Evaluation Team Report

American River College

4700 College Oak Drive

Sacramento, California 95841

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 External Evaluation Team that visited
American River College on October 5 – 8, 2015

Marvin R. Martinez, Chair

NOTE: this page shall be added to the team report noted below, immediately behind the cover page, and shall become part of the final evaluation report associated with the review.

DATE:　　　　　　　January 8, 2016

INSTITUTION:　　　American River College

　　　　　　　　　　4700 College Oak Drive

　　　　　　　　　　Sacramento, CA 95841

TEAM REPORT:　　　Comprehensive Evaluation Report

This report represents the finds of the evaluation team that visited Southwestern College September 28 through October 1, 2015.

SUBJECT:　　　　　　Commission Revisions to the Team Report

The comprehensive External Evaluation Report provides details of the team's findings with regard to the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, and should be read carefully and used to understand the team's findings. Upon a review of the External Evaluation Report sent to the College, the American River College Self-Evaluation Report, and supplemental information and evidence provided by the College, the following changes or corrections are noted for the Team Report:

1. The Commission finds that the College is also out of compliance with Eligibility Requirement 19 and adds that ER to Team Recommendation 1.

2. The Commission finds that the District is not out of compliance with Standard III.C.1, and that Standard reference should be removed from District Recommendation 1.

List of Team Members

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Shasta College

Summary of the Report

Institution: American River College

Date of Visit: October 5, 2015 through October 8, 2015

Team Chair: Marvin R. Martinez, President East Los Angeles College

A twelve-member team of education professionals visited American River College (ARC) October 5 – 8, 2015, to assess how well the College is meeting the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) Standards, Eligibility Requirements, and policies, provide recommendations to assure quality and encourage institutional improvement, and submit recommendations to the ACCJC regarding the College's accreditation status.

The team chair and team assistant conducted a pre-visit to American River College on August 16, 2015, to meet with the College president, the accreditation liaison officer, the administrative team, and those involved with the writing of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report to discuss the logistics for the upcoming site visit and changes that have occurred since the writing of the report. They toured the campus during that visit.

In preparation for the visit, evaluation team members attended an ACCJC all-day training session on September 1, 2015, and studied Commission training materials prepared for visiting teams. The team chair also attended an all-day training session for team chairs held on July 9, 2015.

Prior to the visit, evaluation team members carefully read the 2015 Institutional Self Evaluation Report and assessed the various forms of evidence provided by the College. The evaluation team members completed two written evaluations of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report and identified areas for further investigation. On the day before the formal beginning of the visit, the evaluation team met to review and discuss the written materials and evidence provided by the College, as well as other materials submitted to the ACCJC since its last comprehensive visit in 2009.

During the visit the evaluation team met with faculty, classified staff, students, administrators, and community members. The evaluation team examined documents provided, as well as additional evidence on the College website and evidence provided at the team's request. The evaluation team participated in a tour of campus facilities and visited more than two dozen courses, both face-to-face and online courses. Additionally, evaluation team members visited the Natomas Educational Center, the McClellan Center, and the Mather Center. The evaluation team also conducted two open forums which provided an opportunity for students, community members, and other campus staff to meet with members of the team.

The evaluation team found the ARC Institutional Self Evaluation Report to be well-organized and clearly written. However, the evidence presented in the Institutional Self Evaluation Report did not always represent the breadth and depth of the quality work being done at the College. As a result, the evaluation team needed to conduct numerous, lengthy interviews to verify and clarify the statements made in the Institutional Self Evaluation Report.

The evaluation team found the President, administration, faculty, classified staff, and students at American River College to be welcoming and accommodating. All College employees were responsive to requests and eager to assist the team. The College facilities were appropriate for the team, and the team room was conveniently located and comfortable. The College also arranged for a team work room at the hotel, which was used each day for team meetings and as a place for evaluation team members to work together in the evenings.

The entire visit was well organized and collegial. The evaluation team was impressed by the openness and trust apparent among the administration, faculty, and classified staff. It was clear that the culture of trust that the evaluation team observed is centered on the work of educating and serving students. The evaluation team was well received and was able to complete its scheduled review.

Introduction

American River College is a public community college located in Sacramento, and is one of four colleges in the Los Rios Community College District, the second largest community college district in California. The college services an ethnically and socio-economically diverse student body residing across six counties with a population of more than 1.7 million residents. The College's main campus includes more than 40 buildings comprising over 500,000 square feet. Part of the California Community College System, the College has an enrollment of approximately 21,000 full-time equivalent students, served by approximately 400 full-time faculty. The College was founded in 1955 and became part of the Los Rios Community College District in 1965.

American River College offers a variety of educational opportunities, including degrees, certificates, career and technical education, basic skills education, general education, and coursework leading to transfer to four-year institutions. The College transfers more students to the University of California, Davis and California State University, Sacramento, than any other community college.

American River College offers classes at the Sacramento Regional Public Safety Training Center at McClellan Park and McClellan Center, Mather Center, and the Natomas Educational Center. Students can complete degree and certificate requirements at all these locations. The College's Distance Education program is expanding rapidly, with a fall 2013 headcount of nearly 8,000 students, almost double the headcount of fall 2007.

Since the last comprehensive accreditation evaluation visit in 2009 the College has experienced transitions in leadership. The previous president resigned in June 2013 and the College was led by four interim presidents between June 2013 and August 2014. A permanent College president assumed leadership on August 3, 2014.

As a result of the 2009 comprehensive evaluation team visit, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges took action to reaffirm American River College's accreditation. The College submitted its Midterm Report in fall 2012, and its Institutional Self Evaluation Report in August 2015. The current evaluation team visit and report are in response to the College's most recent Institutional Self Evaluation Report.

American River College's extensive programs, services, and activities demonstrate its commitment to serve the varied educational needs of its diverse community.

Commendations

Commendation 1: The evaluation team commends American River College for establishing and maintaining a variety of partnerships that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability and create a mechanism for outreach to high school students, exposing them firsthand to the various programs and services available at the College. American River College has established relationships with neighboring institutions including Inderkum High School, the Sacramento Public Library, and the Sacramento Municipal Utility District. Through these partnerships, the College is able to leverage resources to enhance student success while improving financial efficiency at the Natomas Educational Center.

Commendation 2: The evaluation team commends American River College for establishing long standing relationships with private businesses allowing the College to obtain various donations for items critical to student success. The Hospitality Management Department secured millions of dollars in donations to support the state-of-the-art Culinary Arts Facility for use by its students. The College's automotive-related programs have also received donated vehicles from industry partners and other motorized equipment for use in the classroom. These donations benefit students who participate in the programs as well as local businesses.

Commendation 3: The evaluation team commends American River College for its deep cultural commitment to providing effective professional development to its employees. While it is clear that the District provides development opportunities, the College itself is responsible for the vast majority of professional development. Even during periods of economic decline, the College continued its support and commitment to professional development at all levels, and the quality of this professional development is evident throughout the College.

Commendation 4: The evaluation team commends American River College for demonstrating a deep commitment to collegial dialogue by applying the principles and concepts of the Interest Based Approach to conflict resolution, collective bargaining, and mediation. Mediators are trained to be available District wide to assist other District Colleges in resolving conflict. The skills gained by employees participating in the Interest Based Approach represent significant professional development to the individual. These skills also have immeasurable value to the College and the District as a whole, leading to a culture of collaboration.

Commendation 5: The evaluation team commends American River College for its efforts in designing and implementing an authentic, systematic, and comprehensive process by which student learning outcome assessments are established, reviewed, and assessed. The process is one that demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement in student learning and faculty development.

Commendation 6: The evaluation team commends American River College for its vision in creating the Center for Leadership and Development, a student space that promotes synergistic relationships, student development, and leadership opportunities such as the SAGES student ambassadors and workshops for student leaders. Additionally, the evaluation team commends the College for providing an inclusive environment for a diverse student body through efforts including the "Brave Space Dialogues" and various ethnic and cultural programs and events.

Commendation 7: The evaluation team commends American River College for its success in Distance Education faculty development, Distance Education course design, and faculty oversight of the quality of its Distance Education offerings. Additionally, the College has established model processes for defining and assuring that regular and effective contact is embedded in each Distance Education course.

Recommendations to Meet Standards

College Recommendation 1: In order to meet the Standards, the evaluation team recommends that the College re-visit its institution-set standards within the participatory governance structure and ensure that accurate institutional data informs the establishment of those standards. The evaluation team further recommends that a College wide dialogue take place to ensure a clear understanding of the meaning, role, and importance of institution-set standards. Once institution-set standards are established, the evaluation team recommends that they be communicated to appropriate constituencies. Finally, the evaluation team recommends that institution-set standards be integrated into the College's ongoing cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation to ensure the improvement of institutional effectiveness. (Standards I.B.3 – 5, ER 10)

District Recommendation 1: In order to meet the standards, the Evaluation Team recommends that the LRCCD develop a comprehensive Technology Plan for the District. The plan should be integrated with the program review process and with the on-going and routine technology assessments done by District Information Technology. The Technology Plan should align with and directly support the District Strategic Plan and the colleges' strategic plans. (Standards III.C.1 and III.C.2)

District Recommendation 2: In order to meet the Standards, the Evaluation Team recommends that the LRCCD develop a clearly-defined policy for selecting and evaluating the presidents of the colleges. (Standard IV.B.1.j)

District Recommendation 3: In order to meet the standards as well as to improve institutional effectiveness and align policy with practice, the Evaluation Team recommends that the District modify the existing Board Policy 4111 to more clearly define that the Chancellor delegates full responsibility, authority, and accountability to the presidents for the operations of the colleges. The Evaluation Team further recommends that Section 1.2 of Board 2411, which establishes the role of the President as the chief college administrator, be added to the policy section 4000 – Administration. (Standards IV.B.2 and IV.B.3.e)

Recommendations to Improve Institutional Effectiveness

College Recommendation 2: In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the evaluation team recommends that the College develop and implement a regularly scheduled and systematic evaluation of their governance and decision-making structures to assure their integrity and effectiveness. (Standards I.B.6-7, IV.A.5)

College Recommendation 3: In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the evaluation team recommends that the College firmly establish a culture of evidence in all facets of institutional processes. The evaluation team further recommends that this include a systematic, integrated, and longitudinal analysis of quantitative data. (Standards I.B.1, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.7, II.A.1.a, II.A.2.d-e, and IV.A.1)

College Recommendation 4: In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the evaluation team recommends that the College formalize its course substitution policy for discontinued or modified programs and publishes this policy appropriately. (Standard II.A.6.b)

Responses to Recommendations of the Previous Evaluation Team

Recommendation 1 (2009)
The ACCJC SLO rubric speaks to authentic assessment and the full engagement of faculty and staff; therefore, to demonstrate SLO success at the proficiency stage by the Commission's 2012 deadline, the team recommends that American River College identify a formal process to review the quality of its assessment tools and to ensure part-time faculty participation in the assessment of SLOs (II.A.1.c, I.B.4, I.B.5).

The 2015 visiting team confirmed that the College has addressed this recommendation. Formalized SLO processes are in place and available on the college website. The SLO coordinator serves as a member of the Curriculum Committee, and the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee has established a rubric and a formalized process for reviewing SLOs. The prior practice of utilizing student surveys to assess SLOs was enhanced in 2012 by the Authentic Assessment Review Report (AARR), which is reviewed by the SLOAC prior to the implementation of the Action Plan and Implementation Report. To ensure adjunct faculty participation, SLOAC has added and is compensating three adjunct participants to the official SLOAC membership. While the college has overtly encouraged adjunct faculty to participate, adjunct faculty were represented at only two of the last eight meetings. In response to the lack of participation, the district recently negotiated the inclusion of stipend payment for adjunct participation at these meetings. Additionally, adjunct faculty participation in the assessment process is reported on the focused assessment plan and tracked by the SLOAC.

The institution has addressed this recommendation.

Recommendation 2 (2009)
The College recognizes that student development needs for leadership, active participation in shared governance, and awareness and tolerance for diversity are paramount at American River College. In order to improve, the team recommends that efforts, such as conflict resolution training, Interest Based Alliance training, and the Community and Diversity Center Initiative, be established for students and institutionalized to address these critical student needs. (I.A.1, II.B.1, II.B.3.b, II.B.3.d)

This recommendation focused on three specific areas in the 2009 accreditation evaluation report. These areas include: conflict resolution training; Interest Based Alliance (or, Interest Based Approach); and Community and Diversity Center Initiative. These have all been addressed by American River College.

Conflict resolution training and an Interest Based Approach (IBA) have been joined together by both the Los Rios Community College District and American River College. The College has a deep commitment to actively use the IBA, a process with direct applications to collective bargaining.

The Los Rios Community College District and American River College have gone an extra step in using the practices found in IBA by applying them to conflict resolution. Mediators are formally trained on a District wide basis in IBA mediation processes and make themselves available to resolve conflicts at other colleges within the District. This provides the College with "in-house" mediators without additional cost to the District, provides professional development for the employee,

provides a skill set that can be used in the daily functioning of the College, and provides connectedness to the entire District. This commitment ensures a solid foundation for a culture that numerous employees call, "the ARC Family." When discussed with employees at a forum during the accreditation visits multiple employees praised the IBA processes and felt it contributed to a culture where cooperation is the norm. The College has turned a weakness identified in 2009 into a commendation for this external evaluation report.

The Community and Diversity Center (CDC) provides numerous workshops for employees, including diversity workshops with special emphasis on student diversity, as well as a clear focus on diversity inclusion for employee search committees.

The institution has addressed this recommendation.

Recommendation 3 (2009)

In order to improve, the team recommends the assessment of the services and the sequencing of the modules provided by the learning resource centers be formalized and systematic with the support of the Research Center. (II.C.2)

The College has taken measures to formalize the assessment of a majority of the learning resource centers by migrating modules to unit-based courses taken to supplement student success. Each of these supplemental courses have student learning outcomes reviewed by the Academic Senate and Curriculum Committee. The assessment of the student learning outcomes are reported to their instructional department and integrated in the student learning outcome process and program review. For those labs continuing with module-based instruction, the College has determined that this format of instruction is appropriate as students are able to practice language skills at their own pace.

The institution has addressed this recommendation.

Recommendation 4 (2009)

In order to improve, it is recommended that student participation in the shared governance process and committees be actively encouraged to ensure the student voices are not lost. This recommendation was recognized in the Self Study, is detailed as a planning agenda, and was spoken to during the team visit. (IV.A.1, IV.A.2.a, IV.A.3)

Based on a review of the standing committee end-of-year reports from the past several years it is evident that the College has encouraged Associated Student Body (ASB) participation in the College's shared governance structure. This is in direct response to the 2009 planning agenda and the ACCJC recommendation concerning Associated Student Body representation on shared governance committees. Each year the College completes Year End Reports that demonstrate the presence of ASB representation on the governance committees. Further, the report indicates what each committee did to encourage ASB participation on these College wide committees. All governance committees included ASB representatives in their communications and invites. ASB representatives were encouraged to actively participate in discussions, share concerns and ask for clarification when needed.

The evaluation team confirmed through meetings with the ASB student leaders that they are actively engaged and feel that they have a voice in governance issues. There is an active partnership

between students and administration on effectively addressing and solving problems. Students are able to voice their concerns and bring forward ideas for institutional improvements.

The institution has addressed this recommendation.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Authority

   The evaluation team confirmed that American River College is part of the California Community College system and is authorized to offer educational programs by the California Education Code. The College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). The College's letter of Reaffirmation of Accreditation from the ACCJC is posted on the College's website.

2. Mission

   The evaluation team confirmed that the current version of the College's mission statement was approved by the Board of Trustees on October 24, 2012. The College's mission statement establishes the "six-county Greater Sacramento region" as the College's primary service area. The mission statement includes an emphasis on student learning in four areas: Career and technical education, developmental education, general education, and lower division post-secondary education. The mission statement is posted on the College's website, the College Catalog, a variety of College publications, and at locations throughout the campus.

3. Governing Board

   The evaluation team confirmed that the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD) is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees consisting of publically elected individuals residing in the trustee area boundaries defined by Board Policy P-3132. This membership is joined by a single Student Trustee who is elected for a one-year term through a District wide election. The Board of Trustees functions as the legislative and policy making body of the District and ensures educational quality as well as financial stability and accountability. Conflict of interest is addressed in the Board policy's Statement of Ethics and no member of the Board has employment, family, or personal financial interest in the institution.

4. Chief Executive Officer

   The evaluation team confirmed that American River College has a District Chancellor selected by the Board of Trustees. The College president is appointed by the Board of Trustees and reports to the Chancellor. The College president is primarily responsible for management of the College, implementation of board policy, and long range planning. Neither the College president nor the Chancellor serves as chair of the board.

5. Administrative Capacity

   The evaluation team confirmed that American River College has sufficient administrative staff, with appropriate preparation and experience to support its mission and purpose. All administrators are screened to determine their ability to service the college and minimal qualifications are stated. While there are a significant number of interim positions, they are staffed by members of the College community with sufficient knowledge to fulfill the duties required.

6. Operational Status

   The evaluation team confirmed that American River College is currently serving over 30,000 students each year. The operational status of the College is documented on the College's website in "Trendline student success data" showing enrollment numbers, degrees and certificates awarded, and transfer numbers for a ten-year period.

7. Degrees

   The evaluation team confirmed that American River College offers 112 degrees with a substantial portion of course offerings leading to a degree. A majority of students are enrolled in programs leading to a degree or certificate of completion.

8. Educational Programs

   The evaluation team confirmed that American River College's degree programs are congruent with its mission, and are based on recognized patterns of study. The College's Curriculum Committee ensures sufficient content and appropriate levels of rigor and quality for programs offered. All degrees represent two years of full-time academic work. All programs culminate in identified student learning outcomes, and these outcomes are published in the College Catalog along with the information for the program.

9. Academic Credit

   The evaluation team confirmed that American River College awards academic credit based on accepted practices under California Code of Regulations, Title 5. The College uses the Carnegie standard unit, in accordance with Title 5. Detailed information on the awarding of credit is published in the College Catalog.

10. Student Learning and Achievement

   The evaluation team confirmed that the institution defines and publishes student learning outcomes for each program, but achievement outcomes for programs in the form of institution-set standards are not clearly articulated. Through regular and systematic assessment, the College demonstrates that students who complete programs, no matter where or how they are offered, achieve the student learning outcomes. The institution partially meets this eligibility requirement.

11. General Education

   The evaluation team confirmed that American River College general education courses, regardless of modality, are a substantial component of all degrees and the quality and rigor of these courses are consistent with the academic standards appropriate to higher education. In order to receive a degree, students must complete coursework in Humanities, Language and Rationality, Living Skills, Natural Sciences, Social/Behavioral Sciences, and Ethnic/Multicultural Studies. General education courses have student learning outcomes.

12. Academic Freedom

The evaluation team confirmed that American River College supports a culture of academic freedom as evidenced by the "Faculty Statement of Professional Ethics" in the College Catalog, Article 17 of the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers contract, and District policy P-7142.

13. Faculty

The evaluation team confirmed that American River College employs sufficient full-time faculty, nearly 400 across all disciplines, to fulfill its mission. All faculty must meet the minimum requirements for their disciplines established in California Code of Regulations, Title 5. The Los Rios College Federation of Teachers contract clearly sets faculty responsibilities for the development and review of curriculum and student learning assessment.

14. Student Services

The evaluation team confirmed that American River College provides an appropriate range of student services to all its students consistent with the College's mission. These services are offered in a variety of areas, locations, and modalities.

15. Admissions

The evaluation team confirmed that American River College admissions policies and procedures are consistent with its mission and with California Code of Regulations, Title 5. These policies and procedures are publicized online, in the College catalog, and in Board policies.

16. Information and Learning Resources

The evaluation team confirmed that American River College provides access to information and learning resources and services to support its students and instructional programs regardless of location and instructional delivery mode.

17. Financial Resources

The evaluation team confirmed that the College's funding base is documented and all resources are identified. The College has sufficient current resources to support student learning.

18. Financial Accountability

The evaluation team confirmed that the College engages a qualified audit firm to conduct audits of all financial records and there is no other relationship with the College other than auditing functions and reports that come from that contractual service. All audits are certified and all explanations of findings are documented appropriately.

19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation

The evaluation team confirmed that the College has an integrated institutional planning, resource allocation, and evaluation process that includes the assessment of student learning outcomes and assesses progress towards achieving stated goals. The College publishes student learning outcomes at all levels, however student learning outcome assessment results were not found by the evaluation team on the College's public website. Rather, the evaluation team found counts of completed program-level assessments. The College publishes student achievement data in the form of their Key Effectiveness Indicators.

20. Integrity in Communication with the Public

   The evaluation team confirmed that American River College provides both print and electronic versions of the College Catalog for its constituencies that include current and accurate general information, requirements, and major policies affecting students. The College Catalog includes all required components.

21. Integrity in Relations with the Accrediting Commission

   The evaluation team confirmed that American River College has stated its commitment to adhering to all Commission Eligibility Requirements and Standards and to accurately portraying itself to the Commission.

Compliance with Commission Policies and Federal Regulations
Public Notification of an Evaluation Team Visit and Third Party Comment

☒ The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comment in advance of a comprehensive evaluation visit.

☒ The institution cooperates with the evaluation team in any necessary follow-up related to the third party comment.

☒ The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions* as to third party comment.

Regulation citation: 602.23(b).

Conclusion

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

Standards and Performance with Respect to Student Achievement

☒ The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance across the institution, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. Course completion is included as one of these elements of student achievement. Other elements of student achievement performance for measurement have been determined as appropriate to the institution's mission.

☒ The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance within each instructional program, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. The defined elements include, but are not limited to, job placement rates for program completers, and for programs in fields where licensure is required, the licensure examination passage rates for program completers.

☐ The institution-set standards for programs and across the institution are relevant to guide self-evaluation and institutional improvement; the defined elements and expected performance levels are appropriate within higher education; the results are reported regularly across the campus; and the definition of elements and results are used in program-level and institution-wide planning to evaluate how well the institution fulfills its mission, to determine needed changes, to allocating resources, and to make improvements.

☐ The institution analyzes its performance as to the institution-set standards and as to student achievement, and takes appropriate measures in areas where its performance is not at the expected level.

Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(i); 602.17(f); 602.19 (a-e).

Conclusion

While the College has established institution-set standards, the validity of those standards is in question. These institution-set standards are not widely understood or articulated across the campus community. A situation has arisen where the College has fallen below its successful course completion institution-set standard, and yet there is little evidence that appropriate measures, including a possible revision to standard have taken place, or are planned to take place. See **College Recommendation 1**.

Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

☒ Credit hour assignments and degree program lengths are within the range of good practice in higher education (in policy and procedure).

☒ The assignment of credit hours and degree program lengths is verified by the institution, and is reliable and accurate across classroom based courses, laboratory classes, distance education classes, and for courses that involve clinical practice (if applicable to the institution).

☒ Tuition is consistent across degree programs (or there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition).

☒ Any clock hour conversions to credit hours adhere to the Department of Education's conversion formula, both in policy and procedure, and in practice.

☒ The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits*.

Regulation citations: 600.2 (definition of credit hour); 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.24(e), (f); 668.2; 668.9.

Conclusion

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirement.

Transfer Policies

☒ Transfer policies are appropriately disclosed to students and to the public.

☒ Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to accept credits for transfer.

☒ The institution complies with the Commission *Policy on Transfer of Credit*.

Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.17(a)(3); 602.24(e); 668.43(a)(ii).

Conclusion

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirement.

Distance Education and Correspondence Education

☒ The institution has policies and procedures for defining and classifying a course as offered by distance education or correspondence education, in alignment with USDE definitions.

☒ There is an accurate and consistent application of the policies and procedures for determining if a course is offered by distance education (with regular and substantive interaction with the instructor, initiated by the instructor, and online activities are included as part of a student's grade) or correspondence education (online activities are primarily "paperwork related," including reading posted materials, posting homework and completing examinations, and interaction with the instructor is initiated by the student as needed).

☒ The institution has appropriate means and consistently applies those means for verifying the identity of a student who participates in a distance education or correspondence education course or program, and for ensuring that student information is protected.

☒ The technology infrastructure is sufficient to maintain and sustain the distance education and correspondence education offerings.

☒ The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education*.

Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(iv), (vi); 602.17(g); 668.38.

Conclusion

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirement.

Student Complaints

☒ The institution has clear policies and procedures for handling student complaints, and the current policies and procedures are accessible to students in the college catalog and online.

☒ The student complaint files for the previous six years (since the last comprehensive evaluation) are available; the files demonstrate accurate implementation of the complaint policies and procedures.

☒ The team analysis of the student complaint files identifies any issues that may be indicative of the institution's noncompliance with any Accreditation Standards.

☒ The institution posts on its website the names of associations, agencies and governmental bodies that accredit, approve, or license the institution and any of its programs, and provides contact information for filing complaints with such entities.

☒ The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Representation of Accredited Status* and the *Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions*.

Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(ix); 668.43.

Conclusion

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirement.

Institutional Disclosure and Advertising and Recruitment Materials

☒ The institution provides accurate, timely (current), and appropriately detailed information to students and the public about its programs, locations, and policies.

☒ The institution complies with the Commission *Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status*.

☒ The institution provides required information concerning its accredited status as described above in the section on Student Complaints.

Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1))(vii); 668.6.

Conclusion

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

Title IV Compliance

☒ The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program, including findings from any audits and program or other review activities by the USDE.

☒ The institution has addressed any issues raised by the USDE as to financial responsibility requirements, program record-keeping, etc. If issues were not timely addressed, the institution demonstrates it has the fiscal and administrative capacity to timely address issues in the future and to retain compliance with Title IV program requirements.

☒ The institution's student loan default rates are within the acceptable range defined by the USDE. Remedial efforts have been undertaken when default rates near or meet a level outside the acceptable range.

☒ Contractual relationships of the institution to offer or receive educational, library, and support services meet the Accreditation Standards and have been approved by the Commission through substantive change if required.

☒ The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations* and the *Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV*.

Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(v); 602.16(a)(1)(x); 602.19(b); 668.5; 668.15; 668.16; 668.71 et seq.

Conclusion

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirement.

Standard I – Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Standard I.A – Mission

General Observations

American River College (ARC) formally presented the most recent version of its mission statement to the Board of Trustees at the October 2012 meeting where it was approved. The current mission statement consists of three distinct parts; vision, mission, and values serve as the foundation for the institution's integrated planning and decision-making processes. The Planning Coordination Council (PCC), which includes representatives from all of the College constituencies, oversees the College wide review process of the mission statement.

Findings and Evidence

The College mission statement defines the institution's four broad educational purposes and its intended student population. It also includes its commitment to assuring students identify their educational goals and needs and successfully accomplish learning. The College offers instruction in career and technical education, developmental education, general education, and lower division post-secondary education for transfer to a four-year institution. The College defines its student population as residents in the diverse six-county Greater Sacramento region who are capable of benefiting from community college instruction. The College's student body demographics reasonably reflect the demographics of the District. (Standard I.A)

American River College offers a range of programs and services to meet the evolving needs and interests of its diverse student population. The College offers programs and services at a variety of physical locations, on various days and times, and via multiple instructional modalities including on-ground, self-paced, work experiences, field studies, and distance education. In addition to the main campus, programs are offered at the Natomas Educational Center, McClellan Center, and Mather Center. The College demonstrates it meets the needs of its student population through the use of the Program Review Reporting Tool, the connection between the College's programs and services, and the alignment of the College mission and its Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs). (Standard I.A.1)

The Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD) Board of Trustees approves the College mission statement. The Board approved the most recent version of the mission statement on October 24th, 2012. The College publishes its mission statement on the College website and in the College Catalog. It is prominently posted in several locations on the ARC main campus and is made available at off-site locations. (Standard I.A.2)

The College reviews and revises its mission statement as necessary, and the supporting vision and values statement on a regular three-to-five year cycle using its participatory governance process. Proposed revisions are solicited, reviewed, and discussed by the various constituency groups as evidenced in the minutes of the standing committees. The ARC 2014 Accreditation Survey indicated that 78 percent of respondents agreed that they are "aware of the College Mission, Vision, and

Values" and 56 percent agreed that they were "given the opportunity to review the Mission, Vision, and Values Statement in draft form." (Standard I.A.3)

The College uses the mission statement as the core of departmental and institutional integrated planning and decision-making processes. The integrated planning process is described in the document Institutional Planning at American River College: an Overview and within the Decision Making Handbook. The ARC 2014 Accreditation Survey indicated 71 percent of respondents agreed that "The Mission Statement guides institutional planning and institutional decision-making." (Standard I.A.4)

Conclusion

The institution meets the Standard.

Standard I.B – Improving Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations

American River College (ARC) has an established and systematic planning process that includes goal setting, evaluation, distribution and implementation, and re-evaluation. Planning is collegial and integrated through student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessment, program review, annual unit educational master planning (EMP) and institutional student learning outcomes (ISLOs). Distribution and implementation of resources relies primarily on the EMP process which is supported by program review and SLO assessment. Although the EMP process includes an effective review of SLO assessment data, it lacks a thorough review of student achievement data. The College's Office of Institutional Research (OIR) distributes institutional and program specific data to inform planning decisions. The Data Inquiry Group (DIG) was recently established to expand a culture of evidence to inform decision making. Although the College engages in dialogue and reviews institutional student achievement data, there is confusion related to defining institution-set standards with respect to student achievement, and assessing the College's performance against those institution-set standards.

Findings and Evidence

Continuous College wide dialogue focused on improvement of student learning and student achievement occurs within the eleven standing participatory governance committees. Dialogue also occurs within departmental, division, administrative, and Associated Student Body group meetings, and within program advisory committees. Evidence from committee and planning documents indicates ongoing dialogue related to SLOs, student service outcomes, ISLOs, strategic planning, educational master planning, program review, budget, and institutional planning and decision-making processes. Results from the 2014 ARC Accreditation Survey indicated that less than 20 percent of respondents disagreed with the statement "There is continuous collegial, self-reflective and self-evaluative dialogue about student learning, institutional processes and outcomes." (Standard I.B.1)

There is evidence that the College sets goals and objectives to improve institutional effectiveness. The goals are synonymous with the District's five strategic plan goals. The Planning Coordination Council (PCC) facilitates the College wide process for developing and revising the College objectives and corresponding progress indicators to reflect the evolving needs of students. The PCC reviews data identified through institutional research, including key effectiveness indicators, program review recommendations, SLO assessment results, EMP requests as well as other institutional research data. The OIR compiles progress indicators into an achievement report that assesses progress in achieving desired outcomes and goals and distributes the results through the participatory governance structure. (Standard I.B.2)

The College has in place predictable and systematic planning, resource allocation, and evaluative processes that are linked to the College mission and strategic objectives. The process consists of SLO assessment, ISLO assessment, program review, curriculum review, and the annual EMP. The planning process is linked to budget primarily through the EMP process and is supported by both program review and SLO assessment. The College has identified that it relies on surveys, primarily

the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) as the source of data supporting its research and planning function and the assessment of ISLOs. The College recognizes the need to collect qualitative data through focus groups and interviews and has identified an Actionable Improvement Plan focused on developing the capacity to regularly conduct focus groups.

While the College has made successful use of student assessment data to improve institutional effectiveness, the evaluation team is concerned that quantitative student achievement data is not being used extensively to make decisions and ensure institutional effectiveness. The College reported to the Commission in the 2015 Annual Report that the College has an institution-set standard for successful student course completion of 71.4 percent. In that same report, the College noted a fall 2014 student course completion rate of 69.8 percent. In interviews with faculty, classified staff, and administrators, the evaluation team looked for a College wide response to falling below this critical institution-set standard. No planned response was found, and more troubling, there was a lack of College wide dialogue regarding falling below such an important standard. Further interviews indicated that some College staff believe the figures reported in the 2015 Annual Report are goals to be attained, not standards to remain above. This fundamental misunderstanding was observed time-and-time again in interviews. While there is evidence that the reported institution-set standards were developed in an ad hoc process, there is little evidence that the constituents involved understood the importance of this process, or the intended output of the process.

In conversations with the OIR staff and administration, the evaluation team learned that the value for successful student course completion reported to Commission is believed to be invalid because it was derived from a data set generated with an inconsistent methodology, where success rate values would be affected by changes in the course withdrawal date. Although the evaluation team confirmed the accuracy of this statement, no evidence was found to reflect dialogue to change or improve the invalid institution-set standard, or the situations leading to the inconsistent methodology.

The evaluation team found the use of quantitative student achievement data for assessment, decision-making, and evaluation to be inconsistent. In particular, the program review data sets, or updated versions of those data sets, are not an essential part of the EMP process. The evaluation team would like to note several instances where quantitative student achievement data was used successfully, such as in the development of the College's Student Equity Plan and in the assessment of the College's Reading Across the Disciplines program. (Standard I.B.3)

The College planning processes are broad-based, and all College constituent groups are offered opportunities for input and participation at the department and strategic levels. Evidence of this process is included in PCC minutes related to re-establishing the College strategic objectives. The College distributes resources based on the institution's planning cycle and oversight by the 11 standing committees. The District Strategic Plan and the College objectives provide the framework for long-term planning and financial priorities. The College relies on the EMP process to identify resources needed to improve institutional effectiveness and to guide the distribution of discretionary funds. To develop new funding sources, the District maintains a grants office to support securing external funding sources. The College evaluates institutional effectiveness throughout its various planning cycles, including evaluation of the impact of receiving, or not

receiving requested resources. These evaluations of institutional effectiveness, while rich in narrative, tend to lack quantitative data, other than survey results, to support assertions. (Standard I.B.4)

The OIR handles institutional data collection, analysis, and reporting. The OIR distributes reports to appropriate committees and constituencies for discussion.   Documented assessment results on matters of quality assurance are communicated to the general public, feeder school districts, two-year and four-year institutions, prospective employers, and external agencies. Limited assessment data, at the program and institutional levels, are posted on its external web page as is information concerning accountability. Institution-set standards, including the performance of the College with respect to those standards, are not published in a manner that could be found by the evaluation team. Internally, College constituencies can access data from the OIR web page or by contacting the OIR staff. The College communicates results from the Student Success Scorecard and the CCSSE Survey. (Standard I.B.5)

The College has in place planning, evaluation, and re-evaluation practices at the College, department, and unit levels. The PCC and the other standing committees evaluate the effectiveness of their functions and work through the end-of-year report. For example, the SLOAC Committee has the responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of the SLO assessment process as well as the process by which assessment results are integrated into other planning processes. While the end-of-year reports sufficiently evaluate the committee work, it is unclear how the coordination and integration between committees and processes are systematically evaluated with regards to achieving strategic goals and objectives and improving institutional effectiveness. (Standard I.B.6)

The PCC is the responsible group for assessing the effectiveness of the evaluation mechanisms for improving institutional effectiveness. Evidence is gathered through dialogue within standing committees and workgroups and communicated to the PCC by monthly and end-of-year reports. However, the coordination of the systematic evaluative mechanisms of the planning and decision-making processes beyond dialogue and individual committee reports are not clearly articulated. (Standard I.B.7)

Conclusion

The institution partially meets the Standard.

Recommendations

College Recommendation 1: In order to meet the Standards, the evaluation team recommends that the College re-visit its institution-set standards within the participatory governance structure and ensure that accurate institutional data informs the establishment of those standards. The evaluation team further recommends that a College wide dialogue take place to ensure a clear understanding of the meaning, role, and importance of institution-set standards. Once institution-set standards are established, the evaluation team recommends that they be communicated to appropriate constituencies. Finally, the evaluation team recommends that institution-set standards be integrated into the College's ongoing cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation to ensure the improvement of institutional effectiveness. (Standards I.B.3 – 5, ER 10)

College Recommendation 2: In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the evaluation team recommends that the College develop and implement a regularly scheduled and systematic evaluation of their governance and decision-making structures to assure their integrity and effectiveness. (Standards I.B.6-7, IV.A.5)

College Recommendation 3: In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the evaluation team recommends that the College firmly establish a culture of evidence in all facets of institutional processes. The evaluation team further recommends that this include a systematic, integrated, and longitudinal analysis of quantitative data. (Standards I.B.1, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.7, II.A.1.a, II.A.2.d-e, II.B.3, and IV.A.1)

Standard II – Student Learning Programs and Services

Standard II.A – Instructional Programs

General Observations

American River College (ARC) provides instructional programs that are systematically evaluated through robust faculty-driven student learning outcome (SLO) and curriculum review processes. Dialogue regarding SLOs occurs at all levels of the institution. Distance education (DE) is well-planned and DE faculty receive tremendous support and training. Effectiveness of processes is often assessed through College wide surveys. The processes are systematic and well-documented, however assessment results are not easily located.

Findings and Evidence

The College offers 2,011 courses, 112 associate degrees, 116 certificates of achievement and 163 department-level certificates. In order to ensure the integrity of these programs the College's Curriculum Committee and three subcommittees provide leadership and oversight over the curriculum process. The Institutional Self Evaluation Report states that the Curriculum Committee provides "oversight to ensure curriculum is current and contributes to the mission of the college." The evaluation team reviewed Course Outlines of Record (COR), syllabi, and course websites to validate that course activities align with the allocated lecture/lab hours identified in the COR. Courses reviewed included those representing distance learning, classroom-based with lab, and a course with clinical lab experience. (Standard II.A.1)

The College relies on the analysis of labor market statistics, advisory committee input, and conversations with business, industry, and government to design vocational programs, such as the Clean Diesel Technology Program, as well as curriculum that meet the needs of a diverse student population. The College utilizes data provided by the ARC Office of Institutional Research (OIR) for SLO assessment. The OIR provides SLO data at the course, program and institutional level. (Standard II.A.1.a)

The faculty are charged with making the pedagogical-based determinations of what are appropriate modalities for course delivery. The College offers faculty development courses with the intent to improve student success measures, and the College Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers workshops for course improvement. Distance education enrollments, completion, time-of-day, and success data are collected and reviewed by the College to determine modality. The 2013 DE Student Satisfaction Survey indicated that 83 percent of students surveyed are satisfied with their DE experience at ARC, and the College Regular and Effective Contact Survey indicated that 95 percent of DE instructors understand the importance of regular and effective contact. (Standard II.A.1.b)

American River College provides the largest number of DE courses in the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD) and has demonstrated a strong desire to improve distance learning course delivery. To address the Federal Department of Education requirements for distance learning courses of "Regular Effective and Substantive interactions that are initiated by faculty," ARC has developed a series of components to ensure faculty compliance including: workshops, one-on-one

mentoring, a self-evaluation checklist, an anonymous faculty survey, and a District internal audit. Emphasizing that DE is a delivery modality, the College Distance Learning Committee uses the COR as the standard for content and academic rigor that all courses, no matter the delivery modality, should include. (Standard II.A.1.b)

Faculty complete a self-evaluation checklist to identify areas of compliance or improvement to meet standards for DE courses. This in-depth checklist reviews student-to-faculty initiated contact, discussion boards, skills measurements, SLO achievement, and student success. After faculty evaluate their course and identify areas of weakness, they meet with the DE coordinator or designated faculty to review strategies and options for improvement of DE course delivery. The College also conducted an anonymous faculty survey asking specific questions about DE courses to compile a baseline of course compliance. The emphasis on regular effective interactions was further developed by the District in a 2015 District audit of DE courses to determine whether a course meets a set of District defined standards for interaction. If courses do not meet the District negotiated standard, faculty are not permitted to teach a DE course without additional professional development.

Delivery modality does not impact the number of hours required to successfully complete a course. The COR is the same for distance education and face-to-face courses so that course modality does not affect the rigor of the course. The identities of students participating in distance education courses is ensured through secure login procedures. Faculty and staff are required to use their college ID number to validate their access to the Desire2Learn (D2L) portal. (Standard II.A.1.b)

The College has established processes in place for SLO development and assessment. All courses have been assessed at least once. Programs move through the assessment cycle in one of three cohorts and the first cohort is currently on its third cycle of assessment. Course-level SLOs are mapped to program-level outcomes to ensure that courses are aligned to programs. In the past, the College mapped the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) to ISLOs but since spring 2015, the College maps course-level SLOs to ISLOs using the Authentic Assessment Results Report (AARR). Dialogue surrounding this process has taken part from the department-level to the Planning Coordination Council (PCC). (Standard II.A.1.c)

Instructional quality and improvement is regularly assessed through a systematic curriculum review process that occurs every six years for non-CTE courses, and every two-years for CTE programs. The College shares a District wide course numbering system which is overseen by a district-level curriculum committee. (Standard II.A.2)

The Curriculum Committee Handbook outlines the policies, procedures, and expected standards for the development of SLOs and explains the central role of the faculty member in curriculum development. Program reviews validate the quality of the courses offered. The College relies on advisory committees for CTE courses and program development. A review of advisory committee minutes indicates widespread dialogue regarding curriculum and SLOs (Standard II.A.2.a). The quality of instruction is systematically assessed through program review and the faculty performance evaluation processes. The California Federation of Educators (CFE) contract outlines the responsibilities of the faculty, including the assessment of SLOs (Standard II.A.2.c).

The College uses the CCSSE, a self-reporting tool, to determine learning styles and student needs and also offers training to faculty on teaching methodologies to reach a diverse student body. DE effectiveness is assessed through the DE Student Satisfaction Survey, a self-reporting tool to determine efficacy. The program review template includes analysis of DE versus face-to-face classes at the aggregated level. While the College uses survey data to determine the needs of the student body, stronger evidence, such as disaggregated longitudinal student achievement data is required to demonstrate the effectiveness of delivery modes. (Standard II.A.2.d)

The College systematically reviews all courses and programs for relevance, appropriateness, achievement of learning outcomes, currency, and future needs. Course and program planning occur through curriculum review, program review, SLO assessment and the Educational Master Planning (EMP) process. The College's Program Review, Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC), and EMP websites all document these cyclical processes. The evaluation team had difficulty making connections between instructional program review data and the annual EMP process. Course-level data and longitudinal trends appear to be absent from these processes, making it difficult to draw conclusions about achievement of outcomes. (Standard II.A.2.e)

The College has implemented a thorough and well-documented three-year SLO assessment process. The SLOAC provides faculty support and training, and reviews all levels of SLO assessment. In depth technical course-level SLO reviews occur at the curriculum planning level. Faculty student learning assessment includes a focused and broad assessment of all course-level SLOs. SLOs that fall below the assessment benchmark set by faculty result in the development of action plans to address the possible issues either in the SLO itself, or in the curriculum. Implementation plans follow the action plans. Action plans integrate into planning processes through curriculum planning, the EMP process, professional development, and program review. Course-level SLOs are mapped to program SLOs and ISLOs. As previously mentioned, the CCSSE is also used to assess ISLOs. ISLO achievement is discussed at many levels, including the PCC, and results are available to internal constituents. However, they are not available to external constituents. The SLO process is exemplary, but in support of a culture of evidence, the results should be easily accessible to all constituent groups. (Standard II.A.2.f)

Programs using course and program exams are using standards set by specific accrediting bodies to measure learning and minimize biases (Standard II.A.2.g). The College follows the WASC standards for required GE components for all degree programs. The College identified issues with the GE SLO assessment process, but they were corrected using a well-documented participatory governance process (Standard II.A.3).

The College describes comprehensive SLOs within the College Catalog. Students acquire knowledge of the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences, as well as life-long learner skills and recognition of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen through the graduation requirements. A well-defined SLO process is used to assess student attainment of this knowledge and these skills. Faculty review CORs to determine if the course provides the prescribed skills and SLOs outlining the attributes of ethical human beings and effective citizens are listed in the College Catalog. All degrees require the required area of inquiry or interdisciplinary core. (Standards II.A.3.a, II.A.3.b, II.A.3.c, II.A.4)

The College utilizes a systematic program review process to ensure effectiveness of technical and occupational programs and provides job placement support through the ARC Career Center. Analysis of labor market data is included in program development through the curriculum process, and review of advisory committee minutes demonstrates discussion of job placement and market trends. (Standard II.A.5)

Articulation policies are listed in Board policy P-7135. The current California State University (CSU) articulation agreements are located at the website assist.org and the K-12 articulation agreements are listed on the Statewide Career Pathways website (Standard II.A.6.a). The College states a Program Focus Review Policy in the Curriculum Handbook that clearly outlines the process for program elimination or modification. The College allows for substitution of courses for which the Counseling Center maintains a substitution database, however this practice is not documented in the Program Focus Review Policy. (Standard II.A.6.b)

The College reviews and publishes catalogs and class schedules and provides for electronic updates when possible. The College lists the statements of Academic Freedom and Academic Honesty in the College Catalog and on the District website. Board policy P-7142 addresses the WASC Standard on issues of personal and professional views and the Board of Trustees have developed policies for both the "Student Rights and Responsibilities" (Board policy P-2411) and the "Standards of Conduct and Due Process." (Board Policy p-2441) These policies can be found in the College Catalog, College website, and other documents. The College's Academic Integrity of Faculty and the Standards of Conduct are located on the College webpage, in the College Catalog, and in the Faculty Handbook. (Standard II.A.6.c, II.A.7, II.A.7.a, II.A.7.b, II.A.7.c)

Conclusion

The institution meets the Standard.

Recommendation

See **College Recommendation 3.**

College Recommendation 4: In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the evaluation team recommends that the College formalize its course substitution policy for discontinued or modified programs and publishes this policy appropriately. (Standard II.A.6.b)

Standard II.B – Student Support Services

General Observations

The College provides appropriate and effective student support services at the main campus and off-site locations and comparable counseling and student support services are provided to DE students. Programs are regularly assessed through program review and will be further assessed through a recently redesigned student service outcomes (SSOs) process. Assessment is fully integrated into the development of the College's Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) and Student Equity Plan.

Findings and Evidence

Previously, the College's student support services used a SLO model based on the College's instructional SLO model. The College evaluated the process and determined this form of assessment was not appropriate for student support services assessment. In 2014-2015, the College's student support services revised their outcomes and the corresponding assessments to better align with student programs and services. Beginning fall 2015, the College's student support services now have seven SSOs and each service area aligns with one or more of the seven SSOs. The SSOs align with ISLOs, as well as with the SSSP. Service area outcomes will be assessed on an annual basis to assure the quality of student support services. SSO assessment results will follow the same process as SLOs, directly connecting to program review, EMPs, professional development, curriculum development, and other areas as appropriate. (Standards II.B.1, II.B.4)

The College provides comparable levels of student services for DE and off-site locations. DE students are offered services including DSP&S, Google Hangouts, phone appointments and email communication with counselors. Off-site services include counseling and financial aid services. All levels of service are appropriate to the programs offered at the off-site locations. Services are assessed through the District Distance Education Satisfaction Survey, program review, and the newly implemented annual SSO assessment. (Standard II.B.1)

The College Catalog contains user-friendly, accurate, and current information in the areas of general information, requirements, and major policies affecting students. The College follows a detailed annual process for reviewing and publishing the Catalog. It is reviewed in collaboration with administration, faculty, and staff. The College maintains policies in the Catalog and in the Student Rights and Responsibilities publication available on the Center for Leadership and Development website. Policies for student grievances are clearly articulated in the District's Student Grievance Procedures (R-2412) and College policies. Complaints reviewed since 1997 indicate policies and procedures for student complaints are followed consistently. Records are secured in a safe area to ensure student privacy and the College makes a confidential reporter available to students. (Standards II.B.2.a, II.B.2.b, II.B.2.c, II.B.2.d)

The College identifies and meets the needs of students through appropriate student support services. The OIR provides assessment data to inform the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) and the Student Equity Plan, and was responsible for providing the data at the beginning stages of developing these plans. A research analyst was recently placed on the SSSP and the Student Equity committees to further support their research needs. The SSSP and Student Equity

Plan reports reflect the learning support needs of the College and there is evidence of College wide dialogue around institutional improvement based on analyses of data within these reports. In addition to assessing the seven service SSOs, DE services are assessed through the District Distance Education Satisfaction Survey. (Standards II.B.3, II.B.3.a)

The College environment is one that supports the personal, civic, and intellectual development of the students. The Community and Diversity Center (CDC) focuses on training and support for civic responsibility as well as an appreciation for diversity through activities including Black Heritage Month, LGBT Awareness celebrations, Asian Pacific Heritage Month, and Hispanic Chicano Latino Heritage Month. (Standard II.B.3.b)

The College meets student needs through a wide variety of counseling options and reviews those services through the program review and SSOs assessment processes. In addition, the SSSP and Student Equity Plan provide an additional assessment to evaluate disproportionate impact on students in the areas of access, course, and degree completion. Areas assessed for disproportionate impact include ESL, English, and math success indicators. The SSSP plan also assesses services provided to students including orientation, assessment, educational planning and follow-up services. Counseling faculty are well-trained through professional development opportunities at the College, District, and state levels. (Standard II.B.3.c)

American River College provides a wealth of programs and services to promote diversity of culture and learning. Faculty reflecting the diverse student demographic have been hired to support students from a variety of backgrounds and provide workshops and leadership development opportunities to enrich student lives. Student support services are delivered in a wide variety of languages. (Standard II.B.3.d)

Validation of assessment instruments is a faculty-driven process. The OIR provides the research that informs rich program-level dialogue leading to appropriate student placement in the curriculum. The death of a former researcher who was in the process of validating instruments for math, English, ESL and chemistry resulted in the delay of completing these validation studies. A recently hired research analyst completed the validation using the previous research methodologies and existing data set, but will now move forward with methodologies and best practices established throughout California. (Standard II.B.3.e)

All student data is protected through limited employee access requiring user validation. Scanned paper records are saved off-site with older student records being stored on microfiche housed in the Enrollment Services Office. The College follows District prescribed policies governing the storage and disposal of student-related data. The District utilizes Oracle PeopleSoft Campus Solutions to maintain and secure student data. (Standard II.B.3.f)

Conclusion

The institution meets the Standard.

Recommendation

See **College Recommendation 3**.

Standard II.C – Library and Learning Support Services

General Observations

The ARC Library has initiated and developed exemplary practices and programs since their last accreditation visit in 2009. Since its renovation in 2010, the Library has been instrumental in ensuring the College's Information Literacy ISLO is met. Appropriate learning support services are widely available to students on the main campus, as well as at the Natomas Educational Center, McClellan Center, and the Mather Center. Besides the ten support centers located in the Learning Resource Center, there are an array of comprehensive quality resources available to diverse student populations throughout the campus. Tutoring is available campus-wide and at the off-site locations in a variety of disciplines. Online tutoring, while in its infancy, is becoming a new learning support service available to both DE and face-to-face students. The Library and other learning support services align with ARC's mission and are accessible regardless of location or means of delivery.

Findings and Evidence

The College Library works cooperatively with the other Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD) libraries to share both print and electronic resources across the District. In spring 2015, the District upgraded their integrated library system to the newest version of Innovative Interfaces library catalog software. This upgrade is evidence that the College is keeping pace with current innovative and technological industry trends. The Library maintains a robust collection both in print and online that is supported by six full-time equivalent (FTE) librarians. The Institutional Self Evaluation Report indicates that the District uses a collaborative purchasing process for library materials that sometimes impacts the equitable distribution of materials among the District sites. However, interviews with librarians confirm that it is a collegial process that strives to ensure student access to high-quality materials. In the fall 2014 Accreditation Survey, 81 percent of faculty "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the ARC Library had adequate materials to support student assignments. (Standard II.C.1.a)

The campus's learning support services provided evidence through surveys and tracking cohort groups that educational equipment, materials and programs enhance the quality of education at ARC. (Standard II.C.1.a)

The institution has made great strides in providing support services for developing information competency skills across the curriculum. Through a collaborative process including faculty input, information competency skills became a new section in the program review in fall 2013. As a College wide ISLO, each program is accountable for meeting the information competency ISLO. Library instruction is given in a variety of modalities. Besides one-on-one instruction at the reference desk, librarians offer instruction orientations tailored to specific disciplines. According to the latest Library Demographic Report, the overall success rate of students who attended library orientations was 74.7 percent versus 63.9 percent for non-library users. (Standard II.C.1.b)

The Library renovation was completed on-time for the fall 2010 semester, adding 7,000 square feet to the building. Of the students surveyed in fall 2012, 71 percent "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the Library is a welcoming and comfortable place to study. The Library is open 72.5 hours per week and accommodates evening students by being open until 10:00 p.m. Students have access to a

variety of electronic resources including electronic books and journal articles that focus on general education, subject discipline, and technical education offerings at the College. The Library has a unique arrangement with the North Natomas Branch of the Sacramento Public Library to provide reference, reserve and inter-library loan services for Natomas Educational Center students. (Standard II.C.1.c)

Learning support services are extended to students regardless of their location or means of delivery. Beginning in fall 2015, Reading Across the Disciplines (RAD), Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), the Math Multimedia Center, and the Science Skills Center, have a support presence at the Natomas Educational Center. This development is partly in response to results from the spring 2015 Natomas Student Survey as well as the WAC and RAD surveys when the College identified the need to expand its tutorial services beyond basic skills classes. The College piloted a 24-hour online tutorial service through Tutor.com in 2014 and will be transitioning to NetTutor in fall 2015 through the California Community Colleges Online Education Initiative. (Standard II.C.1.c)

With the help of Campus Police, the Library has made progress in the area of safety and managing disruptive students. Library staff convened an Emergency Preparedness Task Force and rewrote the building's emergency plan in fall 2011. Since then, the Library has met with District Police to review campus safety procedures. The Learning Resource Center (LRC) staff participated in Active Shooter Training in 2014. (Standard II.C.1.d)

The Library's computers and printers are maintained by the College's Information Technology (IT) Department while Instructional Media Services maintains the building's projectors. The Library employs security gates and video cameras at the entrance, circulation desk, and on all floors of the Library. The Learning Resource Center password protects all electronic student information and all computers both in the Library and LRC and students must login using their ID cards. The Fall 2014 ARC Accreditation Survey finds that 81 percent of the campus faculty and staff indicate that the LRC technology equipment is properly maintained. (Standard II.C.1.d)

At the Natomas Educational Center, a dedicated IT staff member maintains all the technology resources while the main campus IT department provide additional computer security assistance to the Center. Natomas Educational Center is staffed by a security guard whenever the facility is open, and campus safety drills have been recently conducted. (Standard II.C.1.d)

The Library and learning support service centers have formal agreements with a number of different third party vendors in order to maintain adequate services to students. Agreements exist for the Library's catalog system, the LRC's contract with Tutor.com, and with the North Natomas Library to provide study space and library services to ARC students. (Standard II.C.1.e)

American River College's library and learning support services have conducted a number of surveys to measure the satisfaction of students and staff. These surveys indicate a high level of satisfaction across all facets of library and learning support services. The Library recently went through a large "weeding" project to evaluate and discard outdated material in their collection. In addition, library courses participate in the College's formal SLO assessment process. The majority of learning support services offered at the College have courses with SLOs and their results are reported to their respective programs. The creation of LRC Room 104 and the Student Technology Center are the result of assessments that pointed to a student and faculty need for these resources. (Standard II.C)

Conclusion

The College meets the Standard.

Standard III – Resources

Standard III.A – Human Resources

General Observations

American River College (ARC), as a part of the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD), has a unique centralized yet decentralized structure with regards to employee recruitment. The Colleges submit their staffing needs through a District wide consideration process. The allocation of funds to the Colleges for all new positions, and during times of contraction for existing positions, is determined through a process based upon contractual funding formulas found in the various collective bargaining agreements (CBAs). The Colleges then recruit according to their needs. The CBAs are articulated to reflect cost allocations for position allocation and the model for positon allocation funds uses a "trombone" model which has some strong merits. The evaluation team found this model to be exceptional in that it reduces labor negotiations with a pre-defined formulaic approach to position funding and salary level funding.

Findings and Evidence

American River College uses a combined centralized yet decentralized system for the recruitment and hiring of all positions. The specific allocation of positions such as faculty or classified staff are determined by a District wide model.

Human resources planning is fully integrated with the District and supports all institutional planning. There are formalized hiring processes in place and faculty are actively involved in the selection of new faculty hires. Faculty hiring is subject to the use of minimum qualifications as defined through the State Chancellor's Office. Diversity training takes place for selection committees and each search committee has a formally trained equity officer. Staff qualifications are also reviewed to match minimum qualifications, as required.

The faculty hiring process described in the Institutional Self Evaluation Report reflects critical review of faculty candidates through the use of various assessments accompanied by a thorough interview process with faculty deeply involved in the review, selection, and recommendation for hires. (Standard III.A.1.a)

All types of personnel have long established evaluation processes that occur on a regular and timely basis. There are clear and specific evaluation criteria the District examines for academic and classified employees. Contract faculty are evaluated while on tenure-track status and tenured faculty evaluations are conducted to verify that effective teaching takes place within the classroom. There is a formalized process for administrative evaluations consisting of a three-year cycle for long-term employees and a separate process for new administrative employees. Classified staff are evaluated consistently to assess proficiency with respect to the job classification.

Upon a review of fifteen randomly selected personnel files at the District Office fourteen personnel files had current evaluations. ARC was found to have eight of nine evaluations completed in a timely fashion. In comparison to other community colleges this completion rate by ARC and LRCCD is well above average. (Standard III.A.1.b)

The Los Rios College Federation of Teachers (LRCFT) CBA includes as evaluation criteria for faculty the need to "effectively assess" SLOs. In addition, a required self-study portion of the faculty evaluation asks faculty members to consider their effectiveness in evaluating student learning. (Standard III.A.1.c)

The evaluation team confirmed that all three employee groups, faculty, classified staff, and management have written codes of professional ethics. The College aids employees in the review of these codes through training programs. (Standard III.A.1.d)

Staffing ratios for full-time faculty and part-time faculty are in line with changes in finances experienced by the College through the recent recession as well as a result of decline in enrollment numbers. There has been a clear reduction in classified staff and administrative positions, but these reductions are consistent with enrollment trends. Full-time faculty staffing has been a priority of the LRCCD as evidenced by significantly exceeding the District Full-time Faculty Obligation Number (FON), however the total number of full-time faculty serving ARC has fallen with the decline in enrollment.

In interviews with classified staff concerns regarding low staffing levels of classified employees were expressed. It was stated that the replacement of classified staff positions lagged considerably behind other employee groups. The evaluation team was concerned by the issue of replacement of classified staff positions, and how the lack of replacement might impact student learning, but was unable to appropriately quantify this impact when measured against declining enrollment. (Standard III.A.2)

Policies are addressed on a District wide basis through a collaborative process. When an item regarding policy or procedure arises as a concern to a participatory governance group it goes through a formal review process. In hiring practice the LRCCD has developed a thorough hiring manual which documents all hiring processes. This manual is required to be brought to all hiring committees as part of the duties of the chair of the committee. The evaluation team found the processes defined within the hiring manual to be in line with best practices within the California Community Colleges.

There is adequate provision for the security of personnel and employment files. Medical records are properly secured. The District utilizes electronic personnel files and employment records at the District Office which appear to be state-of-the-art. These electronic files have a high security level and the system provides instant access to employee records. They are located on a secure server only available through the District Office with access restricted to key personnel. This is in-line with best practices for the maintenance of personnel files. Only administrative files are located on campus. (Standards III.A.3, III.A.3.a, III.A.3.b)

Diversity is embraced by ARC through a variety of programs. ARC has regular and extensive diversity training for each employee group with specialized applications, especially for faculty in relation to students. Diversity is further emphasized through the appointment of an administrator at the College, formally trained through the Office of Human Resources, as an Equity Officer. The College equity officer serves on search committees and performs additional functions, such as investigating discrimination complaints, addressing Title IX complaints, and assuring that there is the appointment of a trained equity representative on hiring committees to monitor compliance with

regards to District policies and applicable laws on equity, diversity and equal employment opportunity. This Equity Officer works with the Office of Human Resources when legal assistance is required. The Equity Officer position is an additional duty assigned to an administrator, including deans and vice presidents, without additional compensation. Currently, the position of Equity Officer is assigned to a vice president at ARC. While this program appears to work well for ARC as well as the rest of the District, there is a concern about the lack of a third-party investigator for these complaints. A third-party investigator provides an impartial perspective in the complaint process without any direct personal interaction with the various employees. There is a consistent practice to appoint a diverse representation of employees on each hiring committee. (Standards III.A.4, III.A.4.a, III.A.4.b, III.A.4.c)

American River College has a deep, cultural commitment to the use of professional development for its employees. While this is apparent throughout the District, the College anecdotally identifies that only about five to ten percent of the training comes from the District. The rest of the extensive professional development program comes from within the College, other entities within the District or their additional connections within their local community. An example is the New Faculty Academy which has diverse topics including: navigating the campus, effective syllabus design, student resources, shared governance, flipped classrooms, and many more topics.

Professional development opportunities are available to management and classified staff as well. There is a long established Dean's Academy, supervisor training, and numerous individual classes for professional development. For classified staff, programs include such things as software applications training, how to interpret the information on your paycheck, and bringing in local speakers to present on a variety of topics. There are two full-time faculty members dedicated to the professional development of faculty, but no specific training staff dedicated to classified staff.

The philosophy of institutional advancement includes the development of their internal employees. American River College as well as the LRCCD has numerous interim positions. These positions are posted internally for temporary transfer and provide internal employees opportunities for advancement. This provides an opportunity to temporarily increase compensation as well as a chance to see if the position is a "good fit." This is a positive process for morale within ARC and also applies to the advancement of classified staff into the ranks of faculty. At ARC there are several classified employees who have had their hours reduced from full-time so they can teach part-time as well as perform their classified duties. This process requires approval by the Board of Trustees, a "flexing of a classified employee's duties," and provides a long-term ability for classified staff to advance within the institution.

A significant training program exists within ARC. There are numerous programs offered at the College with some developed and administered by the College and some presented on a District wide basis. The District has embraced the concept of Interested Based Bargaining, which in their own dialogue has evolved to "Interest Based Approach," a unique methodology in the area of conflict resolution. Teams of employees are available to assist other colleges within the District when there are difficult problems and the College asks for assistance. These teams work to find solutions for their colleagues to resolve problems.

Ongoing professional development programs go through regular evaluation to ensure uniformity and to meet current needs of employees. If there are immediate needs that arise, such as a recent

new telephone system, the College or the District adapts to develop a program to train employees to meet the new needs. This type of constant review and addition to staff development programs establishes LRCCD as an employer that attempts to the meet the training needs of its employees. (Standards III.A.5, III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b)

American River College, as part of the LRCCD, has a District Office allocation formula embedded within the Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs). These agreements are developed to divide funding allocations in accordance with a prescribed formula that provides a basis of funding allocation for staffing levels as well as for salary funding formulas. This drives the connection between human resource planning and institutional planning. The District has found this formulaic methodology to be effective as a basis for collective bargaining resolutions and as a model to drive student needs through the control of allocations for employee hires, especially in determining the full-time and part-time faculty needs to serve students. Improvements in these processes must happen through the collective bargaining process. Evidence of this occurring was found though the cooperation among the various groups to provide funds and flexibility to modify existing contract language to address the annual statutory increases required for state retirement employer contributions.

This approach has become imbedded in the culture of the institution and has generally provided for a positive relationship in working together with the various employee groups. Even though there has been significant labor peace within the District and cooperation in staff reductions through attrition, the evaluation team did find that there is concern from classified staff about reductions in staffing and the need to restore positions. The College is in the process of re-instating a classified staff hiring priorities process to help evaluate staffing levels and areas of greatest need. (Standard III.A.6)

Conclusion

The institution meets the Standard.

Standard III.B – Physical Resources

General Observations

American River College offers programs and services at five locations: the Main Campus located at 4700 College Oak Drive, the McClellan and Sacramento Public Safety Centers located at 5146 Arnold Avenue, the Natomas Center located at 2421 Del Paso Road, the Twin Rivers Pre-Apprenticeship Training Center located at 1333 Grand Avenue, and the Mather Center located at 10115 Spaatz Way and 10150 Missile Way in Mather, California. The Main Campus is comprised of 32 buildings, a parking structure, and several portable classroom buildings. The evaluation team visited four locations, where 50 percent or more of a program can be completed, and found that these locations appear safe and well-maintained. The College developed a Facilities Master Plan in 2012 and an Educational Master Plan in 2015.

To support the physical infrastructure of the LRCCD, Measure A was approved by voters in 2002 for a total of $265,000,000. Measure M was approved by voters in 2008 for a total of $475,000,000. Progress on building renovations and new construction through Measure A include a modernization of the Allied Health building, a modernization and expansion of the Fine Arts facilities, expansion of the Library, expansion of the Natomas Educational Center, and additions and expansion of the Physical Education facilities. Progress on building renovations and new construction through Measure M include the Student Center modernization and expansion, a new parking structure, and a Culinary Arts building.

Findings and Evidence

Responsibility for facilities and scheduled maintenance planning rests with the Director of Administrative Services, in conjunction with the District Facilities Management department. The College ensures the safety of its facilities through the implementation of the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards. Additionally, the College has developed a Safe Campus Initiative focused on awareness, prevention, early intervention, and emergency response. Ongoing assessment of College facilities is done primarily through visual inspections by District and College staff. (Standard III.B.1)

The evaluation team observed that the College has excellent classrooms and laboratories that assure the quality of educational programs and services. The College continues to plan, build, maintain, upgrade, and replace its physical resources in a manner that assures effective utilization and the continuing quality necessary to support its programs and services. With the help of Measure A and Measure M money, the College and the District have been able to fund several projects on and off campus, including, the Student Center modernization and expansion, a new parking structure, and a new Culinary Arts Building. These buildings and the College's long-range planning allow the College to support its programs now and into the future. (Standard III.B.1.a)

In a current year's survey, the majority of respondents felt that the campus was both safe and well-maintained. This demonstrates the College's commitment to identifying the safety concerns of its faculty, staff, and students and its willingness to make the necessary corrections. The College's commitment to safety at the Main Campus and off-site locations is evidenced by the 24-hour Los Rios District Police Department as well as safety-based trainings and resources for faculty, students,

and staff. At off-site facilities, the College provides campus patrol officers. In addition to having well established emergency procedures, the College has also developed Action Coordinators for Emergency Survival which trains personnel on basic procedures within each campus building to address emergencies or critical incidents. In 2009, the College performed a campus-wide accessibility compliance assessment to identify any areas of noncompliance. The Clery Report is published on the Los Rios District Police website. The College has also developed emergency procedures which are updated periodically and distributed College wide. (Standard III.B.1.b)

The College's long-range capital plans are updated periodically and focus on program review, demographic and enrollment data, the District Strategic Plan, and the Educational Master Plan in order to determine the number and type of physical resources necessary to meet increases in enrollment and changes to the College's educational programs and services. This is exhibited through the extensive recent update of its State Capital Outlay Construction Plan as well as its Facilities Master Plan. In addition, the total cost of ownership is factored into new facility projects that increase the square footage of the campus. (Standard III.B.2.a)

The program review process is integrated with the Educational Master Plan and the Facilities Master Plan, which drives the budgetary resource allocation to address the needs of programs and services. Institutional planning identified the Culinary Arts program as being housed in an inadequate facility. This was identified through the Educational Master Plan, and subsequently, the ARC Facilities Master Plan, as a high priority. As such, using money from Measure M, as well as locally secured funds through the College Foundation, the College was able to complete a new state-of-the-art Culinary Arts facility. The College Buildings, Grounds and Safety Committee advises the College president on matters relating to necessary enhancements to campus buildings and grounds with the goal of improving the educational environment and overall safety of the campus.

There is extensive integration between the College's physical resource planning and institutional planning as evidenced through the Educational Master Plan process. Further, the District's Strategic Plan aligns with the College Strategic Goals and Objectives to demonstrate its commitment to evaluating, maintaining, planning, or replacing those physical resources to ensure their effective use in maximizing access to programs and services. (Standard III.B.2.b)

Conclusion

The institution meets the Standard.

Standard III.C – Technology Resources

General Observations

Technology resources are a high priority at ARC as evidenced by the level of support given to programs and departments across campus. There is a high level of collaboration between the College's IT Department and the Technology Committee to stay abreast of the rapidly changing environment of educational technology. The College's Technology Committee, one of the participatory governance groups on campus, provides input on College wide technology decisions, and sets policy for the main campus, its off-site location, and distance learning programs and services. Through its Technology Master Plan, 2014-2019, the College has set goals to improve college operations, support student learning outcomes, and ensure continuous quality improvement.

Findings and Evidence

American River College's use of technology is wide-reaching and comprehensive. The College IT Department initiates, plans and implements strategic goals. Input from the Technology Committee and other participatory governance groups is evidence of a strong culture of collaboration. The College assesses instructional technology needs primarily through the Educational Master Plan (EMP). CTE programs receive guidance from industry advisory committees on their technology needs. The ARC Technology Committee completed the 2014-2019 Technology Master Plan which helps to inform the College's institutional planning processes.

The College ensures that both the hardware and software needs of the staff and student meet user expectations. Student learning is supported by ten student computer labs on the main campus and one other lab in the Learning Resource Center at the Natomas Educational Center. Survey results show that a majority of students and staff are satisfied with the computer technology and support offered. Each year, departments and programs identify their technology needs through the EMP process. (Standard III.C)

After discussions at the department level, department chairs meet with their deans to discuss their justification for technology purchases. With this information, deans meet with Information Technology and a Technology Committee liaison to prioritize technology purchases for the year. At that point, the deans make a recommendation to the associate vice presidents and the purchases are finalized.

Some technology decisions are made at the District level for all four LRCCD Colleges. For example, the District decided to purchase Microsoft Office and AutoDesk for all four Colleges. The District also sets hardware and network standards. However, many of the technology purchases are decentralized due to the nature of the programs at each college. American River College's Music Department requires the most recent software updates to meet industry requirements and so they go directly through the EMP process, and the College IT Department is aware of this industry requirement. The Technology Committee communicates regularly with the Distance Education (DE) Sub-Committee to make sure that the College is taking full advantage of Desire2Learn, the DE learning management system. The Planning Coordination Council (PCC) has recently approved the

hiring of a Dean of Distance Education. This position will help to enhance the operation and effectiveness of online classes at the College. (Standard III.C.1.a)

The College offers multiple opportunities for faculty and staff to receive distance education and emerging technology training. The College's Instructional Technology Center is dedicated to training faculty for online instruction. Their Online Teaching Institute awards a certification for the eight-week course which faculty are recommended to take before they teach online. An annual educational technology conference gives staff the opportunity to see how colleagues District wide use technology to support student success. Student training on the learning management system is also available through a free sample D2L class as well as video instruction. Further training for students can be found on the College's Distance Education website which offers students a tutorial on online learning. (Standard III.C.1.b)

The College Technology Committee creates systematic guidelines such as the Procedural Guidelines for Web-Based Instruction, reviews major new purchases, and develops new technology standards for the College. Recent new technology based on this review process is the installation of smart media technology for classrooms. The evaluation team observed a systematic process in place to assure that high-performing equipment is prioritized for high demand classrooms, labs, and offices with student use. Older equipment follows a cascading plan and is redeployed elsewhere in the College following a resource redistribution process. (Standards III.C.1.c, III.C.1.d)

The College is challenged by its wireless infrastructure. A recent consultant report recommended funding a $300,000 upgrade of the College's wireless service, and the evaluation team observed the approval of these funds at the PCC. Infrastructure is reviewed annually by the College IT Department and encryption of student data and shared files on the administrative domain is updated regularly. The ARC Technology Master Plan 2014 – 2019 was recently approved by the PCC. It addresses maintenance, infrastructure, and organization of the College wide infrastructure. However, the District's IT Department does not have a Master Technology Plan. Instead, they write an annual unit plan identifying unit assessment results, gaps, and initiatives. This annual report is not a future plan for the District but a list of urgent project and initiatives many of which are critical risks requiring special attention. (Standards III.C.1.c, III.C.1.d)

Technology planning is guided by the District's Unit Plan, The American River College Information Technology Master Plan, the American River College Technology Committee and the District Technology Committee. This planning is partially integrated with the College institutional planning process through the committee's annual report to the PCC. (Standard III.C.2)

Conclusion

The institution partially meets the Standard.

Recommendation

District Recommendation 1: In order to meet the standards, the Evaluation Team recommends that the LRCCD develop a comprehensive Technology Plan for the District. The plan should be integrated with the program review process and with the on-going and routine technology assessments done by District Information Technology. The Technology Plan should align with and directly support the District Strategic Plan and the colleges' strategic plans. (Standards III.C.1 and III.C.2)

Standard III.D – Financial Resources

General Observations

American River College's mission is supported by well-managed financial resources. The College has made significant improvement to facilities, with new buildings and other improvements focusing on sustainability in order to minimize future costs. The College understands the importance of updating technological equipment and resources and has developed a Technology Master Plan to address future needs. The College Foundation supports the College mission with contributions to building projects, scholarships to students, and other activities.

The College is supporting student learning with various tutoring programs through its Learning Resource Center, a Veterans Resource Center, and a Center for Leadership and Development which supports the Associated Student Body. The College completed the expansion of the Library in 2010 and the modernization and expansion of its Student Center in 2013 further supporting its students.

Findings and Evidence

American River College's mission states that ARC exists to assure students identify their educational goals and needs and successfully accomplish learning in career and technical education, developmental learning, general education, and/or lower division post-secondary education. The College supports a robust learning environment as evidenced throughout the campus by observing the many programs available to students. The evaluation team confirmed that the mission is clearly the foundation of financial planning. (Standard III.D.1)

The integration of financial planning is described in the Institutional Self Evaluation Report, which is driven by a well-defined and long-standing formula-based budget model. This model breaks down incoming general purpose (non-categorical) funds between ongoing and one-time resources. These new resources are then divided between proportionate share (or "bucket") methodology and program development funds. The proportionate share methodology includes all salary and benefit expenditures and is almost completely formula driven, regardless of funding increases or decreases. The remaining program development funds are distributed by way of a four-component formula to support the College's operational costs. The planning and allocation of discretionary funds is a highly integrated model involving centralized services at the LRCCD, goal setting based on the District Strategic Plan and College objectives, and distribution of funds at ARC. (Standard III.D.1.a)

The Los Rios Community College District utilizes a heavily centralized financial model, particularly in relation to policy setting and initial allocation of resources to the four Colleges through the budget process. A key element in the development of the budget is ensuring that commitments are matched against the supporting resource, with priority given to existing payroll commitments from the previous period as well as contractual obligations such as step increments. Remaining ongoing funds are allocated to each of the Colleges, relative to the size of the college and its weekly student contact hours according to a well-established formula. The only priority based component of the budget process is the allocation of new college discretionary funds, whose distribution is guided by the priorities established in the Educational Master Plan (EMP). (Standard III.D.1.b)

The District maintains unrestricted general fund reserves in excess of the required 5 percent to cover unanticipated costs and emergencies. The District 2013-14 general fund unrestricted reserve totaled $31,277,426, which represents 11.18 percent of total expenditures of the general fund. Through the District and College's conservative budget approach, where multiple budgets are prepared to address the varied impacts of unknown funding issues that often arise at the state funding level and its commitment to maintaining sufficient reserves, the District and College have been able to avoid layoffs and salary reductions with minimal impact to student programs and services. The College has maintained a sizeable reserve over the past five years averaging 12 percent.

The District appears to have its Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 45 future health and welfare benefit commitment well provided for as evidenced by the fact that it has deposited assets into an irrevocable trust that currently exceed the actuarially determined liability. At the end of the 2013-14 fiscal year, the District had assets of $86,190,930 in the irrevocable trust with a corresponding actuarially determined liability of $79,210,387, resulting in a net asset that exceeds the liability by almost nine percent. The 2015 actuarial valuation confirms the College's commitment to funding this liability as the District's assets at the end of the 2014-15 fiscal year increased to $105,171,076 with a corresponding actuarially determined liability of $78,633,504, resulting in a net asset that exceeds the liability by almost 34 percent. (Standard III.D.1.c)

The District has passed two separate general obligation bonds to support construction at its four major locations. Measure A was passed in 2002 for a total of $265,000,000 and Measure M was passed in 2008 for a total of $475,000,000. With the help of Measure A and Measure M, the College has been able to fund several projects on and off campus, including among others, the Student Center modernization and expansion, a new parking structure, and a new Culinary Arts Building. These buildings and its long-range planning allow the College to support its educational programs. The College has made a commitment to maintaining technological standards through the development and periodic updates of its Technology Master Plan. The College and District collaborate in order to maintain District wide standards for technology infrastructure and equipment in order to gain economies of scale when purchasing from various vendors.

The College Budget Committee has primary responsibility for reviewing the budget and making recommendations to the President's Executive Staff (PES). In most cases, college discretionary funds are distributed on a one-time basis, allowing for the opportunity to address new needs in subsequent years while not putting additional continued strain on future budgets. This process allows all constituencies to participate in the development of the institutional plans and budgets, and is open, transparent, and predictable. The District and College clearly align their budget with the goals and objectives of the District Strategic Plan which is driven directly by the District mission, and ARC's objectives are developed through a highly participative process that adopts both short and long-term perspectives. The plans are also continuously reviewed and updated as necessary, which is facilitated by accurate, timely, and accessible data. (Standard III.D.1.d)

The District is largely responsible for most matters related to the required annual external audit largely due to the centralized nature of the financial model in place. The District and College's internal control systems are evaluated by both the external auditors as well as an active internal audit department. The District's 2012, 2013, and 2014 external audits of the District, Proposition 39

General Obligation Bond, and the Los Rios Foundation have all received an unmodified opinion. The 2014 District, Proposition 39 General Obligation and Los Rios Foundation audits all identified no findings and identified no significant weaknesses. The 2012 District findings on "to be arranged hours" and controls over general apportionment claims have been resolved. Internal audit findings and management responses are not openly published, but were reviewed to confirm appropriate management responses. (Standard III.D.2.a)

The Los Rios Foundation is also audited annually, and it includes the ARC Foundation as an affiliate. The Foundation works with the College in supporting its mission by providing scholarships, grants, and funding for capital improvements.

The College utilizes PeopleSoft to control and track the numerous transactions that occur throughout the various programs and services provided by the College. Appropriate approvals are integrated into the various processes and provide an adequate control environment for the tracking and reporting of expenses, which are periodically reviewed through internal and external audits. (Standards III.D.2.d, III.D.3.h)

The District has maintained a healthy general fund reserve, which has been used to cover the funding shortfalls from the state over the past several years allowing the District and College to avoid layoffs and salary reductions with minimal impact to student programs and services. In the coming budget year, the College is planning for growth in order to bring in additional revenue. In addition, the District has established an irrevocable trust for its Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). The District obtains an actuarial valuation of its liability relative to its contributed assets every two years. (Standards III.D.3.a-e)

Although a relatively small population of the College has taken out student loans, it appears as though there has been a trend toward a cohort default rate that is approaching the maximum allowed under statute. While the college is currently in compliance, it has implemented a Department of Education approved default prevention plan to manage this issue proactively. (Standard III.D.3.f)

The College budget process allocates funds on an annual basis for payment of debt and contractual obligations. The District maintains its Purchasing Handbook which outlines the process for purchasing goods and services. All purchase requisitions are created at the College department level and are approved by the Vice President of Administrative Services prior to being forwarded to the District Purchasing Department. The District has sole authority to prepare and issue District purchase orders, which are approved by the District Director of General Services who is responsible for ensuring compliance with laws and regulations for all purchases. (Standard III.D.3.g)

American River College's financial resource planning is well-established and has been functioning effectively for a number of years. The College's current planning is reviewed by the College Budget Committee, the Planning Coordination Council, the Instruction and Student Services Deans Council and the President's Executive Staff. Timelines for completing program reviews are established and communicated out College wide, and are tied to the Educational Master Plan. The College Budget Committee periodically assesses the college discretionary funding formula to ensure that it effectively allocates funds to address any unmet needs identified through the EMP. (Standard III.D.4)

Conclusion

The institution meets the Standard.

Standard IV – Leadership and Governance

Standard IV.A – Decision-Making Roles and Processes

General Observations

The evaluation team found that the College has a supportive and inclusive environment especially as found in their eleven participatory governance committees and their institutional commitment to an interest based approach to interactions. Staff made numerous references to the support they receive, especially through the institution's commitment to a strong professional development program for all employees. The participatory governance committees facilitate decisions in support of student learning programs and services. The evaluation team observed that College leaders are committed to improvement and embrace a culture of collaborative governance. A new effort is being made to develop a stronger evidence-based, data-driven decision-making culture for the institution which needs to be fully embraced. The current president has the confidence of the various constituent groups and works diligently to recognize the work of the various committees in the decision-making process. Students are encouraged to participate on all campus committees and the annual reports of the various participatory governance committees include information on student involvement in their meetings and work.

Findings and Evidence

It is clear that institutional leaders create and encourage innovation leading to institutional excellence. There are systematic participative processes that are used to assure effective planning and implementation. Institutional planning efforts provide opportunity for appropriate staff, faculty and student participation.

A decision-making handbook has been developed which outlines the roles of various constituency groups in the decision-making process and the eleven standing participatory governance committees which provide opportunity for input in decision-making. The handbook makes clear that decisions at the College are to be in the best interest of the students and that the final decision making authority rests with the Board of Trustees. Each year, an end-of-year report is completed for each of the eleven standing committees. From a review of a variety of planning documents and select minutes from various committees, it is evident that the organization relies on faculty, its Academic Senate, the Curriculum Committee, and academic administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services. There are evaluations of planning processes, especially through surveys, and changes to processes are made as a result of these surveys. Examples of this are found in the Planning Coordination Council (PCC) minutes, such as from September 13, 2010, where training for the annual Educational Master Plan (EMP) process was made as a result of evaluation and from February 4, 2013 where additional changes to the EMP process were made. The evaluation team found other evidence employees involved in various committees improving practices, such as changes to the functions of the Budget Committee in 2013 and the recent creation of a Data Inquiry Group (DIG). Such changes go through a participative process as demonstrated through a review of various committee meeting minutes. (Standard IV.A.1)

A number of Board Policies delineate the participatory governance processes at the College including a general policy on participatory governance (P-3411), a policy on the role of the Academic Senate (P-3412), policies for the student trustee and the student body associations (P-3122, P-3123, and P-2311), and a policy for administration (P-4111). These policies define the way in which individuals can bring forward ideas from their constituencies. Additionally, the College has a Decision Making Handbook which explains the way in which the various participatory groups integrate into the overall College decision-making processes. This handbook also describes the charge and composition of the various participatory governance groups and the way in which the process for staffing and resource allocation are implemented. From a review of these documents, selected minutes from various committees, and committee end-of-year reports, it is clear that the organization relies on faculty, its Academic Senate, the Curriculum Committee, and academic administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services. Based on meeting with representatives from the Associated Student Body (ASB), the evaluation team found that students find opportunity to engage in their roles for governance of both the College and District. (Standards IV.A.2, IV.A.2.a, IV.A.2.b)

The evaluation team found that the College's administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. The College uses an interest based approach to train facilitators and to resolve conflicts that may arise among constituent groups. Training in the interest based approach is offered every semester. This approach has been ingrained into the culture of the College and the District and is a real strength for working for the good of the institution. The eleven standing committees provide opportunity for participation by faculty, classified staff, students and administrators prepares an end-of-year report to the PCC as part of an annual evaluation cycle. Other informal methods are in place to enhance the opportunities for members of the various constituency groups to work for the good of the institution. Examples include brown bag lunches with the president and the chancellor, training opportunities related to hiring and planning, including equity in hiring and annual educational master planning, a number of internal communications and newsletters, and various monthly and weekly meetings between leaders of groups like the Academic Senate president, the Classified Senate president, and the College president. (Standard IV.A.3)

The College has complied with the Commission Standards, policies, and guidelines, and Commission requirements for public disclosure, by completing the Institutional Self Evaluation Report and other reports, submitting to external evaluation visits, and requesting approval of substantive changes. A review of the website shows these reports available within one click of the home page. The College also complies with a number of specialized accrediting bodies for programs ranging from nursing and other health occupation fields to automotive, public safety, early childhood education, and more. A review of the evidence demonstrates that the College has responded to previous recommendations made by the Commission. (Standard IV.A.4)

The Decision Making Handbook outlines participative roles in committees and decision-making for faculty, classified staff, administration, and students. It also outlines the relationship and roles between the District and the College in decision-making. The handbook does not include a process outlined to do a regular, comprehensive evaluation of the decision-making processes. Assessment is occurring in various areas, an example of which is the recent review and revision of the mission statement. (Standard IV.A.5)

Conclusion

The institution meets the Standard.

Recommendations

See **College Recommendations 2 and 3**.

Standard IV.B – Board and Administrative Organization

General Observations

American River College (ARC) is one of four colleges in the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD), and the District is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of eight trustees, seven of whom are elected at large by the citizens of Sacramento county, and one of who is a student trustee elected by student representatives of the four colleges. Most of the trustees have served on the Board for many years. The chancellor supervises the presidents of each of the four colleges and a District staff including several vice chancellors and other support staff. The chancellor has served as CEO of the District since 2013, and the president of ARC has served as the institutional CEO for 14 months.

The Board of Trustees is fulfilling its responsibilities to represent the public interest, establish the necessary policies, and monitor the performance of the District and chancellor. Matters coming before the Board are previously reviewed through the District's participatory governance process and are usually in a form ready for Board adoption when presented to the trustees.

Findings and Evidence

The LRCCD Board of Trustees is responsible for governing and setting direction for the entire District, including the assurance of financial stability, responsibility for the quality of programs and services, and for ensuring the effectiveness of student learning. The Board is independent, and the individuals and constituencies of the College communities clearly respect the authority of the Board. The evaluation team found evidence that the Board, upon reaching a decision, works together as a whole to support the decision and works together to improve the District. There is a policy for selecting the chief executive (P-4111), and Board policies and procedures are posted on the District website. The Board has set clear and up-to-date goals for itself. The Board also has policies outlining its duties and responsibilities, its philosophy and purpose, mission, values, and principles. The District Strategic Plan and mission combined with the Board's annual goals provide additional guidance regarding the Board's role in assuring program quality, institutional integrity, and the effectiveness of student learning programs and services. Specific policies with regard to educational programs and student services also inform their efforts to ensure institutional quality. (Standards IV.B, IV.B.1, IV.B.1.a, IV.B.1.b)

For the Board's seven publicly-elected seats, there is a policy in accordance with statute regarding the election process and timelines to ensure staggered terms of office. As a publicly-elected governing board, the trustees are representatives of the public interest. Moreover, the Board invites public input through its public comment sections on regular meeting agendas. Board members are also actively involved in a variety of community organizations. In addition to the statements made in the Institutional Self Evaluation Report, a sampling of recent Board minutes confirms that the Board acts in concert. (Standard IV.B.1.a)

The Board establishes policies consistent with the District's mission. The Board is clearly committed to institutional effectiveness and has policies and processes consistent with this commitment. The Board is informed about specific data regarding student success through documents and reports provided at board meetings. The Board reviews financial statements regularly and receives quarterly

updates on the financial health of the District and a mid-year budget report. The Institutional Self Evaluation Report indicates that enrollment reports are presented each semester as part of an integrated strategic planning model that incorporates an institutional research component. (Standard IV.B.1.b)

Board policy P-4111 states, "The administration of the Los Rios CCD in all aspects shall be delegated to the chancellor who shall carry out the administrative responsibilities and functions in accordance with the policies adopted by the Board of Trustees." Board policy P-3112 identifies that the Board has the responsibility to monitor institutional performance and educational quality as well as to assure the fiscal health and stability of the District. The evaluation team found in the Board minutes as evidence Board actions and discussions on how the Board has fulfilled these responsibilities. The Board regularly reviews data concerning student achievement and the fiscal matters of the District. The Board has adopted and regularly updates Board policies and procedures concerning the Board's organization and operation. Board minutes provide evidence of the Board actions in a manner consistent with their Board policies. (Standards IV.B.1.c, IV.B.1d, IV.B.1.e)

None of the Board members has a financial interest in the institution. The Board has appropriate policies concerning conflict of interest, board ethics, and related matters. All board members submit conflict of interest statements annually, and there is no evidence of conflicts of interest with Board members, nor of any undue influence or pressure. The board agendas and minutes provide evidence that the Board functions as an independent policy-making and final decision-making body. The stability of the Board also would indicate that members serve the public interest and act consistently with the Board policies regarding board behavior and ethics. (Standards IV.B.1.c, IV.B.1.h)

The Board has ultimate responsibility and authority for achievement of the institution's mission. It publishes bylaws and policies on its website, along with contact information so that members of the public may inquire about policies and actions of the Board. (Standards IV.B.1.c, IV.B.1.d)

The Board's policy on trustee roles and responsibilities indicates that trustees should be knowledgeable of the mission of community colleges, and that they should engage in ongoing development. New Board members are encouraged to attend the Community College League of California (CCLC) Trustee Orientation Program and also go through an orientation with District officials, meet with College presidents, and tour District facilities, college campuses and regional education centers. (Standard IV.B.1.f)

The Board's awareness of, and commitment to, the Standards is reflected in part by the alignment of their self-evaluation instrument with the Standards. According to Board policy, each Board member completes a self-evaluation form that examines all areas of governance. Tabulated results are then shared with the Board and discussed at a public Board meeting. The most recent Board self-evaluation was conducted in October of 2014 with the topic also on its agenda for the Board's March 2015 retreat. With few exceptions, the Board routinely conducts its self-evaluation on an annual basis. (Standard IV.B.1.g)

Board policy P-3114, sections 1.2 and 2.0 for Board member conduct, also spells out standards of good practice for Board members and includes a description of remedial action the Board can take if

a member violates the policy. Board minutes reflect that the Board's practices follow the requirements of this policy. (Standard IV.B.1.h)

Through study sessions at Board meetings, the Board has become knowledgeable about the Standards and the efforts made by the Colleges to address the Standards and fulfill recommendations. The Board receives regular reports on the College's accreditation related processes and approves all accreditation related documents. A Board workshop was held in November 2014 focusing on accreditation and the Board's role in supporting College and District accreditation activities. A review of agendas and minutes of recent Board retreats in March and October of 2013 and 2014 also confirms that accreditation is a topic that remains before the Board. (Standard IV.B.1.i)

Board polices P-4111 and P-9142 outline the way in which the Board of Trustees is responsible for the recruitment, selection and evaluation of the chancellor. During the evaluation team visit, it was verified that the Board evaluation of the chancellor takes place during a regular Board of Trustees business meeting held in closed session in the month of October. Copies of the evaluation instruments were reviewed which include a self-evaluation, input from constituent groups, as well as community leaders. A review of October Board agendas and minutes confirmed the evaluation is being done. The chancellor with the Board of Trustees evaluates the performance of the College presidents annually. Input from various constituencies is included in the evaluation process for College presidents. Board Policies P-9141 and P-9142 also identify a general process and timing for evaluation of the College presidents, but more specificity would be helpful. While Board policy P-4111 identifies a specific process for hiring the chancellor, it does not have a specific process for hiring the College presidents. The College presidents are currently hired under the same regulations which address the hiring of all managers. (Standard IV.B.1.j)

Board Policy P-4111 also delegates authority to the chancellor to supervise general business procedures to assure proper administration of property contracts, the budget, audit and accounting of funds, the acquisition of supplies, equipment and property, and the protection of assets and individuals. The evaluation team concluded that the Board has fully delegated responsibility to the chancellor for administering and overseeing the operation of the District. Interviews during the evaluation team visit indicated that there is no sense of Board micromanagement of the chancellor or other administrators that would impede the normal decision-making processes for both the District and the College. (Standard IV.B.3.j)

The evaluation team found that despite his short tenure as College president for a period of 14 months, the president has assumed his role in providing leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, personnel decisions, and institutional effectiveness. The president provides stability and fosters an environment of trust and cooperation. The president is responsible for institutional and academic leadership. According to the Institutional Self Evaluation Report, the goal of the president is to work towards fulfillment of the College's mission and strategy. The president provides the leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting, and developing personnel and assessing institutional effectiveness to achieve the College's mission. The president uses the participatory governance process to foster open discussions and timely decision-making within a number of councils, committees, task forces, and the Academic Senate. (Standard IV.B.2)

The president delegates authority to his vice presidents and has an administrative structure appropriate for the site and scope of the College. The team found that, even during the short tenure of the president, he has engaged in planning, oversees the operation of the College, and is evaluating the administrative structure and staffing to reflect the institution's purposes, size, and complexity. The president delegates authority to the vice president of instruction and a vice president of student services where appropriate. (Standard IV.B.2.a)

The Institutional Self Evaluation Report provides evidence to support the claim that ARC maintains a strong culture of participatory governance planning led by the president. There is also evidence that the Educational Master Planning process drives the annual efforts of the College. Evaluation team interviews and evidence support the statement that the College has a strong culture of participatory governance including student leaders. The evaluation team found the student leaders to have a detailed understanding of the processes and issues facing the College. The president serves on District committees and gives reports to the chancellor and the District management members. The president directs the implementation of regulations and Board policies through meeting with the vice presidents, as well as through attendance at participatory governance committees. (Standard IV.B.2.b)

The president meets individually with the president of the Academic Senate and Associated Student Body and on an ad hoc basis with representatives of the classified staff union. He also communicates with the College via the convocation addresses, all-college meetings, the dissemination of monthly reports, and a weekly bulletin and email. A review of several of these communications indicate that the president uses these opportunities to highlight events as well as people on campus and to share information and data related to three broad goals he has established for the College. Observations of the president's interactions with other College personnel indicate that he is approachable and well respected. (Standard IV.B.2.b)

The Institutional Self Evaluation Report provides evidence to support that the president assures that all regulations and Board polices are implemented appropriately. The evaluation team found through interviews that the president that consults with his vice presidents, District staff, the chancellor, and other College bodies to ensure compliance with Board policies. (Standard IV.B.2.c)

The president, with the cooperation of the vice presidents, effectively controls the budget and expenditures of the College. The president consults with the College's PCC and Budget Committee, District staff, the chancellor, and other key College groups to manage budget expenditures and develop budget projections. The president, working within the participatory governance process, has full authority to propose a College budget to the chancellor and Board of Trustees. This ensures that an open and accountable process is developed to include the College's PCC and Budget Committee and other relevant constituencies, incorporating clear guidelines. (Standard IV.B.2.d)

The Institutional Self Evaluation Report provides evidence to support that the College president works and communicates effectively with the communities served by the institution. The president has initiated interaction with the Chamber of Commerce, city councils, and civic leaders. The evaluation team found that the College president is actively involved with local school district personnel. (Standard IV.B.2.e)

The distribution of operational functions, roles and responsibilities between the District and Colleges is defined in Los Rios Community College District 2014 Function Map, which was developed in 2009 and updated in 2014. The function map clearly delineates the specific roles and responsibilities of the Colleges and the District, but the evaluation team did not observe a process for assessing the effectiveness of the function map. However, evidence shows that there is a clearly defined governance structure in place to coordinate communication and decision-making District wide. (Standard IV.B.3.a)

The District supports the Colleges through a variety of services related to instructional and student services support, policy development, institutional research, human resources services, business services, fiscal services, legal services, public relations, facilities planning and maintenance, and information technology. The District assesses the effectiveness of these services through program review and planning, using data to measure against defined performance indicators. Results are used to make necessary improvements.

An example of what the District provides is found in the faculty hiring prioritization process. The evaluation team found that the College cooperates with the District prioritization of the positions funded to meet College needs as established in the collective bargaining agreements. The District human resources assists the College in the details of posting and advertising the positions, and sends applications received to the College hiring committees.   Certain details of the hiring process are coordinated by the District, but the College has the ability to prioritize hiring to best meet its needs. (Standard IV.B.3.b)

The District conducts budget planning and allocates funds in accordance with Board policy P-8122 and regulation R-8122. The overarching budgeting process is conducted under the auspices of a twenty-seven member, cross-constituency District Budget Committee. Allocations to the Colleges are based on FTES and other factors, such as weekly student contact hours and assignable square footage. Each College is responsible for its respective budget, and resource allocations are determined by established processes at the local level. The chancellor presents a detailed budget document to the Board each year that explains the broad fiscal context and assumptions under which the budget is developed. The Board approves the budget and exercises fiscal oversight through routine review and approval of expenditures as a standing monthly agenda item. (Standards IV.B.3.c, IV.B.3.d)

In practice, the evaluation team found that the chancellor provides the College presidents with the full responsibility and authority for all aspects of educational and student services programs for the Colleges. However, Board policy P-4111 specifically states, "The Chancellor may delegate any powers and duties entrusted by the Board of Trustees, including the administration of the colleges, but the Chancellor shall be specifically responsible to the Board of Trustees for the execution of such delegated powers and duties" not specifically indicating that the chancellor must delegate authority.

The chancellor does hold the presidents accountable for their performance through the annual administrative performance evaluation process. A review of the evaluation instrument shows that this evaluation is based primarily on the degree to which the president has achieved his or her stated goals. The chancellor's interactions with the College presidents during meetings and his review of information presented in their monthly Board reports provide additional opportunities for the chancellor to assess their effectiveness. (Standard IV.B.3.e)

The chancellor regularly communicates via email to all employees, providing updates and information about important issues or changes. Additionally, he communicates in person, formally and informally, at each College convocation and "brown bag" visits. Other District wide communication occurs through interactions in the committees and meetings of the executive staff. (Standard IV.B.3.f)

District governance structures and decision-making processes are regularly evaluated through surveys and reflective dialogue. (Standard IV.B.3.g)

Conclusion

The institution partially meets the Standards.

Recommendations

District Recommendation 2: In order to meet the Standards, the Evaluation Team recommends that the LRCCD develop a clearly-defined policy for selecting and evaluating the presidents of the colleges. (Standard IV.B.1.j)

District Recommendation 3: In order to meet the standards as well as to improve institutional effectiveness and align policy with practice, the Evaluation Team recommends that the District modify the existing Board Policy 4111 to more clearly define that the Chancellor delegates full responsibility, authority, and accountability to the presidents for the operations of the colleges. The Evaluation Team further recommends that Section 1.2 of Board 2411, which establishes the role of the President as the chief college administrator, be added to the policy section 4000 – Administration. (Standards IV.B.2 and IV.B.3.e)