Santa Clarita Community
College District

FEB 0 5 2009

Chancellor's Office

February 3, 2009

Dr. Dianne Van Hook
Chancellor
College of the Canyons
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Dear Chancellor Van Hook:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on January 7-9, 2009, reviewed the institutional Self Study Report and the report of the evaluation team which visited College of the Canyons on Monday, October 20-Thursday, October 23, 2008. The Commission took action to reaffirm accreditation.

The college is commended for the well-organized Self Study Report and the visual themes matrix at the beginning of each standard. The college's commitment to collaborative governance, numerous community partnerships, data-driven planning and evaluation processes, commitment to technology including student and faculty training and support, a wide array of student services, faculty and staff professional development opportunities, and commitment to student success were all noted by the visiting team and the Commission.

I have previously sent you a copy of the evaluation team report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires you to give the team report and this letter dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college self study report. This group should include campus leadership, and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that the team report and the Self Study Report be made available to students and the public. Placing copies in the college library can accomplish this. Should you want the report electronically to place on your web site or for some other purpose, please contact Commission staff.

The recommendations contained in the evaluation team report represent the observations of the evaluation team at the time of the visit. The Commission reminds you that while an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the team report, the college is expected to use the report to improve the educational programs and services of the institution.

Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook
College of the Canyons
February 3, 2009
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All colleges are required to file a Midterm Report in the third year after each comprehensive evaluation. College of the Canyons should submit the Midterm Report by **October 15, 2011**. The Commission will send a reminder to the college about the Midterm Report; a description of reporting requirements can be found on the Commission's website.

The college conducted a comprehensive self study as part of its evaluation. The Commission suggests that the plans for improvement of the institution included in that document be taken into account in the continuing development of College of the Canyons. The next comprehensive evaluation of the college will occur during **Fall 2014**.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to remind you that federal legislation affecting accrediting agencies requires that accredited colleges conduct systematic assessment of educational outcomes (see especially Standards One and Two). A further requirement is that accrediting agencies pay close attention to student loan default rates.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express continuing interest in the institution's educational programs and services. Professional self-regulation is the most effective means of assuring integrity, effectiveness and quality.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. Mitjl Capet, Accreditation Liaison Officer
    Board President, Santa Clarita CCD
    Dr. Robert F. Agrella, Team Chair
    Evaluation Team Members

EVALUATION REPORT

COLLEGE of the CANYONS

26455 Rockwell Canyon Road
Santa Clarita, California 91355-1899

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 College of the Canyons from October 21-23, 2008

Robert F. Agrella, Ed.D.
Chair

COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS

TEAM ROSTER

Dr. Robert Agrella (Chair)
Superintendent-President
Santa Rosa Junior College

Mr. Dave Fishbaugh
Vice President, Instruction
West Valley College

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Mt. San Antonio College

Ms. Bonnie Thoreen
Dean, Upper Valley Campus
Napa Valley College

Mr. Ricardo Navarrette (Assistant)
Vice President, Student Service
Santa Rosa Junior College

SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION REPORT
COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS

October 21-23, 2008

An eleven-member accreditation team visited the Santa Clarita Community College District College of the Canyons, Valencia campus and Canyon Country campus, October 21-23, 2008 for the purpose of determining whether the institution continues to meet accreditation standards.

In preparation for the visit, the team chair attended an all-day training session on August 19, 2008 conducted by ACCJC. Team members attended an all-day training session on September 10, 2008 during which they reviewed the Commission Handbook for Evaluators, were provided the opportunity to begin to function as a team, and began preliminary discussions about the College of the Canyons. Team members also carefully read the college's self study, utilized the internet to review evidentiary documents, and prepared written reports as assigned by the team chair. Approximately three weeks prior to the visit, team members were divided into four groups corresponding to accreditation standards. Each member prepared a more in-depth analysis of the assigned standard as well as a list of individuals or groups they wished to meet while at the college. The meetings were coordinated by the team assistant with the college's Accreditation Liaison Officer. On Monday, October 20, 2008 the team held its initial formal meeting at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Valencia beginning at 12:00 noon and ending shortly after 6:00 p.m.

The three-day visit formally began at 8:00 a.m on Tuesday, October 21, 2008 when the team arrived on campus. For the next three days, team members met either individually or in groups with approximately 225 personnel from both campuses. A limited number of classes were also visited. During the morning of October 21 and the afternoon of October 22 team members held two widely publicized sessions open to anyone wishing to attend. Each of these sessions was well attended (40-55 individuals) and included faculty, staff, and administrative personnel of the college. Attendees expressed enthusiastic support for the college.

During the morning of October 22 three members of the team visited the Canyon Country Campus, toured the facilities, and learned about future expansion plans for the site.

Prior to, as well as during, the visit, team members were given information that allowed them to access online courses and course syllabi.

The self study report appeared to be well organized and attractive. Of particular note was the visual themes matrix placed at the beginning of each standard. The team did find the self study somewhat difficult to read, particularly the responses to the prior recommendations since it referred to the mid term report and other documents to find evidence to support the statements being made. In addition, while the use of the internet to search for evidence documents proved quite useful, team members experienced a number of glitches. However,

as these problems were brought to the attention of college officials, they were quickly resolved.

College of the Canyons is an extremely well-respected institution throughout its service area. The college has forged numerous partnerships with local businesses and organizations and has a strong grants program. The team believes that students and the community at large are fortunate to have College of the Canyons be their primary provider of higher education services.

ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT
COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS

October 21 – 23, 2008

INTRODUCTION

College of the Canyons (COC) is officially accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and received its last accreditation visit in 2002. The district's 367 square mile service area was created by local voters in 1967 and today is home to an estimated 252,000 residents. Officially known as the Santa Clarita Community College District, it is located in the northwest portion of Los Angeles County. The college officially opened in temporary quarters at William S. Hart School in Newhall in 1969. In 1970, 153 acres of land was purchased along the east side of Interstate 5, south of Valencia Boulevard and north of McBean Parkway. A collection of modular buildings was located on this land as college operations were shifted into temporary quarters as permanent facilities were built.

Once agricultural, most of the district is now best characterized as rapidly-growing. The college has positioned itself to take advantage of this growth and to meet the needs of the growing community it serves.

While projections were that enrollment would reach 20,000 by the year 2011, college officials report a headcount of 21,300 students in Fall 2007. In response to this growth, college officials have added faculty and staff and have been aggressive in facilities planning and construction. While the college was housed in eight major buildings in 1988, by 2008 another ten major structures have been built or near completion. The creation of the Canyon Country Campus, opened in August 2007, services residents in the far eastern part of the district and exemplifies planning for the continued future growth of the area. Expansion of both campuses has been greatly enhanced through the voter approved bond measures of $82.1 million in 2001 and $160 million in 2006.

Associate degrees and certificate programs are offered in a variety of vocational and non vocational areas. Course offerings in a variety of formats such as online, short-term, regular semester-length, and hybrid ensure students' needs are met.

The college has developed an extensive number of innovative partnerships with local businesses, agencies, hospitals, school districts, the Chamber of Commerce, the City, and a number of regional four-year institutions.

In addition to a comprehensive educational program, College of the Canyons' student support services are designed to meet a variety of student needs. These services include outreach, admissions and records, counseling, tutorial, financial aid, scholarships, assessment, and orientation. A wide array of categorical programs designed to assist students are also available.

During the three-day visit, the team developed a good understanding for, and appreciation of, the breadth and depth of college operations. The team was impressed with a number of the college's programs, activities, and services observed during the visit. In particular the team wishes to make the following observations:

1.   The Board and the administrative team are commended for their commitment to collaborative governance. An example is their reaching out to students and the Foundation to hold an annual Board of Trustees' meeting with the College's Foundation Board and a semi-annual joint meeting with the Associated Student Government Board. The board and administration are committed to encourage and work within the culture of collaborative governance of the college.

2.   COC personnel are to be commended for identifying partnerships and acquiring private, local, public, and state financial resources necessary to sustain the facilities development needed to support the growth in student enrollment.

3.   The COC personnel are to be commended for the value placed on data and evidence in its institutional planning processes and evaluation of its effectiveness as an institution. The institution is aware of its institutional research resources and employs them to substantiate a variety of requests including new programs, staffing, and resources. College of the Canyons has internalized the importance of data and continues to integrate it into planning and resource allocation processes to achieve its educational purposes.

4.   The team commends COC for its cohesive, integrated and effective use of technology resources that support instruction and many other parts of the institution. The provisions made for end-user training, support for faculty and students engaged in online instruction and overall customer service are exemplary. Planning processes are inclusive, thorough and reward innovation.

5.   The team commends COC for its commitment to student success in its support for the Tutoring, Learning, Computing centers on the Valencia campus, especially the newly developed TLC for athletes, The Zone, and the recently opened TLC on the Canyon Country campus.

6.   The Student Services program at COC is commended for providing a wide array of student oriented services through the coordinated efforts of its many programs and staff. The programs are especially commended for the strides made in identifying and assessing student learning outcomes at both the program and course level, and the demonstrated efforts made to use program review and SLO data to improve services to students.

7.   The team commends the college for its exceptional accomplishments in providing continued professional development to the members of faculty and staff. The most significant of these programs have been developed internally and reflect COC's mission, vision, and statements of philosophy.

8.   The team commends the Board of Trustees, the Chancellor, and all college personnel for their collective success over the past 20 years in building a highly respected reputation in the community and, consequently, being seen as an institution of first choice.

9.   The highly evident entrepreneurial attitude and the enthusiasm, loyalty, and spirit of faculty, staff and administrators are to be especially commended.

To further assist the COC in its efforts to support quality learning the team offers the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that COC continue to build its foundation for Student Learning Outcomes while developing a detailed plan for how to achieve proficiency by the year 2012, as well as find ways to include more adjunct faculty in the process (IIA.1.c, IIA.2.f, IIA.2.i)

Recommendation 2

In order to ensure that the institution maintains student records permanently, securely, and confidentially, with provision for secure backup of all files regardless of the form in which those files are maintained, the team recommends that COC accelerate the timeline for the document imaging of all files and transcripts. The team specifically recommends the document imaging of those records between 1969 and 1990, which are stored in a warehouse and potentially face threats of damage. (IIB.3.f)

Recommendation 3

The team recommends that COC undertake a program review of library services. Without a current library program review, library services cannot be systematically assessed using student learning outcomes and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of the libraries at the Valencia and Canyon Country campuses. (IIC.1, IIC.1.a, IIC.2)

TEAM EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES
TO 2002 RECOMMENDATIONS

During the October 21-23, 2008 visit the team carefully reviewed the college's responses to the six recommendations as a result of the 2002 prior visit.

The team's evaluation of the prior recommendations is as follows:

Recommendation 1: *To ensure that the planning progress continues, the team recommends that systematic evaluation of planning activities and outcomes that document College of the Canyons' achievements be implemented. (Standards 3.A.3, 3.A.4, 3.C.1, 3.C.3; 4.B.3, 4.B.4, 4.B.6, 4.D.3; 5.10; 6.7; 10A.3)*

Recommendation 2 Institutional Effectiveness: *The team recommends that the college implement goal 6 of the current Beyond the Year 2000: Strategic Plan to systematically evaluate planning activities and outcomes that document College of the Canyons' achievements. (Standards 3.A.3, 3.A.4, 3.B.2, 3.B.3, 3.C.1, 3.C.3)*

College of the Canyons chose to respond to both recommendations 1 and 2 together in order to avoid repetition in the responses. The college's response to these combined recommendations provided extensive discussion and review of how the institution's planning activities are developed, implemented, and evaluated. Central to the planning function is the College Planning Team (CPT), composed of campus-wide representation and charged with determining in what ways the college is achieving its mission, purpose and strategic goals.

As commented in the self study, the college has numerous committees, consultation teams, operational teams, departments, divisions and offices that combine to produce numerous publications annually. In addition the college makes extensive use of the Intranet to disseminate these publications.

Every academic department completes a program review annually with non-instruction programs completing a review at least once every three years. The purpose of these program reviews is to improve the college's programs and services.

With respect to the portions of recommendations 1 and 2 that pertain to degree programs, vocational and occupational programs, and awarding credit, the team found the college responded in a concise and clear manner.

It is noteworthy that over the past year, the college has reviewed and refined its academic program review process, combining together three disparate planning threads–budget, narrative evaluation, and student learning outcomes–into one combined, web-based program review system. This system will be piloted with a number of academic departments in 2008/09. The new system also allows the college to link program objectives to the college strategic plan. The fact that the college engages in dialogue to improve existing processes

suggests that the college is at the sustainable continuous quality improvement stage of the ACCJC program review rubric.

Students have been surveyed on a regular basis with the intent of gathering their impressions of instructional and support services, and the results of these surveys have been used to both affirm as well as implement changes in student support services.

In accordance with a self-identified goal based on a program review, Audio Visual Services and Reprographics have been separated.

A student satisfaction survey for Learning Resources is conducted on an annual basis. The results of these surveys are used to improve services to students as deemed appropriate or necessary by college officials.

An item in recommendation 2 that pertains to the Board of Trustees is addressed in the team's response to recommendation 6.

Recommendations 1 and 2 have been satisfactorily addressed.

Recommendation 3: *The team recommends that in order to assure quality and promote excellence, the college should begin the assessment of expected student learning outcomes. (Standards 4.B.3, 4.B.4, 4.B.6, 4.S.3)*

The team found that the college has made considerable progress on the development of student learning outcomes. Discussion and documentation of this progress is contained in Standard IIA of this report.

This recommendation has been satisfactorily addressed.

Recommendation 4: *In order to enhance student support services, the team recommends that student services systematically evaluate progress toward achieving annual goals and that each department participate fully. (Standard 5.10)*

As described in the team's response to recommendations 1 and 2, the college has responded to this recommendation. The team also verified that each department in student services establishes annual goals and that progress toward achieving these goals are evaluated.

This recommendation has been satisfactorily addressed.

Recommendation 5: *The team recommends that the college develop a formula for the stable funding of library materials and tutorial services. (Standards 6.5, 6.7)*

The team found that College of the Canyons made an effort to develop a formula for library materials and tutorial services funding, and ultimately decided that the college would fund needs as they arise.

Student surveys have been conducted on a regular basis to evaluate the Library, TLC Lab and Audiovisual Services. Based on these surveys and program reviews, adjustments have been made to provide students more flexible hours of access. In the response to the recommendation the college also noted that they had done a faculty and point of service survey that would be available by the time of the site visit. The survey was made available to the team.

This recommendation, as stated, has been satisfactorily addressed.

Recommendation 6: *The team recommends that the Board of Trustees review and follow its established policy for self evaluation. (Standards 10.A.3, 10.A.5)*

Evidence was found that the Board completed a self-evaluation in two of the past three years and the college's mid-term report indicates that the Board had completed self evaluations in the three years previous. Reasonable rationale was presented to team members for the year in which a self evaluation was not performed.

This recommendation has been satisfactorily addressed.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. **Authority**

   The visiting team confirmed that College of the Canyons (COC) receives State approval of its programs/services and is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association for Schools and Colleges. The college is authorized to operate as an educational institution and to offer undergraduate education.

2. **Mission**

   The visiting team confirmed that COC's Mission Statement is clearly defined. It was last revised and adopted by the Board of Trustees on March 12, 2008. The college's mission statement is included in the catalog and is posted on the college's website. The mission is appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education and its Southern California constituency.

3. **Governing Board**

   The visiting team confirmed that COC has a functioning, five-member Board of Trustees responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the institution and for ensuring that the institution's mission is being carried out. Its membership is sufficient in size and composition to fulfill all board responsibilities.

4. **Chief Executive Officer**

   The visiting team verified that COC has a chief executive officer whose full-time responsibility is to provide overall leadership and direction to the college.

5. **Administrative Capacity**

   The visiting team verified that COC has an adequately prepared and experienced administrative staff sufficient in size to support the college's mission and purpose.

6. **Operational Status**

   The visiting team verified that COC is fully operational with students actively pursuing degree programs.

7. **Degrees**

   The visiting team verified that COC offers 62 Associate Degrees and 29 certificate programs.

8. Educational Programs

The visiting team verified that COC offers a range of degree and certificate programs consistent with the college mission. The degree and certificate programs are offered in a manner and of rigor consistent with California community college standards at the time of the visit.

9. Academic Credit

The visiting team verified that COC awards academic credit in a manner conventional for community colleges and consistent with degree-granting institutions of higher education.

10. Student Learning and Achievement

The team verified that COC has begun the process to define student learning outcomes (SLO's) and is utilizing the Commission's rubric on SLO development and achievement.

11. General Education

The visiting team verified that COC has a substantial general education component in its degree programs and that writing and computational skills are included in these requirements. General education courses appropriate to higher education are offered.

12. Academic Freedom

The visiting team verified that COC fosters an atmosphere of academic freedom for its faculty and staff.

13. Faculty

At the time of the visit the team verified that COC currently employs 184 full-time and a cadre of approximately 430 adjunct and non credit faculty who meet established minimum qualifications consistent with the California community college system. A statement of faculty responsibilities includes the development and review of curriculum as well as assessment of learning.

14. Student Services

The visiting team verified that COC provides comprehensive student services programs consistent with student needs and the institutional mission.

15. Admissions

The visiting team verified that COC adheres to well-defined admissions policies made readily available to the public.

16. Information and Learning Resources

The visiting team verified that COC operates a Library/Learning Resource Center that includes books, periodicals, reference materials, and electronic resources.

17. Financial Resources

The visiting team verified that COC has an adequate funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development to support the college mission and programs.

18. Financial Accountability

The visiting team verified that COC demonstrates financial accountability through the findings of an independent audit performed on an annual basis.

19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation

The visiting team verified that COC maintains a comprehensive planning system that utilizes data and evidence in its decision making processes. An ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation assesses progress toward achieving institutional goals.

20. Public Information

The visiting team verified that all eligibility requirements for public information are contained in the COC printed college catalog, website, and an array of other printed materials.

21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission

The visiting team confirmed that COC adheres to the eligibility requirements, standards and policies of ACCJC, describes itself in identical terms to all of its accrediting agencies, communicates any changes in its accreditation status in a timely manner, and agrees to disclose information required by ACCJC to carry out is accrediting responsibilities.

ACCREDITATION THEMES

General Comments

The accreditation self study included a visual matrix at the beginning of each standard that illustrated where each theme occurred within that section of the report. The visiting team found this a helpful addition to the written descriptions.

Institutional Commitments

The team found that the College of the Canyons makes a strong commitment to fulfill its mission, augmented by a detailed vision and philosophy statement. It is clear that these three briefs drive institutional planning and goal setting, actualizing the college's primary commitment to support student learning. The college catalog and other publications make clear that the college fosters an entrepreneurial spirit that is committed to serving the community's educational needs.

Evaluation, Planning and Improvement

The team found ample evidence of a strong and systematic evaluation, planning and improvement process that is clearly part of the campus culture. Planning activities revolve around the college's long-range strategic goals, developed in support of the mission. The master planning, budgeting, facilities, technology, and construction planning processes are well communicated and transparent, made visible in the 130-page brief entitled *Decision Making at College of the Canyons*. Each planning area is clearly linked to improving teaching and learning, and the team found evidence that this emphasis on improvement is on-going. For example, after writing the self study, the college identified some issues with the current academic program review format, recognizing that department chairs were asked to send the same repeated information for staffing requests, budget augmentation and program review at different times of the year. A committee of administrators and faculty spent a year brainstorming how to streamline and condense this process, creating an on-line version that combines the data, a narrative, and SLO assessment information. Three weeks before the visit, the Academic Senate approved the new format which will be piloted this year (08-09).

Student Learning Outcomes

The team found evidence that the college has identified Student Learning Outcomes, is beginning to assess them, and is generally at the developmental stage of the Commission's rubric for student learning outcomes. An additional framework has been created through the efforts of the SLO Committee, existing since 2002, though it is not recognized as a standing committee. The college has begun to allocate resources toward this effort by funding an SLO Facilitator position in Spring of 2008. The SLO Facilitator devotes 50% of her full-time

workload to instructional faculty and departments, assisting them with any and all SLO work. The team found that some faculty seemed engaged in the SLO process while others were somewhat less enthusiastic; existing organizational structures and leadership groups had accepted responsibility for SLOs, even if they were not always wholly enthusiastic. The Annual Report on SLOs, sent to the Commission after the self study was written, shows that almost all courses and a majority of programs have written SLOs, while institutional learning outcomes have been identified. Assessment of course and program SLOs is just beginning; only a handful of departments have actually completed this process. Work with Student Services SLOs is much more complete. The team was impressed that all Student Support Services departments have written and assessed SLOs, some completing this process for a third time. Academic and Student Services include SLOs as part of Program Review, though the reporting forms do not capture the dialogue that the team found has resulted from the process. The team believes that the SLO effort will be strengthened if the SLO Committee develops a detailed timeline and goals to bring them to the Proficiency level by 2012.

Organization

The team found that College of the Canyons is a well-organized institution whose primary processes, structures, and resources are directed toward supporting and improving student learning. The college has grown rapidly over the last six years, with sharp increases in both staffing and facilities. This growth has been well orchestrated through the college's planning processes and organizational structure.

Dialogue

The team found evidence that dialogue serves as an important component to decision-making processes at College of the Canyons. It occurs at all levels of college governance, from academic department meetings to the College Planning Team to the Board. This dialogue is informed by reliable information about the college's programs and services, as it clearly demonstrated in the breadth of the data required for program review and other planning and budgeting processes. Some of this dialogue is well evidenced in meeting minutes while other instances are not as well recorded though the team found evidence that it is occurring throughout the institution.

Institutional Integrity

The team found that College of the Canyons represents itself with honesty and truthfulness to external and internal stakeholders. The evidence found ranges from the college's philosophy statement to principles about academic freedom and ethics principles adopted by the Academic Senate to statements about student behavior and plagiarism found on course syllabi. Even job announcements make clear the guiding principles of the college and the characteristics required to work there, capturing its culture of "can-do" and "will-do," within an emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship.

STANDARD I
Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Standard IA   Mission

General Comments

The College of the Canyons (COC) recently revised its mission statement to address the diverse needs of its growing community. The current statement concentrates on three principal areas: lower-division academic education, workforce training, and lifelong learning programs. The statement is central to institutional planning and drives the institutional planning processes, both explicitly and implicitly. The team also found evidence of a statement of vision, philosophy, college goals, strategic plan, and action priorities that closely align with the mission statement. Through these statements, the college demonstrated that it is clearly committed to high quality education and is being clear about its character, direction, purpose, and values, all of which are appropriate for a community college. The mission statement is reviewed on a periodic basis and is revised as necessary.

Findings and Evidence

An analysis of its students' educational goals and assorted demographic indicators assisted COC in identifying its student populations within its rapidly growing service area. (IA) The result is a mission statement with a focus on three chief areas: academic education at the lower division, workforce training for businesses, and lifelong learning. Through the self study and accompanying documents, the team found that COC's extensive set of student learning programs and services closely align with the diversity of student needs that are centrally addressed in the mission statement. (IA.1) Through a review of planning documents and processes, the team confirmed that the mission statement drives the planning efforts on the campus. (IA.4) The current program review process neither states the mission statement explicitly nor asks department to link objectives and achievements directly to the statement. However, through interviews, the team found that many departments still consider the mission statement when developing their department plans. Furthermore, through dialogue about the existing program review process, the next iteration of the program review process will be completed online and the mission statement will be prominently placed at the top field of the document to demonstrate its centrality. (IB.1, IB.4, IB.6)

A revised mission statement was approved by the Board of Trustees on March 12, 2008. It is communicated internally and externally through its publication in the college catalog, the Fact Book, the Educational Master Plan, the Facilities Master Plan, the district's campus website, and on posters around the campuses. (IA.2)

The team found evidence to support that the mission statement is reviewed approximately every two to three years. (1A.3)   Discussion surrounding the most recent and major revision can be traced back to the March 2007 minutes of the College Planning Team (CPT). Through documented dialogue, the CPT agreed that the mission statement should incorporate

the concept of student learning outcomes (SLOs), serve as a launching point for developing Institutional Level Outcomes (ILOs) by identifying the target student populations, and be broad enough to apply to the diversity of students. (IA.4, IB.1, IB.4) Spearheaded by a subcommittee of the CPT, the revision process took approximately one year. The process incorporated research of the mission statements of other institutions, development of potential statements, and the final agreement of the statement through the input of the CPT.

A thread connects and aligns the mission statement with the statement of vision, philosophy, and the eleven college goals stemming from the philosophy. (IA) The college's strategic plan expands the eleven college goals into a multitude of action priorities, which is a term used to describe the specific objectives set by the individual departments. Through these action priorities, the departments articulate their planning of goals and activities to address the college goals, thereby making the college goals and the mission statement concrete. The entire strategic plan is reviewed every three years, at which point the accomplishments of past action priorities are collated and new action priorities are developed. The complete list of achievements is shared internally and externally. The strategic plan serves as one mechanism to evaluate the institution's effectiveness explicitly using the college goals and implicitly using the mission statement. (IB.2, IB.6)

Conclusions

COC meets the expectations of Standard IA. A mission statement that more closely reflects the institutional priorities in order to address the increasingly diverse needs of its students has been developed. There is evidence to indicate that the connection to the mission statement is more evident in some processes than others; however, the fact remains that it is connected to planning. The mission statement was approved by the Board this year and has been shared externally and internally through its placement in key documents. The statement is used to create a strategic plan and action priorities that align achievements in student learning services and programs back to the strategic goals. The mission statement is reviewed on a regular basis and revised as necessary.

Recommendations

None.

Standard IB   Improving Institutional Effectiveness

General Comments

Currently, the college has multiple planning processes such as the program review process, the budget request process, the Educational Master Plans, and the strategic plan. Through feedback and dialogue, COC has identified unnecessary areas of redundancy and is in the process of finalizing a new online program review process to streamline several disparate processes by integrating the budget request process into the program review process and creating a mechanism to inform the strategic plan. Dialogue occurs in both documented and

undocumented forms and is a central component in driving change based on evaluation of existing processes. COC has an open access practice for a majority of its committee meetings, and individuals are encouraged to attend and provide input on the design and development of innovative programs and services to meet varied student needs. The importance of data is evident through the role that it plays in securing resources.

Based on the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness, COC is placed at the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement levels for both its Program Review and Planning processes. An established program review framework is systematically and regularly implemented and linked to institutional planning. The budget request process has a component to connect resource requests to the program review. The link between the program review process and the resource allocation process can be strengthened and made more explicit and consistent, but it is evident that COC has internalized the importance of allocating resources through the use of evidence. The program review process is periodically evaluated and the most recent set of evaluations have given way to a new upcoming online program review process. Student learning outcomes have been identified and assessment results are regularly employed to address student programs and services. Furthermore, COC engages its employees in dialogue to evaluate and improve existing programs, services, and processes. In addition to program review, COC systematically reviews all of its planning processes and integrates them into more comprehensive plans such as the strategic plan and the Educational Master Plans.

Findings and Evidence

Through the self study and interviews with COC administrators, the team discovered that there are multiple demands made on the departments for the same information at varying times of the year. COC's key planning processes include the annual academic program review, the tri-annual non-instructional program review, the tri-annual strategic plan, and the two Education Master Plans, one for the district and one for the Country Canyon campus. These discrete plans interface with other processes such as the budget request process, the Academic Staffing Reports, and the request for new programs. Once the program review is submitted, the departments modify and use the content to complete the forms required of other processes including the strategic plan and the budget request process. Though the processes are connected, they are not yet fully integrated. The document, *Decision Making at College of the Canyons*, is placed on the college's intranet and makes the planning process more transparent to the campus community.

COC values data and engages in constant dialogue, both of which are evidenced in the evolution of the program review process. (IB.1, IB.3, IB.5) The program review process began as a series of questions regarding the program under review, and data regarding the program was provided at the end of the program review document. The location of the data rendered it almost invisible since many departments completed their planning before examining the data. Through interviews, the team learned that undocumented dialogue regarding the program review process occurs in the form of departmental and divisional retreats and meetings as well as CPT meetings where individuals provide input to modify the

process. As a result of this dialogue, the current iteration of the process has brought data to the forefront and departments are asked to draw and use conclusions from provided data to identify the internal and external factors in which they operate, to create objectives for the next three years (which become the action priorities in the strategic plan) and to express the link between their objectives and the strategic plan. The instructional programs have included the course and/or program-level student learning outcomes in the process, unlike the non-instructional programs whose administrative unit objectives currently occur outside of the non-instructional program review process. (IB.1, IB.2, IB.3, IB.4, IB.5)

In order to address the redundancy of its planning processes, COC is finalizing a new online program review process for all departments. The online program review has the potential to intertwine the program review, the budget request, and strategic plan processes. During the 2008-09 academic year, a pilot integrating the budget request process into the program review process will be conducted with a handful of instructional and non-instructional departments. The online process will also serve as a mechanism for capturing the action priorities and aligning them to COC's strategic plan, thereby increasing the efficiency of the process. (IB, IB.2) There will also be a component where departments can evaluate the online program review process and submit their views and recommendations. (IB.4, IB.6) The team suggests that the implementation of the online planning process be done in a timely manner with adequate communication and training to effect integrated planning.

Through a review of the numerous documents referred to in the self study, interviews with district employees and the open public meetings, it is evident to the visiting team that data is central to the institution. Many of its key processes such as the budget request process, academic staffing requests, and request for new programs demand evidence in order for resources to be allocated. Furthermore, the current program review process provides all departments with data fields pre-populated with relevant departmental data ranging from enrollment statistics to survey results for use to engage in department planning. (IB.3) Evidence also indicates that COC shares its plans and results with the internal and external community. (IB.5)

Through an analysis of COC's committee meeting minutes, program reviews, and conversations with college employees, the team confirmed that COC engages in both documented and undocumented dialogue. It is evident that the college values constant communication and discussion about ways to improve student learning as well as institutional processes. (IB, IB.1, IB.4) The majority of COC's committees are open to any employee who is interested in getting involved and engaging in dialogue about evaluating existing processes and developing innovative strategies and programs to ensure student learning and success. (IB, IB.4, I B.6, IB.7)

Conclusions

COC meets the expectations of Standard IB. The college values and uses data and provides various opportunities for input and dialogue to evaluate and improve key institutional processes, student learning programs, and services. The college implements its goals through a strategic plan that incorporates the action priorities of the departments and shares the final document internally and externally. Though certain connections between the mission statement and the program review process and between the program review process and the budget request process could be made more explicit, it is apparent that COC connects its various planning efforts to adequate resource allocation.

Recommendations

None.

STANDARD II
Student Learning Programs and Services

Standard IIA   Instructional Programs

General Comments

Overall, the visiting team found that the district offers high quality instructional program, student support services, and library and learning services that facilitate student learning. College of the Canyons collects, analyzes, and uses a significant amount of student demographic and achievement data.

Based on the ACCJC Student Learning Outcomes Rubric, the team found that COC is at the appropriate "development" level at the time of the accreditation visit. According to interviews, an institutional framework was established with the formation of the SLO committee in 2003, which has labored to plan, train and assist faculty with SLO development, though it does not appear to have a formal standing within the college's organizational structure. The SLO committee chose to first address course outcomes and then program outcomes. Trainings have been offered on a regular basis. Work on general education outcomes began at a retreat which occurred in spring 2008, where those outcomes and possible assessment measures were identified. A faculty manual has been written and made available on the web, but the team found that it is rather brief and lacks examples or much detail about different forms and methods of assessment. The team found evidence that the SLO Committee was established with good faculty participation, and the Academic Senate provides leadership by encouraging faculty to engage in the initiative despite resistance among some faculty members. The Curriculum Committee supports the initiative by incorporating SLOs into the curriculum approval process and the curriculum database. During Spring 2008 a 50% reassigned time position for an SLO Facilitator was established. The SLO Facilitator's responsibilities are to assist academic departments and individual faculty with SLO work. When asked whether faculty members were actively engaged in this process, the SLO Committee responded that it believes that the majority of full-time faculty members are actively engaged, but that the engagement of adjunct faculty was difficult to estimate, and anecdotal evidence suggests that they are sometimes not included.

Despite evidence that a framework is in place and that progress is being made in SLO identification and assessment, the visiting team was concerned about the lack of a planning agenda for SLOs in the self study, especially since assessment is still in its infancy. The team had difficulty in understanding the longer range vision or how the initiative would be sustained.

Findings and Evidence

The team found evidence in the catalog, the web, and interviews that suggests that COC offers a range of high quality programs in traditional academic majors such as Anthropology and Journalism, as well as a range of occupational programs, some of which address

industries in the service area, such as Animation, Biotechnology, and Manufacturing Technology. The curriculum process assures that courses and programs align with the mission of the district. These programs are systematically assessed in an annual program review process, which also includes identification of course and program SLOs. While the majority of departments have identified course and program SLOs, a much smaller number have embarked on an assessment. The college documents trends in award of degrees and certificates, as well as transfer trends. (IIA)

The visiting team found that COC demonstrates in its catalog, web presence, and interviews that instructional programs meet the mission of the district and uphold its integrity. The visiting team found this to be true at both campuses and in the distance education program. The rapidly growing distance education program is well supported and includes a commendable staff development program to cultivate quality online teaching. Quality is assured, in part, by academic program review, which includes program missions that implicitly align with the mission of the college; however, a more explicit alignment would be helpful. The integrity of curriculum is assured by a rigorous curriculum review process, documented in the *Curriculum Handbook*. Integrity is also assured by annual student surveys and most recently, surveys of distance education students as well. The mission of the college is particularly evident in many partnerships in the community, active seeking of grants, and a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurial activity, particularly in economic development. (IIA.1)

COC demonstrates a commitment to meeting the educational needs of varied students. COC publicizes information about the community it serves, including an environmental scan, demographics, concurrent enrollment data, transfer patterns of high school graduates, participation rates, as well as the results of placement tests. There are many indications that the college addresses the needs of these students, for example with the accelerated Progressive Adult College Education (PACE) program, expanded ESL classes, and the rapid expansion of the distance education program. The team recommends, if appropriate, that the college follow the Commission's Substantive Change process to ensure that the growing distance education program is included in the college's accreditation. The research office generates a number of surveys, reports, and research briefs to identify student learning needs and student achievement. (IIA.1.a)

The self study documented and evidence verified a wide variety of delivery systems including traditional, distance education, and accelerated and weekend programs. A user-friendly, well-organized class schedule confirms a wide variety of options for students. (IIA.1.b)

COC has made significant progress in identifying student learning outcomes at the course, program, and degree level. While the self study indicated that 62% of courses and 60% of programs had identified SLOs, the more recent ACCJC report (spring 2008) indicates that 90% of courses and 60% of programs have identified SLOs. Evidence of this was found in the Program Review documents for academic departments. All general education outcomes were identified at a college retreat during Spring 2008, part of the college's three-pronged institutional SLOs which also include Job Skills and Personal Development. (IIA.1.c)

The team found that COC is in the initial stages of course assessment. According to last spring's report on Student Learning Outcomes, while 19% of courses have identified assessment methods, only 7% have been assessed with only 5% completing the assessment loop to improve teaching and learning. A review of program review documents suggested that, in some cases, there was confusion about the language of assessment, about the difference between assessment and grading, or the most appropriate assessment methods to use, but the team believes this could be improved with further trainings. The team found that the brevity and/or layout of the reporting form for program review makes these important concepts difficult to distinguish because the reporting area on the form is so small. In addition, the team found that form did not capture the extent of the dialogue about assessment results that had actually occurred or the level and extent of changes to teaching and learning that have resulted in improvement. The new program review online format may not alleviate this problem. The team suggests that additional training may be indicated so that the dialogue and institutional change that is occurring as a result of the SLO process is better captured. Despite the brevity of comments in the program review document, the team found in conversations with a few faculty members that this dialogue and resulting change has proven meaningful (IIA.1.c).

Program assessment is occurring at an even more infrequent level, with 43% of programs identifying assessment methods while only 25% have attempted assessment and 13% have closed the loop and improved teaching and learning. Since the GE outcomes and assessment methods were created in Spring 2008, no assessment has been undertaken, although the committee reported that one department will be piloting its assessment during Fall 2008 (IIA.1.c).

The SLO committee reported that it has a general plan of how to reach "proficiency" on the ACCJC rubric by 2012, but it is not yet detailed. The committee expects departments to eventually assess every course outcome each semester, plus program and GE outcomes. The team was concerned about the sustainability of this effort, but the committee did not share that apprehension. In order to reach these benchmarks by 2012, the team suggests that the committee develop a more detailed plan for additional trainings, particularly in assessment methods, and create benchmarks and goals for how to bring the instructional component to the "proficiency" level. (IIA.1.c)

The team found that COC assures the quality and improvement of instruction through the curriculum review, program review, planning, and faculty evaluation processes. COC offers pre-collegiate study abroad/educational travel, short-term, distance education, contract education and customized employee training, noncredit and lower division credit courses. All courses, whether credit or noncredit, undergo evaluation by the Curriculum Committee. (IIA.2)

COC has established procedures to identify and approve SLOs, approve, administer, deliver, and evaluate courses and programs, and these procedures are generally faculty-driven. The design of courses and programs is described in the *Curriculum Committee Handbook*, and the process usually begins with the faculty, although occasionally curriculum innovation for new

programs is initiated by a dean. The SLO Committee consists mostly of faculty members; they and the SLO Facilitator provide direct training and advice to faculty. Faculty members identify SLOs and incorporate them and their assessment into program review and the course outlines of record. Evaluation of courses and programs is reflected in the program review process which begins at the faculty level. (IIA.2.a)

As noted previously above, COC relies on the faculty to identify SLOs for all courses and programs. A review of samples of occupational advisory committee minutes confirms that advisory committees assist in identifying the competences and standards required by business and industry. As also noted earlier, the team found that the college has made significant progress identifying SLOs, but assessment is still in the early stages. COC has relied traditionally on grades as the primary assessment of student learning; interviews revealed that the paradigm shift to thinking in terms of outcomes has not been fully realized, with a number of suggested assessments resembling grading as evidenced in the program review documents. (IIA.2.b)

The team found that the college catalog provides the best evidence that major and certificates are characterized by appropriate depth, rigor, sequencing, and time to completion. An introduction to each discipline identifies certificates and majors and the sequence of courses required to complete each one, demonstrating appropriate breadth and depth. Synthesis of learning is not readily apparent in the course sequence, but program SLOs suggest that synthesis of learning is valued by the faculty and will be assessed. (IIA.2.c)

As evidenced in the self study, the class schedule, and the curriculum data base, the college uses delivery modes and teaching methodologies that reflect the diverse needs and learning styles of its students. The team found that most common teaching methodologies and a variety of different types of assignments are listed in the course outline of record. (IIA.2.d)

The team found that COC evaluates all courses and programs through a required cycle of curriculum review and program review. The existing academic program review process at the time of the visit focused primarily on quantitative data, future needs and plans, and student learning outcomes. A previous, more narrative process required more reflection on relevance and appropriateness of courses and programs. The new proposed process will combine both of these to form a more complete picture, an approach the team found that more fully satisfied this standard. (IIA.2.e)

The team found that COC engages in ongoing, systematic evaluation of courses, certificates, and majors though an annual cycle of academic program review. Academic program review documents are gathered together in one master document. Although assessment activity was limited at the time of the visit, conversations with department chairs indicated that when assessments had been done, it appears that results were usually shared in the department for the purpose of improving teaching and learning. General education outcomes had been identified, but not assessed, at the time of the visit. Planning and student achievement data was publicized and widely available at the time of the visit. (IIA.2.f)

The self study revealed that course exit exams are not used by the college, except in English and math. English has since discontinued this practice in favor of portfolio assessment. The math department continues to use a common final exam in several courses, and departmental faculty meet to assess the fairness and validity of these exams. In addition, certain occupational disciplines have external certification or licensing exams. (IIA.2.g)

The team found that, at the time of the visit, COC could not currently assure that degrees and certificates were being awarded based on student achievement of a program's stated learning outcomes, but the team could reasonably expect that this standard would be addressed when program assessment is occurring on a regular cycle. No planning agenda was provided for this substandard, but a longer-range plan should address this. (IIA.2.i)

The team found that COC requires that all academic and vocational degree programs include a component of general education. The associate degree general education philosophy and general education requirements are outlined in the college catalog. (IIA.3) The associate degree general education pattern requires students to understand the basic content and methodologies of the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. (IIA.3.a) The general education pattern also requires skills in both written and oral communication. An outcome of the natural sciences general education requirement is scientific reasoning. Mathematics competency can be demonstrated by completion of specified courses. Critical thinking and the ability to acquire knowledge are built into the Language and Rationality general education area as well as other general education areas. There is no distinct computer literacy requirement. (IIA.3.b) Expectations about ethical behavior and effective citizenship are part of the college's mission statement and are supported in a variety of ways across the college and the curriculum. The college has a Diversity general education requirement that all graduates must complete. An American Institutions general education requirement encourages civic, political, and social responsibility that is supported by extracurricular activities that encourage student engagement. (IIA.3.c) The team found that all degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry, or in an established interdisciplinary core. (IIA.4)

The team found that COC assures that vocational and occupational students meet employment standards and are prepared for external licensure/certification though the annual program review process and regular meetings with advisory committees, by conforming to external regulations, and by looking at the pass rates of external examinations. (IIA.5)

The team found that information provided by the college to students and prospective students was clear and accurate with regard to courses, programs, and transfer policies. For each major and certificate in the catalog, the purpose, content, and course requirements are clearly listed. Program SLOs are not yet published in a way visible to students. The self study reflects that these documents are reviewed every year. Sample course outlines confirmed that all included objectives and three of the four also included student learning outcomes. The Student Survey revealed that 85% of students are aware of SLOs in their course syllabi. (IIA.6)

The team found that COC makes available to students clearly stated transfer-of-credit policies. A transcript evaluation process is described on the Admissions and Records web page. It provides basic information about transcript evaluation with contact information if a student has further questions. COC maintains articulation agreements that are visible on ASSIST or in printed copies. The catalog clearly denotes which courses are transferable to CSU or UC. It would be difficult for any community college district in the Western Region to utilize SLOs for the purposes of transcript evaluation until such time as most other institutions reflect those in their course outlines of record or other publicly accessible documents; however the college's transcript evaluation process could accommodate this requirement in the future. (IIA.6.a)

The team found that COC did not have a formal policy with regard to elimination of programs or significant changes to program requirements that would allow enrolled students to complete their education in a timely manner. However, because of the rapid growth of the college, a policy has not been needed, and only one program was eliminated twenty years ago. A plan to develop a policy and procedure has been developed. (IIA.6.b)

As noted earlier, the team found that the college represents itself clearly, accurately and consistently to prospective students and current students. Public information was attractively formatted and informative. Policies and procedures were reviewed regularly. Class schedules and the catalog are reviewed regularly to ensure accuracy. (IIA.6.c)

The team found that COC follows a detailed Board-approved policy on academic freedom. The current policy was adopted in January 2007 on the recommendation of the Academic Senate and covers both faculty and student responsibilities regarding academic freedom, as well as clearly defining how faculty should distinguish between personal opinion and professionally accepted views. In addition, the board revised three academic student policies in 2006. These policies can be found in the schedule of classes and catalog. (IIA.7)

The self study provided evidence that COC has clearly defined the difference between a faculty member speaking or acting as a private citizen and presenting information in a discipline. The Board policy on academic freedom also clearly requires that faculty present information fairly and objectively by stating "…professional decorum requires the presentation of differing perspectives and interpretations with balanced intellectual rigor." (IIA.7.a) However, in the future, it might be helpful to ask students in the annual student survey whether or not they perceive this fairness and balanced intellectual rigor.

The team found that COC has clearly established and published policies on student academic honesty and the consequences that ensue if dishonesty is found to have occurred. (IIA.7.b) These policies culminate in a clearly stated code of conduct for staff, faculty, administrators and students that emerges through the Mission, Vision and Philosophy statements in addition to the specific published codes of conduct. (IIA.7.c)

The college does not offer curricula in foreign locations. (IIA.8)

Conclusions

The team found that COC meets all of Standard IIA. The college is providing high quality instructional programs to diverse students at various locations using varying modes of delivery. Clear and accurate information is provided to students. The general education program develops a wide range of student skills and abilities. COC has policies in place that protect academic freedom and ensure academic honesty. With regards to Student Learning Outcomes, COC meets the ACCJC expectations, but lacks a planning agenda about how to reach the proficiency level on the rubric by 2012.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that COC continue to build its foundation for Student Learning Outcomes while developing a detailed plan for how to achieve proficiency by 2012, as well as find ways to include more adjunct faculty in the process. (IIA.1c, IIA.2.f, IIA.2.i)

Standard IIB   Student Support Services

General Comments

COC provides a wide array of student support services that reflect the institutional mission and orientation toward student success. (IIB.1) These programs are available at both the Valencia campus and the Country Canyon campus. The self study notes, and the team confirmed, the following programs and services:

- Admission & Records
- Counseling
- Cooperative Work Experience Education (CWEE)
- Health and Wellness Center
- Student Development programs, including clubs and a Service Learning program
- Transfer Center
- Bookstore
- Student Business Office
- Athletics
- International Students Program (ISP)
- Career Center
- Recruitment and Outreach

Additionally, COC offers categorical programs that include Disabled Students Programs & Services (DSP&S), Extended Opportunities Programs and & Services (EOPS)/Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE), CalWORKS, and Matriculation. These

combined programs and mechanisms for annual self assessment respond to the learning support needs of the students on the two campuses. (IIB.3.a)

<u>Findings and Evidence</u>

COC systematically identifies learning support needs of its students through program reviews, questions on its admissions application, and an annual student satisfaction survey. (IIB.3) The team confirmed that Student Services staff discuss and analyze the results of these surveys to assess and respond to learning support needs. For example, the college developed an on-line application process as a result of an analysis of survey data. It also expanded operational hours in the Admissions Office in response to program review and SLO data that indicated the need for expanded weekend and evening services. (IIB.4) At both the Valencia and Canyon Country campuses, the team identified evidence that modifications to student services were made in response to planning data.

The visiting team affirmed that COC systematically assesses student support services using student learning outcomes. The college provides evidence to show that each area of student services has identified strategic goals. Measurement of learning outcomes is conducted using multiple assessment methods. (IIB, IIB.4) The student services program conducts and analyzes SLOs in consonance with the college's institutional effectiveness model that is incorporated in several planning documents, including the Strategic Plan, Educational Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan and Technology Master Plan. The Student Services Division has identified and assessed student learning outcomes at the course and program levels. At the institutional level, the division has identified outcomes that will be measured by course completion, program persistence, degrees and certificates. These outcomes were identified in advance of the college SLO committee's work on institutional level SLO's. This may suggest that there is room for improvement between the Student Services Division and the college's SLO Committee.

COC assures equitable access to all its students through integrated services that are supported by online technology and special services for students in special populations. Online technology supports several student services functions, including counseling, financial aid, assessment, registration and tutoring. Students can also complete the application process online using CCCapply. The college's online orientation is available in English and Spanish. The college also provides online courses in success strategies, career exploration, and job search skills for distance learning students. (IIB.3.a) A position for Student Recruitment and School Relations, established in 2007 with the hiring of a director, expanded the college's outreach capabilities to area high schools and improved pathways for educational access to the college. At the time of the site visit, the team learned that this position had become vacant.

COC has utilized a Title III grant to establish an Innovation Team that meets on a monthly basis to evaluate services and ensure that the services meet students' needs. The team noted evidence of achieving success at accomplishing the four goals of the grant and improve access to student services. These goals are to: (1) improve access to advising and counseling; 2) implement user-friendly online services and information; (3) automate the data entry of

routine student services documents; and (4) improve teaching and learning. Online services are also evaluated through questions included in the college's annual survey. Observation of evidence and discussions with the staff revealed to the team that COC is making progress towards this goal of providing services through online activities.

COC also annually assesses progress towards accomplishing this goal through its strategic planning process. DSP&S staff serve on the Technology Committee to ensure Section 508 compliance, including web site and closed captioning. To accommodate the needs of students who may not have access to computers and online services, the college has provided expanded services, including evening and Saturday hours, to provide face-to-face services to students at the Valencia campus. The Canyon Country campus has also expanded service hours during the week to accommodate students.

Additionally, in spite of its strides towards online registration, COC maintains its telephone STAR system to provide access to students without computers. The self study has a planning agenda to provide an application for admission in Spanish within the next three years. (IIB.3, IIB.3.a)

Counseling services are provided to support student learning. The Student Services Department has eleven general counselors, including nine full-time faculty. One full-time counselor is exclusively dedicated to supporting student athletes. There are also four adjunct counseling faculty and four adult hourly program advisors. Counseling services are also provided by one full-time counselor in EOPS, 1.6 full-time counselors in DSP&S and a 20 hour per week adjunct counselor in the International Students Program. Student contacts per counseling activity have increased for individual appointments, drop-in consultations and group workshops. The services provided by counseling staff are evaluated through the annual student survey, the Scheduling and Records Systems (SARS), program review, and the assessment of SLOs. Student surveys have generally shown an increase in the satisfaction rating for counseling services between 2006 and 2008. This was also validated by the team in interviews with academic faculty, who were complimentary of the services offered through the Student Services Department. The faculty members who met with the team described many examples where they have coordinated their instructional activities with counseling services programs, including outreach to high schools, Basic Skills Initiative, training on the use of online tutoring, and activities on the Innovation Team. The Counseling Department has also responded to goals established as a result of student surveys conducted since the last accreditation visit, and has instituted processes for a regular schedule of counselor training, marketing, and online scheduling of counseling appointments through SARS. (IIB.3, IIB.3.c)

COC publishes a catalog available in both print and online versions through the college website. The catalog provides information that meets accreditation standards IIB.2.a, IIB.2.b, IIB.2.c, and IIB.2.d. Additionally, the college provides students with a schedule of classes that also includes matriculation information as well as information on the student code of conduct. Students interviewed by team members expressed satisfaction with the information and format of the presentations in both the printed and online schedules.

An environment that encourages personal and civic responsibility and personal development for all its students is anchored by several clubs and extra-curricular activities. The college has an Associated Student Government that sponsors regular campus events, including cultural, educational, and service programs. COC's Service Learning Program, which promotes civic engagement, has won national recognition. The Student Development Office provides limited weekly service to promote extra-curricular activities among the students at the Canyon Country campus.

COC also publishes policies related to academic standards and student conduct in its schedule of classes and catalog. (IIB.3.b, IIB.3.d)

COC provides programs and services that enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity. It has several programs and committees, including a Cultural Heritage Committee composed of faculty and staff that plan and implement events that support diversity. The Academic Senate and the Curriculum Committee have supported the development of coursework in diversity throughout the curriculum. Students interviewed during the visit related examples of how diversity programs offered by the college has positively influenced their world views. However, the self study does not address how student learning in diversity issues is assessed at the institutional, program or course level. (IIB.3.d)

Assessment tests in math, English and ESL administered by the college meet California Community District System Office (CCCSO) matriculation standards. COC validates its assessment instruments every six years as required by state mandate. Accuplacer is used for its online placement tests in math, English and ESL. The college includes instructors and students in validation studies of its tests. (IIB.3.e)

COC maintains most of its student records permanently, securely and confidentially. It has provisions for regular and secure backup through its Datatel Colleague system. Access to student files is controlled by state and federal laws as well as college policy. Staff members are required to undergo training on the security of records systems as well as the confidentiality of records and their release to students. The college, through its Title III grant, has purchased a Hershey Systems Singularity system to convert paper transcripts and student files into electronic versions. At the Country Canyon campus, all files are electronically imaged. The college has a planning agenda to electronically image 2.5 million historical records and establish an online degree-audit program and an online student educational plan in order to effect security in its record keeping system. At the Valencia campus, paper files and student records between 1990 and 2008 are secured in a fireproof filing system. Files between 1969 and 1990 are stored in a document storage warehouse. However, a tour of the warehouse revealed to the team that the security of these files may be threatened by the presence of rodents. In order to fully protect these records, the college will need to act in a timely manner or there appears to be a significant risk of certain student records damage or loss. (IIB.3.f)

Conclusions

The team found that COC substantially meets Standard II B. The Student Services program has developed an integrated set of activities designed to meet the learning support needs of students. A culture of assessment is evident in the program delivery system, and SLOs are an integral part of this culture. SLOs are used to evaluate program goals and improve services, including a robust online system of support services. Each area in Student Services has conducted at least one cycle of SLOs and the program uses program reviews as an effective part of a cycle of program assessment and improvement.

There is evidence of coordination among the staff in the program, with meetings held regularly to assess program effectiveness. Teaching faculty, during meetings with team members, praised the counseling services and the level of coordination between academic and student services.

Recommendations

Recommendation 2

In order to ensure that the institution maintains student records permanently, securely, and confidentially, with provision for secure backup of all files, regardless of the form in which those files are maintained, the team recommends that COC accelerate the timeline for the document imaging of all files and transcripts. The team specifically recommends the document imaging of those records between 1969 and 1990, which are stored in a warehouse and potentially face threats of damage. (IIB.3.f)

Standard IIC   Library and Learning Support Services

General Comments

College of the Canyons defines Library and Learning Support Services as the library, media, and Tutoring/Learning/Computing lab (TLC). Located on a prime hilltop spot overlooking the campus, the Valencia library building, constructed in 1997, offers students a friendly and comfortable atmosphere for study and research. The first floor houses the book collection with single study carrels as well as reading tables and lounge furniture. On the second floor there are more study carrels, group study rooms, the media collection and viewing stations, and an 18-station open computer lab as well as numerous group study rooms. The library has wireless access throughout its facility.

Through student/user surveys and interviews with faculty and students, the team found that there is considerable support for the library and learning support services from faculty and students. In the 4th and 5th Annual Student Surveys (2007, 2008) the students rated the library and the TLC at the very top of satisfaction in comparison to other COC services. In the 2007 survey, the library had an 82% satisfaction rating with the TLC at 74%. In 2008 the library had an 83% satisfaction rating with the TLC at 77%. Despite these survey results, the team noted that the library staff is limited and the resources scarce for a college of its size as evidenced by the most recent Non-Instructional Program Review (2004, p. 7). The team's anecdotal interviews with students indicate that there are not enough computers for student use in the library. The media public computer access area is also impacted and does not meet student demand.

Since the previous accreditation team visit in 2002, the dean responsible for the library has retired and many of the functions, such as reprographics and audio-visual services, have been re-assigned to other managers. Following the dean's retirement, one of the faculty librarians has been given a stipend (one month additional pay) to perform responsibilities as the "lead" librarian. Over the past five years, the reporting relationship of the "lead" librarian within the Instruction Office has changed twice. The library is currently aligned under the Dean, Distance Learning Programs & Training.

Currently the College of the Canyons library staff consists of three librarians, including a librarian with the title "Librarian, Bibliographic Instruction/Electronic Databases," five adjunct librarians and five FTE support staff. The library staff feel that another professional librarian is needed to meet the learning-support needs of faculty and students based on several factors: the rapid growth of district enrollment, the continuous expansion of instructional programs, the impending remodel of the present library building, and the fact that the library administrator was not replaced after retirement.

Library electronic databases costs are paid for out of funds from the California Community College Chancellor's Office Telecommunications Technology Infrastructure Plan (TTIP). These support funds do not show in the general fund budget reports. The district general fund budget for electronic databases is $10,000.

The budget reported in the 2004 Program Review is $31,458 for all library materials—books, periodicals, and media materials. Staff reports that the budget has increased in recent years and the 2008-09 adopted budget dated September 30, 2008 indicates the budget line item to be $65,911. The team believes that the budget in 2004 as well as for 2008-09 compares unfavorably with similarly sized colleges based on a dollar amount per full time equivalent student.

There are plans to double the size of the building over the next two years in order to provide more student study space and to incorporate the Tutoring/Learning/Computing Lab (TLC) into an adjacent space. Currently the main TLC is located in a nearby building. The services in the TLC include tutoring in math, English and computing as well as proctored testing services. There is another facility located near the new gymnasium called The Zone which is also part of the TLC. The Zone provides tutoring in the same subjects for the student athletes. Athletes are required to study or take advantage of tutorial services in The Zone three hours per week. During team visits both TLC facilities were very busy, and interviews with staff indicate that students often have to wait for an available space. Relocation to an expanded library building will relieve present overcrowding. The Canyon Country campus also has a TLC. Originally opened in the fall of 2007, it shared space with the library. Within months it was apparent that the space was not sufficient and the TLC moved into its own building. Student visits in all three of the TLC sites for tutoring are documented and submitted to the MIS department for apportionment.

Findings and Evidence

The team found that the surveys and interviews indicate a high satisfaction with the learning resources staff and services. However, the team also notes that there are some indications that the library/learning support services are not adequate. Some of the computers used to search the catalog and online databases are 5 years old and are from other labs that have been upgraded. Many of the computers used in the library are on a scheduled replacement list. The team observed that the media equipment is aging and much of it does not support digital technology. A random search of 40 books in the collection (not including history, art, religion and philosophy) reveal an average copyright date of 1988, 20 years old. And the budget has been relatively stable at approximately $60,000 with a collection of 55,000 volumes held, while student enrollments and instructional offerings have accelerated nearly threefold during the past 20 years. (IIC.1.a)

The Canyon Country campus library opened in the fall of 2007 with approximately a dozen books. Currently it has a collection consisting mainly of reserve materials to support course offerings. A very limited number of circulating materials is available to students. And students indicated a lower level of satisfaction with services and hours at the Canyon Country campus library/TLC than the Valencia campus. There is some indication that materials are shared between the campuses, however the volume of borrowing is low. Librarians estimate about 10 items were loaned to the Canyon Country campus during the spring, 2008 semester. (IIC.1.c) The library materials budget noted above is the budget for both campuses, thereby possibly limiting acquisitions dedicated toward the Canyon Country campus library.

There is an automated library system, Ex Libris, that was purchased in partnership with a local private art college. Recently, a decision was made to migrate the COC portion of the shared database and house it on campus. In addition the college belongs to a multi-type network that allows students to borrow from local high school libraries and the private art college. The library staff is active in the regional library network, Region VII Library of California. A contract with OCLC for catalog records and interlibrary loan services is also maintained. (IIC.1.c)

The library/TLC most recent non-instructional program review was conducted in 2004 for the library. Student evaluation surveys in 2006 and 2007 appear to be systematically implemented. The 2004 program review revealed shortcomings in collection size, budget and staffing levels. Meanwhile, the student satisfaction surveys indicate a rather high rate of satisfaction (74%). (IIC.2)

Conclusions

While the library staff is providing exceptional service to faculty and students, the team believes they are doing it without adequate staff, materials budget, and technology. Library staff should be proud of the survey responses regarding their service; however, in order to meet the spirit and intent of standard II C, the college should recognize the importance of the library and learning support services, including the necessary staff, the library collection, and the appropriate technology.

The team believes that COC does not adequately support its instructional programs in regard to its provision of library services. For a college of its size, and the breadth of its academic, career and technical education programs, the team believes that the libraries and their collections of learning resources do not achieve standards in quantity, currency, depth and variety to facilitate educational offerings, regardless of location or means of delivery.

Furthermore, the 2004 program review for library services is not up to date. As such, the libraries are less enabled to plan for and effect needed improvements. Without a current library program review, COC cannot systematically assess its library services using student learning outcomes and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of the libraries at the Valencia and Canyon Country campuses. (IIC.1, IIC.1.a, IIC.1.c, IIC.2)

Recommendations

Recommendation 3

The team recommends that the college undertake a program review of library services. Without a current library program review, library services cannot be systematically assessed using student learning outcomes and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of the libraries at the Valencia and Canyon Country campuses. (IIC.1, IIC.1.a, IIC.2)

STANDARD III
Resources

Standard IIIA   Human Resources

General Comments

Through a review and evaluation of a variety of written documents the team found that the college employs qualified personnel to support student learning and services to improve institutional effectiveness. Substantial evidence, including the college catalog, college human resources policies and procedures, and job descriptions demonstrate that the college ensures program quality and integrity by employing individuals with education, training, and experience appropriate to their positions. Personnel are treated equitably, are evaluated regularly and systematically, and are provided opportunities for professional development. Human resources planning is integrated with institutional planning.

Findings and Evidence

The team found that personnel needs are addressed in College of the Canyons (COC) planning documents including the annual academic program reviews and three-year strategic plans developed by each academic and non-academic department. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated in printed job announcements, which are also available on the college website.

Faculty play a significant role in the hiring process for faculty positions, as evidenced by the development of a standard faculty "boilerplate" established by the Academic Senate and the district.   Department chairs and deans add additional specificity to the job description. Applicants may apply online through the district's Human Resources Web Page.   Job descriptions are directly related to institutional mission and goals and accurately reflect the position's basic function, representative duties and responsibilities, desirable knowledge, skills, experience, and abilities. Also stated in the job description, is the college's philosophy of expectations in the areas of entrepreneurism and leadership as desired qualifications, which tends to emphasize the attitude that permeates the institution.

COC has developed detailed hiring policies and procedures to ensure that all employees meet or exceed the required education, training and experience qualifications for the position. All faculty members are required to meet the standards outlined in the Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges, or the equivalency previously established by the Academic Senate and the district. There is a demonstrated consistency in hiring practices by requiring the same minimum qualifications for all full-time, part-time and substitute faculty credit and noncredit faculty. The Human Resources staff pre-screens all applications to ensure all applicants meet minimum qualifications prior to the hiring committee's review. A review of the degrees held by faculty and administrators indicate that they are from institutions accredited by recognized U.S. accrediting agencies. Applicants are required to submit original transcripts from an accredited institution if

selected for an interview. Hiring criteria are designed to assess subject matter knowledge, participation in professional responsibilities, scholarly work and experience, and sensitivity to working with students from a diverse background and varying learning styles. Faculty applicants are expected to provide a teaching demonstration, which allows the hiring committees to assess an applicant's technical expertise and teaching effectiveness. (IIIA.1.a)

The team found that COC assures the effectiveness of its human resources by evaluating all personnel systematically and at stated intervals. (IIIA.1.b) Although most California Community Colleges evaluate faculty every three years, tenured faculty at College of the Canyons are evaluated every four years. Non-tenured faculty are evaluated in semesters one, two, three, five, and seven of the probationary period, and may be evaluated in semesters four, six, and eight if the tenure review committee desires. Adjunct faculty are evaluated in their first semester and then at least one additional time during the next four semesters. The faculty evaluation process also includes classroom observations, student surveys and a self-evaluation. The evaluation process is intended to measure a faculty member's proficiency in the classroom based on the following criteria: currency and depth of knowledge in the subject area; the ability to establish and accomplish clear lesson objectives; a proficiency in written and oral English enabling clear, effective communication; the use of a variety of teaching methods and materials challenging to the students; the organization of presentations and activities in the classroom or work site; the use of good time management in the classroom; and the use of appropriate assessment methods. The evaluation process is designed to encourage improvement by providing faculty members with meaningful feedback and follow-up as needed on noted deficiencies.

Represented classified staff are evaluated during their third, sixth and twelfth month of the probationary period and then annually prior to their anniversary date. Confidential staff members are evaluated in the same manner as the represented classified staff using a different evaluation form.

Administrators and classified managers complete an annual self-evaluation report. Supervisors meet with the employee to review the self-evaluation, supply constructive feedback, and provide written comments and set goals for the coming year. This process is an essential element in the process of improvement. Based on meritorious service, a change in job description, or other factors, a recommendation for salary adjustment may be made by the Chancellor to the Board of Trustees. (IIIA.1.b)

Although student learning outcomes are a required part of the course outline and are being incorporated into course syllabi, faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated student learning outcomes are not currently evaluated on the effectiveness in producing those outcomes. (IIIA.1.c) The team learned that this is a topic that will be addressed through the collective bargaining process during the next round of negotiations.

Although COC has a published philosophy of "Respect for All People" and ethics are clearly implied in various Board Policies and documents, there is currently no formal professional

ethics policy for all employees. Human Resources plans to develop a code of ethics policy that applies to all employees. (IIIA.1.d)

The self study states that the number of full-time faculty members is sufficient to meet current student needs and is well ahead of their full-time faculty obligation issued by the California Community Colleges' System Office. COC is to be recognized for the quick response to the rapid hiring of faculty and staff, as a result of the rapid population growth of the college's service area as well as the needs of the new Canyon Country campus. The team also noted that the college has several processes in place to determine where new personnel resources are needed. (IIIA.2)

COC utilizes various sources for personnel policies and procedures. Board Policies were reviewed, revised and approved in June 2008. The district's *Decision Making at College of the Canyons,* which contains current hiring policies and procedures, was recently updated and disseminated broadly in 2008. All Board Policies and Collective Bargaining Agreements are available on the college's intranet site, which is accessible to all employees. All new employees are provided an orientation on policies and procedures along with a copy of the appropriate collective bargaining agreement. (III A.3)

COC systematically implements and adheres to written personnel policies and procedures ensuring fairness in all employment procedures as approved by the district Board of Trustees. These policies are available for information and review on the district's website and in various publications. Hiring committees are provided with training and written materials regarding fair and equitable employment practices. The college utilizes a PowerPoint presentation to ensure consistency of training and information being disseminated. (IIIA.3.a)

The team confirmed, as stated in the self study, personnel records for all employees are physically kept in a locked and secured environment by the Human Resources Office. Procedures are in place to allow employees access to their personnel files as prescribed by the collective bargaining agreements. (IIIA.3.b)

COC demonstrates through published policies and practices an understanding and concern for issues of equity and diversity. The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Advisory Committee is composed of administrators, faculty, staff and students who are currently updating the college's EEO Plan. Online training and workshops are provided and all employees are encouraged to participate. (IIIA.4, IIIA.4.a)

The Human Resources Office annually assesses its record in employment equity and diversity for all personnel. As a result of this annual analysis, increased targeted advertising to reach specific populations has been implemented. Various organizations on campus have sponsored campuswide events with the goal of fostering an appreciation and celebration of diversity. The college has also established the Diversity Partnership Committee whose purpose is to plan and coordinate diversity events for both personnel as well as students. (IIIA.4.b)

COC demonstrates integrity in the treatment of its administration, faculty, staff and students as demonstrated in Board policies and the numerous employee recognition and award events that occur on a regular basis. (IIIA.4.c)

The team was particularly impressed with the college's demonstrated long-term commitment to faculty and staff development. The Staff Development Advisory Committee was formed in 1989-90 and included faculty, classified, and management representatives. The structure of the committee has evolved to now include an advisory committee for each employee group as well as a coordinating committee that assists in planning professional development activities. The program was recognized and awarded the Institutional Merit Award by the National Council for Staff, Program and Organization Development in Fall 2007. The college's Chancellor was also recognized for outstanding leadership in support of staff, program and organizational development activities. Evidence of COC's significant commitment was formalized by the establishment and funding of the Professional Development Department in 1998.

The wide variety of outstanding professional development activities demonstrates the college's commitment to providing appropriate professional development, consistent with the institutions strategic goals and the personal and professional development goals of its employees. The Professional Development activities includes a Flex Program for Faculty, the Administrative Development Program, Management Skills Training, Administrative and Faculty retreats, participation in the Southern California Community College District Employment Relations Consortium workshops, Technology Training workshops, and Cultural Diversity Training. Most impressive are the Online Instructor Certification courses that provide training for faculty prior to teaching an online course, the Leadership Education in Action Program (LEAP) that provides leadership training for interested staff, and the Associate Program for Adjunct Faculty that focuses on improving teaching techniques. Also notable, is the Professional Development Mentorship Program that is offered to faculty and staff who aspire to a management or leadership role, and the New Employee Orientation Program. (IIIA.5, IIIA.5.a)

Professional development workshops and activities are planned based on the results of an annual needs assessment survey. Each individual activity is also evaluated by the participants in an effort to provide a quality program. (IIIA.5.b)

Human Resources planning is integrated in the college's planning process at the institutional, departmental and program level. The college's Strategic Plan sets the overall goals, which are reviewed and revised based on the current needs and objectives. (IIIA.6)

Conclusions

COC meets the expectations of Standard IIIA. The college provided ample evidence that the deficiencies found in meeting Standard IIIA.1.c and Standard IIIA.1.d are in the process of being addressed.

Recommendations

None

Standard IIIB   Physical Resources

General Comments

The self study, associated evidence, and a campus tour demonstrated to the team how the college's facilities are planned and developed to support its educational master plan and its strategic plan goals. Such coordination assures that facilities are conducive to student learning. The district provides safe and supportive facilities as well as coordinates the growth of its new facilities with its vision and goals.

The college utilizes a financing plan that incorporates private and partnership contributions, local bond proceeds, interest income, refinancing mechanisms, and state funding to support substantial growth. The college constantly strives to provide a pleasant campus appearance in order to remain attractive to students and the general public. The coordination of the facilities master plan with the college's strategic plan and educational master plan assure the alignment of the facilities to the needs of student learning.

Findings and Evidence

There is full integration between the college's strategic and educational master plans and the Board-approved five-year facilities master plan that extends to the year 2012. The demands of a growing community are being sufficiently met through a combination of private financing, district bond financing, and state funding. The team found the campus facilities to be safe and meet applicable building codes. The rapid enrollment growth and the development of new program offerings place pressures on the facilities and new construction to remain conducive to student learning. The coordinated response of the facilities staff with the college's Educational Master plan and Strategic Plan accomplishes this challenge. (IIIB) In addition, there are adequate funds for the scheduled maintenance of existing facilities to remain current with applicable codes and standards of safety and performance. The college also adequately funds the current maintenance program in order to provide safe and attractive campuses that remain conducive to student learning and a pleasing work environment. (IIIB.1, IIIB.1.b) The future challenge will be whether such growth can be sustained due to the recent economic downturn and resulting state budget problems and potential college budget limitations. COC has responded to this potential problem by developing a financial reserve for possible 2008-09 mid-year budget cuts, as well as developing partnerships with other organizations to fund building projects. The college is also seeking private and local public funding for future growth projects. (IIIB, IIIB.1, IIIB.1.a, IIIB.1.b)

The Canyon Country campus opened in 2007 utilizing modular buildings and is serving students while construction of permanent campus facilities is being planned. The modular buildings serve the needs of the existing students and as anticipated enrollment growth

occurs over the next five years, the college expects the first permanent building to be ready for use in 2012. The team verified that the construction plans for the Canyon Country campus are contained in the college's facilities master plan and are linked to the college's strategic goals and educational master plan for the Canyon Country campus. (IIIB.1 and IIIB.2.a)

The facilities master plan reflects the needs of the college's mission and vision through the coordination with its strategic and educational master plan. The facilities under construction as well as planned for construction are within the college's planned financial capabilities. (IIIB.2.a) These projects will result in campuses that will sustain the necessary programs to provide for student learning. There is adequate funding of on-going maintenance and scheduled maintenance, as well as existing capital construction. In addition, the college plans for the operational cost of its planned facilities. (IIIB.2.b) The development of the new facilities is attracting more students from both its immediate surrounding the community and out its service area as well.

Conclusions

COC meets the expectations of Standard IIIB. The college is doing a commendable job of identifying other organizations to partner in order to acquire needed financial resources for new development and planning for the future growth of its campuses. The team also found that the facilities master plan and the capital construction plans are coordinated with the college's strategic plan and educational master plan. The college's facilities planning and operational maintenance results in facilities that are conducive to student learning. The rate of future campus development may be adversely impacted by the state's economic downturn which will result in the need to develop additional local funding sources. This has been recognized by the Board of Trustees and administration and plans are being developed to respond to this potential if it occurs by acquiring private funding or partnering with other organizations.

Recommendations

None

Standard IIIC   Technology Resources

General Comments

COC has ensured, through a variety of means, that its technology resources are used to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. Technology planning is integrated with institutional planning in multiple ways, including regular reliance on departmental program reviews, a technology strategic plan, a more recent technology master plan, and the Educational and Facilities Master Plan. Technology Resources are structured within the organization into two major components: Management Information Systems and Information Technology. Each major area is further subdivided

into areas of specialization, such as Audiovisual and Computer Support/Online Services. Related areas, such as Distance Learning and Instructional Design, are organized under the Instruction component of the college, but linked and coordinated to Technology and Online Services. There are a number of well-structured and active committees whose focus pertains to technology resources. These committees are composed of faculty, staff and administration. They meet regularly, make decisions that receive institutional follow-through and support and contribute substantially to planning. Information concerning the actions of these bodies is regularly disseminated throughout the college. Surveys of students, faculty and staff concerning the adequacy of technology resources are conducted periodically, with the results analyzed, then flowing into planning processes. Systems for the provision of information technologies are well-designed, generally up-to-date, secure, protected and provided comprehensively to both the Valencia and Canyon Country campuses. User support and training are routinely accommodated. Staffing levels devoted to the provision of the technologies appear to be satisfactory to meet current demand. Incremental increases in these areas have kept pace with the rapid growth of enrollment.

Findings and Evidence

The thorough implementation of technology resources throughout the college meets the teaching, learning, communication, and research needs of both the Valencia campus and Canyon Country campus. There are a comprehensive variety of systems and tools in place for this. Instructors and administration use WebCMS to manage the curriculum development process. The online course management system, Blackboard, is used by faculty and students for online and hybrid course instruction and learning. Datatel Colleague is used as the enterprise system, in conjunction with WebAdvisor, STAR and CCCApply. Students interface with these automated systems to apply, register, enroll and conduct other business through electronic means with the college. The college supports Micrograde and Turnitin for faculty use. The Datatel system also supports the automation needs of human resources, purchasing and fiscal services. The COC website is a well-designed, attractive resource providing a useful informational tool to the entire community served by the college. Care is taken to ensure that its online resources meet accessibility requirements. Remote access to online library resources is available to registered students and other authorized users. An Intranet serves the internal needs of the college. Most classrooms and instructional spaces are sufficiently supported with audiovisual and computing systems. Classrooms and laboratories housed in the new modular structures at the Canyon Country campus and the newer or remodeled facilities at Valencia are particularly well appointed. Classrooms and laboratories in some of the older Valencia campus buildings are not as well equipped with the newest audiovisual and instructional technologies. Faculty teaching in these facilities still have access to portable equipment and the same levels of service. A competent network infrastructure reaches all areas of the two campuses and possesses sufficient bandwidth to handle current needs. Plans are in place to further upgrade the bandwidth at the Canyon Country campus. Wireless connectivity is fully deployed at Canyon Country campus and expected to be ubiquitous at both campuses by mid-year 2009. (IIIC, IIIC.1, IIIC.1.a)

Training for users of these technology resources is well-conceived and regularly provided. COC offers group and one-on-one instruction on technology topics through its Professional

Development Program and the Institute for Teaching and Learning. Technology Centers with ample equipment, staffing, and hours of operation are in place at both campuses. A staffed help desk is in place to assist technology users. Distance learning instructors have additional resources and services devoted to their training and support. These include workshops on relevant topics and two courses offered for credit that train and certify full-time and part-time faculty in online teaching and learning. Close to two hundred COC faculty members have completed the courses. Additionally, the college has recently expanded its training capabilities in these areas by adding an Instructional Design Coordinator to its staff. Survey results confirm that technology training at COC is appreciated by a large majority of respondents. Additional needs assessments also help determine new course offerings. COC believes it can improve opportunities for students to receive "as-needed" training on technology topics to improve their academic success, as stated in a Planning Agenda item. As another Planning Agenda item, the college plans to further support the expansion of distance learning, and in particular its support of distant student needs. (IIIC.1.b)

The underlying infrastructure and equipment supporting the many uses of technology is up-to-date and properly maintained. Fiscal support comes from the general fund, additional state categorical funds, various grant funds, and local bond funds and is sufficient to meet current needs. The administration of technology resources has a solid structure and is ample enough to support the current needs of two campuses. Adequate numbers of qualified support personnel are assigned to service both MIS and IT units, each part also covering the two campuses. The design of the infrastructure and the security of systems and data, including back-up technologies and procedures, have no apparent flaws or shortcomings. COC does have a Planning Agenda in place to enhance its disaster recovery capabilities through co-locating critical resources, using off-site tape storage and testing server virtualization techniques. Since the last self study, the expansion of technology systems, resources, and support staff has all kept pace with advances in technology and with the rapid growth of enrollment. (IIIC.1.c)

Planning for technology resources is integrated with institutional planning. COC has continually recognized the importance of technology and technology services in its Education and Facilities Master Plan and in separate strategic plans that focus on technology, including the recent Technology Master Plan. Program review allows individual departments and programs to declare needs for technology. These are routinely formulated into planning efforts and resource allocation decisions. Input and consultation from individuals and constituencies are derived from a variety of standing committees. These include a Technology Committee, Web Committee, Educational Technology Committee, and the Datatel Stand-Up Committee. Faculty and staff survey results indicate that the levels of satisfaction with the provision and quality of technology resources and services are quite high. (IIIC.2)

The distribution of technology resources at both the Valencia campus and the Canyon Country campus meets or exceeds standards. Access to many electronic resources and information is readily provided by the district website. Both the Valencia and Canyon Country sites maintain individual web presences. Student and faculty access to online and

hybrid courses is facilitated by Blackboard. Wireless connectivity is widely available at both locations. In both instructional and non-instructional domains, neither individuals nor classes of users are overlooked or impeded from employing technology into daily routines. (IIIC.1.c, IIIC.1.d)

Conclusions

COC meets the expectations of Standard IIIC. The college enjoys a data- and information-rich environment through the widespread provisions of information technologies. The college supports innovation and recognizes the role of information technologies in its internal operations and its instructional programs. All phases of the efforts made to plan, acquire, implement and utilize its technology resources are in place and soundly managed. Furthermore, the college effectively supports and trains students and personnel in the use of technology. COC also recognizes a few areas in which improvements can be made, such as further expanding support for students receiving instruction by distance and technology training. The Team recognizes that COC has the necessary vision, structures and funding resources in place to competently effect improvements, as needed.

Recommendations

None

Standard IIID   Financial Resources

General Comments

The team reviewed evidence indicating that a system of effective resource planning for the college exists. COC complies with the annual independent audit report and audited financial statement requirements, along with the periodic actuarial reports to appropriately reflect long-term liabilities. Board policy reflects the minimum fund balance requirement in the unrestricted general fund, but actual reserves are in excess of this requirement in order to ensure adequate assets on hand in case of unforeseen circumstances or funding shortfalls.

The college displays an exemplary practice in developing a detailed budgetary process that incorporates several components of strategic planning as evidenced in the financial plans, annual budget requests and presentations, and capital plans. This practice includes the periodic review and evaluation of the budget process that provide the basis for budget development and allocation.

Findings and Evidence

The team found that the district's financial resources are sufficient to support all aspects of the operations and capital improvements. The college has experienced significant funded FTES growth that has averaged eight percent per year over the last seven years. This growth

has materially contributed to the financial stability of the college. This financial stability, coupled with sound planning has enhanced the development of programs and services. (IIID)

The self study report as well as documents provided to the team describe a budget development and financial planning process integrated with institutional planning. The PAC-B Committee provides oversight for budget development, encourages understanding of the budget process, and works to ensure that the budget allocation process is driven by collegewide planning and strategic priorities. COC has taken the next steps in incorporating an online process of budget integration into the new program review process that is set to be piloted in 2009-10. The district's mission and goals lead the fiscal planning process and are incorporated into the Strategic Accomplishments. (IIID.1) Evidence provided in the team room and from interviews of college personnel document the budget development process. This process utilizes documents such as the Strategic, Educational, Facilities, and Construction Master Plans at the beginning of the budget cycle to help identify budget priorities. Once the budget is adopted by the Board of Trustees, the college continuously updates the departmental units on the status of their requests and expenditures allocation throughout the process. (IIID.1.a)

The team confirmed the distribution of financial information to the college community. This includes the presentation of financial information at board meetings on a monthly basis, the review of financial information with department personnel as a part of the evaluation process, the overall periodic review of financial information in the development of planning efforts, as well as periodic presentations and emails by the Chancellor. The college utilizes other funding sources, such as grants, business partnerships, and new credit or non-credit programs that have the ability to generate new FTES. Various options are assessed and aligned with institutional planning. (IIID.1.b, IIID.2.g)

In making short-term financial plans, the team found evidence that long-range financial priorities are considered to ensure financial stability. (IIID.1.c) The college takes into account and incorporates into the planning processes the impacts of activities and how they relate to student learning outcomes, as evidenced in the detailed planning and budgeting process that exists. Most of the district's long-term liabilities are offset by commensurate reduction in expenses or fees associated with the particular project, such as energy savings from the Central Plant and student parking fees. The college has utilized Certificates of Participation (COPs) issued for the expansion of the Central Plant and the improvement of student parking lots. State Scheduled Maintenance Funds are used for short-term maintenance and repair needs. The college has passed two general obligation bonds, Measure C in 2001 for $82 million and Measure M in 2006 for $160 million. The college is also expected to receive state matching funds toward capital construction projects. COC is to be complemented on the thoroughness of completing the Fiscal Assessment Checklist that is used to assure financial stability when making short-range plans by considering its long-range financial priorities. (IIID.1.c)

The college has an extensive process for financial planning and budget development. Initial workshops are conducted for all faculty, staff, and administrators, to ensure a complete

understanding of the fiscal management resources available and the development process. (IIID.1.d)

The college is looking toward the future in incorporating the budget development process into future planning and program review.

The team found that fiscal management systems assure the financial integrity of the college. The financial management system (Datatel) has appropriate control mechanisms and has the capability to generate dependable and useful reports to personnel throughout the district. The team found that these reports were distributed on a timely basis and are utilized at all appropriate levels of the organization, including the Board of Trustees, to make sound financial decisions. (IIID.2.a, IIID.2.b) Over the past several years, the college has exceeded the fund balance requirements established by Board policy. In the past year, the college has maintained a 6% fund balance by responsibly estimating revenues, establishing a system of checks and balances, and reviewing and evaluating budgeted allocations of departments. (IIID.2.c) The college is a member of Joint Powers Authority (JPA) for both worker's compensation insurance and property/liability coverage. (IIID.2.c)

COC has routinely completed the Fiscal Management Self-Assessment Checklist on an annual basis and has scored high marks based on the fifteen criteria for fiscal health. (IIID.2.g) This valuable tool provides a comprehensive picture of the college's financial strength. As evidenced by the unqualified opinion and audits over the past six years, the college has demonstrated effective oversight of finances, including financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, contractual relationships, auxiliary organizations, and institutional investments and assets. (IIID.2.d, IIID.2.e) The college continues to increase grant revenues, requiring the additional monitoring of related objectives and expenditures. (IIID.2.e, IIID.2.f) The team found the college's concern for, and oversight of, financial resources to be at a consistently high level of scrutiny. The team found ample evidence that the evaluation of its financial resources was constantly being evaluated both for internal integrity and for meeting institutional planning needs. (IIID.2.g, IIID.3)

Conclusions

The team found that COC meets the expectations of Standard IID. This finding is based on the evidence provided in the team room in support of the self study report, interviews with college personnel, and physical observations. COC is to be complimented on the very extensive process of financial planning it has instituted and for taking the necessary steps to ensure long-term fiscal stability.

Recommendations

None

STANDARD IV
Leadership and Governance

General Comments

Despite its rapid growth, the team found that COC incorporates a structure of collaborative governance, systematically engaging all constituents in the discussion of the college's operation and future. This culture of collaborative governance is not only supported by the campus community, but it is ingrained into the college's culture. There is a positive relationship between the attitude of employees and their inclusion in such discussions. The long-term stability of the Board, the Chancellor, and the core faculty has created a high level of confidence and trust in the district's leadership. The visiting team observed that COC leadership is committed to advancing institutional improvement and continued embracing of a collaborative governance culture.

The use of research data is widely accepted and used throughout the college. The use of data in decision making processes is consistently encouraged by the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees.

COC's financial stability and the ability to properly fund student learning programs in the future are not a current concern of the Chancellor or the Board of Trustees based on the continued increasing enrollment, and a sustained financial fund balance. Although the college has maintained financial reserves in the past, the State's economic decline may have an adverse impact on future budgets. The Board of Trustees and administration have identified the change in the economic environment as a potential concern and have developed planning scenarios to respond to such possible changes.

The Foundation is an important part of the college's organization and it is fully integrated into the various educational, support, and community outreach programs, thus facilitating not only fund raising but also outreach and academic improvement. The Foundation is aligned as an administrative unit and reports to the Chancellor. The Board of Trustees holds an annual meeting with the Foundation's officers to encourage cooperation and communication between the Foundation and the college.

The team found that the Board of Trustees encourages collaboration with the college's Associated Students Government organization by holding two meetings a year with the student leaders with the sole purpose of discussing student issues. Additionally, the college supports an active and well-funded student government organization. Students are encouraged to participate in and are respected members of college committees.

The Board of Trustees has been stable in both their tenure and their commitment to the college. In concert with the long tenure and the proactive leadership of the Chancellor, the college has benefited by an effective and dedicated leadership team.

Findings and Evidence

Standard IVA Decision-Making Roles and Processes

The team found that COC recognizes and utilizes the contributions of its leadership team and staff throughout the organization for continuous improvement. The college has a supportive and inclusive environment as evidenced by the numerous committees and concerted efforts to seek input from all levels of the organization. The college's planning processes facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. The college values ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization and recognizes that this contributes to enabling the institution to identify institutional values and to achieving established goals. (IVA)

Led by the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees, the administration, the faculty and the staff have collectively created an environment of innovation and institutional excellence. Staff, faculty, administrators, and students, no matter what their official titles, are encouraged to take initiative in improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. The culture created by the core of long-term senior administration and faculty has benefited student learning success. Board policies support this process and the administration's implementation encourages its success. (IVA.1)

COC has various policies and procedures providing for faculty, staff, and student participation in the decision-making processes. (IVA.2) Collaborative governance is embedded in the institution's culture, thus resulting in very inclusive decision-making processes. The faculty, administrators, students, and staff have a substantive role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget decisions. The lines of communication between various groups are defined in the District's Decision Making Guide. (IVA.2) The organization relies on faculty, its academic senate, the curriculum committee, and academic administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services. (IVA.2.a, IVA.2.b)

The team found that the Board of Trustees, Chancellor, administrators, faculty, staff, and students share a high degree of concern for the good of the institution. Extensive communication among the various constituencies ensures that decisions that support the mission and goals of the college are consistently made. (IVA.3).

The team found that COC complies with all of the Accrediting Commission standards, policies, guidelines, and requirements for public disclosure. COC has responded to previous recommendations made by the Commission and provided ample information for the visiting team. The team noted that the Board of Trustees plans to take additional steps in response to the previous team's recommendation regarding the Board's Self-Evaluation process in order to maintain the policy as highly effective and timely. In addition, the Board intends to publish the annually established goals for the institution as well as assessment of the previous year's goals. (IVA.4)

The Board of Trustees, COC administration, standing committees, and other governance structures are regularly evaluated to ensure their integrity and effectiveness. Evidence of the evaluations was supplied to the team and is available for public inspection. (IVA.5)

Standard IVB   Board and Administrative Organization

The long term stability of the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor has allowed the college to develop and maintain an effective leadership team. Board Policy clearly describes the duties of the Board of Trustees. Evidence, including discussions with the Board of Trustees and Board meeting minutes, supports the self study assertion that the Board of Trustees is fulfilling its responsibilities to represent the public interest, establish necessary policies, and monitor the performance of the college and the Chancellor. Board policy describing the duties and responsibilities of the Chancellor are contained in Board policy number 2430. As appropriate, matters coming before the Board are previously reviewed by a variety of College advisory groups and are usually in final form when presented to the Trustees for consideration. (IVB)

The Board of Trustees has established policies to ensure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services, and the financial stability of the college. These policies were recently updated and the Board recognizes the need to return to specific policies for additional consideration. The team encourages the Board of Trustees to engage in this additional review and consideration on a timely basis. The Board of Trustees has a clearly defined policy for the selection of the CEO and a policy and procedure for the evaluation of the college's Chancellor. Through a review of the Board minutes and discussions with the Trustees it is apparent that the evaluation process of the Chancellor is conducted by the Trustees in a serious and timely manner.

The team found that the Board of Trustees is an independent policy-making body that is very well connected to the community and therefore reflects the public interest in its activities and decisions. The Board of Trustees support an environment in which debate and discussion can occur in a culture of trust and respect, resulting in final decisions being supported by the entire Board. (IVB.1.a)

In June 2008, the Board of Trustees adopted the Community College League of California's model policy manual and is in the process currently of identifying specific policies for reconsideration, consistent with the college's updated Mission Statement. As a result of the team visit, the college identified that it had not yet fully published the recently adopted policies, and in some cases this resulted in team confusion about the wording and approval of several policies. Although policies reflect the required content to satisfy accreditation standards, those identified by the college for reconsideration need to be accomplished in a timely manner. (IVB.1.b)

The team found that the Board has established policies for the financial integrity of the college and is very attentive to the matter of fiscal stability. The team also found the Board to be diligent in exercising its responsibilities for the oversight of the college's educational quality and legal matters. (IVB.1.c)

The Board of Trustees has adopted policies that clearly specify the Board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures. The team found evidence that the Board of Trustees acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. (IVB.1.d)

The Board of Trustees acts in a manner consistent with its policies and regularly reviews and evaluates policies and practices in order to determine if revisions are required. The Board's past action to censure one of its own trustees for violation of a Board policy demonstrated to the team the seriousness with which the Board takes policy matters, as well as the integrity of the Board. (IVB.1.e)

The Board of Trustees has adopted a basic policy for board development and new member orientation. Existing Board members and the Student Trustee are encouraged to attend development programs in order to improve their performance as trustees. Members of the Board indicated to the team its desire to further update and amend the procedure on new trustee orientation to reflect the extensive demands on trustees in a California community college. (IVB.1.f)

The Board of Trustees' self-evaluation process for assessing board performance is contained in policy 2745. The Board has completed such a self-evaluation in each of the past two years (June 2007 and April 2008) but did not complete the process in 2005 for reasons that appeared to the team to be perfectly justifiable. The Board is planning to integrate its goals resulting from their self-evaluation into the college's annual goals process. The team suggests that the Board could improve the process by making such goals more transparent to the institution. (IVB.1.g)

In June 2008 the Board of Trustees adopted an updated code of ethics that complies with the accreditation standards. An accompanying administrative procedure was in draft form at the time of the team visit. (IVB.1.h)

The Board of Trustees has been continually informed about the status of the college's accreditation process, and has been involved in the process through appropriate participation in the preparation of the self study. (IVB.1.i)

The Board of Trustees has an adopted policy for the selection of the Chancellor as well as an adopted policy for the evaluation of the Chancellor. The Board has evaluated the Chancellor on an annual basis and meets with the Chancellor in closed session to discuss the annual evaluations. The Board of Trustees has delegated full responsibility and authority for the Chancellor to implement and administer board policies without board interference and holds the Chancellor accountable for the operation of the college through the annual evaluation process. The Board recognizes that the college has benefited by the long and proactive leadership of the Chancellor. The team found that the institution has also benefited by both the dedicated and stable leadership of the Board of Trustees and the performance of the Chancellor. (IVB.1.j)

The Chancellor has been employed by the college for the past 20 years and during this time, the college has experienced substantial growth and development, both in the physical and learning environments. As outlined in board policy, the team found the Chancellor has the responsibility for the quality of the institution by providing effective leadership in all areas of the college including planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness. The Chancellor promotes an environment of continued professional development for all employees. (IVB.2.a)

The Chancellor has provided leadership in the update and development of the college's mission and vision, strategic planning, review and update of board policies, and institutional development of student learning outcomes and evaluation processes. This leadership provides the overall direction of the college, outlines goals, and links all of the planning processes to its continued growth and development while maintaining the integrity of college processes, institutional practices, and fiscal resources. (IVB.2.a, IVB.2.b, IVB.2.c, IVB.2.d)

The college community, through numerous interviews and comments, provided the team valuable information on the effectiveness of the style and leadership support from the Chancellor. The Chancellor was described to the team as highly engaged in the culture of the institution and very open to sharing her vision and commitment to collaborative governance and to the constant development and growth of the college. The direct interaction with community members, maintaining a positive approach to new college initiatives, and the continuous formation of new partnerships that advance district priorities are all positive examples the team found of the high energy and commitment of the Chancellor to the institution and the community. (IVB.2.e)

Conclusions

COC meets the expectations of Standard IV. The Board of Trustees, Chancellor, and members of the college community participate jointly in a strong culture of collaborative governance. The culture created by the Board and the Chancellor is one of being inclusive in its discussions of college issues prior to a final decision being made in matters affecting the future operation of the institution.

The college's Foundation, and Associated Students Government organizations, continue to provide strong support to the institution's mission associated with student success and growth.

Recommendations

None