaningful general education experience for students when there is no evidence of a rigorous, extended discussion of general education among faculty and educational administrators tied to a coherent system for longitudinal assessment of the institutional core competencies. The College needs to have this discussion and to develop clear criteria for establishing and maintaining general education courses. (Standard II.A.3)

The self study and team investigation confirmed that all degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry and that career and technical certificates were focused on meeting workforce needs and external licensure and certification requirements. (Standards II.A.4, II.A.5)

The self-study discussion of Standard II.A.6.a. indicates that the College meets this standard, but that the function can be improved. The College possesses an excellent, committed Articulation Officer (AO) who receives no technical or clerical support while working on reduced load and also serving as a general counselor. Lack of support for the AO is a concern as the College becomes involved in the SB 1440 transfer degree process. This will significantly increase the AO’s workload. The AO should be given some assistance so that she can complete and evaluate service level outcomes. The team agrees that there is room for improvement on this standard. (Standard II.A.6.a)

The College provides opportunities for students enrolled in programs that are discontinued to complete degree requirements in a timely manner. (Standard II.A.6.b)

The College is working diligently to comply with Standard II.A.6.c. The implementation of Banner CurricuNET and MyGroups indicate a willingness and commitment to communicating accurately and openly with the campus and community. The college has made commendable progress on this standard in recent years despite its budget challenges. (Standard II.A.6.c)

The team examined appropriate board policies confirming the College’s commitment to academic freedom and student academic honesty. (Standard II.A.7)

The College does not offer curricula in foreign locations to students other than U.S. nationals. (Standard II.A.8.b)

Conclusions

The College is moving in the right direction on many of its initiatives. There are processes and forms in place that tie assessment of student learning to institutional effectiveness. Course outcomes have been mapped to program outcomes and Core Competencies; however, the College needs to provide more evidence of meaningful assessment of program learning outcomes and Core Competencies. Furthermore, there is no process to assess general education in a systematic way. Instructional and student service programs have demonstrated assessments and results, but the process is not in place for non-instructional programs. Dialogue among faculty regarding student outcomes is occurring, yet there is limited documented evidence of the dialogue. Some faculty indicate a lack of impact on programs through the course assessment process and do not apprehend the connection between course and program outcomes.

Throughout the self-study there are references to lack of data or inability to synthesize data for effective decision making, which was corroborated through interviews. This shortcoming places the College in a precarious position with regard to data-driven decision making. The conversion to Banner appears to be the source of this data issue, and the College is encouraged to put resources in place to ensure adequate human and technical resources to provide timely and accurate data to the college community.

With the increase in DE course offerings and enrollments, the College is now responding to consequences of the “spontaneous growth.” The College is assessing new course management systems and more importantly, the impact on student outcomes in this modality. Some programs have placed a moratorium on new distance education offerings in order to reflect on the course development process and impact on students who are not prepared to succeed in this modality.

The College partially meets Standard II.A.

Recommendation #5

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College expand its data collection, analysis and planning related to meeting the needs and fostering the success of an increasingly diverse student population. Student and staff equity and diversity plans should be fully integrated with the College’s planning processes and should include strategies geared toward attracting a diverse pool of qualified applicants able to contribute to the success of the College’s student population. (Standards II.A.1.a, II.A.2.d, II.B.3.d, III.A.4.a-c)

Recommendation #6

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College develop mechanisms and learning support systems to ensure that students enrolled in distance education courses are achieving stated learning outcomes at a level comparable with students enrolled in onsite programs and courses. (Standard II.A.1.b-c)

Recommendation #7

In order to meet the standards and increase institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the College develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures that incorporate effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes into the evaluation process of faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving student learning outcomes. (Standards II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, III.A.1.c)

See also Recommendations #2, #3 and #4.

II.B Student Support Services

General Observations

The student support services offered to the students of Solano College include admissions, registration, assessment, CalWORKs, EOPS, DSP, library, learning center, student government and clubs, financial aid, counseling, health center, transfer center, and veterans' services. Currently, several of these offices report directly to the College President. Only the library, learning center, health center and student government report to the Executive Vice President. According to the President, this is a temporary organizational structure which he will evaluate in the coming months to determine how to best align the Student Services Division in order to develop a cohesive unit where each area knows what the other is doing and complimentary policies are assembled.

While much of Student Services is reporting directly to the President, he has created a Student Services Council which meets twice monthly to discuss improvements to services and consistency. A survey is available at the service counters throughout the Student Services area, but there is little evidence that anyone is gathering the information from these instruments to inform improvements to learning or services. The exception to this is in the Counseling office where data is being used for some decision-making.

Solano College publishes a college catalog with accurate general information including required information. The catalog provides the address and location of the College; the website; the College mission; College courses; degrees, certificates, and transfer information; an academic calendar; information on financial aid, Admissions and Records, and student fees; learning resources; names and degrees of faculty and administrators; names of Board of Trustees members; and policies on academic regulations and academic honesty, non-discrimination, grievance and complaint processes, sexual harassment, and refund of fees.

In addition to its main location, Solano College offers courses at sites in Vallejo, Vacaville, and Travis Air Force Base, as well as offering classes online. There is a dean assigned to each of the Vallejo and Vacaville sites, along with a full-time classified staff member who provides general information about available student services. Counselors qualified to work with the disabled student populations are assigned to each site as part of their assignments.

The team observed that a committed staff is offering a full range of student services to support students' needs. Managers in Student Services expressed satisfaction with the fact that they have begun meeting on a more regular basis to discuss the delivery of quality student services.

Findings and Evidence

Although the self-study states that student services programs are included in annual planning and review in relation to the College's strategic goals and objectives, and that information from Research and Planning and program reviews is used to ensure that student success and achievement is achieved, the self-evaluation section provides no evidence of the relationship between delivery of student support services and enhanced success of student recipients of these services. The team found based on interviews with key student services management personnel, that most efforts at program improvement are initiated and implemented through dialogue among managers and classified personnel. There is no evidence to identify formal, measurable benchmarks tied to the assessment mechanisms applied, such as surveys and the Accountability Reporting for the California Community Colleges (ARCC) indicators. Dialogue ensues with regard to these indicators and changes in service delivery methods are implemented in an effort to achieve unspecified improvements to the performance indicators. No goals or objectives have been established for success indicators such as successful course completion, retention, persistence, or completion of students' educational goals.

Under the direction of the Dean of Counseling and Special Services, the Counseling Division has developed SLOs for all of its coursework and service area outcomes (SAOs) for the service portion of the Division. Other areas of student services have developed a number of SAOs and minimally developed program reviews; however there is no longitudinal analysis or linkages to student learning and success. There is no evidence that SLOs have been developed or assessed for any areas of Student Services except the Counseling courses. (Standard II.B.1)

The Executive Director of Institutional Advancement is responsible for the production of the catalog. Any curriculum changes are communicated with the office staff in Institutional Advancement to ensure accuracy of the catalog. The Student Services Council members provide any modifications or additions to the policy and procedure sections of the document. The team verified that the College catalog contains all the information required by the standards. (Standard II.B.2)

The College has made efforts to address the needs of students who take courses at its sites, and a number of services are also offered online. There is no evidence that any formal assessment of the services at the sites or online has taken place.

By placing a dean and a full-time generalist at the sites, the College has recognized the need for services at the sites. The generalists have been trained on processes in Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, and Counseling Services.

Library services are very limited at the sites and no tutoring is available at the sites or online. In addition, students wishing to pay fees with cash or checks must do so at the main campus.

The self-study indicates that students are generally satisfied with the services provided to them. The Student Opinion Survey compares responses from Fairfield, Vacaville, Vallejo and online students. (Standard II.B.3.a)

Solano College has an active student government and student club structure providing students with the opportunity to learn personal and civic responsibility along with intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development. Members of the Associated Students of Solano College meet regularly and serve on shared governance committees across the campus and the Inter-Club Council has more than 20 active clubs that provide support for students and the community. (Standard II.B.3.b)

Qualified counselors work with Solano College students in the Counseling Center on the main campus and at the sites. A number of counselors are assigned to work with specialized programs such as MESA, DSP and Umoja as part of their assignment. Although students are encouraged to see a counselor each semester, most students do not follow that recommendation. The Counseling Department evaluates its effectiveness through the program review process and through student surveys. (Standard II.B.3.c)

The College is making efforts to design and maintain programs, practices, and services that support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity. Completion of a three unit course in Cross-Cultural Studies is a requirement to receive a degree from Solano College. In addition to the course requirement, individual departments have sponsored workshops or activities to embrace diversity. The students of the College have formed many clubs to showcase specific cultural customs and practices, and have shared those customs and practices with the College and the surrounding community by hosting special events or displays. (Standard II.B.3.c)

Students who wish to enroll in any English course at the College are required to take the Accuplacer assessment or provide proof of prior course completion. Faculty members assigned to the English Department evaluate the Accuplacer regularly through outcomes assessment, program review and focused inquiry groups. The Math Department studied the Accuplacer as an assessment tool and found that it could not be validated. Therefore they moved to self-placement, allowing students to determine which math course would be appropriate for their individual educational goal. Early results of self-placement do not indicate that success rates have improved. Although increased success in math classes was noted as a goal in the 2004 Student Equity Plan, the success rates for Solano students in math classes has not improved and has instead declined. (Standard II.B.3.e)

Student records are maintained securely and confidentially, with provisions for secure backup of files. The College has written policies to govern the maintenance of student records and follow those policies. Care is taken to ensure students' rights under the Family Education Right to Privacy Act in all issues surrounding release of student information. (Standard II.B.3.f)

Although the Student Services Division is clearly heavily engaged in identifying and assessing the needs of the student population, assessment processes are, for the most part, dialogue-based and informal. A number of areas within Student Services have completed the program review

documents; however, there is no longitudinal assessment. Each program review appears to be a stand-alone document. (Standard II.B.4)

The description in the self-study reports that Student Support Services are assessed through “Service Area Outcomes,” and the evidence identified for this section is the same document that was noted previously in the report as “Student Learning Outcomes.” There does not seem to be a clear understanding at the College of the difference between a student learning outcome and a service area outcome in Student Services. The programs within Student Services are struggling to develop Student Learning Outcomes and Services Area Outcomes without a clear understanding of the difference of these two concepts. (Standard II.B.4)

Conclusions

While much has been accomplished in Student Services with diminishing staff size and reorganization, the Student Services area would benefit immensely from strong leadership, ensuring the integration of the diverse activities found in the programs. Additionally, the College could benefit from a more formalized approach to program assessment, by adopting specific, measurable objectives for improvement in key performance indicators for services to students, accompanied by strategies for achieving them. A number of indicators, such as basic skills course completion rates, retention, persistence, and success rates, are affected by instructional as well as student services programs thus, their development, adoption and measurement is best achieved through collaborative efforts of faculty, classified staff, and managers from both areas. Formal objectives and strategies could augment the ongoing efforts to improve programs through less formal collaborative problem solving. The College might also benefit from a uniform template for establishing and assessing SLOs for all of the areas of student services and specialized training to understand how to write and assess SLOs for Student Services.

Solano College benefits from having a dedicated and caring classified staff in Student Services. Many of the classified staff members have been with the College for numerous years and have worked as a team committed to student success regardless of the changes in management.

Students of the College could benefit from more formal assessment of services available and delivery of those services. With most areas of student support closing at 5:00 pm or earlier each day, it is questionable that the evening students have appropriate access to needed services.

Although a rubric for evaluating what are currently referred to as SAOs is present, there is no evidence to suggest that the current SAOs have ever been assessed or used for program improvement. To fully meet the standards, the departments within Student Services will need to fully participate in the program review process and will need to fully develop and assess Student Learning Outcomes for the students they serve.

The College partially meets Standard II.B.

Recommendation #8

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College develop a plan to provide equitable access to appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students who are taking

classes at the Vacaville and Vallejo Centers and online. Increased funding and staffing for the libraries at the two centers should be a priority. This plan should also include a regular evaluation of the services. (Standards II.B.3.a, II.C.1)

See also Recommendations #2, #3, #4 and #5.

II.C Library and Learning Support Services

General Observations

The previous accreditation team concluded that SCC was not in complete compliance with this standard: “In order to have Library holdings and services sufficient in scope and currency to support its curriculum, and be able to extend its services to the off-campus centers in Vallejo and Vacaville, the College will have to address the Library’s funding level and, at a minimum, be responsive to the recommendation of October 1993 and 1999 accreditation teams (II.C.1).”

Based on examination of the documents in the team room, tours of the central campus library and the Vallejo and Vacaville educational centers, and interviews of the library staff, the current accreditation team believes that SCC’s library operations have been strengthened by focusing on student learning. The library staff has accomplished this despite a recent budget reduction of \$31, 085 and the retirements of a reference librarian and technical services librarian who have not been replaced because of the current state fiscal crisis. An impact of budget cuts is that there has been a reduction of library hours in the evening after 7:50 pm and 2:50 pm on Fridays. Nevertheless, the library staff have extended services to the educational centers and increased significantly their direct instruction to students through courses on information competency and research. This accomplishment is due primarily to the creativity and commitment of the library staff. The four reference librarians indicated in an interview that, “our strength is the librarians.” They attribute their ability to expand services and instruction while also contributing reassigned-time chairs to the curriculum and distance education committees to the fact that they have an exceptionally strong pool of adjunct librarians. The library also possesses two very talented classified staff members who were awarded increased work hours and an additional month on their annual contracts in able to absorb the technical services function into their other responsibilities. (Standards II.C, II.C.1.c)

Findings and Evidence

SCC and its library maintain a successful partnership with local library consortia that assures that there are extensive resources available to students in its service area. As indicated in the SCC catalog, the Solano Napa and Partners (SNAP) cooperative library system provides student and faculty access to more than one million items and an extensive list of databases. The library provides free, daily delivery of SNAP materials located at other SNAP libraries. SCC is also a member of the NorthNet Library System. This partnership is headquartered in Santa Rosa, CA. It significantly increases SCC library capacity. Library users may receive guidance from the excellent library website. They also have access to a variety of online resources, including full-text magazines, journals, newspapers, e-books, and other digital resources. The main library

maintains adequate provision for maintenance and security. A highly competent library staff works diligently to maintain currency and access to resources through a variety of modalities. (Standards II.C.1.c, II.C.1.e)

The librarians have worked diligently to develop and offer a range of “Information Competency Courses” for students that reflect their commitment to student learning and institutional “Core Competency 2. Critical Thinking and Information Competency.” They also provide a host of library orientations on the central campus in Fairfield and at educational centers in Vacaville and Vallejo. The librarians have established SLOs for these courses and activities, gather data on outcomes, and analyze and publish the results. The library also maintains an impressive liaison system to the major academic and career educational programs and to counseling. (Standards II.C.1.a, II.C.1.b, II.C.2)

Based on its tour of the Vacaville and Vallejo Centers and a student/faculty forum in Vallejo, the team noted that an area that requires strengthening is the library facilities and holdings at the centers. The number of student work centers should be expanded in the long run along with the meager book and reference collections at the centers. Some students indicated their appreciation of the hardworking and responsive librarians, but also indicated their frustration with the lack of immediate access to books. (Standards II.C.1.c, II.C.2)

Conclusions

Despite the present fiscal crisis, which is putting inordinate pressure on all student learning support services at SCC, the librarians have made great strides in expanding services and instruction through creative partnerships and resourceful and responsive reorganization. The initial team concern about the health of the technical services functions have been allayed. It is apparent that an inexpensive method of shoring up this function and assuring adequate coverage on the central campus library is to increase the budget for student workers to assist the hardworking and committed classified staff in the library. The College administration should explore opportunities for alternative funding of library functions through grants and endowments. SCC will need a focused strategy for assuring that it will be able to provide high quality, responsive learning support services in Vacaville and Vallejo as those campus populations expand.

The team concludes that SCC has made adequate progress in addressing the recommendations of previous accreditation teams for the main library in Fairfield. However, the condition of library services in the educational centers indicates that the College is in partial compliance with Standard II.C.

Recommendations

See Recommendations # 3 and #8.

STANDARD III

Resources

III.A Human Resources

General Observations

The College has established policies and procedures relevant to employee recruitment, selection and evaluation. Recent administrative hirings have improved stability and morale at the College overall, but vacancies and turnover in the human resources area persist. Comprehensive planning, evaluation and an emphasis on continuous improvement are not readily apparent in the human resources area. Deficits remain in the currency and thoroughness of human resource policies, procedures and practices.

Findings and Evidence

College policies and procedures, specifically Board Policies 4000 and 4005, support the hiring of qualified personnel. Multiple online job announcements illustrate that the College provides clearly and publicly stated information regarding criteria, qualifications and procedures. The College mission and vision is detailed within job announcements. Faculty interviews include a teaching demonstration component. Student and staff comments during accreditation forums reflect an appreciation for the high quality of College employees. (Standards III.A.1, III.A.1.a)

Board policies and collective bargaining contracts identify the processes for systematic and regular employee evaluations. In October, the Interim Director of Human Resources compiled a list of delinquent evaluations for presentation to the Board of Trustees in December. The list is lengthy, with multiple evaluations significantly overdue. Upon receipt of employee evaluations, Human Resources reviews the documents to ensure that an improvement plan is included when warranted. (Standard III.A.1.b)

While faculty are engaged in the development and assessment of student learning outcomes, these activities are not identified within faculty job announcements or as a part of the faculty evaluation process documented within the collective bargaining contract. The 2005 Self-study noted that “when SLO criteria and evaluative components are completed, they will be incorporated into the faculty evaluation criteria.” To date, this has not occurred. The administration and faculty union must come together to remedy this compliance issue. (Standard III.A.1.c)

The College does have several policies addressing specific ethical issues but it lacks a comprehensive written code of ethics for all its personnel. The Self-study did not identify a planning agenda associated with this omission. (Standard III.A.1.d)

The College has significantly strengthened its administrative capacity since the previous Self-study. The hiring and retention of several key administrators, most notably the Superintendent/President and the Vice President of Finance and Administration, has improved

institutional stability and capacity. While the Manager of Human Resources position has been filled, the Director of Human Resources position, which includes lead negotiator responsibilities, is currently open and temporarily filled on an interim basis. The College has also gone through two recent reorganizations, prompted in large part by fiscal challenges. Recent furloughs, also driven by fiscal challenges, further impact staffing. Numerous vacancies and interim positions continue to challenge the organizational infrastructure. The fall 2009 IPEDS data identifies several staffing categories where the College is below its *Comparison Group Median* (non-professional, other professional). Projected staffing data reflects an anticipated decline in full-time faculty and an increased reliance upon part-time faculty in the current academic year. During 2011-12, the College does not expect to meet its full-time faculty obligation number but does expect to meet the requirement based on the percentage of full-time faculty compared to part-time faculty. Faculty hirings are being discussed and prioritized for 2012-13. (Standard III.A.2)

Human resource policies are published and available on the College web site. Only a limited number of procedures are located on the site. While evidence is provided as to the establishment of human resource policies, a lack of regular, systematic updating is observed. Given the frequent use of interim and temporary employees, the equity, consistency and currency of related policies and procedures are relevant to ensuring fairness in employment procedures. The College does maintain provisions to protect the security and confidentiality of personnel records. (Standards III.A.3, III.A.3.a, III.A.3.b)

Section IV of Board Policy 4000 establishes practices to ensure equal employment opportunity of a “monitored group.” The College’s long-standing Ethnic Minority Coalition provides both a formal and informal voice regarding issues of diversity. The Director of Human Resources is tasked “to coordinate and implement an effective staff diversity plan.” The elimination of a Diversity Coordinator and vacancies in Human Resources have inhibited plan development and the implementation of desired practices and recruitment. The recently hired Human Resources Manager has been charged with tasks related to fostering staff diversity. Given the current and projected student demographics, the significant disparity between student and staff ethnicity is likely to widen over time without an effective staff diversity plan. While the College lacks an employee code of ethics, employees consistently noted an improvement in the level of trust and community at the College. Recently, exit interviews have been reinstated as an evaluative tool to better understand staffing issues. (Standards III.A.4, III.A.4.a, III.A.4.b, III.A.4.c)

The College offers numerous professional development and FLEX opportunities, yet 36% of surveyed employees disagree that “they have sufficient professional development opportunities.” The Self-study notes that “the Superintendent and Academic Senate President have been discussing greater professional development opportunities for faculty, staff and administrators” and the 2011-12 budget provides \$50,000 in funding for staff development. (Standards III.A.5, III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b)

The staff and faculty hiring process is conducted in parallel with the IPP. Program Review data is used, in part, to identify human resource priorities. In the current budget environment, the human resource planning process is often trumped by budget issues. (Standard III.A.6)

Conclusions

The College has made significant progress in improving institutional stability and capacity through key hirings. Currency, planning and staffing in the human resources area, however, continue to challenge the institution's overall effectiveness.

The College partially meets Standard III.A.

Recommendation #9

In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the College develop a clear, written code of ethics for all its personnel. (Standard III.A.1.d)

See also Recommendations #2, #5 and #7.

III.B Physical Resources

General Observations

Many facilities projects have been recently completed, due to Measure G bond funding. The new Vacaville and Vallejo centers and strengthened infrastructure will provide students with improved facilities and access. Yet, budget and staffing deficiencies have led to suboptimal operations at times.

Findings and Evidence

Significant building, upgrading and replacement of physical resources occurred as a result of Measure G funds. The College is currently exploring an additional bond measure to “accommodate the growing communities in Vallejo, Benicia, American Canyon, Dixon and Winters.” Results from the 2010 Accreditation Employee and Student Survey indicate that the average student is satisfied with the *general condition and appearance of the buildings and grounds*. Student responses do not differ significantly by campus. Through interviews, employees expressed a variety of concerns regarding exterior lighting at night, lack of weeding, biology lab ventilation, the planning and maintenance of the baseball field and routine maintenance levels. In the face of Maintenance and Operations Department constraints and building upon the College's growing spirit of community, a fall 2010 Green and Clean Day was organized to help beautify the campus grounds. The Vice President of Finance and Administration has directed the Facilities Director to develop facilities standards of care to promote consistency in expectations and operations. In addition to the Fairfield campus, team members visited the Vacaville and Vallejo Centers, as well as the Nut Tree airport site. Overall, the facilities appeared safe, relatively clean and well-utilized. Positive student feedback regarding utilization of the Vallejo Center was, in particular, noteworthy. (Standards III.B.1, III.B.1.a, III.B.1.b)

Regular, systematic evaluation of facilities is not conducted. An initial facilities program review is slated for fall 2011. Given the expansion of facilities subsequent to Measure G's passage, the absence of a corresponding formal evaluation mechanism is noteworthy. Through informal observations, the College was able to make improvements in the Vacaville Center based on lessons learned through the Vallejo Center construction. As the College explores an additional bond measure, utilization and other relevant data will be critical for effective planning. No data is provided to support the analysis and implication of total cost of ownership data on facilities planning. Despite planning efforts associated with Measure G and attempts to approximate ongoing operational expenses, there is "currently a shortage of staff to maintain the new square footage and fields" and "the plan was neglected." While efforts are underway to integrate the Maintenance and Operations Department into the IPP, plans to pursue an additional bond measure contribute to the urgency of this core activity. At this point, a draft list of potential bond projects and facilities prioritization has been developed by the Facilities Director and taken to constituents for discussion. The final draft will come from the Facilities Master Planning process, a part of the integrated institution-wide planning process. (Standards III.B.2, III.B.2.a, III.B.2.b)

Conclusions

The main Fairfield campus, the Vacaville and Vallejo Centers, and the Travis Air Force Base and Nut Tree Aeronautics provide students with a variety of instructional options. Facilities have been modernized, improved and augmented to enhance the physical learning environment. However, ongoing maintenance operations have been constrained by staffing and fiscal challenges. In order to mitigate operational shortfalls, the effective use of integrated, data-driven planning is needed to identify the feasibility and effectiveness of physical resources.

The College partially meets Standard III.B.

Recommendations

See Recommendation #2.

III.C Technology Resources

General Observations

The college has made significant technology advancements since the last site visit. The College recently implemented the Banner system and the MySolano portal for students, employees, and faculty. The Banner implementation improved reporting effectiveness as well as providing improved fiscal data for departments. The Strategic Technology Advisory Committee (STAC) has been non-operative for some time. Disaster recovery, server room security, and redundant systems are currently lacking.

Findings and Evidence

The college has a draft Information Technology Plan that assesses the College's technology needs and identifies actions that need to be taken to meet those needs. The assessment is primarily through the knowledge of the Technology Services and Support (TSS) department. The STAC will be reorganizing in the very near term to review this plan. (Standard III.C.1, III.C.1.a.)

The TSS department is responsible for the district-wide administration of technology. Technology training for faculty and staff is offered through Flex Cal activities. The Office of Admissions and Records provides student training for MySolano activities. The TSS web site offers FAQ's, Tech Tips, and other technology information useful to faculty, staff, and students. (Standard III.C.1.b)

Management and staff readily acknowledge there is not an ongoing budget for equipment replacement or upgrading technology. Emphasis was placed on the prior bond measure to make improvements to technology. Future technology improvements are being planned for a new bond measure that is still in the planning process. (Standard III.C.1.c)

The College continues to enhance the availability of technology resources. Bond funding was used to keep infrastructure reasonably up-to-date. Improvements to A/C units in the server room should provide better reliability for technology. Distance programs utilize a vendor system that is housed off-site. Problems with distance education generally require the assistance of the vendor. (Standard III.C.1.d)

The draft Information Technology Plan describes the development of a central technology budget. The team could not, however, fully determine the linkage between institutional planning, budgeting, and technology. There is no systematic budgetary mechanism in place to replace or upgrade technology. (Standard III.C.2)

Conclusions

The TSS department continually monitors the needs of users and students. Changes to technology since the last site visit have improved financial reporting, student access, and instructional offerings. Additional improvements are needed to protect the current investment in technology.

The College partially meets Standard III.C.

Recommendations

See Recommendation #2.

III.D Fiscal Resources

General Observations

The College is maintaining an ending balance above 5%, but there is some concern about maintaining this level during the state's ongoing fiscal crisis. Deficit spending is projected for the next two fiscal years. The college has begun to set aside funding to meet its retiree benefit obligations in an irrevocable trust. Fiscal leadership consists of a new vice president, director, and manager. The college indicates positive responses to the new fiscal leaders.

Findings and Evidence

The College has adopted to expend approximately \$89 million across all District funds. Approximately \$51 million of these expenditures relate to the general fund. The College is operating with a planned deficit in the general fund in 2011-12 of approximately \$1.5 million to delay permanent reductions. (Standard III.D)

Like most planning at the College, financial planning is not thoroughly integrated with other planning activities. The College does utilize an integrated approach including three-year plans, implementation plans, and other College plans to develop the budget. (Standard III.D.1.a)

The information provided by the new Vice President of Finance & Administration (VPFA) reflects up-to-date information available from the California Community College Chancellor's Office. Additional funding sources, including federal and local revenues, reflect best information available to the College. The VPFA has presented this information to the College in a clear and transparent manner. (Standard III.D.1.b)

The College has established an irrevocable trust with the Community College League of California to fund health care obligations for retirees. The current operating budget includes full payment of the Annual Required Contribution (ARC) as established by GASB 45. The ARC in the current year is paid by pay-go benefits for retirees as well as an expected current year contribution to the irrevocable trust. The college has formed a committee to discuss health care cost containment. Total cost of ownership relating to technology and building relating to Measure G have not been budgeted for in the current budget. A new bond measure is currently being discussed to address these issues. (Standard III.D.1.c)

The VPFA has improved transparency in the budget process. Budget information is shared throughout the College through forums, Board presentations, governance committees, and the college web site. The College's Integrated Planning Process (IPP) allows participation from the constituency groups. (Standards III.D.1.d, III.D.2.b)

The College has been subject to various audit findings in prior years relating to internal controls. The Director of Fiscal Services has implemented new cash reconciliation processes to ensure that bank statements and county cash reconciliations are completed timely. The most recent audit report dated June 30, 2010 includes an unqualified opinion on both the financial statements and

federal programs. Several audit findings were noted but have been reviewed and acted on by the College. (Standards III.D.2.a, III.D.2.d, III.D.2.e, III.D.2.g)

The apportionment deferrals imposed by the state will exceed the general fund reserves of the College. The College has worked with the county treasury to ensure available funds as necessary. This arrangement allows for payment of payroll and vendor warrants even if cash levels turn negative in the general fund. The College has appropriate liability and workers compensation insurance as part of a Joint Powers Authority with other community colleges. (Standard III.D.2.c)

A review of all Measure G bond funds is conducted each year in a performance and financial audit. The College has accurately monitored the ongoing revenues and expenses for this measure. The Solano College Education Foundation tax returns have been appropriately filed. (Standards III.D.2.d, III.D.2.e)

All contractual agreements are reviewed by fiscal services before being sent to the VPFA. The Board of Trustees approves all contracts entered into by the College. Appropriate provisions are written and reviewed, as appropriate, to protect the College. (Standard III.D.2.f)

The College utilizes quarterly financial reports, annual financial reports, and the annual audit to review the effective use of financial resources. Board approval of the quarterly reports and the annual audits allow evaluation of the process. The VPFA has developed improved methods of sharing transparent financial information which allows the College to assess financial resources. (Standard III.D.3)

Conclusions

The evidence reviewed for this standard included all documents listed in the self-study, interviews with finance representatives and shared governance committees, a thorough review of budget documents, annual financial reports and audits, and the Integrated Planning Process. The evidence was consistent with the statements in the self-study, and provided additional insight for those statements.

The College partially meets Standard III.D.

Recommendations

See Recommendation #2.

STANDARD IV

Leadership and Governance

IV.A Decision-Making Roles and Processes

General Observations

Although assessment is often anecdotal and not always evidence-based, evidence does exist that the College community has been immersed on many levels with an extreme accreditation process. A survey indicates that there is a significant difference in classified responses to participation in program review and the development of the three year planning document, which seems to have created a lack of ownership by classified staff.

The college community has been immersed on many levels related to decision-making through participation in the numerous governance and planning committees, as well as the accreditation process, and show evidence that they are evolving into a collaborative governing body with some trust. Solano Community College (SCC) is truly in the community through their various centers and, even in times of contention, they continue to reach out to serve new communities within their service area through planning with various city leaders. SCC has not lost sight of the needs of its students, creating a strong professional development program with over 60 workshops focusing on study skills, Focused Inquiry Groups and the Umoja program. Also, on the operations side, there is a desire to maintain an environment conducive to learning.

Findings and Evidence

Solano Community College has taken steps to create an environment of institutional excellence by constituency groups' involvement in revising the College's mission, vision and goals statements and by the adoption of these statements by the Governing Board. (Standard IV.A.1)

The formulation of goals and objectives drive the program review process, culminating in a College-wide strategic goals and objectives document. (Standard IV.A.2)

Although communication is evident among managers through Administrative Leadership Group (ALG) meetings and retreats, the evidence of communication with faculty, staff and students is unclear. The ALG provides a structure that has encouraged camaraderie and professional development leading to clarity of where they need to go and how to get there.

Through the Integrated Planning Process (IPP), the College community can fund proposals which have a wide ranging impact. These proposals are reviewed by the Shared Governance Council (SGC), Finance and Budget Planning Advisory Council (FABPAC), and Superintendent/President's Cabinet (SPC). The effectiveness and timeliness of this process is in question, as meeting minutes indicate that there is a core group of only four or five people who regularly attend SGC and there is not always representation from all of the constituent groups. During group meetings, it was revealed that some employees have the impression that others are

immune to the IPP Process, that there is a perception that the Superintendent/President makes sudden and bold moves which are unsettling to faculty and staff, and at times college governance procedures are not followed. Since the IPP process is only in place for funding strategic proposals, these employee perceptions may be the result of not fully understanding the process as designed, or a lack of communication as to the purpose of the IPP.

Survey results indicated a consensus among the groups that they were familiar with the strategic goals and objectives and knew the connection between planning and the mission, goals and objectives. However, the lack of participation by staff and part-time faculty in program review and the development of the three year plan should be addressed. Staff shared that at times there was a “you” and “us” feeling and not a “we” feeling. Staff also stated that for them “it’s all about the students.”

There are numerous standing and temporary committees at SCC: Shared Governance Council, Enrollment Management Committee, Associated Students of Solano Community College, Superintendent/Presidents Cabinet, Finance and Budget Planning Advisory Council, Process Evaluation and Review Team, and Hiring Committees which provide opportunities for constituents to work together on planning. The quality and effectiveness of the interaction between and among these groups is not consistent, sometimes leading to the perception that this is just an exercise in shared governance. There is a small group of loyal employees who on a regular basis participate. The College constituencies need to be more fully engaged. (Standards IV.A.2 and IV.A.2.a)

There are documents that support that SCC relies on faculty, Curriculum Committee, Academic Senate and academic administrators for recommendations concerning student learning programs and services. (Standard IV.A.2.b)

Evidence supports that the college has the infrastructure to meet this standard through its governance structures and processes which allow for collaboration and communication between all constituencies. However, the practices need be evaluated in a systematic manner to determine the effectiveness of these practices. The Superintendent/President (S/P) has brought a sense of community to the college family as well as the greater community through various activities (S/P Direct Grams, open forums, and hosting dinners at his home for various groups such as students, classified, faculty, and external community leaders). (Standard IV.A.3)

SCC has been on the accreditation “hot-seat” and closely guided by a Special Trustee. As a result they have had to look closely at their past but more importantly their future and are continuing to strengthen the ways they communicate and relate to each other, their students and their communities. Throughout a tumultuous period they have kept their eyes on the prize, their students! SCC has been in an extreme planning mode for the past two years. In a short amount of time, they have developed a culture of transparency as a result of their desire to continue to move SCC to a student-centered environment. (Standard IV.A.4)

SCC has strengthened and developed its formal and informal evaluation processes and made public the results of these evaluations. The recent hiring of a Director of Research and Planning will play a major

role in strengthening an environment of evidence-based culture, providing vital information needed by groups to make solid wide-reaching decisions. (Standard IV.A.5)

Conclusions

Although the “pieces” to create effective and trusting leadership relationships across all lines are in place, the processes are in their infancy and need time to develop more fully before they can be evaluated, modified and refined.

The College partially meets Standard IV.A.

Recommendations

See Recommendation #2.

IV.B Board and Administrative Organization

General Observations

The Solano Community College District recently hired a new Superintendent/President who has emphasized the College’s integrated planning processes, data collection process, and college-wide accountability. The Solano Community College District Board of Trustees has committed its actions to being a policy making governance body that delegates management and operational responsibilities to the Superintendent/President. It appears that the Board and the S/P have established an appropriate and productive relationship.

The Board of Trustees operates and makes decisions within the scope of its duties as set in policy. These duties align with the expectations in Standard IV. The Board authorizes the Superintendent/President to carry out all duties that implement board policy and to ensure that all College operations proceed effectively and efficiently. The Superintendent/President and other campus leaders make sure that all operations, activities, and services support the mission of the College and enhance student learning

Findings and Evidence

There has been a major transformation of Board of Trustees (BOT) practices and behaviors. The BOT has been deeply involved in professional development through retreats, conferences, development of policies and procedures, and by taking an introspective look at how they function. They are working as a team and have learned how to disagree intelligently.

The Board of Trustees is an independent policy making group. The group reflects the SCC service area which is divided into seven geographic districts and members are popularly elected as specified in statute. The members serve staggered four-year terms of office to ensure stability. A non-voting student trustee is elected by the total student body to serve a one-year term of office. To ensure opportunities for community input, board policies contain requirements for

opportunities for public participation in meetings of the BOT. The BOT governs with the authority granted and duties defined in the California Education Code Section 70902. (Standards IV.B.1, IV.B.1.a)

The SCC BOT actions and polices are in line with the College's recently reviewed and revised mission, vision, core values, strategic goals and objectives and Strategic Plan. The hiring of the new Director of Research and Planning will provide greater data to the BOT for continual improvement of the college. (Standard IV.B.1.b)

SCC BOT has the ultimate responsibility for education, legal, and financial matters. (Standard IV.B.1.c)

The BOT Policies Series 1000 states that the governing board publishes the board bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structures, and operating procedures. (Standard IV.B.1.d)

Minutes and resolutions indicate that the SCC BOT acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. It regularly evaluates these policies and practices and revises them as needed. Access to these documents is available through the BOT website. (Standard IV.B.1.e)

The BOT has been in a developmental mode during the last three years. They have attended numerous retreats, taken advantage of professional development activities, and hired a consultant to help them become a more highly functioning Board. Recently, they have developed a new member orientation. (Standard IV.B.1.f)

Board Policy 1070 addresses the Board's self-evaluation process, which is conducted quarterly followed by an in-depth discussion regarding results at Board retreats. (Standard IV.B.1.g)

Board policies provide the structure for the BOT's Code of Ethics and also the process to address violations pertaining to the Code of Ethics. (Standard IV.B.1.h)

Members of the team met with five of the seven BOT members, who were very aware and knowledgeable of the self-evaluation process. In fact, three of the BOT members were involved with the development of the Standard IV response. The Superintendent/President through individual contact and S/P Gram keeps the BOT informed about the accreditation progress. (Standard IV.B.1.i)

As a result of the last accreditation findings, the SCC BOT has been involved in accreditation training sessions.

Recently, the SCC BOT adopted policies and procedures for hiring a CEO. A policy defines the Board's delegation of administrative authority to the S/P. The BOT negotiated a contract with the S/P that requires an annual evaluation. (Standard IV.B.1.j)

In the S/P's short tenure, he has led two re-organization plans. The most recent plan is in its early implementation stage and will need time to demonstrate its effectiveness. Among the

S/P's many responsibilities and duties, in the latest reorganization, much of the Student Services Division reports directly to the S/P. There needs to be further review of this new reporting structure. (Standards IV.B.2, IV.B.2.a)

The S/P guides the mission, institutional goals, and strategic planning process. The S/P participates in these processes in an appropriate capacity by attending meetings and ensuring that the recommendations of various bodies on campus are broadly reviewed. (Standard IV.B.2.b)

The S/P ensures that SCC has adequate access to resources necessary for adherence to regulatory statutes and review of board policies. (Standard IV.B.2.c)

The S/P has ultimate responsibility for the fiscal stability of the college. A clearly defined process for budget development has been established involving a broad array of college personnel. (Standard IV.B.2.d)

The S/P is to be commended for his active participation in the communities that SCC serves. His presence is felt throughout the area and he communicates the mission of the college in various ways: Presidents Blog and attendance at numerous meetings of local service clubs, political organizations, churches and chamber of commerce groups. (Standard IV.B.2.e)

Conclusions

The Solano Community College Board of Trustees' policies contain the necessary provisions to support the accreditation standards and encourage student learning and institutional improvement. As discussed in Standard I, there appears to be two different mission statements in use. To fully meet Standard IV, the Board needs to consistently use the same mission statement and ensure that its policies align with that statement. The Board has well-defined procedures for selecting a Superintendent/President and for evaluating both the Superintendent/President and the Board's performance.

The Solano Community College Superintendent/President is involved in both the external and internal communities. The Superintendent/President encourages input from various shared governance committees. However, the Board of Trustees through its representative, the Superintendent/President, must ensure that the integrated planning and institutional effectiveness processes are implemented in a timely manner. Much work has been accomplished on the integration of planning and budgeting, but a full cycle of implementation and evaluation needs to be completed in order to ensure compliance with this standard.

The College partially meets this standard.

Recommendations

See Recommendations #1, #2 and #4.